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The discursive positioning of graduating teachers in accreditation of teacher education programs

Abstract

This paper uses discourse analysis techniques associated with Foucauldian archaeology to examine a teacher education accreditation document from Australia to reveal how graduating teachers are constructed through the discourses presented. The findings reveal a discursive site of contestation within the document itself and a mismatch between the identified policy discourses and those from the academic archive. The authors suggest that rather than contradictory representations of what constitutes graduating teacher quality and professionalism, what is needed is an accreditation process that agrees on constructions of graduate identity and professional practice that enact an intellectual and reflexive form of professionalism.

Keywords: accreditation, Foucault, program standards, professionalism, teacher standards

1. Introduction

First published in April 2011 by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), the *Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and procedures* (AITSL, 2011) outlines the requirements against which Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs are assessed. The national system of accreditation has three integrated elements: (1) the graduate teacher standards which make explicit the knowledge, skills and attributes expected of graduating teachers from an accredited program; (2) program standards which describe the features of high quality ITE programs ensuring that

the graduate standards can be achieved; and, (3) the national accreditation process which details the establishment and composition of accreditation panels and their processes for assessment and reporting.

Standards research to date has mainly focussed around programs and practices associated with primary and secondary education ([Author 1], 2011; [Author 1], [Author 2], & [Colleague], 2012; Clarke & Moore, 2013; Darling-Hammond, 2001; Hargreaves, 2000; Ingvarson, 2010; Mahony & Hextall, 2000; Ní Chróinín, Tormey, & O'Sullivan, 2012; Sachs, 2003; Tang, Cheng, & So, 2006) with limited research at the tertiary level. Whilst there have been many studies around quality assurance procedures in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) particularly centred on European universities (see, for example, Billing, 2004; Brown, 2004; Dill & Beerkens, 2013; Frank, Kurth & Mironowicz, 2012), none specifically comment on the use of standards in faculties of education. There have, however, been two Australian studies of this ilk: McArdle's (2010) study which outlined a roadmap used by one faculty of education in reconceptualising their undergraduate curriculum program in response to the Queensland College of Teachers' (QCT) standards, and Hudson's (2009) quantitative study which measured the perceptions of science pre-service teachers' development against the same standards. However, neither is based on the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL, 2012), the current standards document in circulation. This dearth of research on the current standards/accreditation document at the tertiary level is problematic given the high stakes for graduates seeking employment as teachers. Using discourse analysis techniques associated with Foucauldian archaeology, this paper therefore presents the findings of an examination of the policy document used in Australia to accredit ITE programs.

The opening section outlines the theoretical/methodological framework for this study detailing our interpretation of Foucauldian archaeological analysis (for a detailed explanation

of the methodology see [Author 1] & [Colleague], 2014) as a rigorous technique to examine the shaping of discourse in the *Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and procedures* (AITSL, 2011) policy document. Following the archaeological approach, the significant voices of authority from the enunciative field of professionalism and teacher quality/ professional standards are overviewed to highlight competing discourses from the academic archive. Then, the policy document is examined for statements that are the same (Step 1) but also ones that are different (Step 2) before the policy and academic discourses are cross analysed (Step 3) to see what transformations (if any) need to occur in accreditation processes (Step 4). The recent *Staff in Australia's schools 2013* report (Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), 2014) claimed that over 50% of early career teachers felt underprepared to enter the classroom. Therefore this study is timely to investigate if the accreditation process provides clear guidelines of what constitutes a quality, professional graduating teacher who is classroom ready.

2. Theoretical/methodological framework

According to Michel Foucault, discourses encompass more than just what is said; they are also about what is thought, who can speak, when and with what authority (Foucault, 1995). The meanings of discourses are therefore not limited to spoken language but also arise from institutions and power relations. It therefore becomes necessary to ascertain who has the authority to speak (authorial intentions) (Ball, 1993) in accreditation discourses and indeed whose voices are privileged in the creation of policy that shapes the professional landscape for graduating teachers. Where policy is concerned, Gale reminds us of the interdiscursivity of discourses where dominant policy actors or "key players" (Dwyer, 1995, p. 476) serve to "oust the dominance of others" (Gale, 1999, p. 400) and a particular group's participation can

be easily excluded and negated (Freeland, 1994). In this way, only "certain voices are heard at any point in time" (Ball, 1994, p. 16). Furthermore, Ball (1990) articulated how policy assembles collections of related policies, exercising power through the production of truth and knowledge as discourse. Ball referred to this as "intertextual compatibility" (Ball, 1990) so the use of supporting texts is also noted. Therefore, the authoritative texts and key players in the accreditation process are outlined in the findings section before the four steps of archaeological analysis to reveal the dominant discourses begins.

Step One in the archaeological analysis is an examination of the accreditation document for ITE looking for isomorphism or "sameness" in the statements. According to Foucault (1972), statements are the atoms or elementary units of discourse so it is important to pay particular attention to the continuities between statements as well as counting the frequency of terms and words (repeatability) and examining their arrangement and co-location within statements. Ball (1990) maintained that certain possibilities of thought are constructed by how words are ordered, combined, displaced and excluded. When statements cohere and make core repeatable claims of knowledge, they form discursive practices (or regimes of truth).

Discourses become "discursive practices" or "regimes of truth" as they convey the message about what are normal, establishing criteria (the standards/accreditation process) against which pre-service education courses are evaluated. Foucault defines "regimes of truth" as "the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power" are "attached to the true" (Foucault, 1994, p. 132). He elaborates by saying that what needs to be looked for is the status of the truth – does the truth rest on fragile ground, "crumbling soil" (Foucault, 1972, p. 137) or on solid foundations? What allows the accreditation document to be read as an unproblematic statement of fact?

Step Two uncovered irruptions, discontinuities, or distances between statements (fields of initial differentiation) within the document. Foucault (1972) referred to this as the analysis of "contradictions" (p. 149) and maintained that contradictions should be described as "they are not appearances to be overcome, nor secret principles to be uncovered" (p. 151). Therefore, in this step (Step 2) any words, phrases or statements which contradict the main discourses identified in Step 1 are highlighted.

Foucault (1972) further maintained that archaeology is a comparative analysis that is not intended to reduce the diversity of discourses. Rather, the intention is to have a diversifying effect. For this part of the analysis (Step 3) the findings are cross analysed with the academic literature on professionalism and teacher quality/professional standards to highlight the simultaneous and competing discourses in circulation.

Finally, the analysis of transformations (Step 4) reveals the implications that the contradictions, both within and between the policy document and the academic archive, have for the construction of graduate identity for pre-service teachers.

Before explicating the identified discourses from the policy document, the academic literature on professionalism and teacher quality/professional standards are overviewed so that the comparisons can occur later as part of the archaeological analysis (Step 3).

3. Academic literature on teacher professionalism and teacher quality/professional standards

3.1. Teacher professionalism – the academic archive

There have been many attempts to identify the essential characteristics of the professions over many years (see, for example, Freidson, 2001; Gewirtz, Mahony, Hextall, & Cribb, 2009; Goode, 1957; Marshall, 1939; Parsons, 1954; Purvis, 1973; Stinnett & Huggett,

1963; Travers & Rebore, 1990; Wilensky, 1964). Most of these writers agree that a professional engages in intellectual work, partakes in a preparation programme with ongoing in-service learning and has been admitted to practice as they have met the standards set up by members of their professional organisation. This "traditional" discourse of professionalism modelled on the learned professions (doctors and lawyers) and originating in 18th century Europe has been called "classical professionalism" (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996) in the education setting. However, for many commentators (see, for example, Furlong, Barton, Miles, Whiting, & Whitty, 2000; Goodson & Hargreaves,1996; Hoyle,1974; Leaton Gray & Whitty, 2010) some of the characteristics, namely professional knowledge and autonomy, are not agreed upon, so definitions still remain a site of struggle.

In the mid-1990s, Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) put forward different typologies on professionalism that gave credence to teachers as professional practitioners. However, there were many criticisms of these discourses of practical, flexible, restricted/extended and complex professionalism. Hargreaves (2000) presented professionalism as passing through four historical ages, namely the pre-professional, the autonomous, the collegial and the post professional age. For these writers and others there are many competing views or discourses on the concept. These can be broadly divided into two schools of thought: (1) new professionalism, and (2) managerial professionalism. Although different writers over the years have used various nomenclatures – new professionalism (Goodson, 1999); post-modern professionalism (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996); principled professionalism (Goodson, 2000); democratic, transformative and activist professionalism (Sachs, 2003); occupational professionalism (Evetts, 2009); enacted professionalism (Evans, 2008, 2011; Hilferty, 2008); and deduced or assumed professionalism (Evans, 2011) – the amalgam of these discourses equate to teachers as professionals working with the cognitive dimensions of knowledge and the emotional dimensions of teaching for the greater good of the teaching profession.

Alternatively, in response to accountability agendas, professionalism has been colonised by governments, rewritten and redefined in a managerial discourse that sees teachers as unquestioning supporters and implementers of a competency-based, outcome-oriented pedagogy related to the world of work (Robertson, 1996). Evetts' (2009) term for this managerial discourse was "organisational professionalism" while Evans (2008, 2011) referred to "demanded", "required" or "prescribed" professionalism. In these types of so-called "professionalism", teachers become little more than recipe-following operatives (Winch & Foreman-Peck, 2005) whose professional expertise is reduced to classroom management and the technical aspects of teaching only. Wragg (2001) has argued that teachers are being prepared for a life of ticking boxes, the pedagogical equivalent of painting by numbers (Davies & Edwards, 2001).

Nevertheless, despite these competing discourses on professionalism there is some agreement between researchers and writers that three criteria are essential for being professional – knowledge, autonomy and responsibility (Furlong et al., 2000; Hoyle, 1974; Leaton Gray & Whitty, 2010; Quicke, 2000). Furlong et al. (2000) state that:

> It is because professionals face complex and unpredictable situations that they need a specialised body of knowledge; if they are able to apply that knowledge, it is argued that they need autonomy to make their own judgements (p. 5)

These are the characteristics for professionalism that the current authors have adopted. Table 1 summarises the discourses of professionalism archaeologically and highlights those considered to be new or mangerial professionalism discourses by the aid of a key.

[Insert Table 1 near here]

3.2. Teacher quality and professional standards – the academic archive

Similar to the concept of professionalism, teacher quality is a contested, ineffable term, some using it synonymously with “good” or “effective” teaching (Berliner, 2005), others adding the word “successful” (Fenstermacher and Richardson, 2005) The term has also changed its meaning through time and is subject to geographical and cultural differences.

In the early 1900s the notion of teacher quality recognised high moral character as a major attribute. Teachers had to be good role models for their students representing the highest standards of social propriety (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Mitchell, Robinson, Plake, & Knowles, 2001). This was epitomised in the writings of Willard Waller and his influential book *The sociology of teaching* (1932). Good teachers were placed on a pedestal and devoted all their time to the community. Whilst some may believe that this is an out-dated notion, later writers such as Noddings (1984) maintained that teachers should role model and communicate an ethic of care to their students so that the students themselves could then put this into practice. Others such Tom (1984) devoted a whole book to teaching as a moral craft where it was ultimately a teacher’s moral responsibility to “develop students in certain desirable directions” (p. 81).

After World War 2, the notion of teacher quality changed to a broader notion based on personality. Instilling moral and social values were still considered a measure of teacher quality but the definition extended to include traits such as curiosity, enthusiasm and compassion (Mitchell et al., 2001). This way of thinking was born out of psychoanalytical theories and examined the different psychological and behaviourial attributes of a good teacher (Cochran-Smith, 2001). Student gains in achievement were not considered to indicate teacher quality at this time.

Between the 1960s and the 1980s there was a shift to a focus on quality as teachers' skills rather than their morality or personality traits. Teacher observation became widespread, documenting what teachers do in their classrooms, in particular which strategies showed improvements in students' achievement levels (Cochran-Smith, 2001). This was based on "process-product" (Mitchell et al., 2001) research and was the first time student achievement became a widely accepted criterion for teacher quality.

From the early 1980s to the late 1990s, the focus shifted yet again, this time to the knowledge, skills and attitudes teachers should have (Cochran-Smith, 2001) and since the turn of the millennium, the most important consideration has been the impact that teachers have on learning, in what Cochran-Smith (2001) has referred to as "the outcomes question" (p. 529). Many studies have claimed that improving teacher quality will lead to improved student outcomes (see Barber & Mourshed, 2007; Hattie, 2009; Mourshed, Chijioke, & Barber, 2010; Slater, Davies, & Burgess, 2012; Vegas, Ganimian, & Jaimovich, 2012); however, other commentators such as Fenstermacher and Richardson (2005) and Berliner (2005) refute the direct causal relationship between teacher quality and student learning outcomes as overly simplistic. These writers maintain that the older traditional notions of teaching as a moral activity (compassion, fairness), a psychological activity (caring, motivating) and a logical activity (demonstrating, modelling) are still important elements of teacher quality.

More recently, Strong (2011) has grouped the academic literature around teacher quality in the following ways: some see teacher quality as a focus on qualifications as a reflection of competence – degree, university course, exam scores, certification, subject matter credential and experience all which are easy to measure; for others, it is about personal and psychological qualities – the love of children, compassion and fairness. Many believe it is more concerned with pedagogical standards exhibited (for example, the use of teaching

strategies and creating a positive classroom environment) whilst some use the term teacher effectiveness focused on teachers' abilities to raise student learning. Many of Strong's (2011) ideas posited here have materialised from how teacher quality has been viewed over time.

Most recent attempts to define teacher quality are based on statements of professional standards. Originating in America but followed by many other countries including Australia, the standards-driven agenda has become the contemporary view of quality in the accreditation of teacher education courses and measurement of teacher quality. This definition of teacher quality is concerned with teachers' abilities to engage students in learning rather than character traits or technical proficiency. According to AITSL, the current body for standards development and implementation, professional standards are a

> … public statement of what constitutes teacher quality. They define the work of teachers and make explicit the elements of high quality, effective teaching in 21st century schools that will improve educational outcomes for students (AITSL, 2011, p. 2).

Although Ingvarson (2010) claims that Australia is at an unprecedented level of agreement about the need to implement a standards-based system, there are deep differences in how standards are thought about from various corners of the globe (see [Author 1], 2012; Beyer, 2002; Codd, 2004; Connell, 2009; Flowers & Hancock, 2003; Louden, 2000; Mahony & Hextall, 2000; Ní Chróinín, Tormey, & O'Sullivan, 2012; Reynolds, 1999; Sachs, 2003; Simons & Kelchtermans, 2008; Tang, Cheng, & So, 2006). The academic literature on professional standards reveals two competing discourses variously named which are summarised in Table 2 below. A synthesis of this literature reveals two ways of thinking: (1) Standards for Teaching which are aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning

from within the profession; and (2) Standards for Teachers where the main focus is on controlling quality in education by imposing external accountability regimes determined outside the profession; in other words, government controlled.

Education is not the only profession where standards are a site of struggle. Since the turn of the century, standardisation is also visible in other professions such as law (Competency Standards for Entry Level Lawyers, 2000), medicine (Medical Board of Australian Registration Standards, 2010), engineering (Australian Engineering Competency Standards, 2011), and architecture (National Competency Standards in Architecture (NCSA), 1993) to name but a few.

[Insert Table 2 near here]

4. Findings

4.1. Voices and texts of authority in accreditation

In order to determine the voices of authority in the accreditation document, the acknowledgements section was examined. This section lists the Australian Education Ministers who endorsed the document with representation from all states and territories including Peter Garrett, the Australian Minister for Education at the time. Special thanks are given to a range of organisations representing various stakeholders from the education community. Close inspection of these organisations reveals that the majority are government departments. The AITSL National Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Working Group is also mentioned. Closer examination of the credentials of the AITSL working party reveals three academics from faculties of education (although one was the Deputy Chair of AITSL at

the time) and seven government officials. Therefore, government employees' voices are arguably considerably louder in this document even though others are mentioned as having authority.

Consultations on the draft report occurred in a variety of formats – an on-line survey, forums, individual teleconferences and written submissions – but are not reported in the accreditation document. The details of the voices from the consultation process are outlined in the *National system for the accreditation of pre-service teacher education programs – Proposal for consultation: Consultation report* (AITSL, 2010). Close examination of this document reveals that overall there appears to be representation from the broad spectrum of those involved in education. That said, there are some factors that could cast doubt on the validity of the claims made in the accreditation document. The consultation document states that "feedback was received from a representative breadth of stakeholders, ranging from individuals to jurisdictional registration authorities, employers, professional bodies, education providers and teacher unions" (AITSL, 2010, p. 15). However, there are discrepancies in reported figures with partiality in responses to some questions, forums were invite-only, and pre-determined questions were used to initiate responses. Additionally, consultation time frames for data collection appear to have been rather short. Furthermore, the consultation document claims that there "was strong support for the development of a national system for accreditation of initial teacher education programs" (AITSL, 2010, p. 6). However, as it was reported that over 35% of respondents did not reply to this question with a further 7% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing (AITSL, 2010) the claims to "strong support" are questionable.

With regards to authoritative texts, there are two policy documents mentioned in footnotes and two others in the body of the text. The footnoted texts are the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (first developed by AITSL in 2011) and the *Melbourne*

Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (endorsed by MCEETYA in 2008) and the in text citations are the *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA) and *The Australian Qualifications Framework* (AQF). What is noteworthy here is the absence of academic voices within the discourse. Instead, existing Australian policy documents provide interdiscursive cohesion corroborating the accreditation process as the unproblematic truth.

4.2. Dominant discourses in the accreditation document

Table 3 below summarises the dominant discourses revealed by the analytic process for the different sections of the document.

[Insert Table 3 near here]

As revealed in Table 3, overall, there are two dominant discourses, namely a "discourse of quality" and a "discourse of being professional". Using the archaeological method as outlined earlier, each discourse is now elaborated in terms of the continuities (sameness, Step 1) and discontinuities (contradictions, Step 2) in statements identified by the analysis.

4.2.1. Discourse of quality

There are three themes within the "discourse of quality", namely: quality program delivery; entry requirements; and quality assurance processes.

The first theme is foregrounded in the preamble: quality repeated 13 times and co-located with "teachers", "graduate", "programmes", "experience placements", "initial teacher education (ITE)", "quality teacher education" and "teacher quality" (pp. 2-3). Additional

upbeat words and statements supporting the thrust of quality are “high expectations”, “high standards”, “excellence”, “successful”, and “accomplished”, all to ensure “public confidence in the profession” who after all “deserve nothing less” (p. 2). Therefore, it is clear that universities owe it to the community to provide quality programs to ensure quality graduates. Providing quality programs is seen in terms of quality personnel and resourcing. Teacher education courses must be delivered by “appropriately qualified staff” (p. 15) who are “effective” (p. 15) in teaching and assessment strategies to meet intended learning outcomes. Resources, in terms of “information and communication technologies” and “education library resources” (p. 15), must be “contemporary” and on par with what students could “expect to be available in schools” (p. 15). Therefore, providers need to ensure that their “facilities” are up to date and can cater to the needs of their students. The use of the words “must” and “ensure” reveals that ITE providers have a responsibility to deliver and resource “quality” programs “conform[ing]” to government defined protocols. Quality is also foregrounded in the practicum experience where universities and schools have to provide quality partnerships. This is evident in statements such as “suitably qualified and registered [teachers who have] expertise and [are] supported in coaching and mentoring”, and “support for improvement or program counselling” (p. 15), the latter statement referring to timely identification of at-risk students.

However, within this first theme there are contradictions (Step 2). There are instances when teacher education is portrayed in a deficit discourse where “improvement” and “change” need to happen, “performance needs improvement”, and already existing practices need to “add value” or “build on” (p. 2). Therefore, the dominant notion is that universities at present are not quite up to the task of quality delivery, thus diminishing teacher educators’ authority. What is also noteworthy is the foregrounding of “school-teaching experience”, the

implication being that currently practicing teachers' skills trump research knowledge and praxis from university academics.

The second theme is concerned with entry requirements to ensure quality entrants to primary, secondary and specialist courses where recognition of prior learning is measured in accordance with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Students who enter education courses should "engage effectively", "carry out the intellectual demands of teaching", have "personal literacy and numeracy … be [in] the top 30 percent of the population", and for post graduates have a "discipline specific qualification" (Step 1). However, a contradiction (Step 2) is portrayed in program standard 3.2 where providers are given the option of not adhering to the entrant requirements – "providers who select students who do not meet the requirements" (p. 12). The concept of "quality" entrants is therefore open to question: What constitutes quality and how is it recognised?

The third theme of quality assurance is encapsulated in the two objectives of national accreditation: (1) [To improve] teacher quality through continuous improvement of initial teacher education, and (2) [To make accountable] providers for their delivery of quality teacher education programs. These notions encompass quality assurance in terms of accreditation and accountability. In the first two program standards, "accreditation" or some form of the word (for example, "re-accreditation") is repeated eight times and co-located with "internal …", "relevant … requirements" and "processes" (p. 12). The whole section on accreditation furthers this notion, the word repeated 62 times and co-located with "national formal", "programs", "application", "process", "panel" (p. 17), "report" (p. 18) and "quality assurance" (p. 19). Accreditation is repeated a further 24 times in the summary table outlining the roles of stakeholders. The lexical linking across these phrases reveals strict quality assurance processes and procedures that universities have to adhere to in order to be

accredited (Step 1). However, as already discussed in the example for entry requirements, processes can be circumvented thus providing evidence of another contradiction (Step 2).

Accountability also plays a part in the quality assurance process and is revealed in statements such as “use a range of data”, “destination surveys”, “feedback”, “formal evaluation”, “report annually”, “benchmarking”, “agreed protocols” and “evaluation and program improvement” (p. 15). As part of this quality assurance/accountability regime, ITEs and thus teacher educators are locked into a never-ending reporting cycle thus diminishing their authority and placing them in a contradictory deficit discourse.

4.2.2. Discourse of being professional

The word “professional” is repeated 28 times in the accreditation document and co-located with a myriad of words including “practice” (p. 2), “knowledge” (p. 2), “engagement” (p. 2), “learning” (p. 10), “expertise” (p. 2), “teaching” (p. 11), “ethics” (p. 11) “standards”, and “qualification” (p. 12). Here the image of the graduating teacher presented is a qualified, knowledgeable member of the teaching profession, the repetition of the word “professional” privileging this notion as non-negotiable . For clarity, this discourse has been divided into two themes – “professional knowledge” and “professional practice”.

The first theme, “professional knowledge”, is the title for the first domain of teaching in the graduate standards and is evident in statements such as “graduates have the knowledge … necessary to build highly productive professional practice” (p. 2), and “current professional expert knowledge” (p. 12). The word “knowledge” is repeated 12 times (Step 1) in the graduate standards and mainly co-located with “understanding”. Graduates are expected to have knowledge of “teaching strategies” (p. 6), “a range of resources” (p. 7), “strategies … to evaluate teaching programs”, and “practical approaches”. “Understanding” or “understand” appears a further 12 times in terms of graduates’ comprehension of “relevant

issues and strategies" (p. 8), "assessment strategies" (p. 9), "the role of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers in identifying professional learning needs" (p. 10), and understanding "ethics" and "relevant legislative, administrative and organisational polices and processes". Therefore, "knowledge" appears to be reduced to the technical aspects of teaching and compliance to relevant legislation. Further examination of the active verbs within the graduate standards (as shown in Table 4 below) and using Bloom's Taxonomy as a framework reveals that for the most part, only lower levels of thinking are expected from graduates. This is a contradiction to the term "professional expert knowledge" (Step 2).

[Insert Table 4 near here]

This contradiction between expert and technical knowledge is evident in the program standard's references to "discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies" mentioned 11 times. The word "discipline" is mentioned a further seven times co-located with "studies", "study requirements" (p. 14) and "degree program" (p. 13). Therefore, in order for an ITE course to be accredited, it must provide "sound depth and breadth of knowledge" (p. 14) in both discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogy, in other words, the "what and how" of teaching. The "knowledge" foregrounded here is specialised discipline knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge, both which require a certain degree of intellectuality. This is in contrast to the anti-intellectualism promoted by lower order thinking and generic knowledge contexts (non-subject specific) in the graduate standards.

The second theme within this discourse is "professional practice". Here the practicum experience is foregrounded with references made to "professional experience placements" (p. 2, p. 14), "professional support arrangements" (p. 14), and "professional practice elements"

(p. 15) (Step 1). Furthermore, graduate teachers have to work with “parents and carers” and understand the “role of external professionals and community representatives in broadening teachers’ professional knowledge and practice” (p. 11). This statement represents graduates as being under the gaze of numerous stakeholders, the subtle implication being that graduates are not quite equipped to cope with this demand. This is not surprising as many would not have had these opportunities in their short practicum experiences in schools. Again, this contradicts the broader notions of “quality” and “being professional” posited throughout the whole document (Step 2).

4.3. Cross analysis (Step 3)

When the findings are considered in the light of the academic literature on professionalism, graduates appear to be presented in a “classical” (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996) discourse of professionalism where knowledge is specialised. A “new” (Goodson, 1999) or “post-modern professionalism” (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996) would also be apt where the cognitive dimensions of knowledge are important. However, as evidenced by the contradictory constructions of knowledge, it would appear that there is no universal agreement on what constitutes knowledge from within AITSL itself. As mentioned earlier, the generic graduate standards made up of technical sounding phrases and educational jargon is the antithesis of the discipline specific program standards. Furthermore, there is limited interest in Hoyle’s (1974) professionality or “extended professionalism” (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996), where theory is translated into practice. The priority positioning of practicing teachers and the practicum over academics and their instruction provides evidence of this, diminishing the authority of the latter in the discourse. Rather, what is promoted in this document is a “practical”, “flexible” (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996) or “restricted”

(Hoyle, 1974) discourse of professionalism where tacit knowledge is seen as "a source of valid theory" (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996, p. 11). Evans' (2011) research from the UK supports these notions. Although not concerned with accreditation documents *per se*, she identified standards as concentrating on the behavioural components of professionalism, rather than the more important intellectual components. The anti-intellectualism or lower order thinking in the graduate standards provides further support for Evans' findings. To become a professional teacher, all one has to do is to acquire the trained competencies and expertise that the government and its agencies prescribe. Beck (2009) has referred to demonstrable performances based on a number of sequenced statements such as those in the graduate standards as representing "performative professionalism".

For many such as Quicke (2000), autonomy (responsibility) is central to professionalism where teachers are free to make decisions based on the best interests of their students. They build strong alliances in the education community in a "democratic" (Sachs, 2003) discourse and shape their own lives from within the profession in an "enacted" discourse of professionalism (Evans, 2008, 2011; Evetts, 2009; Hilferty, 2008). However, this privilege is absent in the accreditation document where high degrees of surveillance are evident from supervising teachers, parents and the wider community. The omnipresent gaze counters the mantra of "being professional" revealing the neo-liberalist "deep-seated distrust of professionalism" (Clarke & Moore, 2013, p. 488) in the teaching profession. This disempowers and diminishes the status of graduates from the get-go. Rather than quality graduate professionals (as the document claims) ready to enter the educational domain in a new, post-modern, principled or democratic professionalism, instead graduates enter into a demanded, required, and prescribed or managerialist discourse. Perhaps this is why so many feel underprepared to enter the profession as the *Staff in Australia's Schools 2013* (ACER, 2014) report claims.

When examining the findings in the light of the academic literature on quality, it becomes obvious that quality in the accreditation document is predominantly centred on quality assurance processes and procedures associated with standards. To use Strong's (2011) groupings of quality, the focus is firmly on qualifications and pedagogical standards with the personal dimensions of teaching ignored. The standards in this accreditation process as *the* measure of teacher quality promote the logical acts of teaching with much less emphasis on the psychological and moral aspects (Berliner, 2005; Fenstermacher & Richardson, 2005). Whilst inferences can be made to the caring dimensions of teaching, Standard 4 (for example) of the graduate standards states that teachers should "create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments", none of the focus area descriptors for this standard go as far as to mention the word "care". Rather, what is put forward are technical aspects of teaching (manage classroom activities and manage challenging behaviour) in terms of classroom management. Beyer (2002) argues that standards only provide a technical approach to teaching and do not take into account the broader political, social and philosophical underpinnings of good teaching. Louden (2000) has been equally critical, describing standards as long lists of competencies where dot points could be added or subtracted (Connell, 2009) with no real change.

In all, accreditation as quality assurance by means of dotted standards and the dominance of government voices in the development of this document reveals a regulatory discourse (Mahony & Hextall, 2000) where graduating teachers are merely technicians conforming government mandated priorities. Sachs' (2003) term for these types of standards is quality assurance or commonsense. Her view is that they are control mechanisms usually imposed by governments for licensing and certification procedures. They standardise practice in a high surveillance environment resulting in compliance. Berliner (2005) agrees,

maintaining that political mandates to define quality are simply leading to "compliance oriented actions" (p. 207). Foucault (1980) points out that:

> … each society has its "regime of truth", its general politics of truth, that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true, the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true or false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned … the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true (p. 131).

Here, the "regime of truth", the explicit program of accreditation is the systematic form of thought that endeavours to form the conduct of graduating teachers. Accreditation is a productive form of power but not necessarily oppressive. For Foucault, discourses are productive in that they affect people's conduct. Some discourses dominate not necessarily because they are more right or more truthful, but because they have political strength at the time. In this way, particular meanings enable particular groups, here the government to exercise power reflecting their own particular vested interests.

5. Conclusion

The *Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and procedures* (AITSL, 2011) policy document appears as a necessary truth, a cohesive and complete version of what ITE programs need to do to be accredited in order to produce quality graduating professionals. However, the analysis presented here exposes a complex, contradictory and incomplete story. By using repetition and co-location of words, the positioning of teacher educators in a deficit discourse thus silencing them, the privileging of certain discourses from the academic archive, the volume given to government voices and the many contradictions present, the accreditation document is, rather, a carefully crafted and

cultivated use of policy as a discursive practice. Foucault (1983) argued that anything that is not examined for hidden assumptions is dangerous, thus the need to question this document as an unproblematic statement of fact. What is really presented in this document is an anti-intellectual discourse where graduates as technicians are reduced to being the robotic cogs in the government machine with ITE programs as the robot manufacturers. There is no acknowledgement of the singular “who” of what it means to be a graduating teacher.

What is needed is a more developmental approach to standards rather than dominant regulatory discourses where graduating teachers can aspire to the exceptional rather than merely being the “standard” teacher. Managerial discourses need to “transform” (Step 4) or be revised in accreditation documents to an enacted discourse of professionalism, an active process of social engagement through which teachers can shape their own lives. Discourses of quality need to focus on quality teaching and learning rather than quality assurance processes, incorporating and advocating the moral and active care of students.Teacher educators need to shout louder. They are the ones in the position to produce graduating teachers who are also reflexive professionals who on their own terms can find out who they are as teachers and develop their own professional behaviours, attitudes and intellectuality.

There is a collision between quality professionals and regulated technicians in this document but more research is needed into the lived experiences of graduating, beginning and experienced teachers as well as teacher educators to see if all of them can walk away from this collision unscathed. Rather than the promulgation of such standards discourses further interrogation of their impacts is needed in the lived experiences of all involved in education.

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Table 1

Voices of authority on professionalism from the academic archive highlighting new and managerial discourses

Key: # - new professionalism discourses
*- managerial professionalism discourses

Selected writers	Interpretations and definitions of professionalism
Marshall (1939), Goode (1957), Wilensky (1964)	social service professionalism
Parsons (1954), Stinnett and Huggett (1963), Purvis (1973), Travers and Rebore (1990)	professions based on functionalist theory
Hoyle (1974)	professionalisation, professionality
Goodson and Hargreaves (1996)	classical, flexible, practical, extended, complex and post-modern professionalism #
Hanlon (1998)	commercialised professionalism
Goodson (1999, 2000)	new and principled professionalism #
Freidson (1994, 2001)	the ideology of professionalism
Sachs (2001, 2003, 2005)	Transformative #, democratic #, managerial * and activist professionalism #
Hargreaves (2000), Day (2002)	the four ages of professionalism
Hilferty (2007, 2008), Evans (2008, 2011)	enacted professionalism #
Evetts (2009)	Organisational *, occupational # professionalism
Evans (2008, 2011)	Deduced #, assumed #, demanded *, required*, prescribed *professionalism
[Author 1] (2011)	new/classical/practical discourses of professionalism #

Table 2

Voices of authority on professional standards from the academic archive revealing two competing discourses.

Standards for teaching	Standards for teachers
Developmental standards (Mahony & Hextall, 2000), standards for quality improvement (Sachs, 2003), standards for professional learning (Mayer et al., 2005)	Regulatory standards (Mahony & Hextall, 2000), commonsense standards, standards for quality assurance, standards for certification and control (Sachs, 2003), standards for accountability (Mayer et al., 2005)

Table 3

The mapping of overarching discourses across the accreditation document.

Preamble and overarching discourses	Discourses present in the National Graduate Standards	Discourses present in the National Program Standards	Discourses present in the National Accreditation Process
Quality		Quality	Quality
Being professional	Being professional	Being professional	

Table 4

Active verbs included in each standard.

APST Standard #	Active verb and repeatability
1	Demonstrate (6 times)
2	Demonstrate (2 times), organise, use, implement, know, understand
3	Demonstrate (3 times), set, plan, include, describe, structure, sequence, select, use (2 times), evaluate (2 times), engage
4	Demonstrate (3 times), identify, describe, support (3 times), manage (2 times), maintain, use
5	Demonstrate (5 times), assess (2 times), provide, make judgements, interpret, report, support, evaluate, modify, keep
6	Demonstrate (2 times), understand, seek, apply (2 times), identify, engage (2 times),
7	Understand (4 times), meet, comply, engage (2 times), apply