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Tiffany Jones

Understanding Education Policy

The 'Four Education Orientations'
Framework

 Springer

Tiffany Jones
School of Education
University of New England
Armidale, NSW
Australia

ISSN 2211-1921 ISSN 2211-193X (electronic)
ISBN 978-94-007-6264-0 ISBN 978-94-007-6265-7 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-6265-7
Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg New York London

Library of Congress Control Number: 2013932093

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Printed on acid-free paper

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Preface

Educational policy has personal, educational, cultural and relational relevance to those involved in schooling (whether you are attending, delivering or researching education). This book is not about sexuality. But in order to explain my passion for the *seemingly* ‘dry’ topic of education policy that is at the heart of this book, it is worth noting that it originally stemmed from my individual engagement with education policy as an Australian high school student concerned with issues of homophobic bullying at my school. As a young person experiencing the shoving and slurs that went with the social approbation of my same sex attraction, I struggled to understand how certain kinds of bullying appeared utterly unacceptable in school rules and regulations, while other cruel acts and insults not only went unchallenged by certain staff members but were even perpetuated by a few of them. Even in this context, I could see that the anti-bullying policies at my all-girls Catholic school were not clear-cut. Some of the rules were spoken, some of them were written as procedures in manuals that would be referred to only in the most extreme of cases. Some of the rules seemed to intersect with the Catholic tenants of the school in confusing ways whereby the ‘higher power’ (whether anti-discrimination laws or the directives of religious leaders such as pope and bishops) could be uncertain. What one teacher or student saw as bullying others saw as an appropriate admonishment. These complications impacted me greatly, sparking a life-long concern for understanding education policy.

Later as a teacher and education lecturer, I became more aware of the collective efforts to understand education policy trends and changes in different aspects of education employment, and the broader social responses to the shifts in how education was to be ‘done’. Learning about different policy processes alongside different supervisors, co-researchers, faculties and centres and my engagement with policy took a more analytical bent, and I became interested in policy’s potential to impact upon educational problems more broadly. The difference in policy across government and independent schooling was always a fascination. Through various literature reviews and policy studies, the ways in which policies appeared to be conceiving and approaching educational problems in particular ways emerged in my work and the work of other policy researchers, as did the different lenses commonly used in its analysis.

Teaching education policy analysis to undergraduate and postgraduate students, it was often a useful starting point to be able to discuss these different lenses. Having a conceptual framework for our debates allowed the many different perspectives we held on the ‘point’ of policy or ideals for education to be made explicit. Research students particularly can benefit from having a broader overview of the field of policy when engaging with study on a particular policy area, to be able to better understand the impulses behind and around such texts. It was also useful to refer to this framework when engaging with educators and education administrators in their work, their responses to policy and their frustrations with different educational trends. I have also found it useful in my liaison work with policy-making bodies such as UNESCO, various levels of government and policy committees. Words such as ‘neo-liberal’ and ‘critical’ can be thrown about in policy discussions in the assumption that their meanings are obvious, which is not at all the case, and sharing a common vocabulary can allow much greater understanding of the issues and pressures educators face with different policy terrains. Researchers following the multifarious paths of education policies over the years may also take an interest in the framework presented in this book for reflecting on their own specialist areas.

In recommending books as an introduction to education policy, as a guide to frames of reference for policy debates, or for their analytical frameworks, I have often struggled to find one that was succinct in its framing but that took a suitably broad view of the field. I have also struggled to find a useful book for education policy courses or to direct education policy research students for their private study. There are wonderful policy books, but most have too strong a bias to one view of policy or another to allow multiple views of policy to be explored. There is a recent trend in policy textbooks to focus on the neo-liberal movement across education in Western countries for example, with a strong focus on critiquing this trend from a social-justice perspective. Focussing on only two views, such books can overlook even more dominant trends in education, and some other exciting alternatives to them. In writing this book, I found it important to spend time on several policy perspectives—not to solve educational problems with a simplistic ‘solution’ of a singular cure-all stance, but to stimulate dialogue and juicy debates about the fundamental ways we view education and the policies attempting to shape it. I hope to show that education policy is, indeed, anything but ‘dry’ or clear-cut.

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Abstract

Education policy analysis often reveals the orientation of the policies under investigation. This is particularly true in approaches such as discourse analysis and genealogy. However, the orientation of the policy is often reflected on quite briefly, within the results section of reports. Terms such as ‘conservative’ and ‘neo-liberal’ are dropped into discussion sections without adequate definition; without earlier establishment of an appropriate conceptual framing; and with the assumption that their application to education policy is self-evident or common knowledge. Rigour and reproducibility become questionable when one policy is thus described as ‘liberal’, ‘neo-liberal’ or ‘conservative’ in alternate analyses. Introducing education policy theory, this SpringerBrief provides education researchers with an overarching framework for the ‘four key orientations to education policy’ that lie beneath much policy analysis (yet are rarely used directly, with accuracy or in much detail): conservative, liberal, critical and post-modern. It details their application to policy making, implementation and impact. It reflects on their use in analysis of a range of policy types. It argues the value of analysing a policy’s orientation(s) by explicitly using a common education orientations framing, to improve clarity of analysis, reporting and discussion and allow broader paradigmatic, discursive and other taxonomic trends across the education policy field to emerge.

Keywords Education policy • Policy analysis • Paradigm • Orientation • Conservative • Liberal • Critical • Post-modern • Education theory

Chapter 1

Introduction

Education stakeholders must make sense of the policy approaches within which schools are officially called to be run. Key decisions must be made relating to the interpretation and implementation of policy directives and agendas—combining the stakeholders' personal values, perceptions, context and resources. Understanding how policies manifest, their aim, their impact on pedagogy and consequences are all paths central to educational leadership, teaching and policy analysis processes alike. As Bell and Stevenson assert:

...if institutional leaders do not mechanically implement policy from the state, nor do those studying and working in educational institutions mechanically implement the policies of their institutional leaders. Policy is political: it is about the power to determine what is done. It shapes who benefits, for what purpose and who pays. It goes to the very heart of educational philosophy—what is education for? For whom? Who decides? (Bell and Stevenson 2006, p. 9).

Formal schooling is organised and controlled by governments, in the main, and steeped in values—the values of individuals, community values, the values embedded in institutions and wider structures. It is through these values that policy develops in a complex and multi-faceted manner. Governments, schools, individual departments and teachers, students, parents and other community members all have their own interpretations of the policies that may be in line with, variant to or directly oppositional to the intentions of policy makers and policy committee members (whose views may not be entirely uniform in the first place). Developing a conceptual understanding of the politics behind these processes is necessary for building a better informed theoretical and empirical understanding of what is happening in our schools (Ozga 2000). This offers a basis for the examination of policy not only in its application for policy makers as some government departments and agencies may frame it, but as a knowledge base for education researchers and other stakeholders (Ozga 2000). This brief explores different perceptions of policy, making links between both policy sociology and political philosophy literature as a basis for arguing the need for a more useful frame of policy orientations useful to a range of policy stakeholders. It then provides a brief overview of some existing paradigm frameworks, before expanding upon a new orientation-based framework useful in considering different political stances on education policy: 'the Four Orientations to Education'. Analyses of policies within sexuality education, history education and

other areas are referred for using this framework, along with arguments for its value for enhancing understanding of education policy for all stakeholders.

This book may be used by different audiences for different reasons—there are many people in the education policy arena who may seek a better understanding of it for practical or academic purposes. However, in order to particularly cater to the need of the growing body of education policy students and education policy research students (in Masters Courses from Harvard to vocational colleges), the text includes 11 sets of (two) coloured text boxes at the end of [Chaps. 2–5](#), which could be divided and completed over the weeks of a single course unit (or the introduction to a research program) for one semester/trimester. The first box (in blue) contains key terms used in the section, which are defined or used in meaningful ways in the text. The second (in pink) contains tutorial and field activities that can be done in classes, as homework or used to stimulate development around personal scholarship and research. Course co-ordinators may guide student groups to read particular sections of this book and work on the activities throughout a unit of work, so that the cohort can progress towards developing conceptual frameworks for their own research projects or literature review papers. However, audiences choosing to read this book simply as an introduction to the field of education policy or as an argument for a particular theoretical framework may choose to read simply this book ‘straight-through’ like a peer-reviewed research paper/theory text, or in a few brief sittings, and may skip over the activities suggested in the coloured text boxes altogether.

References

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Chapter 2

Perceptions of Policy

Conceptualisations of policy vary across the field of education policy research, and sometimes even within a particular study (Ozga 1990). While understandings of policy have certainly developed and expanded over time, this is not to declare that there is a unified view on what policy 'is'. Older ideas are not automatically supplanted by newer concepts as they emerge. Rather, a range of older and newer definitions are at work in contemporary education research concomitantly, and are being added to and debated as policy theory evolves. Four key themes in these constructions of policy are briefly outlined and critiqued below: policy as text, policy as values-laden actions, policy as process and policy as discursive. The value of each (particularly the latter conception) is then expanded upon for orientation-based analysis of policies in education policy research.

2.1 Policy as Text

Both in professional literature and everyday talk, policy is often characterised as *a set of laws or guidelines within a 'governing text'* (Callewaert 2006, p. 767). Young (2007) calls this the traditional approach in education policy research, but it can also be evident within some contemporary research-based 'calls' for policy or content analysis of policy texts, which can be built on simplistic models of policy as constituting a textual 'policy document' or an official spoken requirement (verbal text) on expected behaviours. These models, without always declaring an explicit correlation, can carry the assumption that policy directly determines practices (perhaps with variable successes dependent on the policy's wording (Callewaert 2006). At most, 'Technical-empiricist' models of policy analysis evaluate policy as communication between policy makers and practitioners, considering whether or not policy makers' intentions within the text were 'understood' and implemented (Alexander 1997, p. 3; Olssen et al. 2004, pp. 60–61).

It would be foolish to deny that texts (and the policy makers' intentions) are an important *aspect* of policy. Policy advocates can decry their absence or denounce their presence, department heads and principals can announce them in stakeholder gatherings, students can look them up and quote them to negotiate an issue, staff can be hired and fired by their adherence to them and so forth. Yet policy texts

can also be all but ignored. They can be buried in the depths of thick manuals or hidden at the end of infinitely diverting clicks on hyperlinked webpages. They can be coupled with utterly no funding, resources or guidance. On the other hand, they can feature as centrepieces to expensive and sensational political campaigns. They can be resisted at rallies peopled with union members, parents and outraged community members. The words they use can be interpreted in multiple ways such that they support divergent intentions and practices. Policy texts may not even reflect policy makers' intentions to begin with, and these intentions may be conflicting or unknown to the policy makers, and are unlikely to have purely 'originated' within these individuals in a de-contextualised manner.

Levinson, Sutton and Winstead decry the lack of social theory in education policy research using this construction of policy:

Virtually all research in the traditional paradigm is applied, evaluative, and problem oriented, within a technocratic liberal democratic ethos. It is directed toward addressing or modifying the policy in question, perhaps toward documenting its unintended consequences. Rarely does such policy research more openly address the assumptions and interests that go into policy formation itself, or question the nature of policy as a social practice of power under late modernity (Callewaert 2006, pp. 768–769).

The lack of interest in social practices of power is an issue with this model for research interested in power dynamics regulating dominant trends and uses of education. Another problem with application of this model is that the subjects of the policy (particularly students, but also parents, teachers and other stakeholders) are only visible in this model as they are mentioned and considered within the text. Thus, student subjection within stakeholder interpretations, their experiences of practices and their own navigations of the field are denied in a manner that is unhelpful for a study interested in student subjectivity (for example). Thus, these models have a very limited usefulness.

Keywords

Policy document, policy text
 Governing text
 Policy-makers' intentions
 Technical-empiricist analysis

Tutorial and Field Activities

1. What are three education policy areas you are interested in?
2. Pick one area to focus on. Is there any international policy document on this topic provided by bodies like UNESCO or Education International?

3. Is there a distinct national education policy document for this topic? If so, how can it be accessed, and by whom? Was there an official launch or campaign promoting it in the media or to schools?
4. Is there a distinct state or district education policy document for this topic? If so, how can it be accessed, and by whom? Was there an official launch or campaign promoting it in the media or to schools?
5. Are there any independent education policy documents (for religious or alternative education systems)? If so, how can they be accessed, and by whom? Was there an official launch?
6. Is there any guidance related to this issue delivered within the text of other policy documents on broader themes?
7. Can you find examples of individual schools that have policy documents or policy text covering the topic? Is the policy available online, or in school diaries, or only to staff?
8. If there are no policy documents or policy texts for your topic, are there other ways in which guidance on this issue is communicated?
9. If there are several policy documents or text parts, is there a hierarchy in how do they relate to each-other? Is there a governing text or law? Are there exemptions?
10. Who are the main (or potential) ‘policy makers’ for this topic area?
11. Would you say they give clear guidance in this policy area?
12. Is it possible in looking at their policy documents, texts or other provisions to have different interpretations of the policy-makers’ intentions about how this area should be dealt with?

2.2 Policy as Values-Laden Actions

As early as the 1960s, there has been a view of policy that went beyond the ‘policy as text’ model to construct it as *actions that assign value ideals* (Easton 1965). This view is not unlike some more contemporary claims that policy describes an organisation’s ‘stance’ on matters and the series of actions to be taken (Harman 1984) or ‘... aims or goals (statements on) what ought to happen’ (Blakemore 2003, p. 10). In the 1970s Kogan recognised policy as the pursuit of fundamentally political objectives. In an educational policy making study wherein he refers to policies as the ‘operational statements of values’ or the ‘authoritative allocation of values’ (Kogan 1975, p. 55), he locates education policy within the realm of values and politics, and this frame has been drawn on in much subsequent education policy research (Giroux 1993; Irvine 2002; Luke and Luke 1995; McLaren 1992; Snook 2000). This also places policy in a context of wider fundamental questions about what and whom education is for, and who decides. In this sense, Kogan’s version of policy is not completely divorced from the context of its creation, but rather includes and reflects this context.

There is logic in the idea that policy (at least in part) reflects or is part of its context. Yet rapid economic and social change have affected the policy making context since Kogan published this work, and when policy is considered in terms of values within contemporary education research now there must be a recognition that those values are continually being contested, ‘with ensuing conflicts ebbing and flowing’ (Bell and Stevenson 2006, p. 17). Indeed, all of these ‘values-laden actions’ models are problematic in that they focus on the intended outcomes or politically ideal interpretations of policy. Jennings’ model (Fig. 2.1 below) reveals the sequential logic of this perspective on policy (Jennings 1977). Policy is seen as initiated in response to a specific issue, opinions are gathered and leaders emerge. This overlooks how ‘problems’ may not even be perceptible due to the bias of community and leadership or alternative possibilities on how policy may be initiated. The model then suggests alternatives are formally presented and then discussed, and the final policy is made and implemented. So there is some acknowledgment of negotiation of power and some room for minor conflict. However, as Scott (1998) argues, no degree of planning in policy generally can eliminate contingency, and planners must adopt plans slowly and react to human agency and local responses rather than repeatedly seeking to enforce envisioned outcomes. High modernist impositions with the most utopic of visions can debilitate the institutions that they sought to support, and sometimes the weaknesses of quite idealistic and hopeful leadership are only overcome by individuals who, ironically, ‘break the rules’ for survival.

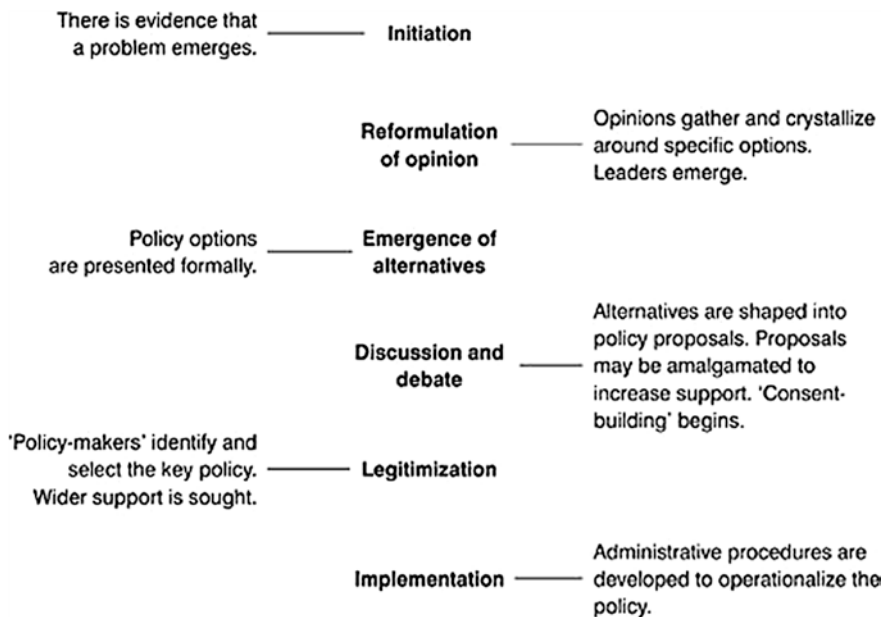


Fig. 2.1 Jennings' (1977) linear model of policy overlooks interpretation processes

In ignoring the *processes* of policy (such as interpretation and implementation issues) and the ways in which these can be part of what forms and re-forms policy, these models do not explore the ‘whole picture’ of policy. They also overlook the ways in which the values within the policies can be critiqued, refined and even resisted. This means that policy analysis using this construction of policy can overlook how the policy is actually experienced by stakeholders. The Jennings (1977) model in particular shows how it is the role of leaders that could be analysed most easily in this framing, and that those whose values are not represented or who are subject to policy (such as students and school community members) are less ‘visible’ in this conceptualisation. This invisibility renders such models less valuable for studies with a critical or post-structural interest in such school community members’ interests, but may have some value for studies with an interest in administrators and leaders.

Keywords

Values-ideals
Stance
Values-laden actions
Context

Tutorial and Field Activities

1. Choose one education policy document, text segment, statement or artefact.
2. What sorts of concepts are valued in this text (including any imagery)?
3. What is the policy’s ‘stance’ on the topic area it deals with?
4. What are the contexts, or situations, it refers to?
5. What does it suggest ‘should happen’, when and why?
6. What actions does it promote, discourage or ban?
7. What are the values or beliefs suggested in the way it promotes or bans an action?
8. Whose values are represented in this approach?
9. Whose values are not represented in this approach?
10. If you have access to one or two people in the relevant field (perhaps you know a teacher, an administrator, a student or perhaps you could consider your own experience) ask them if what the policy position says ‘should happen’, **does** happen in their experience?

2.3 Policy as Process

Since the 1980s, there has been a sense in education research that policy *is process-based* and it is indeed problematic to define policy in a manner that de-contextualises its processes (Prunty 1984). Policy may further be conceived as a succession or cycle of decisions (Ham and Hill 1984), or a continuous cycle where it is made, re-made during implementation and repeatedly revised (Bowe et al. 1992). It may equally be defined as including the provision and allotment of resources (Codd 1988). There is certainly value in this conceptual development; policy directives and ideals can be more or less likely to ‘succeed’ or be interpreted in varying ways dependant on the processes by which policy comes into being, is funded, resourced, serviced, tested and policed. Within the 1990s the view that policy may indeed be seen as a process in itself became more widespread, and was particularly popularised by policy theorists such as Stephen J. Ball (Ball 1993; Bell and Stevenson 2006; Fulcher 1989; Kenway 1990; Lingard 1993). This modelling of policy can be seen in research exploring how local actors and dynamics within implementation affect education policy outcomes (Alexander 1997; Sabatier 1986) and research considering ‘failed’ implementation using backward mapping approaches (Allen 2007; Angelides 2008).

Such research can acknowledge unanticipated policy impacts through localised institutional effects (Alexander 1997; APA Task Force 2009; Raab 1994) and use interpretive approaches based on sociology (symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology), literary criticism (hermeneutics), cultural anthropology and cognitive or social psychologies. This construction occupies ‘a kind of middle ground between traditional and critical approaches’ broaching the, broader question of what ‘does’, albeit to make policy more effective at achieving its aim (Levinson et al. 2009, pp. 772–773). Spillane, Reiser and Reimer’s integrative sociocultural model particularly applies situated cognition to emphasise the interpretive processes in which implementing agents are involved (Alexander 1997), and they argue that the idea that such agents’ alternative interpretations are necessarily ‘mistaken’ or ‘wilful efforts’ of sabotage is simplistic (p. 393). Their model includes three core elements: the policy signals, the individual implementing agent and the situation in which sense making occurs (p.392). It focuses on how the implementing agent (principals, staff) constructs meaning as informed by their personal set of prior knowledge and beliefs, with some acknowledgement of the institution’s effects on this. This acknowledges practice as an ongoing process of policies. However, this model has faced critique for accepting the conventional distinction between policy makers and policy implementers (Levinson et al. 2009), where sometimes individuals can fulfil both roles. Another issue is that the focus on individuals overlooks broader social power dynamics and the cultural influences *shaping* individual interpretation.

Additionally, it must be noted that there is no set, predictable or ‘natural’ cycle followed in the case of all policies. For all the discussion of policies as being developed and revised over time in these models, policies can actually be unannounced,

undistributed, resource-less clauses in hidden manuals. Policies can be abandoned completely with a change of leadership. Or, they can be unspoken but generally adhered to because they are (unofficially) part of hegemonic social cultures imperceptible from ‘the inside’ (a particular time/place). Alternately, taking a new ideological perspective can mean certain policies may even be analysed as being ‘as yet unconceived’. So looking at processes alone can only make visible what has happened and is conceivable in a particular world-view and model of processes, leaving out other possibilities. This means discussion of ‘what is not’ and depths of analysis of ‘what is’ in terms of the policy is limited. Research located within the post-modern perspective—wherein researcher curiosity about ‘what is not’ and ‘what may be’ can be essential for gaining distance from and analysing current truths—may find such models of policy less useful.

Keywords

Policy processes
Policy cycle
Implementation
Mistaken interpretation
Wilful resistance or sabotage

Tutorial and Field Activities

1. Choose one education policy topic area.
2. Historically, have there ever been different policy documents/texts to what is available now in this policy area?
3. Would you say this policy area has been regularly updated, sporadically updated, or sometimes abandoned/replaced entirely?
4. For current approaches to this policy area, what implementation is required?
5. How is this monitored (if at all)?
6. Is implementation ever officially evaluated or reported on? How?
7. In what ways could this policy area be accidentally misunderstood? Have there been reports of education stakeholders or staff misunderstanding or overlooking the policy?
8. In what ways could this policy be intentionally resisted? Have there been reports of people speaking out against the policy or resisting its requirements?

2.4 Policy as Discursive

Alongside the three other conceptualisations, there is also theoretical work that understands policy as *mobilising specific ‘discourses’ within or across its various texts and processes* (Ball and Exley 2010; Fairclough 1993; Rogers et al. 2005). These discourses necessarily relate to, and affect, policy contexts. Theorists who view policy as discursive trace the language of texts back to its source in spoken language of social life, and this materialist theory of discourse—stemming from psychoanalysts, Michel Foucault, Mikhail m. Bakhtin, black aestheticians, New Historicists, cultural materialists, cultural studies theorists, post-structuralist feminists and queer theorists—insists that language is uttered by ‘embodied subjects situated historically in contentious social spheres regulated by powerful institutions’ (Leitch et al. 2001, p. 6). This approach to the policy as social text, wherein language use is dialogical,¹ sees policy as representing and refracting reality (as reality is grounded in conventions of social phenomena, not in nature). Indeed, language constitutes reality, and also (re)produces distortions. Thus discursive policy is in a sense a scripted mixing and matching of cultural codes derived from (and deriving) the schooling context, community, traditions and practices.

In order to better understand this latter construction of policy, it is necessary to define discourse. The term ‘discourse’ originates from the Latin *discursus*—‘to run to and fro’ (Rogers et al. 2005). Yet the meaning of the word has changed significantly over time, such that it is difficult to delineate (Mills 1997). Even Foucault, in carrying out what is widely recognised as seminal work on the character of discourse, never limited his compositions to one conceptualisation of the term, arguing:

Instead of gradually reducing the rather fluctuating meaning of the word ‘discourse’, I believe I have added to its meanings: treating it sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualisable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements (Foucault 1972, p. 80).

Fairclough (1989) extends Foucault’s model to create a distinct understanding of discourse as ‘social practice’, determined by ‘sets of conventions associated with social institutions’ (p.17). Like Foucault and socio-linguistics generally, Fairclough (1989) rejects the Saussurean view of language as divided into the pre-existing system of codes (*langue*) and an individuals’ chosen use of it (*parole*). He argues that language-use (and all language-based constructs such as conversations and policies), is discursive as their variation is not uniquely determined by an individual, but socially determined by variables such as the social identities of people interacting, their socially defined roles and social settings (Fairclough 1989, p. 17). The key

¹ Informs and is informed by previous language and textual usage rather than maintains pre-scriptive meaning, as in Bakhtin’s and subsequent literary and language theorists’ use of the word (Apple 1990).

elements of Fairclough's model are shared with other theorists interested in critical discourse analysis (Gee 1990; Rogers et al. 2005; Wodak 1996): that discourse does ideological work, constitutes society and culture, is situated and historical, and relates to/mediates power. For example, Gilbert argues discourse sees language not simply as logically structured meaning systems, but as a social practice in which people 'enter into relations with each other as they engage in the process of producing and interpreting meaning' (Gilbert 1992, p. 58). This highlights the importance of interpretation processes and human interactions within any construction of policy as discursive.

Consequently, education policy discourses are not only 'found' by researchers using these models within policy texts or within schools, but across sites as varied as the field of education research and academic conferences, teacher interpretations, within media reports, in casual discussions between parents, at anti-racism rallies and so on. Luke and Luke highlight the complexity of such discourses:

Educational discourse thus can be seen as a system of signs and representations that traverse laterally through a synchronic grid: from the academic article to the policy document and curriculum specifications, from the folk wisdom of the staffroom to the principal's speech at the school assembly, and from the classroom text to student small group and lesson talk (Luke and Luke 1995, p. 364).

One could add that it goes around and back and 'to and fro' again, as discourse is wont to do in the Latin understanding. Discursive models can allow room for examination of the 'roles', 'identities' or subject positions offered for students in education policies, practices, interpretations and their own field navigations. The interest in discourse function in some models also potentially allows for exploration of the use and usefulness of policies and policy position constructions, without conflating these directly with 'reality/practice' in a simplistic fashion. Indeed, complexities in the relationship between policy text, interpretation and practices are inherent in some models. For these reasons, a discursive model of policy can be particularly useful and appropriate to research with key preoccupations around students, multiple stakeholders, subjectivity and power.

However, not all models were considered equally useful for such research. Most commonly, education researchers who explicate their model tend to apply either the work of Gee or some combination of theorists such as Foucault and Fairclough (Rogers et al. 2005). Gee (1990, 1999) distinguishes between ('upper case D') Discourses—cultural language components, ('lower case d') discourse—the linguistic elements used to connect them. Both components work together to maintain construct interactions, yet are saturated by power relations with histories of participation. Gee's model uses an essentially critical framing and asserts that while all discourses are ideological and social, some are valued more than others, and is in this sense well suited to critical analysis based on Marxist, radical feminist, postcolonial and such grounds. However, Gee's framing is not entirely compatible with the post-modern frame of some education research in that it is less congruent with an analysis of power beyond the 'repressive/repressed' model. A model of discourse that allows room for a more complex theory of power and discursive functioning is required in such research.

A particular model of ‘discourse’ increasingly used in education research that fits these needs mostly draws on the work of two theorists: Michel Foucault and Norman Fairclough (according to analysis of education policy research by Mayo 2000; Rogers et al. 2005). As explained above, it is generally accepted within discourse theory and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) traditions that discourse is ‘language use as social practice’, moving to and fro between constructing and reflecting the social world. This model aligns with this broader view of discourse, as do its two key discourse theorists, but draws on key rules framing discourse within Foucault’s ‘Social theory of discourse’ as it evolved in the theorist’s works (Foucault 1969a, 1969b, 1970, 1979, 1980, 1981). Foucault sought to understand, in the poststructuralist sense, the genealogy of constructs that were considered ‘natural’ (in his examination of topics such as authorial creativity,² justice, normality and understanding). He analysed social cultures (around literature, the penal system, Victorian society, the Renaissance) to determine how such constructs are produced within, and produce, power/knowledge relationships. In his understanding of social cultures, ‘orders of discourse’ are the discursive practices in a society or institution and the relationships among them.

In a 1966 anti-humanist Nietzschean archaeology of human sciences (including sociology and psychology), Foucault (1970) particularly shows all eras have specific central conditions of so-called ‘truth’ that comprised what could be expressed as discourse (e.g. culture, science and art). These conditions change in relatively sudden major shifts, from period to period, such that truth and meaning are relative, temporal and contextual productions (Caputo and Yount 2006; Foucault 1972). He added further detail in a 1969 exploration of speech act theory, eschewing structuralist notions of prescriptive language (wherein semantic elements have predetermined meanings preceding their articulation), instead analysing how the ‘statement’ as the basic unit of discourse constitutes a network of rules that are the preconditions for making utterances or propositions meaningful (Foucault 1972). Statements are treated as events that depend on the contextual and interactive conditions in which they emerge and exist within a field of discourse; the meaning of a statement relies more on the succession of statements that precede and follow it than ‘grammatical correctness’.³ He analysed discursive formations comprised of a huge organised dispersion of statement events. Where structuralists search for homogeneity in thinking, Foucault considers differences developed in the discursive field over time and refused to analyse statements outside of their historical context and the discursive formations to which they belong (Jones 1994, p. 155). An important point (although sometimes overlooked in education research) is that while Foucault seeks to understand dominant discourses, he also focuses on expelled and forgotten discourses that do not change the overall discursive formation by entering into cultural hegemony

² The presupposed creative genius of (for example) literary authors — Foucault (1969b) instead saw the ‘author’ as a construction which fulfilled various social functions in valuation of cultural knowledge.

³ Grammatically incorrect statements can still have meaning, grammatically correct statements may nevertheless be meaningless or nonsensical.

(Foucault 1972, 1981; Jones 1994; Mayo 2000). This is imperative because the differences of such alternative discourses from dominant discourses serve to further clarify 'what' hegemony entails.

In addition to these understandings, this model potentially also draws on Foucault's 'Rule of the tactical polyvalence of discourses' (Foucault 1976, p. 100). Thus, it can be said to theorise education policy as 'a multiplicity of discursive elements' rather than a world divided between one dominant discourse and 'the dominated one' (p.100). It therefore accepts that there can exist 'different and even contradictory discourses within the same strategy' and unchanged discourses in 'opposing' strategies' (p.102). Education policy discourses are thus seen as 'tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations' (p.101). So where some research may discuss one or two key dominant discourses in the policy it explores, this modelling allows consideration of not only dominant discourses but also those that may be operant, dormant, challenged and even strongly negated across different policies within the education policy field. In addition, the model does not assume that the same discursive constructions in different policies are necessarily used in the same way. Instead, it is underlined by the possibility that the same constructions (of teachers, of education or other relevant research areas) may potentially be used in different policies in different ways, and even within the one policy (and its processes) in different ways.

Fairclough (1989) builds on (and one could say more cleanly 'organises' and perhaps 'refocuses') Foucault's more erratic work on discourse to create a distinct understanding of discourse as 'social practice', determined by 'sets of conventions associated with social institutions' (p. 17). Following Foucault, Fairclough's interest in discourse focussed on the links between language and power (Fairclough 1989). He suggests any instance where discourse takes place (which he calls a 'discursive event') has three aspects (Fairclough 1992, p. 4). First, text that can be 'read'—including all spoken and written language, visual images such as photographs and diagrams and non-verbal communication embodied in actions (Fairclough 1995, p. 54). Second, there are the discursive processes through which the text is developed and interpreted. This is Foucault's (1972) view of discourse as an 'individualisable group of statements', or the identification of different discourses through text analysis. Third, discourse is social practice or what Foucault (1972) terms 'regulated practice' that takes place within particularised socio-historic contexts. Therefore, the organisations and institutions within any setting shape discourses and vice versa. Fairclough's work thus extends and rearranges Foucault's ideas, but also centres them in a complicated way around texts such that his model lends itself more to textually oriented discourse analyses (TODA) and systematic Critical Discourse Analysis with a primarily contemporary focus⁴ (where Foucault was interested in genealogical and archaeological historical methodologies).

⁴ CDA is a particular method of discourse analysis developed by Fairclough that can be critical or post-structural in orientation, see method for more information.

Fairclough thus offers the threefold model of discourse (Fairclough 1989, p. 25) as manifesting in text, interaction and context that is a useful variation of the model (Fig. 2.2). Within this model, discourse is understood as manifesting in the social conditions that stimulate the production of the education policy, the processes of its production, the education policy itself (texts/images/spoken requirements), the ways in which the education policy is interpreted and practiced, and the context of this implementation. This particular model is useful for research that does not seek to limit the study's engagement constructions within policy to those within the texts themselves, but to include the constructions within social contexts before and after policy texts were developed, and those used in the production and interpretation processes of policy texts. In assessing the usefulness of these constructions of education movements or stakeholder roles, such research can thus explore their usefulness in different areas (such as usefulness in inciting the creation of policy, usefulness in sexuality classes, usefulness in terms of social and structural supports or usefulness as assessed by stakeholders themselves).

Where Foucault looks at the 'statement' within context, Fairclough further breaks down exploration of discourse into exploration of textual features (vocabulary, grammar, textual structures, turn-taking imagery) in conjunction with interactional features and contextual features (Fairclough 1989, 1992, 1995, 1998). All of these features potentially carry experiential value (the knowledge and beliefs being mobilised), relational value (traces of and cues to the social relations being enacted and constructed) and/or expressive values (traces of and cues to the subjects and social identities being enacted and constructed) (Fairclough 1989, p. 93). Analysis of discourse becomes possible through this model by three key processes within Critical Discourse Analysis: **description** of the text, **interpretation** of the relationship between text and interaction, and **explanation** of the relationship between interaction and social context (Fairclough 1989, p. 91). Research can thus examine the 'to and fro' of sexuality education discourses in these three policy aspects: sourcing data

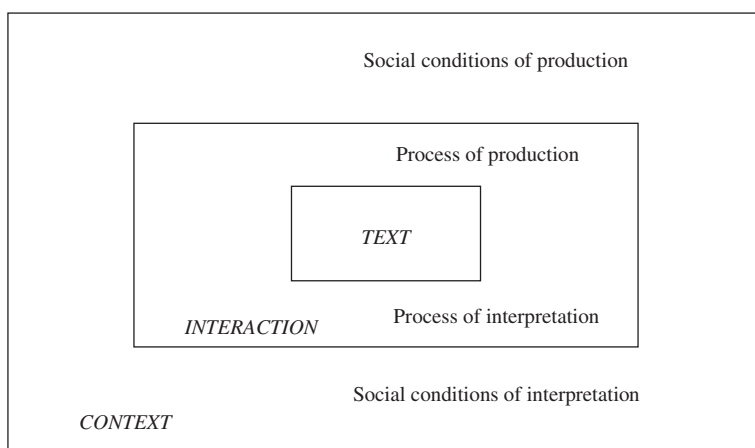


Fig. 2.2 Fairclough's model of discourse as text, interaction and context (Fairclough 1989:25)

from policy documents, but also data pertaining to processes of these documents' production and interpretation, and the surrounding social conditions.

Critiques of this model of discourse can be used to better understand it. Foucault's discourse model has been drawn on by theorists from Fairclough to Deleuze and Butler, and along with Fairclough's work it has been popular with post-structural, post-modern and critical discourse analysts in education research (Mayo 2000; Rogers et al. 2005; Van Loon 2001). While it has been cast as erratically developed even by Foucault (Foucault 1969a),⁵ the main relevant critique is it offers no solutions to 'real world' problems such as class or sex-based struggles (Callewaert 2006; Frank 1989). Manfred Frank provides the key neostructuralist critique (central to some Marxist, feminist and other critiques of the model that rely on the existence of universal structures) of Foucault's assertion that there is nothing outside of discourse, arguing it suggests there is no true reality and offers only chaos (Frank 1989, pp. 183–184). Frank further contends that ordering orders of discourse (through analysis such as in this study) is an attack on order 'as order' that favours disorder, making Foucaultian students enemies of order who can simply be derided as 'against everything' such that their critiques of discourse or the dominant powers are valueless and offer no solutions (Frank 1989, pp.184–187). Yet such critique misunderstands that while Foucault and Fairclough indeed reject a single 'true reality' beyond discourse (even for subjects and situations), they actually don't theorise *any* exteriority to the orders of the discursive field to even constitute Frank's 'chaos'. Plus while all discourses are indeed partial, this does not mean that some cannot be seen as more or less useful (or problematic) than others. Order can be analysed in such research, but is not (and could not be, for theoretical consistency) conceived as extinguishable. However, reordering of the discursive field is possible (and occurs continually), and Fairclough argues that implementation of institutional discourses involves creative extension-through-combination of existing resources, and that there is particularly room for creativity when power struggles and relational changes lead to reordering opportunities (Fairclough 1989, pp. Chs 2–4). Useful directions for such co-construction *can be* considered in this research using this model of education policy, as can the usefulness of discursive constructs from particular perspectives; including the perspective or particular, or multiple, education policy stakeholders.

Therefore, education policy discourses are not only 'found' by researchers within policy texts or within schools, but across sites as varied as the field of education research and academic conferences, within media reports, in casual discussions between parents, at anti-racism rallies and so on. Luke and Luke highlight the complexity of such discourses:

Educational discourse thus can be seen as a system of signs and representations that traverse laterally through a synchronic grid: from the academic article to the policy document and curriculum specifications, from the folk wisdom of the staffroom to the

⁵ Foucault admitted he used discourse sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes particular groups of statements and sometimes as regulated practice, but argued that this only added to its meaning (Foucault 1969a).

principal's speech at the school assembly, and from the classroom text to student small group and lesson talk (Luke and Luke 1995, p. 364).

While it is not the aim of this brief to go into too much detail about any one particular discourse found in any one education policy, some 'recognisable' examples could include the way in which Traditional Christian Discourse or Radical Feminist Discourse may operate within sexuality education policy: each is promoted by specific groups of people; each mobilises a set of ideas about how sexuality education should be viewed; each promotes a distinct model of sexuality and authorised texts; each entails approved classroom activity (moral inculcation or analysis of gender roles); each suggests the school's role in censoring certain aspects of sexuality education; each explores topics such as contraception and homosexuality in a particular way; each characterises the roles of teachers and students (and so on).

Researchers and policy analysts investigating education policies often understand these discourses as placed within a binary opposition, on a scale, or as specifically contextualised by time/place. Unfortunately, it seems the politics of the particular education research/researcher often biases these exemplars, and limit the range of discourses they 'find' (for example within discursively complex policy they may only 'see' one key discourse, a conservative range of discourses, or one or two conservative discourses 'versus' a progressive discourse). This phenomenon reflects a wider trend of researcher bias in education policy research (Holmes and Crossley 2004). Yet for Foucault's 'tactical polyvalence of discourses' it might be conceivable for a Christian education system to mobilise both Traditional Christian Discourse and Radical Feminist Discourse (used as earlier examples) within its sexuality education policy, along with a variety of other seemingly paradoxical discourses, all functioning as tactics in achieving various goals.

The range of analysis approaches that could be applied to education policy is broad. The most suitable approach for qualitative analysis varies depending on the researcher's focus, and Perakyla gives some examples of textual analysis that may be appropriate here including informal approaches, semiotic analysis, discourse analysis, discursive psychology, critical discourse analysis, conversation analysis, historical discourse analysis and membership categorisation analysis (Perakyla 2005, pp. 870–875). Where discourse analysis needs to be qualitative, illuminative and historical, policy science needs to help make sense of the interactions of ideology with political and economic circumstance for policy makers. This seems a different matter entirely, but there is an overlapping interest in contextual political forces and their archetypes.

Keywords

Discourse
Hegemony
Text, interaction and context
Tactical Polyvalence of discourses

Tutorial and Field Activities

1. Choose an education policy topic area that is currently featured a lot in your local news.
2. Collect five articles, news clips or blog posts on the area (try to choose recent examples where possible).
3. What sorts of issues are commonly debated?
4. What are some opinions commonly held in this area?
5. What are some discourses (sets of beliefs or perspectives) in this area that could group sets of opinions together? For example, there may be a very distinct religious discourse often used, there may be very distinct social justice views, there may be arguments about ‘quality’ repeatedly being made etc.
6. Is there a dominant or traditional (hegemonic) discourse? Is it being asserted or challenged in the articles?
7. Do the articles sometimes draw on a few discourses in different ways?
8. Are the perspectives in the articles reflected in policy documents in this area?
9. What contextual factors, incidents or problems may have shaped the development of existing policies (or the lack of policies) in this area? What are some ways you could find out for a research project (what data sources are there, what methods could be used)?
10. In what situations could policy (or the lack of policy) in this area be used, and by whom? How could this implementation/practice be researched (what data sources are there, what methods could be used)?
11. How might these people using the policy be influenced by the key debates and discourses in this area? How could this be researched?
12. Would this policy fit some schooling contexts better than others? How could this be researched?

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Chapter 3

Policy Frameworks and Taxonomies: Gaps Within Research

Accepting that there are a variety of values and education discourses potentially at work within any education policy (or policies), and a variety of ways we can analyse them, how can we best understand them? What conceptual framing is appropriate, or holds value across policy types and constructions? Is there a framing or paradigmatic exemplar that can work across methodologies and analysis types? One way of answering this question is by looking at what a variety of analyses consistently reveal or discuss. Education policy analysis often reveals the broader political education goals and strategies behind the policy or policies under investigation. This is particularly true in the case of methodological approaches such as discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, historical discourse analysis and genealogy. Research into single policy documents usually reveals the operation of one paradigm or paradigmatic ‘orientation’ to education. For example, Heck uncovered a ‘liberal’ or neo-liberal paradigm within the Australian Discovering Democracy framework through a Critical Discourse Analysis (Heck 2003). However, it is important to note that this research did not consider other paradigms in its conceptual framing, and the Civic Republican Citizenship Discourse she describes as within this liberal paradigm is in other broader analyses more correctly cast as ‘conservative’ (Jones 2009). Rigour and reproducibility become questionable when the same policy is thus described as ‘liberal’, ‘neo-liberal’ or ‘conservative’ within different analyses. Similarly, Harvey (2006) uncovers ‘neoliberalism’ and an economic focus in tertiary education policy, although it is important to again outline that neo-liberalism is not explored in the full context of alternative orientations; underlying the sense that researchers will find ‘what they are looking for’ paradigmatically (where it is present) and overlook what they are not looking for.

Some research observing policy changes over time can reveal more than one paradigm. For example, Cheng discusses a paradigm shift in Asian policy and in doing so uncovers two paradigms: ‘a resource-based top-down approach’ which largely ignored school needs, and ‘a school-based approach’ that recognises the importance of institutional level planning and management (Cheng 2000, 2002). Similarly, Lloyd and Payne (2003) describe a Fordist versus post-Fordist shift from a labour-based to a knowledge-based economy within policy. However, the paradigm of the policy is often reflected on quite briefly and only within the results section of such reports. Researchers analysing sex education policy often describe a dichotomy between conservative sexuality education and a more liberal approach based more

on scientific facts (Blair and Monk 2009; Lennerhed 2009; Swain et al. 2004). In such descriptions, the focus is on showing the ‘improvements’ in factual knowledge over time, although this understanding of improvement is certainly values-laden and can be an unexamined bias within the research.

In their analyses of education policy research, Bell and Stevenson (2006) outline three key paradigmatic ‘themes’: the framing of education in terms of ‘economic utility and human capital’, a frame that explores ‘accountability, school autonomy and parental choice’ and the framing of education in terms of ‘citizenship and social justice with a sub-theme of cultural diversity’. Similarly, Higgs (2010) outlines differences across paradigms for considering professional education. She identified the empirico-analytical paradigm (in which learning and research involves acquiring received objective truth and an objective external reality is accepted); the interpretive paradigm (in which learning and research involves a search for understanding and meaning making using narrative reasoning to uncover practical, subjective knowledge about reality as it is experienced) and the critical paradigm (in which learning is the pursuit of empowerment and change through doing and becoming, and collaboratively determined socio-cultural realities are accepted). While each of these sets of three paradigms seem reasonably well argued, they loosely translate into the more simply termed ‘conservative, liberal and critical’ orientations¹ to education as outlined by Kemmis et al. (1983). The value in using these terms in policy analysis, along with the expanded and fourth orientation (the post-modern orientation) outlined below, is that these terms are simpler and translate accurately across policy genres, movements and topics. They also link cohesively with education research paradigms in a manner that reveals how researchers’ theoretical and/or methodological bias can directly lead to inaccurate or divergent analysis of policies. They are also currently generally in use in the media and by stakeholders (education providers, administrators, teachers, parents and so on) in their assessment of education policy moves and strategies (in a way that terms such as empirico-analytical certainly are not, and likely never will be). If qualitative aspects of policy analysis are to become more reportable—those aspects deeper and more explanatory than the ‘quick shocking stats’ commonly used in media reports on education or largely quantitative executive summaries often given to government bodies—the language in which such analyses are packaged needs to speak to a more general audience by drawing on terms with which they have some prior familiarity.

This conceptual brief thus aims to draw out, pull together and further develop this ‘Four Orientations to Education’ taxonomic framework of policy, which lies beneath much policy analysis (yet is rarely used directly, with accuracy or in much detail. The goal is to help researchers—particularly student researchers learning about education policy perhaps for the first time through course work or research programs—to contribute to improving the clarity of analysis, reporting and discussion in the field of education policy research. The text will also shed further light on what could constitute

¹ The term ‘orientation’ here is used to describe to an overarching perspective amalgamating beliefs about the social purposes, social roles, social practices and purposes of education.

‘appropriate conceptual framings’ for policy research and project work, and examples are used throughout to show how it can be applicable to several policy analyses.

Keywords

Policy analysis
Conceptual framework

Tutorial and Field Activities

1. Collect three research articles for one education policy or policy area.
2. What words do the researchers use to describe the policies?
3. Do these terms provide useful explanations? Could a general audience understand them?
4. How does this limit (or expand) the value of their critique?
5. What do the researchers study—e.g. policy documents, specific individuals or groups of people related to the policy area, actions and processes related to the policy area, or contexts related to the policy area (schools, media, public debate, discourses)?
6. What perception of policy is in each article—e.g. policy as a text/document only, policy as values-laden actions, policy as processes including implementation, or policy as having lots of aspects (text/interaction/context)?
7. Did the perceptions of policy the researchers used limit (or expand) the methods they used to explore it?
8. Do the researchers provide quantitative data (statistics, numbers, graphs of numeric data) or qualitative data (interviews, quotes, opinions, analysis of words or discourses, case studies, descriptions)?
9. Who might be interested in this data—e.g. school staff, the public, media, policy makers, politicians? Would such people find this data easy to understand and respond to, or is the discussion confusing?
10. Do any researchers take a strong position for or against a particular approach to this policy area? Do they have an explicit name for this approach? Do any give an explicit name for their position/bias?

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Chapter 4

The Four Orientations to Education Framework

The science historian Thomas Kuhn used the word '*paradigm*' to refer to the set of practices that define a scientific discipline during a particular period of time, and over time began using the word 'exemplar' to discuss particular normative models of sciences. Kuhn defines a scientific paradigm as a widely recognised approach to science that, for a time, provides model problems and solutions for the research community (Kuhn 1996). It is therefore a philosophy behind science approaches. The French historian Mattie Dogan (2001) argues against the idea that paradigms as framed in Kuhn's work can apply to the social sciences, including sociology, political anthropology and political science. He argues that this is because of a deliberate mutual ignorance between scholars and a range of schools in these disciplines. In applying the concept of paradigms to education, its meaning has been expanded to include broader sociological understandings as a set of ways of viewing reality or limits and understandings around acceptable research-based approaches and education approaches. Yet ironically, both Kuhn and Dogan's historical approaches miss both the historical and conceptual trends behind social science research (including their own liberal-progressive work), which can indeed be understood to have broad groupings (across sub-disciplines such as history or education) of structures motivating research, research programmes and conceptions of knowledge.

Foucault's anti-humanist archeology of human sciences from sociology and psychology through to sex education, showed that all eras, histories and research programmes have specific central conditions of so-called 'truth' (Foucault 1969a, b, 1970, 1979, 1980, 1981). These conditions change in relatively sudden major shifts, from period to period, such that truth and meaning are relative, temporal and contextual productions (Caputo and Yount 2006; Foucault 1972). Foucault analysed the way we talk about and research histories of education and educational discursive formations comprising a vast organised dispersion of statement events in particular paradigms. Such paradigms have been tied to concepts of learning. For example, Gilbert and Hoeppe (2004) agree that any curriculum in any school is a selection from a particular culture, and the values of that culture are central to understanding and participating in it (p. 93). Therefore, education is, in itself, a valuing process. Higgs' (2010) three educational research and practice paradigms (mentioned in the previous section) evidenced different views of

knowledge, research and learning. These three ideas towards educational research paradigms were strong as concepts, but disconcertingly named and poorly explained, and overlooking more recent research approaches. The Higgs framework has capitalised on other conceptions, was only recently published and has not been widely used, despite having some merit. Perhaps her discussion of it has also unfortunately been less ‘user-friendly’ in a way that might prevent her model being understood and applied by research students particularly.

These sorts of paradigms translate loosely into earlier models of ‘orientations to education’ which actually present ideas from older and more fundamental philosophies in education that warrant re-visiting and revision in light of newer appropriations. In the 1980s, the influential booklet *Orientations to Curriculum* (Kemmis et al. 1983) proposed three particular ‘education orientations’ that have been more widely cited than Higgs’s framework: vocational neo-classical, liberal-progressive and socially critical. Each can be seen as a different valuing process, based on different beliefs about the aim of education, and aligning with different pedagogical approaches. Hoeppe and McDonald discuss these three orientations as they apply to education and values, shortening them to ‘conservative, liberal and critical’ (Gilbert 2004, pp. 24–26). In discussing ideological orientations to the school subject area of history, *Inquiry 1: a source-based approach to modern history* (Hoeppe et al. 1996), Hoeppe et al. identify an additional fourth category; ‘post-modern’ (pp. 197–214). The post-modern orientation is now a widely acknowledged and commonly used term (Bryson and De Castell 1993; Morton and Zavarzadeh 1991). This orientation was included in the author’s summaries of how the four education orientations were used in a previous study of values in education discourses (Jones 2007, 2009) (outlined in Table 4.1). This section describes the four orientations but considers their application to education policy for the first time. It asks: what is their application to education policy making; how do they manifest in policy implementation; and what is their ideal policy impact? It includes some broad examples of its application to specific education policy movements in areas such as history and sexuality education. However, it must be noted that the framework is a construct, as are the perspectives, and is necessarily partial in its discussion of impacts in that combinations of the perspectives and approaches are often in use. The point of the framework is to draw them out for consideration conceptually, rather than to suggest that theory and practice always align with clean lines. Indeed, in application the framework is incredibly flexible, and discussion of this flexibility follows on.

Keywords

Paradigm
Orientation to education

Table 4.1 Orientations to education

Orientation:	Conservative	Liberal	Critical	Post-modern
Approximate time of origin in modern education	Since Pre-1960s	Since 1960s	Since 1970s	Since 1990s
Belief about education	Education should maintain the status quo. It should identify, describe and reinforce the prevailing values, beliefs and practices of society, and 'transmit' them to students.	Education develops the individual potential of all students, rewarding achievement and encouraging competitive activity. It is based on developing knowledge and skills, especially inquiry and decision-making skills. Neo-liberal: Education choice and service for the individual's self-interest should not be hindered by the state's self-interest.	Education can help create a 'better' society/ reality challenging the status quo by encouraging students to identify values and practices that are unjust or unsustainable, to propose alternatives redressing broader marginalisation, and to take appropriate action to begin bringing those alternatives to fruition.	Education can demystify 'truth'/'reality' and problematise knowledge. Theories of the social are explored—such as the hegemony (or discursive assumptions of a time or culture) are revealed, allowing new possibilities and conceptual play.
Goal of Educators	To maintain social stability and protect the existing interests of various groups in society.	To promote individual excellence and social progress, and reward students according to their performance.	To bring about a more peaceful, just and sustainable world through students' actions.	To develop in students a critical oppositional position in relation to the dominant order, self-reflexivity and awareness of partiality.

(continued)

Table 4.1 (continued)

Orientation:	Conservative	Liberal	Critical	Post-modern
Role of Students in Shaping Curriculum	Students leave unquestioned the dominant values and practices of society.	Students identify aspects of society in need of reform, but leave untouched questions of radical change to beliefs or practices.	Students ask probing questions about the most deep-seated values and assumptions in society.	Students can both de-construct and co-construct values, as all knowledge is seen as constructed and relational. Students are placed in an oppositional subject position through which they can interrogate reality and intervene in its reconstitution.
Classroom Pedagogical Practice of the Teacher	Characterised by the undisputed authority of the teacher, the relative passivity of the students and the unproblematic transmission of authorised knowledge.	Characterised by the teacher's role as leader and facilitator, active inquiry by students, and an emphasis on understanding the reasons for social phenomena.	Characterised by more democratic relations between teacher and students, high levels of collaboration, learning that involves ideological critique.	Characterised by the teacher's role as de-constructor and facilitator, approach favours the teaching of multiple perspectives and co-creation of knowledge.

Revised from Jones 2009 to include neo-conservative and neo-liberal perspectives

Tutorial and Field Activities

1. Read the row of descriptions for ‘Belief About Education’ in Table 4.1. Which set of beliefs about the purpose of education most closely match your own? The orientation for this set (or sets) of beliefs could be a bias to be aware of in your work as an educator or a researcher (or both).
2. Compare with classmates or a friend: which belief about education(s) do they agree with most?
3. Think about your own education experiences. Read through Table 4.1, paying particular attention to the bottom row of descriptions about ‘classroom pedagogical practice of the teacher’. In your experience, which orientation to education do your teachers mainly take? Did this impact your beliefs about education now?
4. Compare with classmates or a friend: which types of classroom(s) did they experience? Did this impact their beliefs about education now?
5. Collect three research articles for one education policy or policy area.
6. Do these researchers describe the research orientation behind their methodology well? For example, the researchers may use any of the following words: paradigm, conservative, traditional, liberal, neo-liberal, critical, emancipatory, post-modern, queer, feminist or post-structuralist (or similar words). They may give definitions of these words, or they may assume the reader knows what the term means.
7. Do you think the researchers intentionally reveal their researcher bias (their beliefs about how education ‘should be’)? Or do they see this perspective simply as ‘the truth’?
8. Do the researchers study policy documents, specific individuals or groups of people related to the policy area, actions and processes related to the policy area, or contexts related to the policy area (schools, media, public debate, discourses)?
9. Do the researchers treat policy as a text/document only, values-laden actions or positions, processes including implementation or more broadly as having lots of aspects (text/interaction/context)?
10. How does this limit (or expand) the methods they can use to explore it?
11. Do the researchers provide data about the policy area that would be easy for the people most likely to need it (whether teachers, parents, policy makers or students for example) to understand?
12. Do any researchers take a strong position for or against a particular approach to this policy? Do they have an explicit name for this approach?

4.1 Conservative

4.1.1 Education Orientation Ideals

While it still manifests throughout the field of education today, the conservative orientation to education strongly reigned prior to the 1960s in modern history. Researchers have discussed the dominance of this orientation in education as a field generally (Kemmis et al. 1983; Ladson-Billings 1998); in education policies produced in places such as Singapore, England, South Africa and the US as tied to particular administrations (Bee Bee 2001; Deacon et al. 2010; Gillborn 2005; Haffner 1992; Irvine 2002); and in particular policies such as the *Australian National Framework for Values Education in Schools* (Jones 2009). Within this orientation, schools and teachers take an authoritarian approach and inculcate students with the dominant values, beliefs and practices of the time. Students are merely passive recipients of this knowledge and constructed as the ‘empty vessel’ or ‘blank slate’ to be filled with knowledge, a perspective in use in seventeenth and eighteenth century educational philosophers John Locke and Jean-Jacque Rousseau’s work on human learning and ‘*tabula rasa*’ (Bell 1979; Bennett 1971). Education is understood as a preparation for work (Kemmis et al. 1983). Thus, the education discourses within policies stemming from this orientation focus on shaping students to fit current social, civic, religious and vocational conventions. Classroom pedagogy is seen as ideally characterised by the undisputed authority of the teacher and the unproblematic transmission of authorised knowledge. Methods include lectures or sermons, stories, viewing of texts, enforcing of behavioural rules and pledges.

4.1.2 Education Policy Production

A key belief recurring throughout the various education discourses stemming from this orientation centre is that education should maintain—or further strengthen—the status quo. This leads to a goal within policy making and policy processes of maintaining social stability and protecting the existing interests of dominant groups in society (Irvine 2002). There is also utilitarian strand in political economy and a prescriptive sense of what is morally right or wrong (Kenyon 2007), true or otherwise ‘best’ within education. Policy can be conceived as a problem-solving tool designed to rectify particular issue(s) of concern (Dale 1989). Policy-making processes may be perceived as centred around leadership and following the top-down model; with the production of sweeping, prescriptive policies ‘from above’ (Dale 1989; Kenyon 2007). There can be use of arms-length or quasi-autonomous third-party agencies or Quangos¹ in this process (Hodgson and Spours 2006; Kenyon 2007), although these ‘fall under’ the leadership body in the power dynamic and ultimately enhance the sense of policy centralisation. There is a general distrust of localised governance or

¹ Quasi-autonomous national government organisations or funding agencies.

more democratic means of policy making (Kenyon 2007), and thus moves towards nationalisation of previously state-controlled curricula or policies can indicate conservative underpinnings. The sort of policy research characteristically drawn upon in the policy-making processes include leadership-funded studies and inquiries directly designed to assist policy makers, and education research that aims at solving a problem within schools or society as perceived by the status quo/education leadership through the best policy/best systemised policy into practice translation (Ozga 2000; Simons et al. 2009). Such research may apply positivist frames or ‘grand narratives’.

4.1.3 Education Policy Processes in Practice

Policy implementation processes are standardised and their application can be monitored, sometimes with a ‘pass/fail’ approach wherein schools may be shut down for not meeting set benchmarks (despite contextual issues that may make these benchmarks less appropriate) (Gillborn 2005). There can be confusion across education policy research created by some researchers’ conflation of conservative tenants emphasising these ‘standard practice’ ideals with the liberal orientation’s emphasis on market competitiveness and ‘best practice’; yet in the conservative orientation the emphasis is more on *maintaining internal strengths and traditions* rather than on improving practice in relation to competitors or externally determined standards. Within this approach, there can be an assumed hierarchy of policy functionaries imposing the authority and power of the policy from above—from the government/church leadership/institution initiating the policy through to the school leadership and teaching/other staff and students (Raab 1994). Funding allocations, resource-development and so on are also distributed ‘from above’ in this manner. The desired policy impact is to further ingrain existing dominant education/school order and cultures. Key social institutions are ideally strengthened.

4.1.4 Neo-conservative

This exemplar includes neo-conservatism within the conservative orientation, but notes that education researchers should differentiate it from more generally ‘emergent’ conservative perspectives through particularising its retrospective focus. For example, Apple describes neo-conservatism as guided by an equitable vision of the conservative ‘strong state’, but with a goal of ‘returning to’ this ideal within a romanticised view of the past or previously established strong states (where people ‘knew their place’ within the ‘natural order’ and ‘real knowledge/morality’ based on patriarchal Western structures reigned supreme) through ‘residual’ ideological and discursive forms (Apple 1998, p. 12). Important to this strand of the conservative orientation is the fear of the ‘other’ and concepts of ‘cultural pollution’—the belief that (for example) student bodies, values curricula, history or language taught within schools (and as treated in society more generally) have become polluted by the inclusion of migrants, bilingualism or multiple cultural and political positions

(Apple 1998, p. 13). The aims of returning to idealised ‘original’ policy and curricula positions and within a systematically streamlined national curricula and testing structure (and far greater policing of teacher training and autonomy) often overlooks or mystifies the inherent social contentions and inconsistencies around these positions historically (Apple 1990, 1998; Levine 1996), as well as the often more localised curricula of schools in the relatively fragmented nations of the past. For this reason, the neo-conservative push is often compromised by the necessity of at least in part recognising ‘the contributions of the other’ and promoting ‘voluntary’ national standards where strong national control of education bodies are lacking (Apple 1993, 1998).

4.1.5 Examples

A general example of conservative education is the focus on ‘reading, riting and rithmetic’ requirements behind academic tests within British Commonwealth countries in early modern history, which required the student to recall and cite information without any critical treatment of it, and limited education to the basic skills needed to enter the workforce. Neo-conservative moves in educational administrative and organisational policies and an increasing emphasis on basic skills could particularly be found from the mid-1990s in policy changes in British Columbia and Ontario, Canada. During this period the British Columbian government particularly pushed to amalgamate school districts into large units that would take over administrative functions, reducing the size of government and its redistributive functions. Larry Kuehn argued policies eliminating or reducing services offered on a broad basis in these districts during the 1990s had little negative impact ‘on those at the top of the income levels’, but a lot of negative impact on ‘those at the bottom, and often on those in the middle’ (in Kuehn et al. 2006, p. 21). A similar neo-conservative return to a mainstreamed curriculum and workforce preparation was privileged within England’s 2005 *White Paper* education policy document (House of Commons 2005). The policy makes compulsory a set curriculum for all students focussed on ‘work-related learning’ and skills sets, particularly English, maths, science, citizenship and vocational/workplace skills and experiences (p. 71). In typical neo-conservative fashion there is no requirement to study the arts, humanities, social sciences or any of the many languages other than English. This was justified with the argument that workers needed basic literacy, numeracy and some vocational skills; other necessary skills were to be learnt most economically in the workplace. From 14 years of age, students who achieved lower test scores were to be moved into part-time schooling, vocational training and part-time work. Richard Hatcher and Bill Anderson argued that students from poorer and diverse cultural backgrounds were overwhelmingly targeted for such programmes and labelled this policy ‘the educational equivalent of the national minimum wage (...) since that is what it will lead to for many’ (in Kuehn et al. 2006, p. 23).

Examples of conservative moves in a more specific curriculum area include the promotion of non-approach and sexual morality discourses within sexuality education across a range of schooling contexts (the example of sexuality education as a

curriculum-specific policy area is used throughout the examples section given in each orientation, as it draws on the author's key research area and is quite a simple field for readers from diverse curriculum specialisations to understand). The non-approach discourse functions as an anti-pedagogy preventing any discussion of sexuality within schools, seeing it as the appropriate domain of an exterior authority (such as the church or parents), with proponents in 1980s America including education historian Diane Ravitch and anti-abortionist James Ford (Moran 2000, p. 204). Sexuality outside the confines of heterosexual marriage is negated (Haffner 1992, pp. vii–viii; Irvine 2002, p. 7). Sexual Morality discourse endorses asceticism (self-disciplined renunciation of bodily pleasures) based on body-mind and flesh-spirit dichotomies found in the particular religious institution(s) promoting it (Carlson 1992). Both these discourses are active in some American schools where teachers are forbidden from even uttering the word 'homosexual' (Earls et al. 1992; Elia 2005), or in some Australian Catholic sexuality education policy (Catholic Education Office Melbourne 2001) which negates teaching on pleasure, safe sex or autonomous decision-making.

In American sexuality education neo-conservatism is expressed in Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage education discourse, linked to the 1981 Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) federal law (or 'Chastity Act'). This is in one sense a more secular-friendly version of the conservative sexuality education discourses discussed, containing a tactical compromise on the social expectation of school provision of *some form* of sex education. The former dominance of (more liberal) comprehensive sexuality education discourse was 'almost entirely supplanted' with Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage messages in schools in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Elia 2005, p. 786), linked to increased government-led policy and programming tied to the Bush Administration. Despite decreased support of this discourse from other advocates (Greslé-Favier 2010; Gusrang and Cheng 2010), the act limited funding to most programmes around abortion and mandated Abstinence Education and units promoting 'self-discipline' in the pedagogy it did support (Moran 2000, p. 204). Another example of neo-conservatism in education is the well-documented push in Australian history education (under the Howard Government) to privilege historians such as Geoffrey Norman Blainey and a return to 'the old history curriculum' (Beams 2004; Gillborn 2005; MacIntyre and Clark 2003). This version saw Australia's colonisation by Britain in terms of a story of progress and achievement, against 'attacks' from revisionists considering indigenous perspectives.

Keywords

Conservative/traditional
 Vocational
 Top-down
 Centralisation
 Neo-conservative
 Retrospective

Tutorial and Field Activities

1. What are some of the benefits of mainly viewing education as preparation for work?
2. What are some of the problems of mainly viewing education as preparation for work?
3. What are some of the benefits of teaching students the dominant values in society?
4. What are some of the problems of teaching students the dominant values in society?
5. What are some of the benefits of top-down, centralised leadership?
6. What are some of the problems of top-down, centralised leadership?
7. Can you name an educational body or institution that seems to have a strong ‘top-down’ or centralised leadership?
8. Is there a strong focus in any particular part of the education field in your country (nationally, in states/districts, particular independent systems or schools) on vocational/job outcomes for students? Try to find a policy text example—perhaps a national or sector-specific policy document, a quote by someone in the media, or some text from a school website or school diary that supports your argument.
9. Is there a strong focus in any particular part of the education field in your country on teaching young people traditional values? Try to find a policy text example that supports your argument.
10. Look at some education blogs, discussion boards or articles. Can you find any examples of neo-conservatism where the writer wishes schools would stop trying to adapt to student diversity, or return to a traditional way of doing things?

4.2 Liberal

4.2.1 Education Orientation Ideals

The liberal orientation was first popularised in education policy in the 1960s (Kemmis et al. 1983). The initial rise of liberalism within education policy in the West has been widely acknowledged by researchers (Ball et al. 2000; Fraser 1993; Giroux 1993; Olssen and Peters 2005; Weiler 1993; Youdell 2004). It has been linked to ‘human capital theory’ and the shift in post-industrial societies where preparation for a single career has been replaced by multifarious ‘upskilling’ of individuals to allow for a competitive, flexible and insecure workforce (Bauman 2005; Beck 1992; Francis 2006). Trends of raising educational standards and the marketisation of education have spread from the US internationally, having an impact on education

policy in Britain, Canada, Australia and other countries (Ball et al. 2000; Fleming 1991; Francis 2006; Gill 2008; Youdell 2004). Within this orientation, schools and teachers act as facilitators of students' development of knowledge and skills; particularly relating to academic inquiry and personal decision-making (Jones 2009). This orientation is concerned with preparing the 'whole' student for 'life' rather than simply for employment (Beck 1992; Kemmis et al. 1983; Youdell 2004). Thus, as in the framings of educational theorists such as John Dewey and Joseph Schwab, in the liberal orientation schools and lessons are ideally focussed on nurturing students' abilities to choose their own beliefs and values, as well as their intellectual, emotional, social and other living skills (Schwab 1978). Whitehead (1949) particularly warned against forcing 'inert ideas' on students that did not inspire their hearts or minds; liberal education embraces engagement of the affective and intellectual domains. Classroom pedagogy is characterised by democratic settings where the teacher's position is as a facilitator, active inquiry by students and an emphasis on understanding the reasons for social phenomena. While authority is recognised to some extent, an element of authority in this orientation of policy shifts to the individual (e.g. the particular teacher or student) (Bauman 2005; DuGay 1996; Rose 1999), who may be informed and influenced by institutions (such as the state, religious bodies, scientific organisations) and cultural/political theories; but makes their own choices. Students can identify aspects of society in need of reform, but leave untouched questions of radical change to beliefs or practices. Methods include class discussion, writing personal reflections, expression of feelings and opinions, debates, role-play, testing knowledge and practicing skills.

4.2.2 Education Policy Production

Key beliefs about education found in liberal discourses are that education should develop the individual potential of all students, achievement should be rewarded and competition should be encouraged. Education is also understood as based on developing knowledge and skills, especially inquiry and decision-making skills. This leads educators to a goal of promoting individual excellence, happiness and progress, whilst rewarding students according to their performance. Policy-making processes may be perceived as generally leadership-initiated but also further developed and impacted upon across implementation processes and revision/adaptation processes; with policies sometimes designed to be more open to different options and choices (by schools, teachers and communities). Parents and communities in particular are seen as greater stakeholders in the policy process, and sometimes as consumers/clients of the 'education policy product' (Giroux 1993; Weiler 1993). The sort of policy research characteristically drawn upon can therefore apply constructivist, social constructivist or more economy-based frames considering the marketisation and competitiveness of schooling (Ozga 2000). There may be studies on parent/community consensus/consultation about draft policy elements, testing and evaluation of strategies, ranking of best practice and investigation of creative alternatives. Studies used to support

the policy may look at variation in school-specific/teacher-specific interpretations of, attitudes to or choices regarding policy. There may also be comparisons of a variety of approaches to see which produce measurably ‘better’ outcomes, or comparative ranking against international standards.

4.2.3 Education Policy Processes in Practice

Policy implementation processes are competitively standardised although while ‘best practice models’ may be offered, a variety of options may be ranked as ‘good’ or ‘acceptable’ practice. Competitively creative attempts at excellence are encouraged, although achievement can be narrowly defined in an academic sense to mean ‘higher exam marks’ within a system of rigorous testing (Francis 2006; Mahony 1998). ‘Excellence’ in implementation is highly valued and may even be rewarded. It may garner greater funding, awards or become publicly hailed as a ‘best practice’ example. Within this approach, there is greater recognition of how the authority and power of the policy is affected by the agency of policy functionaries and stakeholders (Raab 1994). However, the locating of achievement or underachievement within individuals rather than within social structures by neo-liberal policy movements can mean that individual students/staff/schools can be ‘problematised rather than valorised’ (Francis 2006, p. 187); broader social issues affecting achievement can be overlooked. Funding allocations may be tied to the choice to implement optional aspects of policy, or to engage in the use of certain resources or even resource-development. The desired policy impact is a measurable achievement for betterment of the individual’s school experience, increased school competitiveness (at individual, state or even international level) and increased public/consumer satisfaction with schools. The democratic rights and freedoms of ‘the individual’ are ideally strengthened (Rose 1999), with individuals becoming ‘entrepreneurs of the self’ (DuGay 1996).

4.2.4 Neo-liberal

This exemplar includes neo-liberalism within the liberal orientation, but notes that education researchers should differentiate it from more general ‘progressive’ and ‘Victorian’ liberal perspectives with their assumption of a clearer separation of the state and the autonomous individual (and insistence on the pre-availability of choice) (Burchell 1993), through particularising its purported ‘weak state’ (Apple 1998, p. 6) described as intentionally ‘positive’ by neo-liberal theorists such as Buchanan in trying to engineer the market for efficiency purposes. Simply put, neo-liberal agendas centre on further separating (what they see as the overly merged) state and citizen as a pre-condition for greater choice. While as in neo-conservatism there can be the wish to ‘get back to (*here, the greater separation of*) earlier times’, it is based more in an emergent ideological assemblage (Apple 1998) focussed

on choice ideals yet to be achieved. Deriving from public choice theory, the neo-liberal framing sees bureaucratic control as necessarily peppered with inefficiencies caused by the self-interest of bureaucrats (Buchanan 1978). Yet such self-interest is argued as a potentially positive force if properly harnessed, as with within the free market where the self-interest of consumers of the education product can be freely explored in a way that stimulates the competitiveness of autonomous schools (leading to school improvements) and maximises profits (Chubb and Moe 1990; Gordon and Whitty 1997). Education is seen as, for the most part, a ‘natural’ private good that should be marketised (Marginson 1997, 2007); despite its potential for national and even global public goods and outcomes (Marginson 2007). The neo-liberal project thus pushes the decentralisation of control to ‘self-managing schools competing in the market-place’ (Gordon and Whitty 1997, p. 456), urging public schools to mimic the private sector. Thus, knowledge is a tool in the individual’s desire to compete and part of human capital (Olssen et al. 2004). It could be tempting to position neo-liberalism within the ‘critical’ orientation because it speaks to an economising discourse which has colonised education policy. However, it is necessarily cast as liberal because it problematises education policy through the potential democratic interests of the individual (Marginson 2007), rather than aiming at revolutionary structural changes across all education systems redressing broader social inequalities. Equality in the neo-liberal orientation is equality of opportunity (for the pursuit of competitive excellence in the liberal sense) not of outcome (in the critical sense).

4.2.5 Examples

A general example of liberal education could be seen in the education policies of the Whitlam government during the 1970s and 1980s in Australia, where there was free education and higher education for all (evidencing equal opportunities for individuals) and the arts, humanities and affective elements of education generally became increasingly encouraged, along with the sense that education ‘bettered the individual’ broadly rather than as an employee. Australia’s National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an example of a neo-liberal policy return from the later Rudd-Gillard Labor Government that was implemented from 2008, and particularly emphasised the construction of education as a marketable good. NAPLAN required standardised basic skills tests administered to all Australian students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9. The tests were introduced alongside the My School programme (www.myschool.edu.au), which ranked test results from Australian schools on a publicly available website to encourage academic competitiveness and educational ‘choice’ for parents (who were framed as consumers of the education products of schools). NAPLAN and the My Schools site have been famously unpopular with educators, and academics critique the framework way they model public goods on market transactions, and claim this fosters ‘better’ education (Redden and Remy 2012). Raewyn Connell also notes a general

move away from support for teaching to diverse students' needs that coincided with such neo-liberal changes in Australian education, stating:

The highly innovative Disadvantaged Schools Program, supporting school-based programmes since its foundation in the 1970s, was first narrowed to a 'literacy' agenda, and has now been closed down as a national programme. 'Multiculturalism,' once a banner of openness and inclusion in our Anglo-dominated monolingual education system, is now officially disapproved (in Kuehn et al. 2006, p. 24).

Academics also claimed the changes were a competitive response to the Bush Administration's *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (United States Congress 2002) in the United States, which similarly required standards-based basic skills testing in particular grades (tied to federal funding) and aimed to improve individual academic competitiveness. This US Act even encouraged students to transfer to a better public school within their public school district, if the school they attended repeatedly ranked poorly.

Examples of liberal moves in the UK can particularly be seen in educational efforts to empower individual students to protect their self-interests in terms of health. Liberal sexuality education movements mobilising Sexual Risk discourse have arisen at various points: the 1930s–1940s war on venereal disease (Carlson 1992; Moran 2000), or in the 1980 in response to AIDS epidemics (Moran 2000, p. 205). Sexual Risk has particularly dominated sexuality education in Britain and Wales since the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act (Blair and Monk 2009). This discourse considers sexuality in terms of dangers to the individual (disease, pregnancy, emotional hurt) and the choices available to them in managing such risks (from contraception through to abstaining from certain acts). A key example of a neo-liberal move in education is Thatcher's 1980 'Assisted Places Scheme', which enabled academically able children of limited financial means to attend private schools, both furthering the privatisation agenda and demonstrating how it is aimed at benefiting the few rather than the many (Power and Whitty 1999). This scheme particularly privileged those who were most intellectually competitive, providing them an 'equal opportunity' within the typically neo-liberal pursuit of (unequal) excellence.

Keywords

Liberal/progressive
Choice
Measurable outcomes
Quality
Best-practice
Achievement
Competitive
Democratic
Neo-liberal

Separation of individual and state Privatisation

Tutorial and Field Activities

1. How can education be a means to up-skilling individuals for their whole lives, not just work?
2. What are some of the problems of using education to up-skill individuals for life, not just work?
3. What are some of the benefits of offering parents and students lots of choices in educational provisions?
4. What are some of the problems of offering parents and students lots of choices in educational provisions?
5. What are some of the benefits to measuring academic outcomes for different schools, and comparing the results?
6. What are some of the problems to measuring academic outcomes for different schools, and comparing the results?
7. Is there a strong focus in any particular part of the education field in your country (nationally, in states/districts, particular independent systems or schools) on allowing choice for students? Try to find a policy text example—perhaps a national or sector-specific policy document, a quote by someone in the media, or some text from a school website or school diary that supports your argument.
8. Can you find an advertisement for a school that uses the students' high achievement as a 'selling point' to parents?
9. Look at two education websites for private schools (in your country or overseas). List five ways in which they 'sell their brand' to compete for customers.
10. Name a situation (perhaps covered in the media or in history) where a parent or individual student complained about an issue at a school, and used their consumer-power or media attention to pressure the school into recognising their individual rights or choice.

4.3 Critical

4.3.1 *Education Orientation Ideals*

The critical orientation emerged within education movements in the 1970s and is linked to wider reform pushes such as class-system reforms, post-colonialism,

feminism and gay liberation (Kemmis et al. 1983, p. 129). Examples of linked policy movements discussed in research include socialist moves in education policy in Germany and Soviet Russia (Beckmann et al. 2009; Carlson 1992; Rabinbach 1973; Sauerteig and Davidson 2009), civil rights and ethnic revival movements in the US (Mayo 2005), various feminist education reform movements (Elia 2005; Feltey et al. 1991; Hekman 1999; Tuttle 1986), anti-discrimination and inclusive education movements (D'Augelli 1998; Lipkin 1994; Macgillivray and Jennings 2008; Magrab 2003). Within this orientation, whole-school reform approaches are seen as necessary for the inclusion of particular non-dominant/'marginalised' social groups. Teachers aim to engage students more actively in social issues and action, and students are ideally empowered to promote alternative principles, question deep-seated social values and unjust practices, and undertake actions to lead to a more equitable society (Jones 2009). Education is understood as having the potential to revolutionise society and even the world (Kemmis et al. 1983); challenging marginalisation and established social orders. Thus, the education discourses within policies stemming from this orientation focus on reforming schools to fit the needs of marginalised groups and local communities, and may suggest new equitable or alternative visions of the world wherein perceived 'repressive power hierarchies' are challenged (Beckmann et al. 2009). Classroom pedagogy is student-centred and action-based, and characterised by high levels of collaboration between teacher and students. Traditional authorities can be directly called into question, with learning employing ideological critique of mainstream notions from a marginalised perspective and the use of alternative sources and accounts. Methods include critical analysis of popular culture texts and images, viewing and creation of alternative texts/posters/pamphlets, real-world student activism and specific classroom equity reforms.

4.3.2 Education Policy Production

Key beliefs about education within critical education discourses are that it can help create a 'better' society/reality by encouraging students to identify values and practices that are unjust or unsustainable, to propose alternatives, and to take appropriate action to begin bringing those alternatives to fruition. This leads educators to goals of bringing about a more peaceful, just and sustainable world through students' actions. They may aim to provide awareness of 'the structural determinants of oppression and social injustice, and the formation of a cohesive political strategy for social change' (Beckmann et al. 2009, p. 336). Policy-making processes may be perceived as Bottom-up, in that to some extent this type of policy can be advocated for by pressure groups, academics or even specific community members who take some form of (legal or other) action to encourage it (Beckmann et al. 2009; Raab 1994; Sabatier 1986). However, this is not always the case and a critical approach may evolve within particular policy types over time or through leadership influence or legislation changes. Policies can be

localised or adapted to meet specific issues/student body needs or community types (Beckmann et al. 2009; Noddings 1992). Policy research typically used to justify critical policy pushes usually applies critical frames (critical analysis, Marxism, post-colonialism, feminism, gay liberation and so on). Studies may analyse social factors and power dynamics surrounding socio-economic status and poverty, special needs and issues of access/inclusion, sex/gender and sexism, ethnicity and racism, sexuality and homophobia, etc. This research may highlight the existence of the problem or ways it can be overcome through data collection, case-study/ies or symbolic/taxonomic analysis of existing policies (or lack thereof). Ozga (2000) argues for such research which is not aimed at assisting policy makers directly (in the sense of the political science related models of Sabatier) but at challenging the assumptions that inform policy making, thereby contributing to the emancipatory education project. Simons et al. (2009) provide a collection of critical policy research examples that constitutes what they term ‘re-reading’ of policies outside the dominant perspective that draw on economics and organisational theory, as well as critical theory. Despite their theoretical eclecticism, all these studies embed policy in the power dynamics of their specific context of political and social regulation.

4.3.3 Education Policy Processes in Practice

Policy implementation processes can involve whole-school change; whether this entails physical changes to school structures, staff training, revision of rules and disciplinary procedures, new ways of relating between staff or between staff and students or other combinations (Barton 1997; Noddings 2003). Therefore, students and even the community can be highly involved in aspects of implementation and may even take ownership in managing its application. This may even be the case long before any ‘actual policy document’ exists, but during the ‘policy push’. Advocacy groups may also be involved in training and teaching sessions, such that change may be increasingly embraced and monitored by different members of the school community to different extents. Advocacy groups may call for specific policy standards to be required, or standards may be required from bodies concerned with social equity in education such as the United Nations or other humanitarian organisations. Standards and implementation approaches can also be negotiated in an on-going arrangement with particular community representatives or committees, to ensure that the non-dominant groups are properly represented (as with indigenous groups). Standards may sometimes be clarified in law reforms (as with anti-discrimination legislation requirements). For this reason, teachers and other staff at the ‘mid-level’ may be under pressure from many different critical policy stakeholders to ensure student and community needs are met (Barton 1997). Funding may come through advocacy or community groups, directly through leadership or sometimes indirectly (for example, through grants obtained advocacy groups that are then used to develop alternative materials or

fund training). The desired policy impact is socio-cultural change (Beckmann et al. 2009; Kemmis et al. 1983). The standing and needs of non-dominant social groups are ideally improved through assistance to result in equitable outcomes both within the particular classroom/school setting and within the broader community.

4.3.4 Examples

A general example of critical education policy includes the government funding received by some Australian schools under the Whitlam Government from the 1970s to teach Indigenous languages in schools, particularly in Aboriginal-run community schools, which allowed schools to privilege local cultural knowledges rather than simply the type of literacies now dominant in Australian basic skills testing. By 1990, bilingual education programmes were running in 21 Northern Territory schools and for two decades strong support for bilingual programmes flourished in Western Australia and Queensland (Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia 1996). Another Australian example of efforts to ensure equitable outcomes, rather than just equal educational opportunities, can be seen in Queensland's *Inclusive Education Statement* (QLD Government 2005) and the subsequent efforts in that state to upraise students with disabilities academically through learning support officers and training of teachers around teaching and supporting students with disabilities. Adjustments are to be made, as appropriate to student abilities, to classroom assessment items or to testing contexts (including adaptations to the test itself, the testing environment or in some cases provision of specialist assistance), so that students can participate and feel a sense of achievement in their work.

Examples of critical moves in curriculum-specific education policies include the discursive push for inclusion of the 'Black Armband' revisionist version of history recognising indigenous perspectives on 'British colonisation' (as 'European invasion') within Australian history curricula (McKenna 1997; Wimmer 2002), the recognition of Aboriginal English within some testing and the variety of policies promoting additional opportunities for indigenous children and community schools aimed at achieving more equitable social outcomes for this group (e.g. Australian Government 1989; NT Government 1998, 2007). In sexuality education, critical discourses such as inclusive sexuality education discourses are mobilised in some recent education policy and curricula movements in some Western countries—including Australia, England, America and New Zealand—(Angelides 2008; Boston 1997; Cloud 2005; Moran 2000; OECD 2003; Public Health Agency of Canada 2008; VIC Government 2008), and (the more autonomist) gay liberationist discourse can be particularly seen with the development of Harvey Milk High in New York and scholarships from the Point Foundation for marginalised gay youth (Cloud 2005). They also manifest in recent research into the position of same sex attracted and gender questioning youth in schools (GLSEN 2004; Hillier et al. 2010; Hunt and Jensen 2009; Sears 2005).

Keywords

Critical
Marginalisation
Marginalised group
Social order
Social Justice
Privilege
Disadvantage
Identity politics
Equity
Whole-school change
Advocacy

Tutorial and Field Activities

1. In providing for the needs of students with disabilities, what are five areas of the schooling experience a 'whole-school' approach could cover?
2. What are some of the benefits to trying to meet the needs of students with disabilities within general schooling?
3. What are some of the problems that could be encountered in trying to meet the needs of students with disabilities within general schooling?
4. What are three social justice issues (other than marginalisation of people with disabilities) that education can be used to improve?
5. What are some of the problems of tackling these issues in schools?
6. Is there a strong focus in any particular part of the education field in your country (nationally, in states/districts, particular independent systems or schools) on changing schools to ensure they better meet the needs of a group of marginalised students? Try to find a policy text example—perhaps a national or sector-specific policy document, a quote by someone in the media, or some text from a school website or school diary that supports your argument.
7. What are some advantages to policy being developed from the bottom-up?
8. What might be some disadvantages to attempts to getting policy to develop from the bottom-up?
9. Name some groups that provide advocacy in education around marginalised social groups (these might be local to your area, national groups or based overseas).
10. Name a particular education issue on which advocacy groups, students, social groups or academic activists are currently calling for change (in your local media or overseas)?

4.4 Post-Modern

4.4.1 *Education Orientation Ideals*

The most recently developed orientation to education is the post-modern orientation. Emerging in the 1980s, it has been making increasing impact on education policies and education discourses since the 1990s. It stems from post-structuralism vanguard movements of French literary intellectuals and philosophers who were critical of grand narratives and structuralism during the 1960s and 1970s, which swiftly spread to academics around the globe (Carlson 2005, p. 635; Leitch et al. 2001, p. 21). This orientation can manifest at different and sometimes discrete points in policy processes; sometimes erratically evident in policy implementation by particular teachers or schools or in a section of a policy document rather than throughout the entire text for example. However, some examples of education movements it strongly manifests in include discursive values education movements that encourage the teaching of analysis or ethical inquiry (Freakley and Burgh 2002; Mikulics 1998; Veugelers 2000), the teaching of deconstructive analysis (Carlson 2005; Fonow and Marty 1992) and the application of Queer Theory to sexuality education (Britzman 1995; Bryson and De Castell 1993; Duggan 1992; Pinar 2005; Talburt and Steinberg 2000). In the post-modern orientation, schools are seen as socio-culturally situated sites, wherein smaller communities form from intersections within larger society and engage in meaning-making (Nudzor 2009; Trowler 1998). Students and teachers engage together in the de-construction and co-construction of ‘cultural truths’, ‘reality’ and ‘hegemony’, and knowledge is seen as constructed and relational. Education is thus understood as providing a space where culture and identity can be opened up for re-organisation and creative change. Thus, the education discourses within policies stemming from this orientation focus on deconstructive principles, providing multiple perspectives or frameworks for consideration of issues and knowledge, and an inquiry approach. Classroom pedagogy is seen as ideally characterised by exploration of multiple theoretical perspectives and conceptual play. Not only are particular authorities questioned, but the very notion of ‘authority’, ‘authorisation’ and grand narratives are called into question. Methods include student engagement in a range of theories and historio-cultural perspectives, class theorising, vocabulary invention, deconstructive analysis and intellectual games.

4.4.2 *Education Policy Production*

A key belief about education across post-modern education discourses is that it can demystify ‘hegemonic truths’ (deep-seated cultural assumptions) and problematise knowledge. This leads educators to goals of playing ‘devil’s advocate’ in relation to students’ perceptions of reality and self, acting as the ‘deconstructor,

not a mere supporter' (Morton and Zavarzadeh 1991, p. 11). The aim is to develop in students an oppositional position in relation to the dominant order of the 'real', allowing them to recognise their own partiality, in the spirit of what Morton and Zavarzadeh term 'both incompleteness and committedness' (1991, p. 12). In acknowledging their split or partial nature, the denaturalised student sees themselves as constituted by a set of incoherent subject positions produced by cultural discourses, and 'makes visible the arbitrariness of all seemingly natural meanings and cultural organisations' (Jones 2009). Policy-making processes may be perceived as ideally contextual and highly localised to particular school and student body contexts, in line with the post-modernist understanding of contemporary society as composed of different 'life-worlds' (Trowler 1998, p. 75). Policy is also understood as occurring at multiple sites and as developing in a fluid manner over time (Nudzor 2009). Lyotard's 'Performative state' attempts to optimise input and output like a networked computer, 'open' to contributions from a range of participants and operating in flexible networks of language (Yeatman 2007). Thus, broader post-modern policies can be designed to be more amenable to evolutionary co-creation by networks, groups and individual interpreters. Policy research typically used to justify a post-modern approach can apply de-constructive or co-constructive theoretical frames (post-modernism, post-structuralist analysis, post-identity feminist analysis, Queer theory and others). Studies may provide analysis of policy texts, processes and contexts to reveal cultural hegemonies, assumptions, orders of discourse and conceptual frameworks mobilised within them. These studies may inquire into the available subject positions within policy discourses, belief systems informing the discourses, the function of discourses within the policy field or constructions of particular phenomena within them (such as 'discipline', 'sexuality', 'learning', etc.). Post-modern policy research (as with schools of post-modern thought) can thus be based on either more realist framings—in the sense of Ozga's (2000) argument for research that reveals cultural hegemonies and builds knowledge (and may assist emancipatory goals), or more relativist framings—in the sense of researchers who are suspicious of policy 'truths' and the possibility policies could directly shape social 'outcomes' (Nudzor 2009).

4.4.3 Education Policy Processes in Practice

Policy implementation processes can involve multiple functionaries at multiple sites, sometimes with a less-centralised power structure (Yeatman 2007). Ball and Exley (2010) provide insight into what a post-modern policy process looks like in their discussion of policy networks:

... these networks may also be viewed as part of a new kind of state, what Richards and Smith (2002) call a 'post-modern state', which is dependent, flexible, reflexive and diffuse, but nonetheless still centrally steered, within which policy is being 'done' in a multiplicity of new sites (Ball and Exley 2010, p. 166).

Standards, if outlined, may involve improving practice and furthering academic inquiry in the field in question. However, such standards do not function in the liberal sense to further achievement, but rather to develop a field for the field's sake by engaging with complexities instead of denying them. There is also concern with bettering and deepening lived experience, yet identity-politics are not adhered to in the critical sense; developments are considered potentially beneficial for people beyond their identification (or not) with 'marginalised group' tropes (Hekman 1999; Kumashiro 2002). Politicised power is understood exercised by policy creators, schools, teachers and even students, who are also subject to its conditions (Foucault 1969a, 1976, 1979). It is not viewed as purely top-down—it is dynamic, relational and conditional. Therefore, it has productive potential for all policy functionaries and is not purely a repressive force. Funding may come from varied sources; leadership, government grants, advocacy groups, interest groups, etc., where applicable. Evaluation of policy in revision processes can be around how it represents people or provides useful subject positions, the assumptions it holds, how relevant it is to particular historio-cultural contexts or social groups, etc. Pragmatic evaluations may be sought from multiple stakeholders or networks, yet theoretical analyses by academics can be considered. In this orientation, there is more of an acceptance and expectation that any education policy's impact in general can be erratic and unpredictable:

Researchers in this tradition contend that although we do invest heavily in policy-making processes, there is lack of credible evidence to suggest that these policies make any difference in solving our myriad of problems. They emphasise that if information has an impact on policy outcomes at all, it does so over the long term because 'the meaning of policy is taken for granted and a theoretical and epistemological dry rot is built into the analytical structures constructed' (Ball 1994, p. 15), making it difficult, if not impossible, for policy provisions and intentions to be implemented and outcomes attained (Nudzor 2009, p. 504).

The desired impact is indeed more around conceptual, non-specific, evolving developments at varying sites (ranging from within individual students to broader break-down of cultural hegemony). Ideally, the theorisation of a particular phenomenon is furthered and limiting cultural assumptions are challenged or overcome.

4.4.4 Examples

A post-modern move in education includes the spread of the Multicultural Education discourse that grew out of the 1950s American civil rights movements and the 1970s ethnic revivals (Mayo 2005). It is expressed in, for example, particular Australian education policies today (Montessori Australia Foundation 2007; NT Government 1998) and a body of education texts and research too broad to cover here. This discourse aims at equitable schooling provision for diverse cultural populations within the same school and all schooling systems (Mayo 2005, p. 561). A range of traditions and cultural views are seen as equally valid in this discourse. Thus, all students are assumed to gain from being educated through

multiple cultural lenses, and practical and academic ‘monocultures’ are to be relinquished in the curricula, the running of schools and pedagogical approaches (Compton 1989; Grant and Lei 2001; Grant and Sleeter 2002). Diversity is valued as a desirable and productive component of the educational experience and process; it has even been aligned with new learning theories around multiliteracies, multiple intelligences and the cultural awareness aspect of Lingard’s ‘productive pedagogies’ theories (Blackmore 2006). In the case of Montessori and some Steiner school education policies, there is often an emphasis on school administration being locally determined by individual school leadership bodies, rather than overseen through a centralised system governing body. The post-modern relativist approach to knowledge and skills can be seen in the eschewing of mainstream curriculum and testing for more individualised programmes of study adapted to the students attending the schools and their interest areas, and in some cases the option of individually designed project-based assessments can be offered in place of mainstream tests on basic skills or specific core curricula.

To continue the ongoing example of policy around sexuality education as a curriculum area, a combination of critical and post-modern orientations is evidenced in sexuality education policy for the state of Victoria in Australia, particularly in the policy *Supporting Sexual Diversity in Schools* (VIC Government 2008). This policy provides some directions on supporting diverse students but also uses discussion of same sex attracted and gender that allow the concepts to be divorced to some extent from identity politics, and to be explored and questioned. This deconstructive conceptual element can be found in some post-modern policies, and the document also evidences intersecting discourses around diversity, safety and also multiple schooling contexts and subject areas in a post-modern fashion. Sexuality is framed as a concept which can be taught across curricula and in unintended engagements in the schooling context.

Keywords

Post-modern
Construction
De-construction
Co-construction
Multiple perspectives
Theoretical frameworks
Devil’s advocate
Partiality
Hegemony
Networks
Different life-worlds
Performative state

Tutorial and Field Activities

1. What are the benefits to exposing students to multiple theoretical and social perspectives?
2. What are some of the difficulties inherent in using multiple theoretical and social perspectives?
3. What are some of the benefits to teaching students to see themselves as constituted through culture/s?
4. What are some of problems around teaching students to see themselves as constituted through culture/s?
5. Give two examples of schooling communities that may have very different life-worlds and very different policy needs.
6. Which communities or social groups have the most to gain from greater involvement in local education policy development?
7. What are the difficulties around school communities having more local control over education policies in their area?
8. Can individuals or groups sometimes enact policies in ways that change their meaning?
9. Are there ‘implicit policies’ in the educational institutions you have experienced (policies that are unstated and don’t exist in any documents, but seem to be part of the hegemony of the place)?
10. Class debate: some relativist post-modernists argue education policy has little impact on schools. Divide class into two teams. *Team A agrees*—policy has little impact. Explain this position giving reasons why it does not make a difference (e.g. consider issues of lack of roll-out, individual and group resistance, and any research examples you can find of policies making little impact). *Team B disagrees*, instead arguing that policy makes a difference. Explain how it makes a difference (e.g. consider not just statistics on behaviours and learning, but impacts on language and ways of thinking, and use any research examples you can find of policy ‘working’).

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Chapter 5

Analysing Orientations in Policy

The orientation frameworks can be applied by researchers to analysis of many different types of education policy. When applying this framework, it is important to note that orientations should not be treated in a simplistic manner. The way an orientation manifests may change over time or across discourses. For example, in discussion of sex education discourses, Irvine (2002) discusses two key conservative sex education policy approaches: a censoring non-approach wherein ‘initiatives to protect children from exposure to allegedly corrupting sex talk, whether from sex education programs or the media, are central’ (p. 1) and a morality-based sex education approach where:

Through the creation of sexuality infrastructure, in which sex education materials occupy a central place, these opponents have actively positioned themselves as sexual experts. By creating alternative sex education curricula, conservative and evangelical Christians shifted the terms of conflict from whether sex education would be taught in schools to which curriculum would be taught (Irvine 2002, p. 12).

Another key point is that the orientations are not necessarily mutually exclusive within an education policy. Some policies may indeed appear to be ‘typical’ of only one orientation. Yet some policies, their processes and contexts manifest more than one orientation (for example, both conservative and liberal orientations may be found) along with a range of education discourses within those orientations.

There can be coalescence between neo-liberal and conservative ideas in the shaping of policy to keep both nations powerful and competitive, and neo-liberalists form a powerful part of ‘conservative restoration’ in New Right alliances (Apple 1998). Points of contact and departure between different strands of New Right thinking have been a persistent (and intriguing) feature of the Right’s dominance since the collapse of Keynesian welfarism in the mid-1970s (Apple 1998; Power and Whitty 1999). ‘Third Way thinking’ (not confined to the UK but perhaps more widely discussed within it) draws on aspects of conservative, liberal *and* critical orientations. As an explicit repudiation of both neo-liberalism and Keynesian corporatism, the policy framework can help to make policy analysis a sense of this development’s seemingly contradictory use of the liberal prioritisation of human capital by showing how this priority is framed not so much in contradiction with a liberal democratic view (democracy and the democratic family are important), but *in a reactionary combination* with partially a critical

lens—with what Giddens terms promotion of equality as both inclusion and outcomes achieved through affirmative paths and positive welfare (Giddens 1998). Yet human capital is also here viewed through a partially conservative lens, which shares the critical orientation's 'active civil society'. The 'radical centre' (Giddens 1998) here refuses extremes of both conservative and critical concerns around issues such as gay rights and abortion, offering the neo-liberal sense of non-politicisation of 'personal choices'. There is much room for exploration of the main emphasis within Third Way education policies separately and overall using the exemplar (that is not the key focus of this brief, but a recommendation to researchers). However, the key point is that the Third Way and such 'alternative political positions' on education cannot exist entirely 'outside' the conceptual orientations of the framework or their related discourses, but operate within and in reaction to them, combining them in new and interesting ways.

On top of this, the policy making and implementation processes can be a battleground for a variety of orientations as mobilised by different parties and individuals. Particular principals, teachers or students may interpret policies in specific ways or resist the intended practices altogether. Certain sentences or post-modern definitions may be inserted into generally liberal policy documents by policy writers to disrupt the discursive order within the text, or advocacy groups may have pushed for the revision of one particular section of a programme. Highly critical and diversity—encompassing materials may be prepared by an external group to assist in the implementation of a conservative sex education policy. For example, in a critical discourse analysis of the *Australian National Framework for Values Education in Schools* the data revealed that the document's strong privileging of conservative values education discourses, particularly 'Civics and Citizenship Education', 'Values Inculcation' and 'Character Education' (Jones 2007, 2009). Yet in analysis of policy processes of implementation and impact, the data revealed some Australian schools have been disrupting this move to conservatism by taking more critical and post-modern approaches. In particular, critical values education approaches incorporating 'Social Action' and 'Peace Education' discourses were strongly represented in practice trials. These discourses were initially identified within a broader literature review prepared for the study which suggested 16 possible values education discourses currently at work in this field policy (see Table 5.1 for the full range).

Some of the orientations hold more sway in the 'education world' and particularly the 'policy world'—readers with any experience in schools will have some sense of the historic (and even contemporary) dominance of the conservative orientation in many education institutions and departments. Readers following news stories in countries such as the UK and Australia may also often note the neo-liberal debates and tensions in the media around the line between the individual and the state, and the frequent discussion by politicians of how education can be strategically employed to enhance both the individual's, and national, economic competitiveness. However popular these trends are, there is certainly no agreement on the idea that these trends 'should' be popular. Indeed, other orientations can be much more popular in the 'academic world'; particular education faculties can become known for their critical or even post-modern education research stance, and may

Table 5.1 Orientation-based values education discourse exemplar (Jones 2009)

Education orientation	Values education approach	Ideology
<i>Conservative</i> Transmitting dominant values	Religious monopolism	In this model, morality is considered to be directly dependant on one's religion. The argument is that there is only one true faith, and so only one efficacious morality. The logic of this stance requires adherents to seek an exclusive curriculum monopoly, either at a state level or by operating their own schools. Acts are right or wrong in themselves according to religious texts/doctrine/dogma.
	Values inculcation (common values)	Valuing is considered a process of the student identifying with and accepting the standards or norms of the important individuals and institutions within society. The student is seen/treated as a reactor/recipient rather than as an initiator. Extreme advocates believe that the needs and goals of society should transcend those of individuals. Certain values are universal and absolute—derived from the 'natural order', an omnipotent Creator or dominant culture.
	Character education	Generally embracing indoctrination/inculcation as an educational practice, this approach is focused on habituating the student to civil modes of conduct. Being honest, hardworking, obeying legitimate authority, kind, patriotic and responsible. This message is explicit, pervasive and reinforced by rewards and punishments. Children are not seen as naturally moral; they must be taught by lesson and example to behave in a manner appropriate to their host society.
	Citizenship and civics education	A variation of character education that emphasises the values that maintain the common good and assure the survival of the society. Patriotism, democratic values such as freedom, responsibility, obedience to legitimate rules and authority, are focal points. The virtues/values promoted here are those which belong to the 'ideal' citizen appropriate to the host society. Students do not determine these values; they are pre-established.

(continued)

Table 5.1 (continued)

Education orientation	Values education approach	Ideology
<i>Liberal</i>	Values education approach	An integrated/whole school approach based on Gestalt Therapy and Psycho-synthesis. It synthesises affective and cognitive education. The knowledge/skills content of lessons is related to students' feelings/values systems, and presented in a cyclical process format of: conflict/frustration, confrontation, persistence and resolution/completion. Learning is student-centred, with personal responsibility, self-awareness, choice and personal agency seen as key.
Teaching valuing skills for personal choice/development.	Confluent education	No explicit approach is taken; values education occurs inexplicitly/unintentionally only. It stems from the philosophy that schools (particularly state-run/secular educational organisations) have no business becoming involved in the morality of students, or will have little effect. Morality is either seen as the parent/s' responsibility, or related to the choice and personal agency of the student.
	Laissez Faire	Based on Kohlberg's three levels theory of moral development, which maps a six stage invariate, sequential process of developing morality. Higher stages are better stages. The goal of moral education is the enhancement of students' development from lower to higher stages of moral reasoning. This approach aims to create a school-based just community. Classrooms become democratic settings where students deliberate about moral dilemmas/conflicts.
	Moral development (moral reasoning/just community)	The central focus of the approach is to help students use rational thinking and emotional awareness to examine personal behaviour. Students clarify their own values, rather than have these inculcated. The valuing process is internal, relative, individualistic and related to self-actualisation. It involves choosing freely from alternatives. Over time, an ethical identity is created through repeated affirmation and action relating to one's own valuing processes.
	Values clarification	

(continued)

Table 5.1 (continued)

Education orientation	Values education approach	Ideology
<i>Critical</i> Facilitating integrated student action based on alternative principles.	Values education approach Caring community	An integrated/whole school approach based on feminist understandings of morality. It strongly emphasises the ethic of care—nurturing, closeness, emotional attachment and supportive relationships. Educators' moral influence stems from their caring relationships with students, parents and one another. Students are not rewarded for empathic actions; these become the classroom culture's norm. The school has a 'family style' dynamic.
	Cultural heritage	An integrated/whole school approach based on post-colonialist understandings of morality. This approach emphasises values; however, these are not mainstream values but are instead drawn from the traditions of non-dominant cultures. Parents, elders and cultural leaders educate children within and beyond school, promoting deep understanding of/participation in cultural arts and ceremonies. The school does not claim a 'superior' morality as such.
	Peace education	An integrated/whole school approach based on an ethic of care that extends beyond the classroom. Moral commitments include valuing and befriending the earth, living in harmony with the natural world, recognising the interrelatedness of all human and natural life, preventing violence towards the earth and all its peoples. Students learn to create and live in a culture of peace. Students participate in/design projects to better the community and world.
	Social action (action learning)	An integrated/whole school approach based on action learning. In this approach valuing is regarded as a process of self-actualisation in which individuals consider alternatives and act on their choices. Students learn to view themselves as social and political beings with the right to access the systems of influence in the larger world. Through involvement in social action, students come to believe in themselves as moral agents or activists.

(continued)

Table 5.1 (continued)

Education orientation	Values education approach	Ideology
<i>Post-modern</i> Critically exploring and co-creating ethical frameworks and positions.	Values education approach Discursive school	This approach does not recognise any 'absolute truths'. It involves a close study of classical, philosophical thought—such as a close reading of The Republic, analysing the applicability to today's standards. Students apply epistemological theory to contemporary ethical dilemmas. They evaluate the relative merit of each philosophical system, such that they are able to cite, discuss and debate the strengths and weaknesses of each approach.
	Ethical inquiry (community of inquiry)	An integrated, cross-curricular approach based on the view of moral education as a process by which students engage in moral conversation regarding dilemmas. Within carefully facilitated discussions, students to investigate values or actions and imagine alternatives. They consider philosophical questions, and debate the applicability of different ethical perspectives (such as consequentialism, non-consequentialism, virtue ethics and ethic of care).
	Values analysis	Logical thinking and scientific investigation are used to determine positions on values issues. Each step in the thought process is carefully examined and compared to other options; with a focus on the ultimate, possible conclusion of moral actions. Rational and analytical frameworks are encouraged in discussion, interrelation and conceptualisation of values. The approach rejects 'absolute truths', values and principles are still considered.
	Values stimulation	Values Stimulation is an approach being developed in the Netherlands. It does not pretend value neutrality. In fact, the theory is based on the belief that values are always present, whether explicit or not. Student expressions are respected, but also questioned. The teacher may take an adversarial role/play 'devil's advocate' so as to point out the partiality in a student's argument on a particular topic/issue being discussed.

conversely privilege discussions based on a limited number of education theorists or journals befitting that perspective.¹ Many strongly critique neo-liberal movements. Therefore, perhaps one of the most important factors for researchers and students applying this framework is ensuring the review of the literature completed in preparation for analysis considers discourses from all four orientations (where these are potentially at work in the policy field), regardless of the dominant perspectives seen in the local school, media or a particular host institution. It is only in mapping the discursive field as broadly as possible first that the researcher can more accurately analyse the discursive composition of policies or their processes, and consider their value from a range of perspectives. While the two tables shown here are the ‘bare bones’ of such preparation, they stem from wide pre-reading of many policies, theoretical literature, resources and teaching materials, media articles and research from within the appropriate policy fields. In this pre-reading, it is important to look at the central beliefs and core ideals of the discourses, the promoted and negated practices within the discourses, the roles they ascribe (for schools, teachers, students and other school community members) and so on.² It is also important to gain a sense of to whom the authorities are in each discourse, and whom or what the approaches are aimed at serving. Limiting (for example) analysis of conservative policy to conservative frameworks alone will only allow one perspective on what ‘should be’ or ‘is/is not’ happening, restricting the opportunity for deeper questioning of ‘the point of education’ that must always be behind policy considerations.

There are many potential benefits for using ‘Orientations to Education’ conceptual frame in policy analysis. First, it is an explicit conceptual frame that draws on *implicit* differentiations already being widely (albeit erratically and incompletely) made in policy analysis, so it is useful in interpretation of policy in contemporary times. Second, in making this implicit frame explicit, a common language in education policy analysis can be created, so that commonly conflated terms (such as conservative and liberal, or critical and post-modern) are not so easily confused or misappropriated. Policy analysis can then become more easily reproducible by different researchers, and rigour is potentially enhanced by the lessening of researcher bias towards only ‘looking for’ one orientation or another in their research.

Third, wider use of this frame should allow for greater comparison across analysis of policy types. For example, Table 5.2 shows a framework for discourses

¹ This comment also applies to other relevant faculties or research centres conducting education and education policy research, teacher education training or research student training. The author has personally experienced several different schools, education departments and university faculties/centres—some dominated by a more conservative orientation to education or policy research, others by critical framings informed by staff interests in emancipatory social research. Of course, individuals within these organisations certainly provide exceptions to the rule or may vary their approaches over time, and some institutions may host staff working within a broad spectrum of approaches.

² While my examples show discourses in education policies by orientation, similar taxonomies could well be created focussing other particular topics across the four orientations such as ‘teacher roles in mathematics education’, ‘constructions of learners in primary-school literacy’, ‘school administration’, ‘school-based disciplinary approaches’ and so on.

Table 5.2 Orientation-based sexuality education discourse exemplar (adapted from Jones 2011a, b)

Education orientation	Sexuality education approach	Ideology
<i>Conservative</i> Transmitting dominant sexualities.	Storks and fairies	To protect children, sexual information is intentionally substituted with a pleasant fiction drawing on popular culture. A stork, fairy or mythical occurrence brings fully-formed babies to established loving and hopeful family homes that consist of a married female and male.
	None/Non-approach	Sexuality content—seen as the domain of parents/the church/an exterior authority and developmentally, socially or morally inappropriate for schools to disseminate—is withheld/censored in pedagogy, texts and the school environment.
	Physical hygiene	Problematic bodily emissions related to sexual functioning must be managed/hidden. (Hetero) Sexual sublimation beyond marital sex is necessary to maintain hygiene; deviation leads to loss of masculine power and creativity, female hysteria, disease and degeneration.
	Sexual morality	Religion/God is at the centre of a sexuality system based on asceticism, body/mind and flesh/spirit dichotomies. Marital procreative heterosexual sex only is affirmed, other expressions are condemned temptations of the body, to be controlled by the mind for the purity of the spirit.
	Birds and bees	Sexual interaction is part of a naturalist world. Natural metaphors protect childhood purity but satisfy curiosity. Human sexuality mimics the contact of bees with flower pollen, cross-pollination and the fertilisation of bird's eggs. The mother animal and its care are emphasised.
	Biological science	Focuses on scientific understandings of biological reproduction of the human species; embedded in broader study of bodily systems, human life cycles, animal reproduction or genetics. Involves study of anatomy, physiology, 'correct' functioning and disease prevention.
	Abstinence education	Students are told to abstain from sexual interaction until married. Prior sexual activity is presented as a cause of psychological and physical harm - depression, shame, guilt, sexual infections and loss of long-term committed relationships. Intercourse basics may be taught.
	Christian/Ex-gay redemption	Masturbation, homosexuality and gender diversity are 'not part of God's plan'. They represent modern cultural distractions. Sexual orientation and gender behaviours can be controlled through effort. Youth are encouraged to be 'ex-gay' identified/heterosexual.

(continued)

Table 5.2 (continued)

Education orientation	Sexuality education approach	Ideology
<i>Liberal</i> Teaching sexuality skills and knowledge for personal choice/development.	Sexual liberationist	Promotes sexual individual sexual rights, with the individual deciding what is right for their own behaviour. Ethics of reciprocity and consensuality. A broad range of sexual acts are 'normal'. Youths are encouraged to 'feel comfortable' with sexual concepts and vocabulary.
	Comprehensive sex education	Wide-ranging sexual education covering sexual anatomy and physiology, contraception, sexual communication, relationship development and maintenance, sexual victimisation, sexual values, sexual minority issues, sexual prejudice and abstinence as a choice.
	Sexual risk/progressive	Sexual activity of any kind outside of marriage involves a list of emotional, social and physical risks including heartbreak, being ostracised, exposure to STDs, unwanted pregnancy, etc. Youth are taught about perceived dangers, 'safe sex', condom use and contraceptive choices.
	Sexual readiness	Focuses on equipping students with decision-making skills regarding their sexual 'readiness'. Virginity is valued, and not to be exchanged lightly. Readiness involves individual, emotional, physical, relational, practical and other concerns. Sex before readiness is seen as damaging.
	Effective relationships	Sexual and other relationships are seen in terms of effectiveness of communication, emotional exchange, support and other key features. Students are taught communication, negotiation, empathy and other relating skills.
	Controversial issues/values clarification	Schools are a neutral space for rational, objective study. Sexual issues (such as homosexual marriage) are controversial. The individual student must be encouraged to express and form their own opinion on them. Teacher should present evidence impartially, without advocacy.
	Liberal feminist	A woman is equal to a man and can choose her career/occupation. She should receive equitable working conditions and remuneration, and should have more choice about her roles within a relationship regarding child rearing and the sharing of domestic duties and dynamics.

(continued)

Table 5.2 (continued)

Education orientation	Sexuality education approach	Ideology
<i>Critical</i>	State socialist/sexual-politics	Freudian genital gratification in the context of 'politically correct' non-monomogamous heterosexual relations is seen as a healthy way to channel energy, rather than purely into a life of work or for reproduction. Greater acceptance of working class and adolescent sexualities.
Facilitating integrated student action based on alternative sexuality principles and redressing marginalised sexualities.	Sexual revolutionary socialist/radical freudian	Focuses on how a revolutionary sexuality can be celebrated in a context of civilised and labour-free technological utopia. Polymorphous pre-genital exploration that celebrates the body in a post-labour utopia. Creative exploration, love and play are encouraged.
	Radical feminist	A woman is different to a man and these differences should be valued. Feminine writing styles, knowledge, emotions, experiences and concepts of time may be explored. Child rearing is valued as labour, however, a life that is autonomous from men is also a possible and legitimate lifestyle.
	Anti-discrimination/anti-harassment/equity	Human rights concepts, acts and legislation based on sexuality, sex, orientation, etc., must be understood and respected. Discrimination or harassment on the grounds of such personal traits is wrong. School codes, posters, class rules, and equal access policies may reflect this.
	Inclusive/social justice safe and supportive	School should be safe and supportive spaces which promote equity, social justice and inclusiveness for all students. Students of diverse sexualities, sexes, etc., should be supported and included in school events, activities, class resources, etc. This support is affirming, beyond 'acceptance'.
	Gay liberationist	Focuses on combating direct and indirect homophobia by identifying and eliminating it. Emphasises the need to acknowledge, protect and support gay and lesbian people as a marginalised group within society. There is an effort to make gay and lesbian issues 'visible' in sexual and other frames.
	Post-colonial	Redresses the marginalisation of local and Indigenous cultural knowledge through provision of local teachings about sexualities and sexuality frameworks. Can incorporate oral histories, elders, parent-child nights and engaging in traditional activities/ceremonies.

(continued)

Table 5.2 (continued)

Education orientation	Sexuality education approach/Ideology
<i>Post-modern</i> Theoretically exploring sex, gender and sexuality frameworks and subject positions.	<p>Post-structuralist Teachers and students explore how 'reality' is constituted through language and representation. They de- and co-construct texts about sexuality and gender, and consider how sexual identity plays a central political role in emancipation. Teachers may play 'devil's advocate'.</p> <p>Post-identity feminist Sex is political and serves as a source of both liberation and oppression. Its meaning and experience is shaped by social and cultural differences such as race, gender, social class and orientation. Gender identity is shaped by cultural institutions, language, media, etc. and is not innate.</p>
	<p>Multi-cultural/general po-mo Aims to ensure schooling equitably educates culturally diverse populations. Rejects the notion that (sexual) reality can be understood in a singular universal voice. Sexuality education should acknowledge the various heritages of the child, as well as mainstream/'general' sexuality efforts.</p>
	<p>Diversity education Sexuality and gender are not limited to a two-sex bi-polarised model. A whole school approach is taken to becoming inclusive for people with diverse sexualities and gender identification, including students, staff and families. Variety is celebrated. Constructions of 'family' are reconsidered.</p>
Queer	<p>Aims to disrupt/destabilise the structures (sex, gender, orientation) that uphold the illusion of heteronormativity through revealing their performative nature. This can be achieved through deconstruction and (re)creation of texts, including the self or others as texts.</p>

(continued)

by orientation prepared for a study of sexuality education policies in Australian schools. Simplified to this level (the literature review for the study obviously contains detailed information about each discourse), this is similar enough to the values education discourse table (Table 5.1) that the studies using these frameworks could in combination conceivably reveal broader trends in Australian education policy generally (rather than just in discrete types of ‘values education policy’ and ‘sexuality education policy’). It would thus be incredibly useful for researchers exploring other subject field curricula, policy types and implementation to conduct analysis of how the orientations apply to these sites. A fourth point is that education policy research could benefit even further from analysis of how the education orientations have manifested over time in these policy types, and across different education sectors (public, private, Catholic, etc.) and across countries. It would be possible to better map international trends with this more detailed perspective on policy discourses. The framework allows for the discourses used by governments at the national level to be more accurately and accessibly defined, and makes apparent the assumptions at the core of discourses and rhetoric by leaders, pressure groups and other stakeholders in policy debates.

Keywords

New Right
Third Way thinking
Conceptual framework
Orientation-based research
Orientation-based discourse exemplar
Orientation analysis
Orientation-based discourse analysis

Tutorial and Field Activities

1. Determine a key education policy area in which you have developed an interest (either prior to, or through using this text).
2. Refine your scope by specifying a historic or contemporary context that you are most interested in for this education policy area.
3. Consider whether you want to explore this policy area only as it applies to one country, or to one state/district or to one education sector (e.g. government, Catholic, other). You may be more interested in comparing case studies, or looking at schools, or the perspectives of a particular group of stakeholders. Have a basic idea in mind.

4. Gather and quickly skim read any publicly available policy documents, texts, statements or comments about this area for relevant institutions. Note absences of ‘official policy’.
5. Gather and quickly skim read the abstracts for research articles and books on this education policy area.
6. Gather and quickly skim read media articles, public comments and organisational responses to this education policy area.
7. Think about the texts you are gathering. Can you find any repeated use of perspectives that appear (or are labelled) conservative/traditional, liberal, neo-liberal, critical, post-modern?
8. Are there any discourses that are referred to, or key approaches that keep being mentioned? How do these fit into a framework of conservative, liberal, critical and post-modern orientations?
9. Have a shot at building an *orientation-based conceptual framework* for your education policy area. This is just a starting point, and you will probably revisit and refine it as you get deeper into your field. You can develop this over time in more depth, adding more columns or rows. You can use it to analyse the approaches, opinions and positions held by your key research objects and subjects. But first you need to make a start! Draft a table with three columns. As in the example (following), the columns are labelled education orientation, approach (or discourse) and ideology (or key ideas/traits/indicators). See the completed examples given in the textbook (Tables 5.1, 5.2).

For each orientation in the first column (conservative, liberal, critical and post-modern) write a broad description of how it applies to your education policy area. You will revisit this few times, but generally conservative will relate to dominant and traditional values, liberal will relate to individual or market choice and quality/competitive achievement, critical will relate to alternative values and attempts to redress social justice issues and post-modern will relate to multiple or contextually specific approaches.

Next, list any approaches or discourses that seem to fit the orientations that you have identified in your readings. Put an explanation of their key ideas under the ‘ideology’ column.

If you find it difficult to find information on approaches related to one or more orientation as they are to your policy area (for example, there may be less information on critical or post-modern approaches). In this situation, use this book to help you envision how such approaches might ‘look’, and sketch in some rough ideas into the table. Defining the existing approaches taken or discussed in any education policy area involves also defining and imaging what they are ‘not’. Considering alternative helps you to interrogate and reflect on the field and offer it something new.

Education orientation	Approach	Ideology
Conservative		
Liberal		
Critical		
Post-modern		

10. Workshop your conceptual framework in class, if you are using this book within a course. Alternatively, workshop it with peers, co-workers and anyone with whom you discuss your field and scholarly reflections (this may even include taxi-drivers, your neighbours, strangers on a bus... everyone has an opinion on education and how it should be run). Continue developing your orientation-based conceptual framework for your education policy area as you re-visit your collection of literature and re-read it more deeply. You may use this conceptual framework to structure a literature review for a project or paper, to analyse data in research, to stimulate your own policy making, to better shape debates and discussions, or simply to determine your own approaches to educational roles you may hold. If you choose to go on and develop a research project applying the conceptual framework, consider how some of the activities in this text have suggested different questions to consider, different data sources to explore and different methods to use to gather data.

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Chapter 6

Conclusion

Any one policy is a battleground for the four orientations of education. Any one policy represents a point in the broader political and historical debate about education wherein a dominant orientation (globally, nationally, within a state or sector) is being further affirmed, developed, tested, challenged or even usurped. Any one policy is not actually ‘one’ policy at all, but potentially re-interpreted, alternated from or opposed by any one nation/state/region, schooling sector, school, parent, teacher or student such that the result is a plethora of different (and evolving) policies in practice and experience. What is dominant within one subject area may not be dominant within another; there are more conservative aspects of education right through to aspects that are decidedly post modern. It is for education policy researchers, interpreters and implementers to map out the landscape of education policy so that the manifestation of these orientations across it in time and space may be ascertained. It is also for us as education stakeholders (of any kind) to affect the map itself, to see what needs a bit of reconstruction and better ‘town planning’, what needs preservation and protection. Part of this task involves deciding which goals are the most desirable for education overall, but also its separate aspects, in contextual and open-minded inquiry. The current dominations of particular orientations in education policy are not asserted as how it ‘should’ be, but how it ‘is’ in the current state of education trends. Considering the full breadth of other possibilities for our education policy is essential if policy critique is to have any kind of deeper meaning beyond simply looking at simplistic descriptive statistics and figures on whether or not established policies—which may or may not be useful—are being followed.

Author Biography

Tiffany Jones is a researcher and lecturer in contextual studies in education at the University of New England, Australia. A published author, she has researched values education policy, sexuality education policy, subjectivities in education policy, education theories and other themes throughout her career at universities including Griffith University, La Trobe University and UNE. The 2006 Griffith University Medal recipient, she has received several university scholarships and the 2008 Association for Women Educators' Award for her research. She has a Bachelor of Creative Arts, a Bachelor of Education with First Class Honours and a Ph.D. in Education Policy. She has liaised and been invited to consult on policy with international organisations within the education sector including UNESCO, Australian/state government and non-government bodies, and a range of educational institutions and media.