From ‘Ritual’ to ‘Mindfulness’: policy and pedagogic positioning

Paul Adams
The University of Hull, UK
p.adams@hull.ac.uk
The presentation

Outline of policy analysis methods.
Policy as discourse
Positions as an alternative to role
The positioning triangle
Pedagogy as ritual and pedagogy as mindfulness
Policy analysis

**Technocratic approach**
- Demonstration of underlying truth – objectivity
- ‘Truth’ captured; ‘facts’ described; ‘response’ identified; ‘solutions’ undertaken
- Policy as corresponding to author intent

**Policy as discourse**
- Contested approach
- Knowing arises in language use and meaning-making; it constructs the world to which policy pertains
- Policy (as language) has a performative function
- Policy neither an accurate portrayal of reality nor of intent.
Policy as discourse

Policy as an interplay between:

- Text (material embodiment)
- Discursive practices – production, distribution and consumption
- Wider social practices – delineate roles and activities

History and culture determine how the world is viewed

A social construction; given legitimacy through the permission it has to speak.
This perspective has a tendency to...

‘Concentrate on the ability of some groups rather than others to make discourse, and on some groups rather than others as effected or constituted in discourse. To put the point briefly, those who are deemed to ‘hold’ power are portrayed as the ones making discourse, whereas those who are seen as ‘lacking’ power are described as constituted in discourse.

(Bacchi, 2000: 52)
### 3 Key Points

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<th>Products</th>
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<td>• Political reasoning located in economic, social, cultural and historical ways of seeing the world</td>
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<td>• Provide the means by which solutions might be ‘captured’</td>
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<td>• The scope for response</td>
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<td>• Policy as discourse presents representations from which action might be chosen</td>
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Pedagogic types

- Defiant
- Compliant
- Unfortunate
- Accidental
Roles or positions?

**Role**
- Social typification
- Relatively static
- Fails to capture the fluidity of activity

**Position**
- Product of negotiation
- Situated in social entities of: people; institutions; society
- Played out in unfolding social episodes
Positioning theory

Story line

Language ← Position
Policy as position

...specifically denies the ‘moment’ of policy creation as distinct from the professional space. Put another way, it is, in effect, the moment-by-moment happenings within the professional arena that create policy; there is no ‘interpretation’ or ‘local mediation’ of policy, policy can only exist as a product of professional performance, it has substance beyond the discursive
Ritual and mindfulness

Pedagogy as ritual
- The unchallenged construction of pedagogic policy.
- The adoption of a first order position.

Pedagogy as mindfulness
- The removal of limits to pedagogy are removed.
- Challenges to first order, and so on, positioning
- Pedagogic policy as a process of positioning and repositioning