

Pepa RT1  
5 - 2.15 to 3.45pm - 303-G01  
SIG: Education Policy  
Dr. Adele Scott, Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA) Te Wehengarua

Keywords: policy development public education

### Keeping the balance between being proactive and reactive PPTA Te Wehengarua - the professional voice of teachers

For most of its first fifty years, PPTA Te Wehengarua (PPTA) was essentially a professional association for secondary teachers, which emerged in 1952 from various earlier teacher groupings (Alison, 2024). Today, it serves as both the professional association and industrial union representing the majority of teachers engaged in secondary education in Aotearoa New Zealand, including secondary teachers, principals, and manual and technology teachers. All PPTA activity is guided by the following: to advance the cause of public education; to uphold and maintain the just claims of its members individually and collectively; and to affirm and advance Te Tiriti O Waitangi. At its heart, PPTA has over 20,000 members and through its various member-led committees and elected Executive and Te Huarahi, it advocates on behalf of these members on issues that are widely held and deeply felt. This presentation will demonstrate how it connects members to the development of policy towards its vision for secondary education, serving both the need to be proactive and reactive, and arising from the sector as it reflects the lived experience of teachers. The postmodernist perspective features strongly in the work of the Association recognising diversity, a variety of narratives and the influence of power dynamics (Tan, 2006). Policy development follows guidelines such as those advocated by Wylie (2006), and, as the Association is not a research organisation, it accesses the expertise of reputable researchers as needed. Three examples of policies that have either been developed or are still under development will be presented as we seek to support critical conversations about pedagogy and practice with our membership. We agree with Niu (2025) that it is essential to explore the role of teacher unions in education policy and how they shape teacher professionalism discourses and invite researchers present to discuss how their work can feed into and connect with our mahi.

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Pepa RT2  
5 - 2.15 to 3.45pm - 303-G01  
SIG: Education Policy  
Thomas C. Pearce, University of Auckland

Keywords: assessment, policy constraints

**Navigating Tensions: Policy constraints and enablers on teachers' informal formative assessment and professional judgments.**

Formative assessment has been widely endorsed for more than 20 years as a critical component of effective teaching (Sortwell et al, 2024). This paper invites discussion around the policy constraints and enablers that teachers face in enacting formative assessment in Aotearoa New Zealand classrooms. Based on a qualitative multi-case study of three Aotearoa New Zealand primary school teachers, findings revealed how teachers mediated between their professional beliefs, theories of learning, and the myriad curriculum and policy demands made of them. Informal formative assessment was central to each teacher's understanding of good teaching. It was valued for its proximity to learning, responsiveness and individualisation, and the depth and breadth of outcomes it supported. However time constraints, pressure to meet prescriptive curriculum outcomes and the perceived reductive nature of quantitative reporting all created practical challenges. A key question that arises is: how can informal, interactive, teacher-based formative assessment practices be sustained and enhanced in policy environments that increasingly favour measurable, standardised outcomes? This question is relevant to ongoing policy debates around curriculum and the role of the education system. If we are to assess what we value, rather than value only what we assess, then we must have enabling assessment policy

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Pepa RT5  
5 - 2.15 to 3.45pm - 303-G01  
SIG: Educational Ideas  
Kate Lewis, Manukau Institute of Technology

Keywords: self-determined learning, self-reflection, structured groups

**Developing Self-Determined Learning: Research Insights for Educators to Foster This Essential 21st Century Competency. Developing Self-Determined Learning Using a Blended Learning Model that Harnesses the Potential of Collaborative Groups**

This research addressed the importance for educators to develop self-determined learning and empower students to take ownership of their learning in the contemporary educational landscape. Reflections highlighted that there were gaps in understanding and application of self-determined learning among teachers and students, prompting the development of this research, which fostered self-determined learning through a blended learning model that harnessed the potential of collaborative groups. My research was conducted over the course of a year in an innovative learning environment (ILE) in South Auckland with years 5-8 students. Teacher observations (accompanied by a journal), semi-structured student interviews and samples of students' work were used to evaluate and assess the extent to which students were becoming self-determined learners. This research explored the implementation and impacts of the blended learning model and collaborative groups, demonstrating reduced dependency on teacher support and enhanced collaborative dispositions among students. It highlighted the importance of ongoing research into self-determined learning and the evolving role of teachers in facilitating it. The findings also highlighted the importance of shared responsibility between teachers and students in fostering self-determined learning. Overall, this research contributed to understanding and improving self-determined learning through carefully structured group interactions, assigned group roles, and reflective practices.

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