

査読研究ノート

Assuring Stakeholders: The Place of Teacher Professionalism within a Culture of Quality

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Abstract

*This article is an attempt to contribute to the initiative of making the concept of quality paramount in the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU) English language program and embedding it in the policies and operational plans of the program through the development of a quality culture/culture of quality. The first steps in this initiative are proposed in Blackwell's 2016 article entitled *Towards a Quality Culture in Education*. However, the theoretical framework underlying Blackwell's initiative requires clarification, and so in Part 1 of this article I explicitly address the need to create systems of shared meaning to mobilize people in the pursuit of objectives, stakeholder involvement, and faculty ownership; concepts without which it is difficult to grasp the necessity of certain elements of the quality culture initiative proposed thus far. Furthermore, neither the necessity for the development of a quality culture nor an understanding of how the development of a quality culture is likely to be successfully implemented can be achieved without a full grasp, firstly, of the contested nature of the term "quality" and, secondly, without an understanding of the source of this contestation, topics that are addressed in Part 2. Crucially, Blackwell's problematic account of quality culture and the failure of his proposed initiative to fully reflect certain fundamental elements of quality culture need to be addressed if potential conflict and resistance to the implementation of quality assurance initiatives within the APU English language program is to be avoided. The concept of quality culture has developed specifically to address and reconcile potential conflict that may arise in the implementation of quality assurance measures, particularly in relation to the tension between managerialism and bureaucratization on the one hand, and teacher autonomy and professionalism on the other. Nonetheless, the fundamental consideration of teacher professionalism is overlooked in Blackwell's account of quality culture, with leadership at*

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the coordinator level instead being paramount, and faculty ownership being accounted for by mere involvement or participation rather than any meaningful autonomy. To resolve this situation, I propose the establishment of a process of enquiry and negotiation in which management and staff make their understanding of professionalism explicit and come to a workable agreement about “quality”.

Key terms

quality assurance, quality culture/culture of quality, management theory, teacher professionalism, organization theory, stakeholder theory, ownership

Introduction

Quality Assurance at APU and the Development of a Culture of Quality in the APU English Language Program

The adoption of Quality Assurance measures at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU) reflects the impact that excellence indicators have on the perception of the value of higher educational institutions and their comparative attractiveness, as well as the justification that excellence indicators can provide for taxpayer-funded public investment (Paradeise & Theonig, 2015, p. 12). In an article entitled “Towards a Quality Culture in Language Education”, the Director of the English Language Program at APU, James Blackwell (2016, p. 1), addresses the importance of developing a quality framework at APU in light of the Top Global University (or SGU) project, and gives some preliminary recommendations on how to address the issue of quality in language education programs at APU. The central thesis of Blackwell’s article is that the implementation of QA processes is problematic:

simply creating formal and structural measures for implementing quality assurance will not lead to higher quality outcomes unless institutions ‘breathe life’ into their quality assurance frameworks by more closely involving those who are tasked with their implementation, i.e. faculty and teachers. (Blackwell, 2016, p. 12)

Blackwell (2016, p. 2) states that the need exists for QA to be mediated through the implementation of processes developed by faculty and staff and reflecting shared values, beliefs, expectations and commitment to quality. In short, he argues that quality outcomes cannot be achieved without the concurrent development of a *quality culture/culture of*

quality (Blackwell, 2016, p. 12).

Blackwell's account of quality culture centers on three documents: the European University Association (EUA)'s 2006 *Report on the Three Rounds of the Quality Culture Project*; Gover and Loukkola's 2015 *Eureka Moments! Top Tips for Internal Quality Assurance*; and Bendermacher at alia's 2015 Meeting Abstract discussing the main elements of quality culture, entitled *Unravelling Elements of Quality Culture(s) in Higher Education*. Gover and Loukkola (2015, p. 9) note the "wide consensus that given the specificities of higher education, the mere existence of formal and structural measures alone will not lead to high quality", and identify two distinct elements in quality culture following the EUA document: a cultural/psychological element, and a structural/managerial element; a distinction also observed in Bendermacher et alia, although they refer to them as dimensions rather than elements, and identify ten elements within these two dimensions that are distinctive to quality cultures (Bendermacher et. al., 2015; Blackwell, 2016, p. 13: see Table 1).

Table 1: structural and cultural/psychological elements indicative of a quality culture (Blackwell, 2016 p. 13)

Key elements of the structural dimension are:

- i. Embedded quality management strategies and policies
- ii. Training and development
- iii. Clear responsibilities
- iv. Effective communication
- v. Implementation time
- vi. Stakeholder involvement

Key elements of the cultural/psychological dimension are as follows:

- vii. Transformational & quality-supportive leadership
 - viii. Shared values
 - ix. Faculty ownership & commitment
 - x. Teamwork
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Blackwell then proposes five initiatives as first steps in the development of a quality culture: conducting quality training for course coordinators so that they can provide quality-supportive leadership to teachers in their sections; holding annual Faculty Development workshops to discuss shared values for quality in the language education programs; increasing faculty ownership by involving faculty in the design and implementation of quality initiatives; expanding stakeholder surveying to identify areas for quality improvement; and improving quality by increasing the exchange of best practices for teaching (Blackwell, 2016, pp. 14–15).

Despite the welcome focus on more inclusive conceptualizations of organizations and management approaches, Blackwell's initiative would benefit from explicit attention being given to key concepts that are only alluded to in his article, specifically the need to create systems of shared meaning to mobilize people in the pursuit of objectives, stakeholder involvement, and faculty ownership (Blackwell, 2016, p. 13), which I examine in Part 1 of this article in the sections on Culture as a Metaphor for the Organization, Stakeholders and Stakeholder Theory, and Ownership respectively. Without a more complete understanding of these concepts, it is difficult to grasp the necessity of certain elements of Blackwell's proposed quality culture initiative. Moreover, neither the necessity for the development of a quality culture nor an understanding of how the development of a quality culture is or is not likely to be successfully implemented can be achieved without a full grasp, firstly, of the contested nature of the term "quality" and, secondly, without an understanding of the source of this contestation, which I examine in Part 2, in the sections on Definitions and Perceptions of Quality, and Quality and Teacher Professionalism respectively. Crucially, Blackwell's problematic account of quality culture and the failure of his proposed initiative to fully reflect certain fundamental elements of quality culture need to be addressed if potential conflict and resistance to the implementation of quality assurance initiatives within the APU English language program are to be avoided. I address this issue in the section on Understanding and Facilitating Quality Culture: Identifying and Negotiating Key Areas of Contestation. In this section I also propose that quality culture can be understood as particularly concerned with reconciling tensions between managerialism and bureaucratization on the one hand and teacher autonomy and professionalism on the other. Finally, I conclude by proposing teachers and management beginning the development of implementing QA processes in the APU English language program by entering into a process of enquiry and negotiation about how to nurture a quality culture in which the concept of teacher professionalism is central.

Part 1. Conceptualizing and Creating Shared Systems of Meaning in Organizations: Culture, Stakeholders and Ownership

Culture as a Metaphor for the Organization

Although the idealized understanding of an organization is as "a rationally designed, thoroughly structured social entity whose members work cooperatively towards an explicitly stated common goal", organizational life is also characterized by ambiguities and

paradoxes (Staber, 2013, p. 3). This is well documented in bureaucratic organizations, for example, in which strict rules, procedures and chains of command lead to the marginalization of workers who might employ innovation to address particular situations more efficiently and effectively, simply because these workers are not seen as embodying the principles of reliability and consistency that are valued within the bureaucratic framework (Lune, 2010, p. 70). The irrationality of bureaucracy is also evidenced in the way that bureaucracy tends to yield a complex system of negotiations through which workers and management manipulate each other. In short, “a highly bureaucratized organization is able to function with just as much arbitrary behavior, unpredictability, and personal interest as any aristocracy” (Lune, 2010, pp. 70–71). As such, it is necessary that conventional understandings of what the organization is and should be are revisited, and that the scope of the theoretical lenses with which we study or think about organizations is enlarged (Staber, 2013, p. 3).

Since the 1980s there has been a growing realization among organization and management practitioners, theorists and researchers that creating appropriate systems of shared meaning that can mobilize the efforts of people in pursuit of desired aims and objectives is key to effective management (Morgan, 1997, p. 147). Metaphors - “implied comparisons, used to represent an ambiguous concept in terms of another, more familiar concept” (Staber, 2013, p. 13) - have been used throughout the development of administrative theory and practice as a tool with which to frame organizations (Smircich, 1983, p. 340). Metaphors are fundamental to the expression of goals and can be employed to help realize goals by highlighting “their ideographic, interrelated and evolutionary nature” (Coulter & Zaltman, 2003, p. 260). Furthermore, metaphors can also be valuable as a sensitizing device, in that they encourage people to focus on what might be considered essential as well as to question conventional assumptions (Staber, 2013, p. 14): “Implicit in metaphor there is always a concept of stretching, of tension, of straining for new meanings” (Kortens, 1998, p. 15).

Employing *culture* as a metaphor for organizations highlights how organizations ultimately rest in shared systems of meaning, hence in the actions and interpretative schemes that create and re-create that meaning (Morgan, 1997, p. 142). However, if we wish to grasp the full implications of culture as a metaphor for organizations, it is important to differentiate between two different conceptions of organization and culture

that are prevalent at the intersection of organization theory and culture theory, namely “culture as a variable” and “culture as a root metaphor.” In the first conception, the social world is seen as expressing itself in terms of general and contingent relationships among its more stable elements, which are referred to as variables, and the agenda that drives research into culture as a variable is the search for predictable means for organizational control: “how to mold and shape internal culture in particular ways and how to change culture, consistent with managerial purposes” (Smircich, 1983, pp. 346–347). In the second conception, in which culture is employed as a root metaphor, the phenomenon of organization is explored as subjective experience, in order to search for patterns that make organized action possible: “the social or organizational world exists only as a pattern of symbolic relationships and meanings sustained through the continued processes of human interaction” (Smircich, 1983, pp. 348–353). These two contrasting approaches to organizational culture are what Morgan draws attention to when he differentiates between

attempts to create networks of shared meaning that link key members of an organization around visions, values, and codes of practice...and the use of culture as a manipulative tool...to create an Orwellian world...where the culture controls rather than expresses human character. (Morgan, 1997, p. 151)

Blackwell’s assertion that only the involvement of faculty and staff will “breathe life” into quality assurance frameworks appears to be consistent with Morgan’s view of an organization as the enactment of a shared reality: “organizations are in essence socially constructed realities that are as much in the minds of their members as they are in concrete structures, rules, and relations” (Morgan, 1997, pp. 141–142).

Culture as a metaphor for organization can also be examined in relation to the concept of quality itself, for example in relation to Total Quality Management (TQM), one of the most prominent manifestations of the developments in management theory beginning in the 1980s mentioned above, and with the “quality revolution” specifically (Spencer, 1994, p. 446). The core ideas of TQM- the values to be sought in TQM programs and the distinctive set of interventions to promote those values- were outlined over the course of a number of publications by W. Edwards Deming, Joseph Juran, and Kaoru Ishikawa (Hackman & Wageman, 1995, p. 309), three of the seven so-called “gurus of quality” (Ghobadian and Speller, 1994, p. 53). However, as Spencer (1994, p. 448) points out, TQM

is not a cut-and-dried reality but an amorphous philosophy that is continually enacted by managers, consultants and researchers who make choices based not only on their understandings of the principles of TQM but also on their own conceptual frameworks concerning the nature of organizations.

Spencer examines TQM practice from the perspective of three conceptions of organization. Firstly, he points out that some managers might choose- consciously or unconsciously- to apply TQM *mechanistically*; that is, as a way to establish processes that value efficiency, conformity and compliance, consistent with the traditional view of the organization as a tool or machine in which life must be routinized (Spencer, 1994, pp. 448–452). Secondly, managers whose approach to TQM is grounded in the *organismic* model conceptualize the organization as an organism whose survival can only be safeguarded by growth that is in turn assured by making all employees' interests subordinate to a common goal (Spencer, 1994, pp. 454–456). Thirdly, managers who employ the *cultural* model as a way of understanding organizations do so out of a belief that humans, as distinct from other animals, have the capacity for creating and employing symbols simultaneously as the basis for discourse and as a means of developing their individual lives: "In essence, culture is described as a *metaphor* [emphasis added] for the shared symbols and meanings of organizational participants" (Spencer, 1994, p. 462). As Spencer points out, not only does this model carry with it the implication that the organization is enacted or created by organization members (see also Morgan, 1997, p. 141), it highlights the need for attention to be given to a range of stakeholders (Spencer, 1994, p. 463; see also Blackwell, 2016, pp. 12–15).

Stakeholders and Stakeholder Theory

The word stakeholder appeared first in management literature in 1963, in an internal memorandum at the then Stanford Research Institute, in which it was defined as "those groups without whose support the organization would cease to exist" (Freeman, 1983, p. 89; Freeman et. al., 2010, pp. 30–31). In what is considered the landmark publication in the field of stakeholder theory, Edward Freeman's *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*, Freeman (1984, p. 1) proposed that the then emerging concept of stakeholders in an organization could be used to enrich the way we think about organizations. Freeman's own definition of stakeholder was "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives" (Freeman, 1984, p. 46). As articulated by

Freeman, stakeholder theory was in part a response to shifts in the business environment that rendered the existing framework of the firm inappropriate: “We manage based on our understanding of the past, rather than the future, and in response to the business environment of yesteryear, rather than today” (Freeman, 1986, p. 1). However, it would be a mistake to assume that it was at that time concerned with corporate social responsibility; it was fundamentally concerned with how to be a more effective executive, particularly in relation to the problem of value creation and trade, *not* with the integration of ethical and social issues into the field of corporate strategy (Freeman et. al., 2010, pp. 58–9). There is little in Freeman’s original formulation to suggest that stakeholder theory concerned the problem of what is *morally* right for a business to do (Mansell, 2013, p. 31). Nonetheless, interest in the concept of stakeholders has burgeoned among academics as the view that business has wider responsibilities than simply to engage in open and free competition without deception or fraud has become more widespread (Friedman & Miles, 2006, p. 3). One reason is the continued turbulence of the business world; the profound changes precipitated by the rise of globalization, the influence of information technology, the demise of centralized state planning, and increased societal awareness of the impact of business on communities and nations (Freeman et. al., 2010, p. 3). Although the stakeholder concept has come to be used in a variety of contexts (Friedman & Miles, 2006, p. 3), its contemporary popularity reflects the strongly contested role of the business corporation in contemporary society: “The increasing portion of the global economy directly under the control of corporations has...caused an ethical outcry and led to calls for corporations to be held democratically to account in the same manner as national governments” (Mansell, 2013, p. 1). As such, stakeholder theory has developed into a discourse that theorizes about the social responsibilities of business and generates academic debate on this issue (Mansell, 2013 p. 3), and at its broadest and most ambitious level represents a redefinition of how all organizations should be conceptualized: “The organization should be thought of as a grouping of stakeholders and the purpose of the organization should be to manage their interests, needs and viewpoints” (Friedman & Miles, 2006, p. 1).

Ownership

Another key aspect of the cultural/psychological dimension of quality culture is a consideration of “faculty ownership and commitment” (Blackwell, 2016, p. 13). As Pierce, Kostova and Dirks (2001, p. 299) observe, feelings of ownership or possession are innate to the human condition, can be directed at both material and immaterial objects; and have

significant behavioral, emotional and psychological consequences. They suggest that feelings of ownership are facilitated by three basic human motives: the need for humans to be able to explore and alter their environment; ensuring the continuity of oneself across time through self-definition and expression; and the desire to possess a certain territory or space (Pierce, Kostova & Dirks, 2001, p. 300). Both the concept of financial ownership and the concept of psychological ownership have been subjects of interest in management and organization studies due to their perceived consequences for organizational members and the organization itself (Vandewalle, Van Dyne & Kostova, 1995, p. 210). Psychological ownership, to which quality culture appeals, is worth consideration in the context of the development of a quality culture because of its relationship with employee attitudes and behaviors (Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004, p. 443), and because it provides insight into why, and the conditions under which, individuals both promote and resist change or innovation (Pierce, Kostova & Dirks, 2001, p. 303). Empirical studies have shown, for example, that psychological ownership is positively related to extrarole behavior, i.e. discretionary behavior not formally rewarded by the organization (Vandewalle, Van Dyne and Kostova, 1995, pp. 210–212), supports self-efficacy, accountability, sense of belongingness and self-identity (Avey, J. B. et. al., 2009, p. 173), and is positively linked to employee attitudes, as well as explaining variance in organization-based self-esteem and organizational citizenship behavior over and above the effects of job satisfaction and organizational

Table 2: Comparison of psychological ownership with commitment, identification, and internalization (Pierce, Kostova & Dirks, 2001, p. 306)

Dimensions of Distinctiveness	Psychological Ownership	Commitment	Identification	Internalization
1. Conceptual core	Possessiveness	Desire to remain affiliated	Use of element of organization's identity to define oneself	Shared goals or values
2. Questions answered for individual	What do I feel is mine?	Should I maintain membership?	Who am I?	What do I believe?
3. Motivational bases ^b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Efficacy/effectance ● Self-identity ● Need for place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Security ● Belongingness ● Beliefs and values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attraction ● Affiliation ● Self-enhancement ● Holism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Need to be right ● Beliefs and values
4. Development	Active imposition of self on organization	Decision to maintain membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Categorization of self with organization ● Affiliation ● Emulation 	Adoption of organization's goals or values
5. Type of state	Affective/cognitive	Affective	Cognitive/perceptual	Cognitive/objective
6. Select consequences ^c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rights and responsibilities ● Promotion of/resistance to change ● Frustration, stress ● Refusal to share ● Worker integration ● Alienation ● Stewardship and OCB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● OCB ● Intent to leave ● Attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support for organization and participation in activities ● Intent to remain ● Frustration/stress ● Alienation ● Anomie 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● OCB ● Intent to leave ● In-role behaviors
a. Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Right to information ● Right to voice 	● None	● None	● None
b. Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Burden sharing ● Active and responsible voice ● Becoming informed ● Protecting ● Caring for and nurturing ● Growing/enhancing 	● None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain the status of the admired attribute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Goal and value protection

commitment (Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004, p. 439). In summary, psychological ownership “is key to work-related attitudes (commitment and satisfaction), self-concept (organizational-based self-esteem), and behaviors (performance and organizational citizenship)” (Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004, p. 443). Psychological ownership, however, rooted as it is in possessiveness, is conceptually distinct from the constructs of “commitment”, “identification”, and “internalization”, as illustrated in Table 2 (Pierce, Kostova & Dirks, 2001, p. 306).

One area that the concept of psychological ownership highlights, that these other concepts do not, is the organizationally dysfunctional behaviors, or pathological effects, that psychological ownership can engender among both employees and management, such as “failing to delegate authority and share information; impeding the implementation of participative management, teamwork and cooperation; engaging in sabotage or other deviant behaviors; and feeling frustration, stress, and alienation, as well as physical and psychological health effects” (Pierce, Kostova & Dirks, p. 304). Many of these pathological effects can be understood in terms of “territoriality”, which occurs when individuals who have formed feelings of ownership over informational or social objects within the organization anticipate infringement upon these objects and “engage in protective territoriality to maintain levels of ownership and to communicate ownership to potential threats and the social unit as a whole” (Avey, J. B. et. al., 2009, p. 176). Although territoriality may also promote positive outcomes, its potential to promote politicking and to restrict transparency and information sharing must be accounted for when promoting psychological ownership (Avey, J. B. et. al., 2009, p. 176).

Part 2. Quality and Professionalism: Conflicting Visions of Education

Definitions and Perceptions of Quality

Quality continues to be invoked by and appealed to among managers in contemporary organizations more than perhaps any other mantra, in spite of it being used to describe a wide variety of phenomena and having multiple and often muddled definitions (Reeves & Bednar, 1994, p. 419). Green (1994, pp. 13–16) has pointed out five approaches to the definition of quality: the traditional concept of quality; quality as the conformance to standards; quality as meeting customers’ stated needs; quality as effectiveness in achieving institutional goals; and quality as fitness for purpose. The diversity of definitions of quality is mirrored by its numerous organizational manifestations in higher education institutions:

organizational practices related to quality can be found in various types of national quality assurance schemes (accreditations, evaluations, audits and assessments), but also...in the form of institutional quality assurance systems where evaluation systems, information systems and management systems are combined in different ways. (Stensaker, 2007, p. 100)

This inconsistency of definitions and organizational practices highlights both the symbolic dimension of quality and the influence of fads and fashions in spreading and implementing innovations (Stensaker, 2007, p. 101). It should be remembered, however, that many studies have demonstrated the difficulties that higher education institutions experience when trying to adapt externally initiated reforms and management trends (Stensaker, 2007, p. 101). Newton, for example, over multiple studies, examined academics' responses to quality assurance and quality monitoring. Initially, he conducted a single-site case study that highlighted the gap between the intentions underpinning the implementation of quality assurance procedures at a higher education institution in the U.K. and its actual outcomes (Newton, 2000 p. 153). Even more compelling are the results of his multi-phase investigation into how academics have attempted to make sense of the "quality revolution" in U.K. higher education. This study highlights the "distinction between the dominant 'formal' meanings of quality...and the 'situated' perceptions' of quality revealed by 'close-up' study of academics working with quality systems on a day-to-day basis" (Newton, 2002, p. 39; see table 3).

As Table 3 illustrates so vividly, many critiques of quality assurance view it from the perspective of negative impacts on higher education, particularly from the point of view of

Table 3: Illustrating contrasting meanings of quality (Newton, 2002, p. 47)

Dominant formal meanings of 'quality' in the early 1990s	Situated perceptions of 'quality' of front-line academics: from mid-1990s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality as 'perfection' or 'consistency' • Quality as 'value for money' • Quality as 'total quality' • Quality as 'management commitment' • Quality as 'culture change' • Quality as 'peer review' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality as 'failure to close the loop' • Quality as 'burden' • Quality as 'lack of mutual trust' • Quality as 'suspicion of management motives' • Quality as a culture of 'getting by' • Quality as 'impression management' and 'game-playing' • Quality and 'constraints on teamwork' • Quality as 'discipline and technology' • Quality as 'ritualism' and 'tokenism' • Quality as 'front-line resistance'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality as 'transforming the learner' • Quality as 'fitness for purpose' 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality as 'exceptional' or 'excellence' • Quality as 'customer satisfaction' 	

assaults on academic freedom by managerial power and the bureaucratization of academic processes (Singh, 2010, p. 192). Anderson (2006, p. 161) points out that, despite being devoted to quality in research and teaching, academics continue to have an inimical attitude towards quality assurance processes. It is worth bearing in mind her contention that until a mutually-agreed upon understanding of the contested concept of quality can be reached by management and academic staff, quality processes will be treated by academics “as games to be played and systems to be fed” (Anderson, 2006, p. 161).

Quality and Teacher Professionalism

In order to understand why this negative view of quality exists, and why the preoccupation with quality in education has tended to become associated with managerialism and bureaucracy, it is instructive, at the risk of simplification, to distinguish between two broad views of education: education as commodity and education as public good (White, 1998, p. 135). The former goes hand in hand with managerialism and bureaucratization, and is characterized by “a hierarchy of authority, a system of rules and impersonality”, while the latter is associated with professionalism within which the individual practitioner is given as much autonomy as possible in order to exercise his or her skills, knowledge and judgment (White, 1998, p. 135). Furthermore, within this model, professionalism “stands as an ideal-type opposed to the logic of the market and bureaucracy” (Wilkinson, 2007, p. 381), and represents a normative, productive form of power, whilst managerialism and bureaucratization appear unproductive and constraining (Kolsaker, 2008, p. 523).

However, what it means to be professional, to enact professionalism or to pursue professionalization is not universally agreed upon or understood (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2008, p. 4). In the process of the standards and accountability movement that began in earnest in the 1990s, the term “professional” became uncoupled from the concept of a “profession” and assumed “a confluence of two modes of organizing work: the bureaucratic and the professional. In the process of this confluence management has become the more powerful stream and ‘professionalism’ has to a degree become assimilated into managerialism” (Hoyle, 2008, p. 290), rendering professionalism an “essentially contested concept” (Hoyle, 2008, p. 286). Furthermore, teacher professionalization seems to be developing in certain respects but declining in others:

some parts of the teacher's work are becoming *reprofessionalized* in ways that involve broader tasks, greater complexity, more sophisticated judgment, and collective decision-making among colleagues, while other parts of the work are becoming *deprofessionalized* in terms of more pragmatic training, reduced discretion over goals and purposes, and detailed learning outcomes prescribed by others. (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2008, p. 3)

There is a wealth of literature detailing teachers' misgivings about the political and administrative interest in codifying and applying professional standards to the teaching force that has emerged in recent decades. These misgivings are well summarized by Carr (1989, p. 1), who says, "*Teaching Quality* may use the rhetoric of professionalism, but in reality this amounts to giving teachers little more than a right to exercise a limited discretion within a restrictive framework of bureaucratic rules and managerial controls". These misgivings are explored in a range of formulations. Breen (2007, pp. 1067–1068) traces the appropriation of teacher professionalism and professional development to a loss of certainty in former grand narratives of ELT:

Traditional values and community ties that formerly sustained our sense of stability have been replaced by multiple sources of authority wherein increasingly intrusive media articulate on our behalf what we should regard as 'common sense', economically desirable, and politically advantageous.

Torrance and Forde (2016, p. 112) express ambivalence about the "reprofessionalization" of teachers in Scotland through educational policy aimed at enhancing teacher quality, noting that while the policy appears to promote teacher agency, there is concern that it is also designed to determine professional practice within the confines of current policy demands. Beck (2008, p. 119) argues that the transformation of teaching is "one of de-professionalization in the guise of re-professionalization". He examines the discourse and policies of governments in England since 1979 designed to transform teaching into a "modernized profession", and suggests that both the concept and substance of professionalism have been appropriated in an attempt to silence debate about competing conceptions of professionalism (Beck, 2008 p. 119). More precisely, he argues that certain types of generic pedagogic modes- in this instance the specification by the Training and Development Agency for Schools of new "standards" for both initial teacher training and

teachers' subsequent career progression- are insidious in their capacity to marginalize and even silence competing concepts of professions and professionalism (Beck, 2009 p. 12). This thesis is supported by the sociological work of Fournier (1999, p. 280), who examines the appeal to professionalism as a tool of control, or "disciplinary mechanism". Intriguingly, Fournier's work reveals that the dichotomy between professionalism and managerialism manifests itself even among some employees in fields not traditionally associated with the professions, who reject the model of professionalism proposed by management, but who nonetheless take up the vocabulary of professionalism

to refer to their desire to remain in technical areas of work rather than climb the greasy pole of management... professionalism was seen as the preferred (and, to them, implicitly more moral) alternative to entering the corrupted world of enterprise and management. (Fournier, 1999, pp. 301–302)

Sachs (2001, pp. 149–159) identifies two competing discourses of professionalism shaping the professional identity of teachers: a democratic professionalism, in which teacher knowledge and expertise is recognized and rewarded; and a managerialist professionalism, which is "being reinforced by employing authorities through their policies on teacher professional development with their emphasis on accountability". Sachs (2001, p. 159) also expresses concern about education policies and practices developing within the metaphor or structure of the market. Particularly troubling within the context of an attempt to normalize quality assurance processes is the emergence of a discourse of resistance, refusal, interruption and disruption of the "New Professionalism" (Herr, 2018; Anderson & Cohen, 2018). Arguably the most concise and insightful formulation with which to understand the tension brought to the fore by the standards and accountability movement is articulated by Evans (2011), who distinguishes between "enacted" professionalism and "demanded" professionalism. Evans (2011, p. 868) examines teacher professionalism as "demanded" by reforms in England, finding it to be focused predominately on teachers' behavior, particularly insofar as it applies "the narrowest of definitions of teaching as potentially observable interaction with pupils". She contrasts this with the "enacted" professionalism likely to be prescribed by teachers, which involves greater intellectualization and emotional ownership; a focus "on how they think and what attitudes they hold, including what occupational psychology traditionally categorises as job-related attitudes, such as morale, job satisfaction and motivation" (Evans, 2011, p. 868).

Understanding and Facilitating Quality Culture: Identifying and Negotiating Key Areas of Contestation

Returning to quality culture, Blackwell (2006, p. 13, following Bendermacher et. al., 2015) summarizes the interaction between the elements in the structural dimension and the cultural/psychological dimension as follows: “Research into quality culture also suggests that, leadership, commitment and communication stood out as central binding concepts in the interaction between these elements”. However, these ideas have been developed and modified in Bendermacher et alia’s 2017 article *Unravelling Quality Culture in Higher Education: A Realist Review*. Regarding the central binding concepts in the interaction between the elements, leadership binds the structural/managerial and cultural/psychological elements “through creating trust and shared understanding”, while communication serves as the second binding element by facilitating the distribution of strategies, policies, responsibilities, and evaluative information, as well as accounting for diverging orientations between staff (Bendermacher et al., 2017, p. 52). However, “commitment” is treated differently; in the article, the authors define commitment as one of four “mechanisms” involving relations (human interaction) and agency (reasons for action). These mechanisms are: *commitment*, which emerges from providing incentives to staff, involving them in organizational decision making, alignment of staff and management values and an appeal to staff expertise; *shared ownership*, which reflects the mutual responsibility for quality culture development, facilitates peer support, and reinforces teacher identity; *staff knowledge*, which is essential for identifying and resolving bottlenecks in teaching and learning; and *staff empowerment*, which holds that staff have the opportunity to initiate educational improvements, as well as to bring their experience and expertise into practice (Bendermacher et. al., 2017, p. 52). Again we see teacher professionalism and autonomy emerging as a central concern in the literature on quality initiatives within the educational sphere.

Secondly, while Blackwell (2016, p. 13) describes exact definitions of quality culture as *elusive*, it might be more accurate to describe definitions of quality culture as *taken for granted*: “Those networks that defined the concept came approximately to the same conclusion. As one network expressed it, quality culture refers to an organizational culture that intends to enhance quality permanently” (EUA, 2006, p. 10) and is characterized by the two dimensions (or elements in the EUA literature) noted above. As long as the meaning of quality culture has a taken-for-granted nature, it is not conducive to linking

quality to the fundamental processes of teaching and learning, and is likely to facilitate “processes more dominated by belief, faith and ideology than processes more characterized by knowledge, analyses of empirical studies of the elements that are important for a better description and understanding of such a culture” (Harvey & Stensaker, 2008, p. 427). However, highly instructive definitions of quality culture *do* exist, not least in the work of, again, Bendermacher et alia (2017, p. 52), who define quality culture as “a specific kind of organisational subculture which overlaps with other subcultures based on shared educational values of its members, a people-oriented focus and valuing of autonomy and professionalism”. This definition suggests the concept of quality culture has developed *specifically* to address and reconcile potential conflict that may arise in the implementation of quality assurance measures, *particularly* in relation to the tension between managerialism and bureaucratization on the one hand, and teacher autonomy and professionalism on the other. Although absent from Blackwell’s article, such an interpretation is consistent with literature regarding resistance to the implementation of QA processes, the distinction between the two dimensions of quality culture, and accounts of the interaction between the elements that make up these dimensions.

In summary, the fundamental consideration of teacher professionalism is overlooked in Blackwell’s account of quality culture, with leadership at the coordinator level instead being paramount, and faculty ownership being accounted for by mere involvement or participation rather than any meaningful autonomy, including staff being empowered to initiate educational improvements (Blackwell, 2016, 12–14). This is despite the fact that, as we have seen, quality culture is a concept grounded in the necessity of teachers and academics being assured that managerial considerations are *not* being privileged over teacher professionalism and autonomy. To be sure, Blackwell’s focus on quality culture and his implicit appeal to ownership and progressive conceptualizations of organizations in formulating initiatives to improve the quality of education in the English Language program at APU is an exciting development that is likely to be welcomed by teachers. However, teachers, as stakeholders, must feel assured that the development of a quality culture is proceeding in good faith: “Resistance to quality culture itself will be endemic if teachers see quality culture as a managerialist fad, as a means to reduce their academic freedom or as in any other way disempowering” (Harvey & Stensaker, 2008, pp. 438–439). As such, any initiatives must be implemented on the basis of clear conceptualizations and accurate definitions that can, as much as possible, be mutually agreed upon. I hope that

the above discussion can help facilitate this. Further to this discussion I would propose, following the work of Rowley (1996, p. 15) and Bendermacher et alia (2017, p. 53), who argue that the development of psychological contracts between staff and their managers is key to motivation, that teachers and managers on the APU English language program consider entering into a “psychological contract” to begin the development of implementing meaningful QA processes. Such a contract would be “based on a process of enquiry and negotiation in which management and staff make their expectations explicit and come to a workable agreement on how to nurture a quality culture” (Bendermacher et. al., 2017, p. 53), rather than simply treating quality culture as a concept whose meaning is taken for granted. I would also suggest that there is a heuristic case for placing the concept of teacher professionalism front and center in such enquiry and negotiation, in that it provides access to, and thereby enhances our understanding of, “a particular configuration of educational issues relating to knowledge, skill, power, status, ethics, control, practice, development and leadership” (Hoyle, 2008, p. 287).

Conclusion

The concept of quality culture brings an important dimension into the quality assurance setting; that structures are not enough to enhance quality, hence the need to address the cultural/psychological dimension (Harvey & Stensaker, 2008, p. 438; also Gover & Loukkala, 2015, p. 9; EUA, 2006, p. 10; Bendermacher et. al., 2015; Blackwell, 2016, p. 13). However, quality culture initiatives must be implemented on the basis of clear conceptualizations and accurate definitions that can, as much as possible, be mutually agreed upon. By explicitly addressing the institutional and managerial concepts implicit in the QA initiatives proposed for the APU English language program, clarifying the sources of resistance to the implementation of QA processes on the part of teachers more historically, identifying problematic aspects in the representation of the concept of quality culture that inform the initiatives proposed as a first step towards establishing a quality framework in the APU English language program, and proposing the establishment of a dialogue between teachers and management that can reconcile competing views of professionalism, I hope this article may make some contribution to developing a genuine quality of culture within the APU English language program.

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