

Critical Reading Form

Kennedy, A. (2014): What do professional learning policies say about the purposes of teacher education? *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*

1. What is this work about?

This is a topical study by someone working in the field I am interested in. Aileen Kennedy always takes a constructively critical perspective on policy and this paper uses a conceptualization of purposes of education to give a framework for critical analysis of aspects of contemporary professional learning in the Scottish context.

2. What are the main findings of this work?

Main findings of the analysis are that the perspectives of human capital (through performance based-standards; vernacular globalization; emphasis on impact of PL as an input-output equation and the introduction of M-level qualifications) and socialization (through emphasis on collaborative PL .) are dominating the PL policy environment at the expense of the subjectification purpose. There is also a call for more empirical work to

- 1 support sweeping claims made in policy about the links between professional learning based on standards and improved student outcome;
- 2 Understand the relationship between policy aims and teachers' enactment of them
3. how we "measure" or record any potential impact of PL

Overall it provides a means of critically interrogating some of the complexities and multiple dimensions of a field which is often presented as straightforward - i.e. teacher learning improves outcomes.

4. What gap in our understanding does this work fill? (How is the gap built; do you agree with them; are there short comings to the gap; has it filled a bigger gap than they expected?)

This paper relates practices in Teacher PL in Scotland to the wider international area and clearly highlights how globalizing influences are shaping policy agendas here and elsewhere. It extends the discussion of the purposes of (school) education to the purposes of teacher education and learning and relates the well accepted and respected ideas of Biesta on purposes and rationale to this field.

5. What is the research tradition/approach/method used?

I would call this a critical conceptual analysis as it uses concepts to build a framework for analysis of policy

6. How is this work connected to the wider research field? (**Mention specific papers/researchers**) This is similar to the gap but also considers the positive ways papers can be associated – i.e. are they done in the same tradition; are they from different disciplines but are interested in the same topic?

This work sits comfortably alongside the work of Lingard and Ozga in the critical stance it takes to globalizing influences and transnational policy agendas; it touches also on ideas also developed by Ball in relating some policy imperatives with performativity; and Biesta's work on the focus on measurement of outcomes and evidence-based practice also links in.

7. How is this work relevant to your assignment?

This is of significant importance to the work I am doing around professionalism and the processes and practices in collaborative forms of professional learning.

8. What are the limitations of this work? (**Mention specific papers/researchers**) You may have to track down a full account of the limitations of certain methods or approaches by finding those debates between researchers, which occur from time-to-time in journals.

This for me is a starter for future debates: I think Aileen has opened up a rich seam for discussion here in positioning of aspects of teacher PL as conduits for certain purposes, not all of which necessarily serve teachers' (and students') best interests. The uncritical acceptance of, for example Masters' level learning or the benefits to the profession of professional standards with little discussion as to purpose or rationale will require further exploration and the call for better empirical evidence for these ideas should invite interesting research questions

1. Very useful, return to for more detailed analysis