



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

*Faculty of Education*

Te Kura Toi Tangata

**Waikato Journal of Education**

Te Hautaka Mātauranga o Waikato



Volume 18, Issue 2: 2013

# WAIKATO JOURNAL OF EDUCATION TE HAUTAKA MĀTAURANGA O WAIKATO

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The *Waikato Journal of Education* is a peer refereed journal, published twice a year. This journal takes an eclectic approach to the broad field of education. It embraces creative, qualitative and quantitative methods and topics. The editorial board is currently exploring options for online publication formats to further increase authorial options.

The Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research (WMIER), which is part of the Faculty of Education, The University of Waikato, publishes the journal.

There are two major submission deadline dates: December 1 (for publication the following year in May); June 1 (for publication in the same year in November). Please submit your article or abstract to [wmier@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:wmier@waikato.ac.nz).

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Subscriptions: Within NZ \$50; Overseas NZ \$60  
Copyright: © Faculty of Education, The University of Waikato  
Publisher: Faculty of Education, The University of Waikato  
Cover design: Donn Ratana  
Printed by: Waikato Print

ISSN 1173-6135

# Waikato Journal Of Education

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## How is teacher evaluation policy enacted? The workings of performativity and micro-politics in Japanese schools

Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Faculty of Education, The University of Waikato

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This thesis is concerned with the extent to which new teacher evaluation policies and practices in Japan are about controlling teachers or represent opportunities for authentic professional development. It seeks to examine how the new teacher evaluation policies are embedded within the wider policy formation, what perspectives teachers have on the new policies and what their experiences are, and how the new teacher evaluation policies are actually being enacted in schools.

The thesis uses a range of methods to explore these concerns. For the purpose of macro analysis of the new teacher evaluation policies, it examines both primary and secondary documentation around policy development. For studying the impact of the policy in schools, it draws on data from a national survey and in-depth interviews with a sample of teachers and head teachers. In this way, it employs a mixed methods approach in which quantitative data is used to provide a general picture of how teachers experience and perceive the new teacher evaluation policies and practices and qualitative data is used to provide the depth of analysis required to look at the nature of performativity in schools.

The concept of performativity has been central to the overall investigation. The study argues for a particular reading of performativity—a work through, as opposed to work upon, perspective. This analytical lens illustrates how the new teacher evaluation policies have played a role in producing or reinforcing the mutually policing relations that lead to destabilisation of teacher's identities.

This thesis concludes that the enactment of new teacher evaluation policies has had significant indirect impacts on teachers and teachers' work by affecting modes of school management and teachers' relationships. By illustrating the usefulness of the work through perspective of performativity, it has enabled theorizing of performativity to advance. It also illuminates both congruence and variance between teacher evaluation policies as enacted in Japan and other countries. Japan's teacher evaluation is no less effective as a measure of political control than its counterparts in other countries, but it can work in a more subtle way: teacher evaluation affects, repositions, and reconstructs teachers' work and identities through affected relationships as mentioned above. This



implies that teachers as well as policymakers should develop a more broad, macro-political and critical perspective on teacher evaluation.