



**Murdoch**  
UNIVERSITY

**MURDOCH RESEARCH REPOSITORY**

**Authors Version**

**Thompson, G. and Price, A. (2012) Performance pay for  
Australian teachers: A critical policy historiography.  
The Social Educator, 30 (2). pp. 3-12.**

<http://researchrepository.murdoch.edu.au/13936/>

Copyright: © 2009 SEAA

It is posted here for your personal use. No further distribution is permitted.

# **Spinning education policy: accounting for the historical past of performance pay for teachers**

## **Introduction**

In May 2011 the Australian Federal Education Minister announced there would be a unique, innovative and ‘new’ policy of performance pay for teachers, ‘Rewards for Great Teachers’ (Garrett, 2011a). In response, this paper uses critical policy historiography to argue that the unintended consequences of performance pay for teachers makes it unlikely it will deliver improved ‘quality’ or ‘efficiency’ in Australian schools. What is ‘new’, in the Australian context, is that performance pay is one of a raft of education policies being driven by the Federal Government within a system that constitutionally and historically has placed the responsibility for schooling with the states and territories. Since 2008 a key platform of the Australian Federal Labor Government has been a commitment to an ‘Education Revolution’ that would promote quality, equity and accountability in Australian schools. This commitment has resulted in ‘new’ national initiatives impacting on Australian schools including a high-stakes testing regime (NAPLAN), a mandated national curriculum (the Australian Curriculum), professional standards for teachers and teacher accreditation (AITSL) and the idea of rewarding ‘excellent teachers’ through performance pay (Garrett, 2011b).

These reforms demonstrate the increased influence of the Federal Government in education policy processes and the growth of a “coercive federalism” that pits the State and Federal Governments against each other (Harris-Hart, 2010). Central to these initiatives is the measuring, or auditing, of educational practices and relationships. While this shift in education policy hegemony from State to Federal Governments has been occurring in Australia at least since the 1970s, it has escalated and been transformed in more recent times with a greater emphasis on national human capital agendas which link education and training to Australia’s international economic competitiveness (Lingard & Sellar, 2012).

This paper uses historically informed critical analysis to critique claims about the effects of such policies. We argue that performance pay has a detailed and complex historical trajectory both internationally and within Australian states. Using Gale’s (2001) critical policy historiography we illuminate some of the effects that performance pay policies have had on education internationally and in particular within Australia. This critical historical lens also

provides opportunities to highlight how teachers have, in the past, tactically engaged with such policies.

### **The Education Revolution and Neoliberal Policy Agendas**

Since 2008 the Australian Federal Government has rolled out an Education Revolution that aims to change schools in Australia through improving the outcomes, efficiency and equity of Australian education systems. A key strategy deployed is the implementation of various accounting measures which serve to increase the array, and affect, of apparatus scrutinising and controlling teacher subjectivity and the nature of teachers work. This is reminiscent of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Taylorist systems of scientific management which began a policy trajectory of deskilling and intensifying of teachers' work (Price, Mansfield and McConney, 2012). In more recent times there has been a further deskilling and intensification as a result of "bigger, tighter, harder and flatter" policy agendas like national standardised curricula, high-stakes testing and performance pay that result in tighter controls over teachers and their work (Hargreaves, 2009, p. 89; Apple, 1986; Hargreaves, 2010).

The Education Revolution mobilises through opening education governance up to 'commonsense' market principles and auditing practices. Clarke (2011) argues that the Revolution is indicative of a fantasmic logic where quality and equity are married within education policy documents. This is enabled, Clarke argues, by a wider "policy convergence" or "neoliberal policyscape" in education (2011, p.3). This wider landscape includes neoliberal technologies "that talk of crises, failures and inconsistencies (Clarke, 2011, p. 7). Clarke points out that there is a "projection of a machine-like feedback loop between testing, performance data, and educational improvement, reflecting what we might describe as the fantasy of 'illusory efficiency'" (Clarke, 2011, p. 13). This is evidenced in the policy statements 'Rewards for Great Teachers' and the subsequent 'Top Teachers to be Rewarded', and the way they portray performance pay for teachers as "world's best practice" that is certain to "raise the bar on teacher quality", and therefore education outcomes and efficiency, through measuring teacher performance (Garrett, 2011c).

This neoliberal policy convergence has seduced education policy through promises of improved efficiency, transparency and accountability (Ball, 2000; Ball, 2003; Biesta, 2010; McGregor, 2009). Importantly this seduction has created a reform agenda enacted through

policy that presupposes some ‘crisis’ in teaching quality. Gale (2006) argues that that this manufactured crisis results in a widespread loss of confidence and positions teachers as the problem, rather than the solution. The solution to these ‘crises’ in the neoliberal imaginary is through practices of accounting, known as an audit culture, or the increasing justification of policies, practices and pedagogies, both macro and micro, because they appear to be measurable and therefore valuable (Apple, 2005). We argue that these auditing cultures give rise to policy that “includes new national accountabilities and testing, a national curriculum, currently under construction” (Lingard, 2010). A critique of ‘Rewards for Great Teachers’ must engage with a critique of those auditing practices that aim to improve efficiency and equity in educative outcomes, as well as the manufactured crisis of teaching (Gale, 2006). Technologies of surveillance and auditing of teachers are not new, teachers have been under scrutiny for centuries (Jones, 1990). However, what is new is the increased intensity, and potential effects, of these technologies on the lives of teachers and their work (Ball, 2000; Ball, 2003).

The evidence used to critique policy claims that ‘Rewards for Great Teachers’ will improve schools and schoolings has been drawn from primary and secondary sources, including historical policy documents and media texts, that shed light on performance pay policies in the UK and Australia in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Gale has argued that there are “three alternative and overlapping critical historical lenses with which to ‘read’ and ‘write’ policy research” (2001, p. 384). These are Policy Historiography, Policy Archaeology and Policy Genealogy (Gale 2001). This paper uses an historiographical approach to critically consider the ‘public issues’ and ‘private’ troubles within the performance policy domain in the latter part of the 19th Century. This strategy enables us to suggest what some of the contemporary experiences and effects of performance pay might be. By looking at the past it is possible to consider what some of the likely (and possibly unintended) consequences of performance pay will be as teachers learn to engage tactically with the policy.

### **How do we understand policy?**

Education policy is often perceived as a series of measures that are imposed at the macro level on schools, teachers, students and other members of the education community. In this understanding, educational policy is a set of regulative and centralised expectations that police the professional and learning lives of those within its purview. These are commonly

held views of policy “that separate it from practice and which are devoid of forms of engagement” (Gale & Densmore, 2003, p. 36). At a macro level this may appear as a compelling case – the linking of education with national productivity agendas through education policy. This is a common political turn that is dominating contemporary debate, particularly when it comes to perceiving the aptitudes and characteristics of teachers and their work internationally and in Australia (Biesta, 2010; Reid, 2009).

Using critical policy historiography to analyse contemporary performance pay policy in Australia is the strategic deployment of Ball’s ‘toolkit’ approach to policy that allows us to view policy through a lens that connects many unconnected experiences and partial conversations. As an example, it gives equal weight to the ways that policy is interpreted in the classroom, the aims and objectives of the policy makers, the vision of the critical academic, and the ways that policy-actors negotiate these spaces (Ball, 1994). Ball’s toolkit incorporates the approaches to analysis of policy as text, policy as discourse and the effects of policy in local settings on those players within the policy game – often teachers, principals, students and parents (Ball, 1994). In our view, a critical policy historiography is a strategy that offers insight into what the future may hold, based on the experiences of the past.

### **What is Performance Pay?**

Far from being new and innovative, performance pay schemes, with a variety of names and acronyms, have been implemented internationally and in Australia at various times for more than a century (Ingvarson, Kleinhenz and Wilkinson, 2008). ‘Rewards for Great Teachers’ is an example of policy that is part of a global ‘movement’ but local effects “always have a vernacular character as they build incrementally on what has gone before within specific educational systems” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p.97). Within the global context, performance pay schemes like ‘Rewards for Great Teachers’ are similar in that they attempt to define, assess, measure, and as a result of these measurements, financially reward teacher ‘performance’. Forms of assessment can range from sole reliance on data from individual student performance on standardised tests to more broadly based ‘evidence’ gleaned from classroom observations, interviews or, increasingly, portfolios that attempt to demonstrate in a measurable way that students are learning as a result of teacher’s performance in classrooms. The OECD suggests that approximately half of its member countries have some form of performance pay (OECD, 2012). However, the impact of it on improving education

outcomes is mixed as it requires a raft of commensurate changes; improved teacher status, autonomy and “giving teachers responsibility as professionals and leaders of reform” (OECD, 2012, p.4).

In the US some states have had various iterations of performance pay for over a century, but it has become a key issue in the last few years (Podgursky & Springer, 2007). According to Lohman, the 2001 Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind) laid the foundations for performance pay by mandating that states administer standardized achievement tests in grades 3, 8 and 10 that could be used to rate or rank teachers. Further ‘encouragement’ for performance pay schemes came with the introduction of Race To The Top (RTTT) and the Teacher Incentive Fund (Lohman, 2011). Studies in the US have shown that there are no conclusive benefits to performance-related pay as any increase in ‘productivity’ is offset by lower teacher morale and job satisfaction (Belfield & Heywood, 2008). Goldhaber, Hyung, DeArmond and Player (2005) argue that performance pay for teachers fails because teaching as a profession does not lend itself to performance pay schemes.

The UK also has a long history of performance pay schemes. More recently, performance pay was a key element of New Labor’s broader performance management model (Storey 2000; Mahoney, Menter and Hextall, 2004). With the aim to raise the standard of teaching, a model of performance management and set of professional standards were developed for various stages of a teaching leadership career from graduate to Head Teacher. Central to this new performance management model was Threshold Assessment, which was to occur at significant moments in a teacher’s career where they could provide evidence that they had met eight professional standards. If they did, they received a performance based promotion and an additional monetary bonus. Above and beyond this some teachers deemed by their heads of school to be the most effective could receive further increments up the pay scale as an incentive for continuous improvement (Mahoney et al 2004). Extrinsic motivation through performance based pay rises were seen as a key to improving the standards and modernising education. However, Storey (2000) argues that performance-related pay in the UK has failed to produce tangible educative benefits except for an increase in teacher fear and frustration. This was supported by Mahony et al (2004) who found that as well as the increased teacher anxiety, performance pay failed to address student alienation, had significant emotional

impacts and the required administration that actually diverted teacher time from engaging with students.

### **Performance Pay policy directions in Australia: ‘Rewards for Great Teachers’**

In May 2011, the Australian Federal Education Minister Peter Garrett announced that there would be a performance pay policy “based on performance in the 2013 school year and paid in early 2014” (Garrett, 2011a). This performance pay aimed to reward about 25,000 teachers across Australia – or around 10% of the teaching workforce (Garrett, 2011a). Teacher performance was to be evaluated using a variety of measures of quality such as:

- Lesson observations
- Student performance data (including NAPLAN and school based information that can show the valued added by particular teachers)
- Parental feedback
- Teacher qualifications and professional development undertaken (Garrett, 2011a).

The rationale for this is simple: if you add a financial incentive to teacher’s work, they will more likely to improve their effectiveness thus having a positive impact on the quality of schooling. In the media release Garrett stated: “Quality teaching is the single most important contributor to the achievements of school students and the Government will provide \$425 million over four years for National Rewards for Great Teachers” (Garrett, 2011c).

The announcement of the scheme polarised debate in the Australian community. Some responses to the policy argued that there was merit to the idea because education is a business and many businesses have incentive-based salaries for employees. It follows, then, that performance pay for teachers will have a flow on effect to improve the quality of education, and therefore education outcomes, across Australia. The oppositional view often delivered by teacher representative groups, unions and some academics argued that the policy would not improve educational outcomes because the reasons for declining education outcomes were of a systemic rather than individual nature. Performance pay, it was argued, would only increase teacher stress, lessen teacher collaboration and make teachers more competitive with their colleagues.

However, to examine the likely effects of ‘Rewards for Great Teachers’ is difficult because as we write the policy is yet to be implemented and therefore has had minimal practical effect. Since the policy announcement ‘Rewards for Great Teachers’ in May 2011 the government

has already revised its policy so that the accounting of good teaching will apply to all teachers nationally and will be linked to national teacher standards: “The Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework will deliver a yearly appraisal of every teacher in every school” (Garrett, 2011c).

The ‘Rewards for Great Teachers’ policy announcement did not change the ways that teachers are perceived, rather it entered an ongoing discursive space, or matrices of power, within which corporatised and business logics of teaching were already powerfully present. This does not obviate the need to understand ‘Rewards for Great Teachers’ at the discursive level; “what can be said and thought, but also... who can speak, when, where and with what authority” (Ball, 1994, p. 21). How the policy is conceptually addressed, enacted, and what claims to truth the people who speak the policy may have because “discourses encode and decode policy texts in ways that constrain (and enable) their meanings”, will be influenced by a myriad of factors including context, systemic and school culture and individual strategies (Gale & Densmore, 2003, p. 45). Rather than seeing performance pay as an oppressive mechanism, we should consider how it will be played with, resisted, enacted and manipulated, to see the teacher as a policy actor who makes “the most out of one’s *opportunities*, of spaces” or cracks that occur when the macro and micro collide (Gale & Densmore, 2003, p. 47). ‘Rewards for Great Teachers’ must be understood within practices, statements and ‘truths’ (discourses) that privilege certain interpretations, values and expectations above others. The innumerable discourses at play within schools; accountability, professionalism, responsibility, learning, success, performance, equity to name a few, are significant because they produce the ‘truths’ within which the ‘actors’ constitute their subjectivities.

At the same time, we argue using historical analysis nuances how these concepts have changed over time. Ball (1993) writes about the ways that the recasting of education through market principles in the UK has changed teachers’ work through the “confusion of social relationships with exchange relationships” that promotes “individualistic, competitive activity”. Connell (2009, p. 214) argues that in the Australian context, far from improving the funding of teacher education, marketised approaches to funding and regulation has resulted in “the construction of an imposing new apparatus of certification and regulation for teachers”. Performance pay can be seen as enmeshed within discourses that encourage an individualistic, competitive teacher self and, commonsense holds, this competitive teacher self improves educational outcomes for Australian society. However, it may be that this competition results



in unintended consequences in schools. Our contention is that looking at the past accounts and experiences of performance pay will help suggest what some of those unintended effects may be.

To try to gauge the effects of this policy, and its claims to improve teaching quality and student outcomes, we invite the reader on a journey into the past when performance pay was first introduced in WA, Victoria and England. This historical narrative is deliberately presented with minimal signposting to enable the reader to draw their own inferences regarding the seemingly commonsense benefits of performance pay that are so routinely presented. Reid argues that using historical study resists the tendency to reduce education debates to a “golden age” where things were better in the past (Reid, 2005, p. 80). Using historical inquiry is a means to disrupt the commonsense belief informing policy assumptions that holding teachers to account through performance pay will improve results (Lobascher, 2011, p. 9). We reason that holding the performance pay policy to account by drawing attention to the macro political assumptions through an historical lens, an approach that is mostly absent from the current policy landscape, offers a perspective that challenges the ‘commonsense’ appeal of the policy.

### **The experience of Performance Pay in WA from 1871**

The issue of performance pay for teachers was one of a number of complex and contested education initiatives that hit the front-page news in Western Australia in 1871. On August 25 of that year, the local Perth newspaper, the Perth Gazette and W.A. Times, took great pleasure in publishing the complete text of the Colony’s newly introduced Education Bill (Perth Gazette & W.A. Times, 1871). The paper noted that despite the usually phlegmatic nature of colonists, “...the question of Education had a charm and interest in it for the settlers which no other subject it would seem could possibly possess” (Perth Gazette & W.A. Times, 1871, p. 2). In fact colonists were “suddenly roused to action, appeared on the platform, and figured in the press on this all absorbing topic of Education” (Perth Gazette & W.A. Times, 1871, p. 2).

In an attempt to address the vexed issue of State aid to Church schools and improve the standard of education in the colony, the Education Act of 1871 was introduced. Among other things government schools became known as ‘secular’ schools and the ‘Central Board of

Education' was established, charged with the responsibility of exercising general supervision over all schools receiving Government aid (Rankin, 1926). The supervision of schools was to be carried out by the Inspector of Schools. Adkinson, former Perth Boy's School teacher, was appointed to this position and it was he who paved the way for the first 'payment by results' scheme in the colony. Under this scheme, a significant proportion of a teacher's salary would come from a subsidy (bonus/reward) paid to them on the basis of their students' individual performances in half yearly exams. This was considered "as an inducement to greater exertions on the part of teachers" (Rankin, 1926, p.39).

Adkinson had migrated from Britain in 1862, the same year that a payment for results scheme had been introduced in England. The scheme was part of a package of education reforms called the Revised Code, 1862, which were recommended following the Newcastle Report of 1861. The Newcastle Report had been commissioned following demands for extension of elementary education to all classes of people. Many working class children at this time were employed as child labourers in factories. Reports and census data highlighted that almost half the elementary age children were not enrolled in schools, even more did not attend and for those who did attend – particularly in 'schools' set up to meet Factory Law legislation – many left almost totally illiterate (Rankin, 1926).

The Revised Code in England was presented to Parliament as an administrative response to demands for an improved funding model that would provide "sound, inexpensive schooling to the mass of the people" (Fletcher, 1975, p. 35). The previous funding scheme had been criticised for being too cumbersome, (with a range of separate grants for buildings, equipment, salaries etc.) and overly reliant on matching means (the amount that schools or districts could raise for themselves). It was argued that this system unfairly disadvantaged schools in the poorest communities and with the most need. The administrative response of Robert Lowe, the [Vice-President of the Committee of the Council on Education](#), within an apparently tight fiscal regime, was to impose examinations on the three most basic and easily examinable subjects and tie school grants and teachers pay to successful outcomes. The new scheme sought to simplify the process by making state funding conditional on school attendance records and individual student performance on exams in the 'three Rs' (reading, writing and arithmetic)

There were polarised views on the new funding scheme, with some of the criticism coming from teachers who were concerned about the impact on their salary and “loss of the quasi civil service status” (Fletcher, 1975, p. 37). Others, however, noted that there was a marked improvement in “both school attendance and in the attainment of basic skills” after 1862 (Fletcher, 1975, p. 37). Some critics argued against the ‘mechanisation’ of learning produced by focusing on the basics. According to Duke, Lowe had not intended that this would lead to an “excessive and mechanical preoccupation with these three subjects at the expense of non-examined subjects; rather was it conceived of as a simple criterion of efficiency to stimulate and reward the meritorious teacher by employing the laudable ambition of men who wish to raise themselves in life” (1965, p.21). There is little doubt though, according to Fletcher, a narrowly defined curriculum, rote learning and cramming for the test resulted from the Revised Code as well as a not insignificant amount of fiddling the books. Perhaps unfairly, by 1864, Lowe had resigned from his position following accusations that some of the reports of school attendance and results had been ‘edited’ by School Inspectors responsible for monitoring the grant scheme.

At the same time as Adkinson arrived in Western Australia and the Revised Code was being introduced in England in 1862, a vitriolic debate around government grants to schools was also unfolding in the Australian colony of Victoria (Pawsey, 1994). Two education bills were being presented to parliament. One, like the English Revised Code, sought a school funding model that restricted government aid only to the payment of teachers’ salaries based on pupil achievement in the ‘three Rs’ (Pawsey, 1994). There were no other (secular) conditions to be placed on curriculum or school size and attendance. Ultimately performance pay was not included in the Common Schools Act, 1862, passed in the Victorian parliament. This Act legislated an opposite funding model for schools than what would be implemented in WA, where government financial aid was conditional on a mandated curriculum (four hours of secular instruction per day) and minimum average student attendance. The Act also established a central Board of Education to oversee the implementation of the policies and prescribed a teacher salary structure based on qualifications.

The potential impact of either of these funding policies was huge – particularly for Catholic schools. Issues surrounding these bills, therefore, must be situated within the broader framework of the State aid debates that have been some of the most divisive in Australian political history. The Victorian Common Schools Act, if enacted as intended, would have

meant a mandated secular curriculum for all schools receiving aid, the closure of small schools (mostly Catholic) and a teacher salary structure based on professional qualifications. The alternative bill would have seen a much wider variety of schools eligible for state aid (more private schools receiving state aid) and the introduction of a performance pay scheme for teachers that was not based on their professional qualifications or experience but upon the results of their students on prescribed subjects.

Despite the carriage of the Common School's Act through the parliament, the initiatives it foreshadowed did not come to fruition. In the opposition's haste to have the Act carried while media attention was on other issues, the details of the 'enactment of the act' was left to a yet to be appointed Board of Education. Ironically, within a year the Board determined that a partial payment by results scheme be introduced to raise standards, in direct contrast to original intentions (Pawsey, 1994).

Despite these very public debates taking place in England and other parts of Australia, the newly appointed Inspector of schools in WA, Adkinson, clearly supported the English Payment for Results scheme and saw it as a means to improve the 'parlous' state of education in the colony. For Adkinson, an incentives pay scheme was one the ways to address low teacher salaries and ensure that teachers would at least teach the basic standards. From 1874 all government school teachers' salaries and all grants to private schools were directly related to student attendance and achievement in half yearly exams (Fletcher, 1981). Teachers were subject to strict and measurable supervision of their curriculum content and teaching practices.

Whilst it was recorded that attendance and indeed some teachers' salaries did improve during the first years of the scheme, the 'Results Grant' system, as it did elsewhere, become the subject of considerable debate in WA in letters to the media and to the Board of Education. One letter to the editor made the following scathing comments:

The Result system, again, is a most [unfair] thing to the **teachers**, as shown by the Rev. Nicholas Nickleby in your contemporary the Inquirer of the 23 d [just]. If a child has no capacity, no matter how hard a teacher works on it, no progress in the child means no pay to the teacher. One might as well set a plough man to work in a field of soft sandy soil, and in his vicinity another to plough up a field of erratic rocks and boulders, and because the latter does not succeed he gets no pay, while the former, with infinitely less labour, rejoices in the receipt of his florins-a pretty system truly to hold in this great

country-a farce in itself, and a cruelty to the **teachers**. After this who would be a teacher? (CLIO, Guilford, 1873)

Concerns were also raised in the country where the system was thought to impose greater hardship:

I regret to notice that no action has been taken in Council to liberalize the Education Act. It certainly will never work in country districts... Just fancy a teacher and his family having to depend upon what he can make out of a school that never can average more than 30 or 35 in attendance throughout the year at a capitation grant of £1 5s., out of which he has to provide himself with quarters in a place where house-rent is enormously high. True there is a chance of his getting a further grant for passes, but the chance is a very vague and uncertain one, hedged in by so many difficulties and hampered by such stringent provisions that in the long run the chances are ten to one against his ever getting one shilling beyond the meagre 25s. head money; and even allowing that he does succeed in making a fair number of passes, how cheering must it be to have to look forward a whole year to the day of inspection to come, upon which hangs his faint rays of hope. In the meantime he and those depending on him may suffer unknown, unpitied privations, from sheer want of sufficient means to escape them, and all this as a teacher in a Government school under the provisions of the vaunted and really wonderful Education Act of 1871. (No name, Geraldton, 1873).

Teachers already on a meagre pay complained about often having to wait weeks after the Inspectors had administered their exams before they received their payments. Concerns were also raised about the detrimental effects of children's non-attendance and subsequent poor results on teacher's pay. This was a particular problem in rural areas where families often moved in search of work. One submission by the Fremantle District Board noted the common occurrence of pupils threatening teachers by saying they would not attend school or would move schools so that teachers would lose their pay bonuses (Fletcher, 1975, p. 43). In correspondence to the local newspaper, 'CLIO' of Guilford claimed that some schools were involved in what s/he termed "respectable kidnapping" from the government schools to keep up the attendance numbers. S/he also maintained that some parents were "uncouth towards old teachers if the least thing crossed them" and removed their children without notice, knowing that this would punish the teachers financially. Other parents were charged with thinking they "confer a favour upon the teacher by sending their children to the school, and that he or she should solicit them to do so." (CLIO, 1873)

The impact on curriculum in WA also emerged as a concern. In the mid 1870's, reading, writing and arithmetic were the core subjects of the curriculum with geography and grammar as extra subjects (Colebatch, 1929, p.290). Under the 'payment by results' scheme teachers were paid fifteen shillings each student for a pass in reading, writing and arithmetic, and 10

shillings for a pass in geography and grammar combined. Colebatch notes that this led to “a growing inclination on the part of many teachers to let geography drop out of the school course.” (School Report, 1876 cited in Colebatch, 1929, p.291). However, in Adkinson’s reports of the time, the teaching of geography was so bad that in many cases it was worth dropping off the curriculum. His suggestion to improve the quality of teaching was, in fact, to increase the result grant for these subjects.

Dependence on attendance and results was linked in some cases to the tendency of some teachers to falsify registers. The Inspectors noted such irregularities in their reports and some teachers were reprimanded or dismissed for such conduct (Fletcher, 1975, p. 49). Even more disturbingly were claims that payment by results contributed to at least one case of “schoolmaster touting” where teachers would actively solicit more academically able students to enrol in their class (Rankin, 1926, p.50; Paternalias, 1873, p.3).

Despite these public concerns the results system gradually became more widely practiced so that by 1873, 21 out of 61 schools were using the system. This may be attributed, at least in part to its promotion by the Inspector who, according to Rankin “used to point out the altered circumstances of those teachers who had adopted the new idea as an inducement to others to abandon the ‘Fixed’ salary method” (1926, p.52).

The Results Grant was still in place in 1890 despite being “condemned by all up-to-date educationalists of that time and it was not favoured in the West” (Rankin, 1926, p.69). One particularly vehement critique, W. Williamson of York argued that “It is not an education system at all....It is in fact a toilsome and degrading system of grinding and cramming, coupled ...with what is neither more nor less than ‘dodging the Inspector’” (in Fletcher, 1975, 49). Adkinson retired in 1890 and was replaced by Mr Walton, newly arrived from England. In his first report in 1891, Walton recommended that the half yearly ‘pernicious’ Results Grant be abolished noting that: “This idea which was practically commercialising education, had disappeared from the codes in Great Britain and the Eastern States” (Rankin, 1926, p. 81).

Walton identified key areas requiring improvement in the education system including low levels of staffing due to poor salaries, non enforcement of compulsory attendance, payment by results and the lack of proper facilities for the training of teachers (Colebatch, 1929, p.

291). Several broad changes took place at this time which lead to the 1895 Elementary Education Act, under which payment by results were abolished, facilities for teacher training (Claremont Teachers College) were established and there was a general increase in funding to schools. Such improvements can be attributed at least in part also to the boom created by the gold rushes bringing much greater wealth and increases in population to the economy. Under such conditions it was possible to improve the status and remuneration of teachers (Fletcher, 1981)

### **Concluding thoughts**

Performance pay is not new in Australia. Such schemes have waxed and waned for more than a century. And, as the history of performance pay shows in Western Australia, it is not a simple or guaranteed way to improve teaching, teachers' work, schools or student outcomes. Performance pay schemes are, in fact, riddled with complex implications for teachers, students and the curriculum that, as they did in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, deserve careful consideration and forthright debate.

We have argued in this paper that despite the Federal Minister for Education's pronouncements that Performance Pay is simply about 'rewarding top teachers', beyond the rhetoric, sound bites and what might seem like a good idea, are complex and profound implications for the way we view, value, fund, manage and control education at both a State and Federal level. Performance pay sits amidst a shifting landscape of governance of education in Australia, from State to Federal jurisdictions. Increasingly the policy that matters is Federal; national education policies that link education to national productivity including national standardised testing (NAPLAN), a national curriculum (the Australian Curriculum), national professional standards for teachers and national accreditation for teacher education providers (through AITSL). This is not a new political agenda, nor one held exclusively by the Labor government. The previous Australian Federal Liberal/National coalition government, lead by Howard, had shifted the discourse along these lines during the 1990's and it is more than likely any future Coalition Government would continue to pursue market driven education policy directions in the name of efficiency, transparency and accountability (Lingard & Sellars, 2012).

‘Rewards for Great Teachers’, which provides Federal Government funding for Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers assessed against the national standards, is an example of how Federal Government money can be increasingly used to influence State education systems. Performance pay schemes must be viewed within the context of an education culture increasingly driven by the need to audit and measure teachers’ work, in which only that which can be measured is valued. Teachers’ work that attends to broad principles of equity, social justice, teacher professionalism, collaboration with parents and community and acknowledges the complexity of the education process is less easily measurable than student achievement on tests and may be further devalued as a result of performance pay.

‘Rewards for Great Teachers’ should not be policy read as a simple scheme, which makes commonsense. It is in fact highly complex and contested with the potential to have a significant impact on the curriculum, what counts as student achievement and the professionalism of teachers’ work. When policy is viewed as discourse, clearly there is much that lies beneath the surface of the sound bite spin of ‘Rewards for Great Teachers’. What are the rewards, how do teachers earn them, how will this be measured, who will do the measuring, but above all, how will teachers strategically and tactically engage the policy? Such questions have already surfaced as members of the education community challenge the oversimplification of such issues.

As for policy and effect – we are yet to see how the scheme plays out – if it survives the next Federal election, although given the oppositions’ previous support for such schemes it is likely that it will. As we write this paper, the NSW and Victorian State Governments have announced reforms that include performance pay linked to professional standards. It is possible that other state governments will follow suit. Whilst we can not do more than tentatively predict the future of performance pay policy, we can use our historical lens to see how it played out in the past – lessons from which we may well be wise to pay heed.

In this paper we have emphasised the need to examine policy with a critical eye. In this respect policy should be viewed as a highly contested field in which many actors play a role in creating meanings for the policy and deciding how best to use it to serve their interests. Understanding the regulated education market (which promotes policy such as performance pay for teachers) through historical study “free from the immediacy of contemporary policy, can generate some deeper understandings about the operations and effects of markets in



education” (Reid, 2005, p. 80). We would argue strongly for a deeper national debate around policies like performance pay. Such policies have the potential to create winners and losers in the short term and in the long term shape the very values that underpin schools and teachers’ work.

## Reference List

- Apple, M. (1986). *Teachers and texts*. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Apple, M. (2005). Education, markets and an audit culture. *Critical Quarterly*, 47 (1-2), 11-29.
- Ball, S. (1993). Education Policy, Power Relations and Teachers' Work. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 41 (2), 106-121.
- Ball, S. (1994). *Education Reform: A Critical and Post-structural Approach*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Ball, S. (2000). Performativities and Fabrications in the Education Economy: Towards a Performative Society? *Australian Educational Researcher*, 27 (2), 1-23.
- Ball, S. (2003). The risks of social reproduction: the middle class and education markets. *London Review of Education*, 1 (3), 163-175.
- Biesta, G. J. (2010). *Good Education in an Age of Measurement: Ethics, Politics, Democracy*. Boulder, Colorado: Paradigm Publishers.
- Belfield, C., & Heywood, J. (2008). Performance pay for teachers: Determinants and consequences. *Economics of Education Review*, 27, 243-252.
- Clarke, M. (2011). Talkin' 'bout a revolution: the social, political and fantasmic logics of education policy. *Journal of Education Policy*, 1-19.
- CLIO, (1873). Correspondence. *Perth Gazette and W.A. Times*. August 15, 3. Retrieved 6 March 2012 from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article3750847>
- Colebatch, H. (1929). *A Story of a Hundred Years. Western Australia 1829 – 1929*. Government Printer. Perth, Western Australia.
- Connell, R. (2009). Good teachers on dangerous ground: towards a new view of teacher quality and professionalism. *Critical Studies in Education*, 50 (3), 213-229.
- Duke, C. (1965). Robert Lowe – A reappraisal. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 19-35
- Fletcher, L. (1975). Payment for results in Western Australia: spur to improvement or pernicious system? *ANZHEJ Journal* 2, 18. Reproduced in A.D. Spaul (ed), *Australian Teachers from Colonial Schoolmasters to Militant Professionals*. Melbourne, 34-52.
- Fletcher, L. (1981). Education of the people. In Stannage, C.T., (ed) *A New History of Western Australia*. UWA Press. Perth. 551 – 573.
- Gale, T. (2001). Critical policy sociology: historiography, archaeology and genealogy as methods of policy analysis. *Journal of Education Policy*, 16:5, 379-393.
- Gale, T., & Densmore, K. (2003). *Engaging Teachers: Towards a Radical Democratic Agenda for Schooling*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Gale, T. (2006). How Did We Ever Arrive at the Conclusion That Teachers are the Problem?: A Critical Reading in the Discourses of Australian Schooling. *English in Australia*, 2, 12-26.
- Garrett, P. (2011a). *Rewards for Great Teachers*. Retrieved October 18th, 2011a, from Ministers Media Centre: Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Portfolio:

[http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Garrett/Media/Releases/Pages/Article\\_110525\\_090123.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Garrett/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_110525_090123.aspx)

- Garrett, P. (2011b). *Investing in Australia's Teachers*. Retrieved February 23, 2012, from Ministers' Media Centre : <http://ministers.deewr.gov.au/garrett/investing-australia%E2%80%99s-teachers>
- Garrett, P. (2011c). *Top teachers to be rewarded*. Retrieved February 23, 2012, from Ministers' Media Centre: <http://ministers.deewr.gov.au/garrett/top-teachers-be-rewarded>
- Goldhaber, D., Hyung, J., DeArmond, M., & Player, D. (2005). *Why do so few public school districts use merit pay?* Washington: University of Washington.
- Hargreaves, A. (2009). A decade of educational change and a defining moment of opportunity – An introduction. *Journal of Educational Change* 10: (2-3) 89-100.
- Hargeaves, A. (2010). Presentism, individualism and conservatism: The legacy of Dan Lortie's *Schoolteacher*. *A Sociological Study. Curriculum Inquiry*. 40 (1),: 143-54
- Harris-Hart, C. (2010). National curriculum and federalism: the Australian experience. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 42 (3), 295-313.
- Ingvarson, L., Kleinhenz, E. & Wilkinson, J. (2008). *Research on Performance Pay for Teachers*. ACER Press. Victoria, Australia.
- Jones, D. (1990). The genealogy of the urban schoolteacher. In S. J. Ball, *Foucault and Education: Disciplines and Knowledge* (pp. 57-77). London: Routledge.
- Lingard, B. (2010). Policy borrowing, policy learning: testing times in Australian schooling. *Critical Studies in Education*, 51 (2), 129-145.
- Lingard, B. & Sellar, S. (2012). 'Catalyst Data': Perverse systemic effects of audit and accountability in Australian schooling. *Journal of Education Policy* [In Press].
- Lobascher, S. (2011). What are the Potential Impacts of High-stakes Testing on Literacy Education in Australia? *Literacy Learning in the Middle Years*, 19 (2), 9-19.
- Lohman, J. (2011). Performance-Based Pay for Teachers and School Administrators. OLR Report from <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2011/rpt2011-R-0433.htm>
- McGregor, G. (2009). Educating for (whose) success? Schooling in an age of neo-liberalism. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* , 30 (3), 345-358.
- Mahony, P., Menter, I., & Hextall, I. (2004). The emotional impact of performance-related pay on teachers in England. *British Educational Research Journal*, 30 (3), 435-456.
- No Name, (1873). Geraldton. Perth Gazette and W.A. Times. August 15, 3. Retrieved 6 March 2012 from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article3748883>
- OECD. (2012). *Does performance-based pay improve teaching?* Retrieved June 5th, 2012, from PISA In Focus: <http://oecdeducationtoday.blogspot.fr/2012/05/another-perspective-on-teachers-pay.html?m=1>
- Paterfamilias, 1873. Perth Gazette and W.A. Times. Sept 26, 3. Retrieved 6 March 2012 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article3755431>
- Pawsey, M.M. (1994). The introduction of payment by results into Victoria's schools. *History of Education Review*, 23 (2), 1-17.
- Perth Gazette & W.A.Times (1871). The Education Bill. Retrieved 2010 from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article3749404>, 2-3.
- Podgursky, M., & Springer, M. (2007). Teacher Performance Pay: A review. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 26 (4), 909-949.
- Price A., Mansfield, C. & McConney, A. (2012). Considering 'teacher resilience' from critical discourse and labour process theory perspectives, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 33(1), 81-95
- Rankin, D.H. (1926). *The History of the Development of Education in Western Australia 1829 - 1923*. Carrolls Ltd. Publishers. Perth W.A.

- Reid, A. (2009). Is this a revolution? A critical analysis of the Rudd government's national education agenda. *Curriculum Perspectives*, 29 (3), 1-13.
- Reid, A. (2005). The Regulated Education Market has a Past. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 26 (1), 79-94.
- Rizvi, F., & Lingard, B. (2010). *Globalizing Education Policy*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Shore, C. (2008). Audit culture and illiberal governance: Universities and the politics of accountability. *Anthropological Theory*, 8, 278-298.
- Storey, A. (2000). A leap of faith? Performance pay for teachers. *Journal of Education Policy*, 15 (5), 509-523.