

## **Rhizo-textual analyses of educational policy documents.**

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## **Rhizo-textual analyses of educational policy documents.**

### **Abstract**

In this paper, I describe methodological applications of Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) understanding of rhizomatic knowledge systems. I draw on rhizo-textual analyses of two different policy documents used in Australia to direct teachers in their teaching of English in primary (elementary) schools.

A rhizo-textual analysis is not concerned with following traditional, scientifically rigorous channels through a study; from data collection, through analysis, to findings that report some objectively discovered truth. Rather, a rhizo-textual analysis is a mapping of connections, of the fleshy tubers that are the rhizome. The mapping draws on various, and often contradictory work, ideas and concepts. What would seem to be "disparate phenomena" enables me to "connect diverse fragments of data in ways that produce new linkages and reveal discontinuities" (Alvermann, 2000, p. 118).

As Deleuze and Guattari point out, "A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, social sciences, and social struggles" (1987, p. 7). This ceaselessness of the connections between rhizomes shifts attention away from the construction of a particular reading of any text towards a new careful attendance to the multiplicity of linkages that can be mapped between any text and other texts, other readings, other assemblages of meaning. Elizabeth Grosz describes rhizomatic texts as "a process of scattering thoughts, scrambling terms, concepts and practices, forging linkages, becoming a form of action" (1995, p. 126)

Within the policy texts I have analysed, this scrambling and scattered process establishes connections between disparate discursive systems, about literacy, about texts, about students and how students learn, and about teaching, so that the version of literacy teaching that is produced seems to be normative, to be unquestionably rational, and therefore to be beyond critique.

### ***Introduction***

This paper provides an illustration of the application of Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) philosophical work on rhizomes to educational research methodology (see also, Honan, 2004). I provide a rhizo-textual analysis of two policy documents from Australia that govern literacy teaching. The texts are: the Years 1 to 10 Queensland English Syllabus (Department of Education Queensland, 1994a), and the Victorian Early Years Literacy Program (Victorian Department of Education, 1997a). While the particular social, historical and economic contexts that affected the development of each policy are different, there are (perhaps unsurprisingly) many similarities in the discursive constructions of literacy and children.

Mapping the rhizomes of policy texts involves tracing the discourses that are present to find the connections, disconnections, the ‘new articulations’ that form discursive plateaus:

In drawing maps, the theorist works at the surface, “creating” possible realities by producing new articulations of disparate phenomena and connecting the exteriority of objects to whatever forces or directions seem potentially related to them. As such, maps exceed both individual and collective experiences of what seems “naturally” real (Dimitriades & Kamberelis, 1997, p. 150)

This mapping work does not create a fixed, spatial map, but rather traces the ‘forces or directions’ between and across the linkages that connect each plateau. These linkages are not linear, according to Deleuze and Guattari, not “merely localizable linkages between points and positions”:

Unlike a structure, which is defined by a set of points and positions, with binary relations between the points and biunivocal relationships between the positions, the rhizome is made only of lines: lines of segmentarity and stratification as its dimensions, and the line of flight or deterritorialization as the maximum dimension after which the multiplicity undergoes metamorphosis, changes in nature (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 21).

These provisional linkages can be read as assemblages, in that they work within and across elements of various discourses to produce coherent movements and flows between and across the discourses to allow plausible readings of seemingly contradictory discourses. In the policy texts I analyse here, these linkages work to provide a version of literacy teaching that seems to be normative, to be unquestionably rational, and therefore to be beyond critique.

### ***The discourses of literacy teaching***

In Australia, literacy teaching is underpinned by the development of different approaches that can be identified as “models” (Patterson, 2000) or “families of thought” (Lo Bianco & Freebody, 1997) or “schools” (Green, 1995). These approaches are:

- Skills and functional literacy;
- Cultural heritage;

- Whole language, growth, developmental;
- Genre-based and functional linguistic; and
- Critical literacy

These approaches can be described in historical terms, in that one particular approach was developed in response to perceived problems with an earlier model. Annette Patterson criticises this view of ‘models’, averring that it emphasises the differences in each ‘model’ and ignores the similarity in pedagogical styles used by teachers (Patterson, 2000, pp. 263-268). I would add that an historical models-based view of these different approaches to literacy teaching support a linear construction of development, in which each approach supplants and replaces what has come before. In my analysis of the policy texts I have found that the discourses of all approaches are present. One does not render another invisible. Bronwyn Davies (1994) uses the concept of palimpsest to describe the complex layering of discourses within a text. Understanding texts as rhizomatic helps make sense of this layering – each discourse interweaves and interconnects with each other forming a discursive web. As well, and following Deleuze and Guattari, each text’s complex web connects with other texts. The forms of discourse taken up within the Queensland English Syllabus can be mapped across and into the text of the Early Years Literacy Program. This mapping work can also produce a Foucauldian genealogical analysis, in that the discourses can be mapped across historical contexts, so readers find similarities, for example, between versions of teaching literacy in 1886 and in 1997 policy texts.

Analysing policy texts reveals that there are particular lines of flight that connect contemporary discourses about literacy teaching with particular discursive constructions from each of these approaches. In both the Queensland English Syllabus (QES) and the Early Years Literacy Program (EYLP), all of these approaches are visible and are connected to each other by linkages that are commonalities and taken-for-granted assumptions that seem reasonable and unquestionable. These discursive linkages are like the lumpy nodes that can appear within a rhizomatic root system, or like

the coupling bands that connect varied systems of pipes in some underground water systems. The linkages allow the discursive construction of a particular version of what counts as literacy, and a particular version of the child who is the subject of literacy teaching.

### *Skills and functional literacy*

In the QES, a functional or skills-based discourse is called on to establish the value of literacy:

Individual communities and the nation as a whole are more likely to function well when their members are able to use varieties of English effectively and efficiently.

People who are literate in standard English can more readily gain access to essential services, employment, further education and recreational opportunities. They can also more easily participate in decision-making activities at local and national levels (Department of Education Queensland, 1994a, p. 2)

The benefits of literacy are not only restricted to the advancement of individuals, but are seen to be of value to the 'nation as a whole'. Literate people are better people because they can take part in activities related to employment, further education, and recreation. There is an implicit assumption here about the relationship between the social development of the individual and the economic development of the nation. Expressing ideas about individuals, in terms of their human capital, allows a relationship to be constructed between individual well-being and a 'better' society:

No longer is there a conflict between the self-interest of the economic subject and the patriotic duty of the citizen: it now appears that one can best fulfil one's obligations to one's nation by most effectively pursuing the enhancement of the economic well-being of oneself, one's family, one's firm, business or organization (Rose, 1999 p. 145).

In the Early Years Literacy Program, this skills-based discourse is called on when explaining the optimal conditions for literacy teaching. In the organisational framework, these optimal conditions include:

- literacy is best taught in uninterrupted two-hour blocks of time

- reading and writing are two distinct and separate components of literacy that should be taught separately
- speaking and listening learning occurs as part of reading and writing while at the same time separated from the other modes

The isolation of the teaching of literacy, and the division between the different language modes reflects the traditional skills-based approach resembling that found in historical contexts in Australia at least as far back as 1886. In New South Wales in 1886 for example, Inspector Wilkins wrote:

The first subject that strikes us as necessary for a primary school is Language, by which is to be understood a full knowledge of our mother tongue, including Reading, Writing, Grammar, Analysis of Sentences, and Composition (quoted in Green & Hodgens, 1996 p. 213).

And in 1941, again in New South Wales, the syllabus “prescribed eight aspects of curriculum activity under the general auspices of ‘English’

Reading (from the School Magazine and a large supply of supplementary readers from Third Class onwards)

Poetry

Oral Expression

Written Expression

Formal elements (phonics, punctuation, sentence and paragraph structure)

Formal grammar

Spelling

Writing (handwriting)

(1941 NSW curriculum quoted in Reid, 1996 p. 151).

This ‘back to basics’ discourse affirming the value of skills that can be separately defined and addressed connects closely with the discourses used in popular media accounts of what counts as literacy. Its presence within the EYLP could be seen as an attempt to assuage the anxieties and tensions that arise whenever debates about a ‘literacy crisis’ is mounted in popular media contexts (see Comber, Green, Lingard, & Luke, 1998).

### ***Genre and functional linguistics***

The particular literacy practices engaged with by successful citizens are located within the 'functional linguistic and genre' discourses. In the late 1980s a group of linguists and educators working at the University of Sydney, drawing on the linguistic theories of Michael Halliday, and theories of semiotics developed by Gunter Kress, constructed a pedagogy known as the 'genre approach' (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Martin, 1991). This approach requires explicit teaching and modelling of the linguistic features and textual structures of a particular genre.

In the QES there is an emphasis on the 'power' of genres:

People who understand how genres work can be powerful instruments of critical review and change in any culture;

Genres enable members of a culture to function in recognisable and effective ways;

To participate effectively and constructively in a dynamic society, members of cultural groups need more than the implicit knowledge that allows them to participate in familiar genres. They also need explicit knowledge (Department of Education Queensland, 1994a, pp. 5 - 6)

Within this discourse, particular knowledge of genres can turn people into 'powerful instruments', and only this kind of knowledge will produce an effective society. This discourse uses medical metaphors, common in literacy discourses, where a good dose of genre will not only heal the patient but society as a whole (see Castleton, 1998; Freebody, 1994; Neilsen, 1998 for discussion of the medical metaphors associated with literacy discourses). So the effective citizen who is 'literate in standard English' must be literate in certain ways, must take on only specific literacy practices in order to be 'powerful instruments'. The 'power' of genres is fundamental to the development of this approach to the teaching and learning of English. In the genre discourse, power is seen to be static, as something that can be grabbed with both hands, as long as the hands are first gloved in the correct genre. This static view of power negates the slipperiness and movability of power relations.

As Foucault says:

Power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation (Foucault, 1980, p. 98).

In the EYLP the genre approach is taken up when describing students' "reading behaviours" .

Students learn about:

The situation in which the language is used and the ways the language varies according to the situation

The sociocultural influences on language that relate to the expectations, values, attitudes, behaviour and responses of people in the broader social and cultural context.

The characteristics of text including the overall ordering and organisation, the grammatical structures and visual characteristics (Victorian Department of Education, 1997b, p. 2)

In the EYLP, genres are now known as 'text types', drawing on what Erica McWilliam (1994) calls "folkloric assumptions" about teachers' inabilities to engage with 'difficult' concepts (such as 'genre'). As well there is a clear indication that only a certain number of these text types are suitable for children in the early years of school. While a 'range' is suggested, this does not include expositions, arguments or discussions.

### ***Whole language***

In the EYLP the organisation of the class during the literacy block is whole-small group-whole with emphasis on individual success and interactivity between groups of children and the teacher. There is an emphasis on individual responses, on small group work, and on interactions between groups of children. This emphasis reflects the whole language approach which, in Australia at least, was developed in a move to break free from the constrictions of "the skill and sub-skills exercises that had been used to teach reading and writing. Using real books and encouraging children to produce their own literature were highly emphasised" (Comber, 1992 p. 2). One pedagogical feature of the

whole language approach is the teaching of the ‘writing process’ (Graves, 1983). In the EYLP the writing process is described as:

Planning; Composing; Recording; Revising; publishing. It is important to note that the process of writing is recursive in nature. Therefore, these aspects of the writing process are overlapping and influence each other. They are influenced by the writer’s purpose and audience. Writers may be involved in different aspects of the process simultaneously and may not develop all pieces of writing to the point of being shared with a wider audience (Victorian Department of Education, 1997c, p. 4).

In the QES, much is made of the language skills developed in early years, eg. “most children develop spoken language skills from infancy”(Department of Education Queensland, 1994a, p. 21) . There is a link made between the development of these ‘spoken language skills’ and the ways children develop their reading and writing skills in later years. This link is made within the “science of developmental psychology” (Walkerdine, 1984, p. 177) and is a feature of a whole language approach.

The use of the discourses of whole language within the QES often work to obscure the meaning of the texts. For example, the syllabus states that one of the ‘skills’ to be developed is the ability to ‘generate strategic procedures’. Apparently this means that, “to enhance their acceptance with family and friends, and to promote self-esteem, children often reflect on the language they use with others” (Department of Education Queensland, 1994a, p. 21) . Further exploration reveals that such ‘strategic procedures’ include:

- trialing, for example, using and reviewing the effectiveness of language patterns
- speculating, for example, imagining alternative structures or outcomes
- negotiating new purposes, for example, redefining the context
- exploiting the flexibility of genres, for example, transcending genres or using language in original ways (Department of Education Queensland, 1994a, p 35).

It would seem that these ‘procedures’ allows the types of ‘text innovations’ that are features of whole language classrooms. Children are encouraged to ‘play’ with texts in these types of lessons; for example, writing a different ending for a story; using ‘invented’ spelling in their writing; changing the physical setting or characters in a particular narrative. So the ‘skill’ being developed is the ability to work creatively and innovatively with language. Such a ‘skill’ is highly esteemed in whole language classrooms, and as highly denigrated in classrooms where a skills-based approach to learning is used.

### ***What counts as literacy teaching?***

Both policy texts use the discourses associated with at least three different literacy teaching approaches, skills, genre, and whole language to construct one version of literacy teaching that appears to be rational and unquestionable. This version seems entirely reasonable, and would be read by many teachers as plausible, and as reflecting their classroom practices. This normative construction, however, narrows and restricts the imagined possibilities for teachers who are interested in moving literacy teaching forward, who believe that teaching literacy must change to adapt to contemporary postmodern circumstances, and who are faced with the complex terrain of current literacy debates:

In the year 2004, then, the average literacy educator is faced with at least four contextual debates; first, there is the academic literacy literature which emphasises the importance of things such as Multiliteracies and critical thinking; second, there is the popular media take on literacy which insists on the value of basic skills in reading and writing; third, there is educational policy which prioritises, among other things, the kinds of multiple literacies most likely to prepare the kind of ‘good citizens’ who can successfully negotiate complex, unstable and culturally diverse worlds but paradoxically wants/needs to take note of measures of basic skills; and finally there is a widespread set of anxieties about the ways in which cultural diversity should be most responsibly managed in a world where attention to difference seems less palatable to many community members, than an insistence of sameness (Rowan & Honan, 2005, ).

The reasonableness and normativity of the particular version of literacy teaching is enhanced through its construction within a variety of discourses. The rhizomatic nature of texts allows quite contradictory discourses to be connected through such linkages that allow these contradictions to seem sensible. In the next section of this paper I analyse the construction of another of these linkages, that of the individual developing child, who appears as the subject of disparate discourses about literacy teaching.

### *The developing child*

This individual, developing child forms one of the provisional linkages that assemble the meanings of the different discourses on teaching of literacy that are present in both texts. The individual, rational child is central to the discourses surrounding progressivist pedagogies. I believe that the construction of this individual subject infiltrates the other discourses, so that, even when the texts are using the discourses of genre or skills based approaches to teaching literacy, the subject that is being constructed is always, still, the individual child of progressivism.

‘The child’ in western liberal democratic societies is positioned as a special category of person who lacks, for a time, the complete range of capacities necessary for full functioning as a citizen. ‘The child’ is understood to acquire those capacities by progressing steadily along a universal path of development to emerge as a self-regulating, autonomous individual, the possessor of a range of attributes (Tyler, 1993 p. 35).

There is a dichotomy in the texts that allows this developing child to be described in terms of individual characteristics, while at the same time she is representative of the whole of society. This dichotomy underlies one of the fundamental tensions in teaching today, especially in early years classrooms: the tension between paying attention to each child’s unique and individual differences while at the same time teaching that child using homogenous practices in small group or whole class situations. As Davies and Hunt explain:

The concerted nature of students’ work to achieve a reading group...reveals the common-sense knowledge we have of classrooms, that they must work in a collective way if

learning is to take place. At the same time, in the attitude of teaching-as-usual, we think of learning as an individual activity. We assess individual performances and take ourselves to be legitimately doing so (Davies & Hunt, 2000 p. 113).

The presence of this dichotomy in the QES allows the child to be spoken about in terms of her individual characteristics, while at the same time statements are made that generalise, universalise the learning of language. While the child is unique, she makes generalisable choices about language, and these choices are controlled by establishing limits to the availability of correct choices.

Cultural diversity in English-speaking communities is reflected in the language choices made;

New genres evolve as people exercise the choices available to them in using the many systems that comprise any language (Department of Education Queensland, 1994a, p. 6) ;  
Through the language resources available to us, individuals and communities make choices about which textual features will best communicate our personal purposes. These choices take account of conventional social and cultural patterns of language use (Department of Education Queensland, 1994a, p. 11).

While individuals make choices about language use, these choices are determined by ‘social and cultural patterns’. Individuals are therefore bound and tied to the social and cultural circumstances in which they find themselves. They are also bound to make ‘correct’ choices in order to be constructed as a successful subject.

In the syllabus, control of these choices is achieved through an explanation of the innate humanist need to belong to society:

The need to communicate with others impels most children to develop effective language skills

The human need to communicate drives children to attend to the meanings associated with particular language structures

Through their need for affection and companionship, most children are anxious to develop communication skills

To enhance their acceptance with family and friends, and to promote self-esteem, children often reflect on the language they use with others (Department of Education Queensland, 1994a, p. 21).

Control of language choices thus becomes a form of governmentality, where “to govern is to act upon action” (Rose, 1999 p. 4). The child is driven or impelled to make the correct language choices, through some inner need, and this inner need is controlled through the necessity to be correct in others’ eyes.

The child of the syllabus is thus constructed as a rational humanist identity; the stable humanist individual, of course, makes rational choices about language based on her innate need to communicate. The essentialism of this humanist individual is so fundamental to all educational discourses that it becomes a feature of discourses that, on the surface, appear to be attempting to construct some other view of a different kind of subject. For example, the skills discourses about language and literacy learning are usually seen to be inhabited by a kind of ‘pre-humanist’ individual, in that the growth and progressivist discourses that rely on the humanist individual were developed after and in opposition to the skills discourses. But the humanist individual infiltrates the skills discourse used in the syllabus. For example, the statements quoted above concerning the ‘need to communicate with others’ are all taken from the section of the text on language skills, *How does development of language skills influence language learning?* (Department of Education Queensland, 1994a, p. 21) .

In the EYLP, it is assumed that children learn how to read and write in developmental stages and achievement in these stages can be measured by normative standards achievable by all children. As Valerie Walkerdine has pointed out, there is an inextricable link between the ideas of “individualized pedagogy” and Piaget’s theory of child development:

The new notion of an individualized pedagogy depended absolutely on the possibility of the observation and classification of normal development and the idea of spontaneous learning. It was the science of developmental psychology which provided the tools and in which the work of Piaget is particularly implicated (Walkerdine, 1984 p. 177).

The EYLP makes a seamless connection between this individualized pedagogy, the ‘natural’ progression of children through stages of development, and the measurement of this progression through normative standards. In the EYLP children who do not meet this standard are (conveniently) removed from the classroom that operates within the organisational framework and subjected to Reading Recovery one-on-one tuition. So on the one hand, there is a discourse operating that claims individual children naturally progress through sequential stages of learning how to read and write, while on the other hand, children who are seen not to be progressing at the same pace as a significant number of their peers, do not meet the standards required, and are diverted from the natural progression (See Nichols, 2004 and others in AJLL’s special issue on ‘Questioning literacy development’).

In the QES, the development of the individual child is not restricted to language development. Rather, the texts construct a child who develops in moral and social ways as well as linguistically, thus creating a place in the English classroom for the acquisition of certain moral and social behaviours, that are often not related to language learning at all. The moral, social and linguistic development of the child thus becomes the responsibility of the English teacher, English learning activities, and the English classroom. This attention to the moral development of the child through English learning has been a feature of schooling since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. As Ian Hunter (1993; 1997) has shown, in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century a ‘pastoral’ relationship was encouraged between the teacher and the child. As Rose points out:

Subjects such as English were to be introduced into the curriculum, not for purely ‘aesthetic’ reasons so beloved of those who defend ‘liberal education’ today, but because they would help the child become aware of these internal states, they would provide a

language for speaking about them, they would provide criteria for judging them: in short, they would actually create new civilized sensibilities (Rose, 1999 p. 78).

In the syllabus, these sensibilities are expressed as ‘attitudes, processes, skills and knowledge’. The texts construct a version of the child who develops these ‘inner’ capacities in a regulated, linear fashion, just as the child develops the ability to use language.

### ***Teaching the individual child***

What is also of interest is how this romantic view of the individual sits within texts that supposedly emphasise the ‘explicit’ teaching of literacy. Christie believes that one of the effects of the construction of the individual child was the insistence that “teachers actively .. resist teaching about language on the grounds that this in some way interfered with the capacity of children to come to terms with building meaning in language in their ‘own’ way” (Christie, 1993 p. 77). She uses this argument to propose the use of explicit teaching about genres as a valid pedagogy. In the QES, both explicit teaching of certain knowledges, and the valuing of children’s inner capacity to individually create meaning, are supported and encouraged. For example, teachers are encouraged to use “focused learning episodes” to explicitly teach students about “aspects of their language and learning” (Department of Education Queensland, 1994a, p. 45), including exploring “specific features of language and ways of deploying and interpreting them to influence meaning in texts” (Department of Education Queensland, 1994b, p. 26). These focused learning episodes are explicitly linked to the individual child’s abilities when the syllabus states, “because of students’ individual differences, focused learning episodes are linked in differing ways to holistic activities. Links are planned in response to the circumstances, needs, interests and abilities of individuals and groups of students” (Department of Education Queensland, 1994b, p. 27).

In the EYLP these ‘focused learning episodes’ are described as ‘teaching groups’. These are “made up of students with similar learning needs, at similar stages, formed for teacher directed instruction

using an approach appropriate to their stage of reading [or writing] development” (Victorian Department of Education, 1997b, p. 26).

So the explicit teaching encouraged by Christie can only occur within a framework of paying attention to the individual characteristics of each child. This encourages the view, similar to the whole language view, that direct teaching only occurs when the child ‘is ready’. It also encourages the idea that the best model of teaching English is a one-on-one situation, or at the least, small groups of students interacting with a teacher. The practical implication of such a view is the basis for one of the contradictions that many teachers deal with daily. On one hand, a teacher is responsible for approximately 30 children at all times during the day. On the other hand, progressivist pedagogy insists that each child should be dealt with on an individual basis. This contradiction is implicit in taken-for-granted understandings of teaching and classrooms. In the EYLP for example, there is a section on “classroom planning and organisation” where teachers are reminded that “it will be necessary for class teachers to consider the number of groups operating in their rooms and plan to ensure that all students are actively engaged during the small **group focus on reading**” [emphasis in the original] (Victorian Department of Education, 1997b, p. 67). In other words, teachers must pay explicit attention to one particular group of children for a focused reading lesson, while also ensuring that the remainder of the class are ‘actively engaged’ in other reading activities. This active engagement will occur apparently if a ‘collaborative classroom environment’ is established and “the skills for effective group work must be taught” (Victorian Department of Education, 1997b, p. 71). As with the QES, teaching social skills such as collaboration seems to be an integral and unquestioned part of the English classroom.

Just as the version of literacy teaching constructed in these policy texts appears to be rational and reasonable, so too the construction of the individual developing child as the subject of literacy teaching appears to be unquestionably plausible. For teachers who are living the daily realities of

classrooms where all children do not appear to be as individual as each other, nor appear to develop in the ways suggested in policy texts, the EYLP and the QES do not offer much comfort or indeed many strategies to deal with these realities. The reality within the policy texts is an idealised simulacra of real classrooms, real children, and real literacies (and an even more unreal reality is portrayed in the videos that accompany the EYLP in which quiet, well behaved groups of children with seemingly identical needs and reading/writing levels work happily and contentedly on activities replicating those exemplified in the documents).

### ***Conclusion***

A rhizo-textual analysis of these policy texts has enabled me to pay close attention to the connections between discursive plateaus. Often, discourse analytic methods provide linear readings of texts, where discourses appear as separate and distinctly different paths. Understanding texts as rhizomatic helps to make sense of the reasonableness of texts that are constructed from seemingly contradictory discourses. This understanding has also helped me make sense of the ways in which teachers interact with policy texts, in that it provides a new view of the plausibility of disparate readings and interpretations of policy.

It is this new view of teachers' interpretations of policy texts that is of interest to me, as I attempt to use Deleuze and Guattari's work as an "apparatus of social critique" (Buchanan, 2000). In this endeavour I participate in the resistance that St. Pierre (2004, p. 287) calls for when she writes that:

One form of resistance to the scientism produced by the old values of government functionaries involves accomplishing scholarship that critiques those values and introduces concepts that upset the established order.

Part of this critique of the established order is to follow lines of flight that produce new readings and new possibilities for teachers as they attempt to make sense of policy texts that govern their teaching.

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