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## **BECOMING PBRF-ABLE**

### *Research Assessment and Education in New Zealand*

It seems ironic that, designed as they are to quantify, evaluate and reward the research quantum of academic institutions, departments and individuals, research assessment exercises have themselves become objects of their research and critique. As many in this volume and elsewhere attest, the impact of research assessment runs deeper than mere measurement of “what is already there”: such processes are productive, or formative (Henkel, 2005; McNay, 2003; Sikes, 2006). Of course bringing about change is intended in the sense of increasing research quantity, enhancing its quality, etc. However, there are suggestions that by changing the conditions of knowledge production, research assessment exercises may also alter the shape and direction of disciplines by diverting and channelling researchers’ intellectual attention and political engagement, influencing what they study, how they do it, and how they report and write (Beck and Young, 2005; Bernstein, 2000).

In making research assessment their object of scholarly inquiry, social scientists study systems, processes and social relations in which, in various professional and personal capacities, they are also involved. For example, in 2002, when New Zealand’s Performance Based Research Fund was introduced, I was a professor and head of a new department in an amalgamated university School of Education. As I experienced my own, and witnessed my colleagues’, emotional, intellectual, and strategic responses, my curiosity as an educational researcher was also aroused. British researchers had argued that the professional university subjects that include clinical or practicum degree components were disadvantaged under that country’s Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) (McNay, 2003; Sikes, 2006). Did New Zealand’s PBRF discriminate in this way? In Foucault’s terms, policy-makers “often know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don’t know is what what they do *does*” (cited in Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982, 187). What is it that the PBRF’s quality assurance process *does* to Education<sup>1</sup> as a university subject?

From its beginnings, Education has been subject to frequent debates over its status and placement: whether it properly belongs in the academy, in separate training colleges, in polytechnics or in a workplace apprenticeship system (Furlong, 2004; McCulloch, 2002). In New Zealand, as in Britain, Education’s story has been one of compromises, splits, restructurings, dispersions and relocations of its various functions and components (Middleton, 2007). Bernstein, a sociologist of education, described Britain’s RAE as not only changing “structural relations between individuals”, but also “preserving structural relations between

social groups” (Bernstein, 2000, xxiv). Was this structural positioning of Education as a subject being alleviated or further entrenched by the PBRF?

To address these and other questions I designed the kind of qualitative study that could be accommodated in the course of my everyday work and applied to the analysis the conceptual resources of my discipline, the sociology of education (Middleton, 2005a, 2008). When, after the 2003 results were announced, the PBRF system moved into its review and revision phase, I was invited to share my “findings” at consultation symposia in Education specifically and on the PBRF more broadly (Middleton, 2005b, 2006). Addressing policy-makers, civil servants, economists, statisticians, scientists and so on required translation or setting aside of disciplinary idiom; a reorientation of language and style. Repackaged as chapters in quality assured books, my own, and my fellow critics’, empirical and theoretical engagements with the PBRF could then be submitted, in the form of “research outputs,” for evaluation by it (Bakker et al, 2006; Smith and Jesson, 2005).

When social scientists take as their object of study institutions and power relations in which they are also personally and professionally located, the methodological, theoretical, political and ethical dilemmas known as *reflexivity* are encountered (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Kenway and McLeod (2004) identify three levels of reflexivity in sociological writing: autobiographical, structural and epistemological. While briefly addressed for methodological reasons, my autobiographical positioning and its orientations in the (classed, gendered etc.) structural “standpoint” of Education are not of central concern in this chapter (Smith, 2000)<sup>2</sup>. Rather, my concern here is with the third, epistemological, level of reflexivity, which draws attention to the historical/social conditions in which particular social theories and disciplines, such as Education, develop and change.

Bourdieu urged social scientists to take into account the contexts that enable, constrain and flavour their own, and their fields’, research and theories:

When research comes to study the very realm within which it operates, the results which it obtains can be immediately reinvested in scientific work as instruments of reflexive knowledge of the conditions and the social limits of this work, which is one of the principal weapons of epistemological vigilance (Bourdieu, 1988, 15).

In this kind of reflexivity, relations between Education (capital E) as body of knowledge or discipline and education (lower case e) as systems, institutions and processes (educating) can be brought into view. To think in this way about the conditions for, and social limits of, theory and research in Education and how research assessment may be affecting these, it is important to work with theoretical and conceptual tools that have been developed within Education itself. Education has its own idiosyncratic form of reflexivity, its objects of inquiry including the very (educational) systems and institutions in which we, as Educationists, and our students (many of whom are student teachers) work, the pedagogical processes in which we are engaged, and which we also have to help our students learn how to do and critique. It is the centrality of pedagogy in Educational theorising that gives it its distinctive character. And it is this that Education can contribute to wider

understanding of the effects of PBRF and similar systems on academic life and intellectual production across the disciplines. To illustrate, I shall use Bernstein's final book, *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity* (2000) as my conceptual framework. When research assessment is conceptualised as a "pedagogic device" in Bernstein's sense, we can explore "what Education does" or offers in relation to the PBRF.

My argument falls into four parts. The first overviews the PBRF's quality evaluation processes and introduces the qualitative research project on which this chapter draws. The second identifies key terms from Basil Bernstein's conceptual framework. These are then applied in the third section in an historical account of the structural ambivalence of Education as a subject: before the introduction of the PBRF, during the quality evaluation process, and afterwards. I conclude by summarising my response to my two related questions: What is it that New Zealand's PBRF does to Education? And, conversely, what is it that Education does in relation to understanding of the PBRF?

#### RESEARCHING THE PBRF: A REFLEXIVE INQUIRY

New Zealand's Performance Based Research Fund set in place its first quality evaluation round in 2002, and published the results at the beginning of 2004 (Performance Based Research Fund, 2004). Results of the second round were announced in 2006 (see Coryn, this volume). Like Britain's RAE, the PBRF is an "outputs driven" model. It replaces the previous system of allocating a "top-up" research component to the equivalent full-time student enrolment funding of degree-granting institutions. The aim is to increase "the quality of research through peer assessment and performance indicators" (Ministry of Education 2002, 17). The Tertiary Education Commission (referred to as TEC and discussed in Opie, this volume), was made responsible for PBRF's design, implementation and oversight. TEC devised:

A mixed model combining both peer review and performance indicators preferable to the prevailing alternatives, namely a model based solely on peer review, like the British Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), or a model based solely on performance indicators, such as the Australian Research Quantum. (Boston, 2004: 1)

Under the new system, research funding is allocated on the basis of three, differentially weighted "elements" of each TEO's research performance over a six-year period: 25% for its external research income, 15% for research degree completions, and 60% for "the research quality of its staff, based on peer review" by 12 panels of experts in a subject, or group of subjects (Tertiary Education Commission, 2003: 11). However, unlike Britain's RAE, the units of assessment of research quality are not departments, but individuals (see Coryn, this volume).

Accordingly, in 2002, and again in 2005, individual degree-level teachers submitted their personal Evidence Portfolios (EPs) listing all their quality assured research outputs, evidence of peer esteem, contributions to the research environment,

and brief descriptions of their four nominated best research ‘outputs’. In the 2002 round, institutions awarded each EP a provisional grade, confidentially communicating these to staff. Provisionally graded EPs were sent to the TEC’s 12 subject panels for final evaluation. In the 2005 round, this provisional formal evaluation by an institution was no longer required and EPs were sent straight to the panels. In both rounds, months after submission, participants received their confidential personal grades – a ‘mark’ of A, B or C (if deemed ‘research active’) or ‘R’ (‘research inactive’). Collective grades and rankings of subjects and institutions were made public. In the first round, despite its relatively high number of A and B rated individuals, as a subject Education’s collective ranking was amongst the lowest. Institutions and media berated Education’s ‘huge research inactive tail’ urging remedial action to help it catch up with high scoring subjects like philosophy or physics (Middleton, 2005b).

Britain’s RAE was described by Bernstein and others as a “restructuring not merely of the external conditions of academic and professional practice, but even more fundamentally of the core elements of academic and professional identity” (Beck and Young, 2005: 184; see also Croll, 2003). Under RAE, institutions chose whose research to submit, and there was “no assumption that all academic staff engage in research’ (Morgan, 2004: 463). The individualisation, and compulsion, of the PBRF suggested that its “consequences for academic identity are likely to be greater than is the case with the RAE” (Codd, 2006: 226).

Bernstein’s framework enables a “sociological analysis of identity within institutional levels ... and the analysis of projected official identities at the level of the state” (Bernstein, 2000: 204). Official identities are projected via statutes, regulations, handbooks, templates, contracts and job descriptions. Professional identity formation is conceptualised as “a continuous and reflexive process, a synthesis of (internal) self definition and the (external) definition of oneself offered by others” (Henkel, 2005: 157). To identify “official” or “external” identities mandated for academics, including Educationists, I read institutional policy documents, which prioritised the roles of “teacher”, “researcher” and “manager/administrator/leader”. I wrote these on flash cards to use as a basis for interviews.

I needed a representative range of interviewees. Some of the relevant demographic characteristics were public knowledge, for example, people’s age groups, lengths of career or experience, levels of seniority, gender and ethnicity. However, from the point of view of my study, the most significant category was an individual’s PBRF score, whether a person’s EP had been rated A, B, C or R. But, when scores were kept confidential, how could I recruit participants? Seeking volunteers, I devised an e-mailed invitation to participate. I needed recruits from a range of TEOs, but because these were in competition, there were ethical dilemmas. I asked deans and heads of department to circulate my letter of invitation around their departments.

This raised reflexive questions concerning “the social positioning of the subject of knowledge, the knower and creator of knowledge” (Smith, 2000: 9). Research participants’ consent is contingent on trust. While I had years of experience in

handling sensitive information from interviews with Education colleagues in previous projects (Middleton, 2007), I was also embedded in the very institutional, professional and intellectual power relations I wanted my interviewees to address. I was a professor, a head of department, a former assistant dean, and involved in various monitoring, review, examination, supervision and pedagogical processes, some of which also involved my participants, a positioning that could generate silences, evasions and refusals. While “acknowledging the partiality of perspective and the effects of different (structural and spatial) locations and power relations between researcher and researched” (Kenway and McLeod, 2004: 527), my structural location could influence the flavour of my data.

However, I had no shortage of volunteers and interviewed 36 Educationists from seven TEOs. Of the 35 who disclosed their PBRF scores, two were rated A, 10 as B, 12 as C and 11 in the R category (see Middleton, 2005a). I asked them to discuss whether or not these categorisations affected their sense of identity, how they saw themselves and their work before, during and after the quality assurance process.

#### THE PBRF AS PEDAGOGIC DEVICE

Bernstein’s conceptual framework bears traces of its origins in an Education faculty. Like other sociologists of knowledge, Bernstein studied the social organisation and status hierarchies of subjects or disciplines and their participants (students, teachers, researchers, etc.). What is distinctive about Bernstein’s approach is the centrality of *pedagogy* in his work. This is of particular value in grounding research on the PBRF from the point of view of Education, the field in which he was institutionally located. I begin with his foundational concepts: classification and framing.

*Classification* refers to boundaries between, and within, disciplines or subjects, encompassing “relations between categories, whether these categories are between agencies, between discourses, between practices” (Bernstein 2000, 6). The PBRF delineated subjects, or groups of subjects, and appointed 12 panels of subject experts to examine individuals’ Evidence Portfolios. Education had its own panel. Identifying with subjects other than Education, some staff located administratively in Education chose to send their EPs to other subject panels. The panels also referred EPs elsewhere (Education Panel 2004, 10). The quality evaluation process projected new classifications within and across disciplinary boundaries, inscribing new collective (institutional and subject-wide) and personal identities: research active/inactive, and A, B or C rated research activity.

*Framing* refers to “the locus of control over pedagogic communication and its context” (Bernstein 2000, 6). Pedagogic communication is any “sustained process whereby somebody(s) acquires new forms or develops existing forms of conduct, knowledge, practice and criteria from somebody(s) or something deemed to be an appropriate provider and evaluator” (Bernstein 2000, 78). As teachers, supervisors, reviewers, examiners etc, academics are providers and evaluators. When we write theses, submit articles for review, learn new technologies, or submit Evidence Portfolios to a PBRF panel we are also acquirers of new forms of conduct,

knowledge, practice and criteria. Framing is strong when the locus of control is towards the transmitter and weak when the locus of control is toward the acquirer. The PBRF requirement that individuals produce and submit an Evidence Portfolio is an example of strong framing, its format, content, length and style being strictly prescribed by the transmitter. Designed to be *formative* in the sense of raising institutional (and personal) levels of research productivity, the PBRF can usefully be seen in Bernstein's sense of a *pedagogic device*.

Professional identities are constructed *by us* and *for us*. Academics locate or position our work and ourselves in relation to epistemological classifications of disciplines or fields. A sense of belonging is nurtured in allegiances to learned societies, conferences, and journals: professional identity formation involves intellectual, inter-personal and psychological processes of identification. We *identify* as educational psychologists, science educators, etc. Such personal affinities intersect in complex, and sometimes contradictory, ways with the financial and administrative categories whereby institutions allocate students to programs, distribute resources to departments, and locate bodies in buildings. Bernstein refers to identifications as *sacred or profane* – sacred describing inward (introjected) relations to knowledge, and profane an outward (projected) orientation towards economic, political or institutional imperatives.

As an academic subject, Education did not emerge until the twentieth century. However, the earlier social sciences and humanities disciplines (particularly history, philosophy, psychology and, later, sociology) would later form its foundations. In the Western world, the nineteenth century saw the development and classification of knowledge into distinct scientific or humanities subjects, and their organisation into self-regulating communities. Bernstein termed these *singulars*:

A discourse as a singular is a discourse which has appropriated a space to give itself a unique name ... And the structure of knowledge in the 19th century was, in fact, the birth and development of singulars (Bernstein 2000, 9).

The epistemological, professional, administrative and social cohesion of singulars was tight (strong classification):

Organisationally and politically, singulars construct strong boundary maintenance (Bernstein 2000, 54).

Culturally (in professional associations, networks and writing) and psychologically (in students, teachers, researchers), “singulars develop strong autonomous self-sealing and narcissistic identities. These identities are constructed by procedures of *introjection*” (Bernstein 2000, 54).

Each singular (physics, history, psychology, etc.) functioned as a *pedagogic device*, regulating the transmission, and criteria for access to, and evaluation of, its knowledge base. Membership of disciplines requires mastery of “three interrelated rules: distributive rules, recontextualising rules and evaluative rules” (Bernstein, 2000: 114). The *distributive rules* “specialise access to *fields* where the production of new knowledge may legitimately take place” (Bernstein 2000, 114). Distributive rules determine whose, or what, research counts as legitimate, who qualifies for



degrees, which articles are relevant to journals. They also “mark and distribute who may transmit what to whom and under what conditions” (Bernstein, 2000: 31) – who may supervise or examine, review, edit, or be on a panel. In short, distributive rules “specialise forms of knowledge, forms of consciousness and forms of practice to social groups” (Bernstein, 2000: 28).

*Recontextualising rules* regulate the work of the discipline’s teachers – those who constitute its *Pedagogic Recontextualising Field* (PRF). The pedagogic recontextualising field produces textbooks, curricula, examination criteria and standards. The knowledge produced by researchers and theorists “passes through ideological screens as it becomes its new form, pedagogic discourse” (Bernstein, 2000: 115). Recontextualising knowledge for teaching involves selection, translation, and filtering: emerging as a syllabus for Physics 101 or Sociology 300 etc. In the late nineteenth century, the establishment of state funded and regulated education systems established *Official Pedagogic Recontextualising Fields* (ORF) “created and dominated by the state for the construction and surveillance of state pedagogic discourse” (Bernstein, 2000: 115). Emanating from the ORF, the PBRF rewards contributions to the knowledge base (laboratory science, field work, theoretical writing), but not the production of its teaching texts, especially those used in schools. The recontextualising activities needed to reproduce and advance a discipline are devalued. Yet these activities were strongly encouraged for staff in teacher education.

As a pedagogic device, the PBRF recontextualises government policies: they are summarised, translated, and operationalised in handbooks, manuals, pro-forma, and seminars. Like any pedagogic practice, these are “there for one purpose: to transmit criteria” (Bernstein 2000, 28). They define the system’s *evaluative rules* and “provide for acquirers the principles for the production of what counts as the legitimate text. The legitimate text is *any* realisation on the part of the acquirer which attracts evaluation” (Bernstein, 2000: xiv). The production of legitimate texts is a hallmark of academic life – essays, theses, journal articles, curriculum vitae, or promotion applications require mastery of recognition, realisation and evaluation rules. Recognition rules help identify contexts – a sociology class, faculty meeting, psychology journal, Evidence Portfolio, etc. Realisation rules enable textual production – written, spoken, visual etc. It is possible to recognise a context, but lack the realisation rule needed to speak or write its texts.

Bernstein argues that those working in a field of knowledge may feel “threatened by a change in its classificatory relation, or by an unfavourable change in the economic context” (Bernstein, 2000: 203). From the mid- to late twentieth century, Educationists experienced continual shifts in the classification and framing of their subject/s, and these reconfigured the constraints and possibilities for collective and individual identity formation.

#### THE CLASSIFICATION AND FRAMING OF EDUCATION

The twentieth century saw the formation of interdisciplinary, or applied, fields situated at ‘the interface between the field of the production of knowledge and any

field of practice' (Bernstein, 2000: 9). Bernstein termed these *regions*. In its formative years as a university subject, Education exemplified a region. A region "is created by a recontextualising of singulars" according to a "recontextualising principle as to which singulars are to be selected, what knowledge within the singular is to be introduced and related" (Bernstein, 2000: 9). Culturally (in professional associations, networks and writing) and psychologically (in students, teachers, researchers), "identities produced by the new regions are more likely to face outwards to fields of practice and thus their contents are likely to be dependent on the requirements of those fields" (Bernstein, 2000: 54).

The classification and framing of Education as a region in New Zealand was influenced by American and British trends and, well into the 1970s and 1980s, Education staff often gained higher degrees in those countries (Middleton 1989; Philips et al. 1989). By the 1960s and 1970s, Education in universities was strongly influenced by the British pattern. There the nature of Education as a subject had been negotiated by a group of senior Education Professors (the pedagogic recontextualising field) and Ministry officials (official pedagogic recontextualising field, or ORF) (McCulloch, 2002; Richardson, 2002). In British universities there were to be four core Education disciplines: philosophy, history and sociology of education, and educational psychology, each rooted in its 'parent' discipline (singular), establishing its own journals, conferences and networks (McCulloch, 2002). Staff and students sometimes identified with the parent discipline, writing for its conferences and journals rather than for its educational derivative. In Bernsteinian terms, this encouraged inward-looking, narcissistic, or introjected, collective and personal identities.

Education's story is one of ambiguity as a (sometimes low status) university subject and as part of a non-degree teachers' college qualification. As in Britain, "two types of mud would stick: university teacher training is too academic and it is not academic enough" (Richardson, 2002: 40). Education's academic components (sub-disciplines) were intended as complementary components of "a pluralist vision of educational studies that sought to draw on a wide range of human knowledge and experience" (McCulloch, 2002: 103). While the foundation Education disciplines were taught in universities, teacher education's professional dimensions were relegated to the 'methods' components taught in teachers' colleges. The opportunity was lost to "bridge the academic concerns of the universities and professional concerns of the colleges as well as to diminish the artificial separation of "theory" and "practice", widespread in the outlook of teachers" (Richardson, 2002: 19). The epistemological split between academic (discipline-based) and applied (professional/practicum) components was configured by an institutional segmentation between courses taught in university Education departments and courses developed for teaching diplomas in colleges. This reinforced a division of labour, deeply inscribing binaries such as mental/ manual, pure/applied, academic/practical. College curriculum departments focused on the learning and teaching of specific school curriculum subjects. Colleges also had their own Education Departments and, as outlined below, staff in these could sometimes straddle the mental/manual divide. College students were not always



qualified to take university Education courses, but those who were often did degree units in Education concurrently with college diploma courses. While research was a requirement for university Education staff, it was not for those in colleges of Education, although a few college staff voluntarily engaged in such activities (Middleton, 2007).

From the early 1960s, the introduction of Bachelor of Education degrees in universities involved some college staff in degree teaching. College and university staff taught in teams; college staff enrolled in qualifications supervised by university colleagues. Joint research projects emerged. It was usually staff in colleges' Education (rather than curriculum) departments who were in such close relationships. The interface of university-based Education with college-based teacher education encouraged porous boundaries between its sub-disciplines: "a weakening of the strength of the classification of discourses and their entailed narcissistic identities and so a change or orientation of identity towards greater external dependency: a change from introjected to projected identities" (Bernstein, 2000: 115). This reorientation became increasingly evident during the unrest of the 1970s when new socio-political movements challenged dominant classifications of knowledge and the emergence of trans-disciplinary fields: curriculum theory, comparative education, Māori education, women's and gender studies. National associations for *educational* research, with generic journals and conferences, were established in Britain (BERA) (Furlong, 2004), Australia (AARE) (Yates, 2005) and New Zealand (NZARE). Encouraged by funding opportunities from governments, "educational research was increasingly advanced as a unitary and autonomous kind of study in its own right" (McCulloch, 2002: 101).

During the 1990s, government zeal for market-driven tertiary education (Devine, 2005; Peters 1997) saw degrees introduced in polytechnics, colleges of education and the new Māori institutions, wānanga. The 1989 Education Act (New Zealand Government 1989) defined the characteristics of the various types of TEO and established a New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) responsible for approval and monitoring of degrees outside the university sector. Colleges of education and polytechnics, quick to take this opportunity, set up three-year Bachelor of Teaching degrees, which undercut the more expensive four-year university-approved qualifications taught jointly by university and college staff. With government now refusing to fund a fourth year, universities shortened their qualifications. Teacher education's theoretical components were drastically reduced and falling enrolments in social science and humanities faculties threatened the viability of Education as a major for these students. The dominance of the 'disciplines of education' classification (regions) was over.

The Education Act ruled that NZQA could award degree status only to qualifications "taught mainly by people engaged in research" (section 254(3) (a)). College and polytechnic degree teachers, not previously required to be research-active, were pressured to re-invent themselves as researchers (Fergusson 1999). The Act defined colleges of education as "characterised by teaching and research required for the pre-school, compulsory and post-compulsory sectors of education, and for associated social and service roles" (section 162(4)(b)(ii)). College staff's

service roles included contributions to pedagogic recontextualising fields in the teaching profession – writing national curricula or textbooks for schools. Would these ‘count’ as research? The reclassification of college staff as researchers challenged Education’s distribution rules: “after individuals outside the field of production create new knowledge, the field’s principles will operate as to whether such knowledge is incorporated into the field” (Bernstein 2000, 115). As with its Australian counterpart (AARE), the NZARE “focussed more on processes of support and development ... than on setting hurdles and sanctions for who can be an education researcher and what can count as education research” (Yates 2005, 3).

From the 1990s, amalgamations of teachers’ colleges with universities intensified pressures towards research activity. Unlike the college degrees, university degrees were not subject to NZQA’s authority. The Education Act characterised universities as “primarily concerned with more advanced learning, the principal aim being to develop intellectual independence” (Section 162(4)(a)(i)). Universities’ academic freedom was mandatory: they “accept a role as critic and conscience of society” (Section 162(4)(a)(v)). Universities’ “research and teaching are closely interdependent and most of their teaching is done by people who are active in advancing knowledge” (Section 162(4)(a)(ii)). Once a former college was amalgamated into a university to form a School/Faculty of Education, would “advancing knowledge” include the former college service roles?

Amalgamations involved geographical shifts of staff. University Education department staff moved out of social science or humanities blocks in their universities and into former college buildings. For both groups, these physical, organisational, and interpersonal changes provoked insecurity and anxiety.

### RESTRUCTURING IDENTITIES

When viewed as a pedagogical device, the PBRF’s research assessment exercise appears as a site of “struggle to produce and institutionalise particular identities” (Bernstein, 2000: 66). In interviews, participants gave rich and detailed accounts of their strategies for dealing with continually changing institutionalised (external) identities. Substantial extracts from their stories were included in an early paper (Middleton, 2005a) and briefer examples in a later analysis (Middleton, 2008). The following is highly condensed and abstracted from the qualitative data on which it is based.

Bernstein argued that: “Today the state is attempting to weaken the PRF through its ORF, and thus attempting to reduce relative autonomy over the construction of pedagogic discourse and over its social contexts” (Bernstein, 2000: 33). The peer review systems developed in disciplines’ own pedagogic recontextualising fields are now, with the introduction of research assessment, harnessed to the state’s official recontextualising field. Before the introduction of the PBRF, some Education staff self-identified as researchers, but others identified otherwise. Consistent with the “service roles” mandated by law for colleges of education, they described themselves with words such as: curriculum leader, intellectual, activist-writer, poet and literary critic, and musical director/conductor.

It was useful to think of the interviewees' internal professional identities as falling into three main categories. The *academics* were familiar with, and comfortable in, a university research culture. *Curriculum staff* were former college of education staff whose contracts had not previously required research and who had prioritised service roles to the teaching profession. *Researching professionals* were those whose identities bridged boundaries between academic and curriculum. They had usually worked in college Education departments, and regarded new imperatives to research as an opportunity to upgrade qualifications, teach degree courses, and identify as researchers. The academics, the curriculum staff and the researching professionals were affected by the PBRF in different ways. In Bernstein's terms, "the analysis of identity within institutional levels" may conflict with "the analysis of projected official identities at the level of the state" (Bernstein, 2000: 52).

Citing the Education Act's requirement that NZQA-authorized degrees be taught mainly by those engaged in research (Boston, 2006), the PBRF projected the identity "researcher". It classified research (by subjects) and researchers (as research active or inactive; and as of A, B or C quality) and ranked collective performances of subjects and institutions. It transmitted criteria for the production of the legitimate text (Evidence Portfolio). To produce a legitimate EP "acquirers" must internalise the category's recognition rules (what counts as research) and realisation rules (to have carried out the research and published). They must recontextualise outputs in the mandated format, positioning themselves in "internal command economies of disciplinary repute, professional prestige, and administrative allocation" (Luke, 1997: 54).

Internal self-definitions of academics rated A or B were consistent with the projected (external) identity "researcher". Having published in high status journals, supervised and examined theses, and been cited in the works of peers, they described the PBRF's requirements as affirming their existing internal professional identities. Some of the less experienced, but "career savvy" staff used the PBRF process intentionally as a career scaffold. Translated into Bernsteinian terminology, compiling their EPs helped these staff to acquire recognition and realisation rules. But those who had not "done research", but who may have had proud records of advancing knowledge through "service roles", inevitably fared poorly. While some had grasped the recognition rule, they knew that, to continue working in what had been reclassified as a university, (no longer a college), position, they needed to develop research expertise. Through no fault of their own, they were unable to "speak the required legitimate text" (Bernstein, 2000: 17).

Being classified as A, B, C and R (fail) "echoes everyone's experiences of schooling" (Web Research, 2004: 203). The workforce in Education is largely middle-aged (Crothers, 2005) and the reclassification of experienced and successful practitioners as "inactive" meant that many "experienced what is, to some a sense of crisis and loss. Cherished identities and commitments have been undermined and, for some, this has been experienced as an assault on their professionalism" (Beck and Young, 2005: 184). The imperative to research for *all* degree teachers was described as counter-productive for teacher education.

Changing classifications of knowledge, and knowledge-workers, have psychological consequences for the formation and maintenance of professional identities. Some maintained continuity in their sense of self through strategies of resistance, including what Bernstein referred to as “psychic defences” (Bernstein, 2000, 17). A few of the older ex-college staff claimed to be unaffected by their scores, rejected the prioritising of research, and reasserted the importance of, and their commitments to, teacher-education’s social and service roles. The 2003 round’s practice of institutions awarding provisional scores (abandoned in the 2006 round) was for many an incitement to further insecurity and anxiety, exemplifying Judith Butler’s argument that “identifications are never fully made; they are incessantly reconstituted and, as such, are subject to the volatile logic of iterability” (Butler, 1993: 105).

A common theme was increasing pressure to prioritise activities seen as, as one interviewee put it, “PBRF-able.” This led to reluctance to take on any institutional service roles, (such as head of department), that might get in the way of research productivity (Ministry of Education, 2005). Although confidentiality of individuals’ scores was guaranteed in policy, it was not always in fact (Web Research, 2004). Positioning recipients as commodities of economic value, good scores were being used in promotion, job and grant applications (Ashcroft, 2005); as currency in the “accumulation of a symbolic capital of external renown” (Bourdieu, 1988, 1998).

As a pedagogical device, the PBRF is politically charged, and “the group who appropriates the device has access to a ruler and distributor of consciousness, identity and desire” (Bernstein, 2000: 202). Education’s dissonance between the identities “teacher-educator” and “researcher”, evident before the PBRF, remains and is intensifying. The PBRF projects onto all degree staff the external identity “researcher”, citing the Education Act’s benchmark for NZQA-approved degrees (section 254(3)(a); see also Boston, 2006). As Bernstein said of Britain’s RAE, in the case of Education, New Zealand’s PBRF usually “preserves structural relations between social groups but changes structural relations between individuals” (Bernstein, 2000: xxiv).

#### THE PBRF AND EDUCATION

Official recontextualising fields are “arenas for the construction, distribution, reproduction and change of pedagogic identities ... A pedagogic identity, then, is the embedding of a career in a social base” (Bernstein, 2000: 62). Projected official identities are increasingly internalised as career aspirations. Prioritising academic life according to what is “PBRF-able” is at odds with values of academic freedom. Writing from Australia, Bronwyn Davies asks (2005: 2):

What then can we say that academic work is? Within neoliberal regimes we can no longer say it is the life of the intellect and of the imagination – a positioning from which the culture will draw both sustenance and critique, a positioning from which we can speak and be heard, and which carries with it the weighty responsibility of doing more than mimic the wise words of

others, more than pick up the threads of what is already there, more than succumb to what successive neoliberal governments think they want.

In the sections of New Zealand's Education Act defining different kinds of TEO, universities, and their staff, are charged with a statutory mandate to develop intellectual independence and to "accept a role as critic and conscience of society" (section 162(4)(a)(v)). Determining one's research agenda or intellectual priorities according to external agendas, ("getting an A" or being classified as "research active" and so on) marks a shift away from intellectual autonomy. Summarising Bernstein, Beck and Young (2005, 184) write:

For generations, such identities had centred, he suggested, in a particular kind of humane relationship to *knowledge* – a relationship that was centred in what he termed 'inwardness' and 'inner dedication.' And it was this that was now most profoundly threatened by the rising tide of marketisation, external regulation, and an 'audit culture.'

The idea of the pedagogic device casts the PBRF as: "a symbolic ruler, ruling consciousness, in the sense of having power over it, and ruling in the sense of measuring the legitimacy of the realisations of consciousness" (Bernstein, 2000: 114).

The reflexivity inherent in educational theory exemplifies Bourdieu's description of the social scientist as "saddled with the task of knowing an object – the social world – of which he is the product, in a way such that the problems he raises about it and the concepts he uses have every chance of being the product of this object itself" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 235). The problems raised and concepts used by Educationists emanate from the subject's institutional and epistemological vantage-points oriented around the pedagogical. Conceptualising as pedagogical the systems in which the nature of intellectual work and the professional identities of academic workers are being redefined through political intervention, Education can help academic staff across the disciplines to "talk back" to policy-makers. Education's distinctive epistemological reflexivity is a useful item in any academic's methodological tool-kit:

In fact, his freedom in the face of the social determinations which affect him is proportionate to the power of his theoretical and technical methods of objectification, and above all, perhaps, to his ability to use them on himself, so as to speak, to objectify his own position through the objectification of the space within which are defined both his own position and his primary vision of his position, and positions opposed to it (Bourdieu, 1988: 15).

What Education (as subject) offers to a broader understanding of the PBRF is precisely this kind of reflexive analysis of the policies enabling and constraining what and how we research, teach, think, critique, consult, advise, administer, converse and write.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> A capital E is used when referring to Education as a field of study in order to avoid confusion with education as a system or process.
- <sup>2</sup> Standpoint theorists, such as Dorothy Smith (2000) emphasise the vantage-point of sociologically classified groups, most frequently by social class, ethnicity/culture or gender (as in feminist standpoint theory). As a profession, primary school teaching has long served as a route to social mobility for working-class and ethnic minority students, and has also become increasingly feminised. The status of Education as a university subject reflects the class, race and gender stratification of its staff and students and the profession they service.

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