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PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL: A POTENTIAL SITE OF CONFLICT?

**A Case Study of the Implementation and Development of
Performance Appraisal in Four New Zealand Primary Schools**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Educational Administration

at

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Betty Irons

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ABSTRACT

This thesis was motivated by a minor conflict over a teacher's performance appraisal in the researcher's own school. The introduction details how this minor conflict—within a school might reflect, as (Bates 1988, 35) claimed, a wider conflict in society. In this research, that wider conflict is considered to be whether education is seen as a public good, where teachers are treated as professionals, or as a market commodity, where teachers are treated merely as workers.

A case study of four New Zealand primary schools was undertaken, to describe how their performance appraisal systems were implemented and developed. The research is undertaken from a critical-theoretical perspective so the review of the literature is widened to include the changes to educational administration, both internationally and in New Zealand. The legal requirement for performance appraisal is examined and the critical stages of the process established. Questions of accountability and control, teachers' professionalism and different types of performance appraisal are examined and linked to the wider conflict in society stated above.

In setting out the research design, the research objective and questions are followed by a detailed description of the selection of the participant schools, how access was negotiated, the fieldwork (questionnaires and sample interviews), the analysis of the results and the writing of the report. The analysis of the results includes charts and figures to reflect the quantitative data collected and quotes from the questionnaires and interviews are used to substantiate this data.

In the discussion of the results, the researcher acknowledges that although the schools in this small survey were just starting their performance appraisal schemes, there was a small percentage of teachers who had concerns about aspects of these schemes. These concerns indicate a potential for conflict. Reasons are discussed for this conflict and the main points of the discussions are then listed to show how they reflect the wider debate about the place of education as a public good or a market commodity. These points were:

1. *there were concerns about the true purposes of performance appraisal;*
2. *there is evidence that teachers were insufficiently trained for performance appraisal and are, therefore, disempowered;*
3. *some teachers are reasserting their rights as professionals, by using self-evaluation and peer appraisal, to improve their teaching;*
4. *teachers were willing to be professionally accountable, rather than contractually accountable.*

Recommendations are given which it is hoped will help all schools who are implementing and/or developing their performance appraisal schemes and suggestions made for further research which could be undertaken on this topic.

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