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**Title:** Genealogy of the Ethics of Teacher Self-Evaluation : From Adherence to Norms to Self-Discipline through Self-Evaluation

**Year:** 2023

**Version:** Accepted version (Final draft)

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**Please cite the original version:**

Pitkänen, H. (2023). Genealogy of the Ethics of Teacher Self-Evaluation : From Adherence to Norms to Self-Discipline through Self-Evaluation. In J. Madalinska-Michalak (Ed.), *Quality in Teaching and Teacher Education : International Perspectives from a Changing World* (pp. 72-97). Brill. [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004536609\\_005](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004536609_005)

## **Genealogy of the Ethics of Teacher Self-Evaluation**

### ***From Adherence to Norms to Self-discipline through Self-evaluation***

*Hannele Pitkänen*

#### **Abstract**

Quality evaluation (QE) has assumed major importance in governing education. QE is acknowledged as a self-evident and necessary method of improving quality in education across education systems. Along with the quality 'evaluation wave', schools and teachers have not only become objects of evaluation, but have also been subjected to increasing demands to self-evaluate. Using genealogical methodology, this chapter analyses the emergence and formation of the politics of school and teacher self-evaluation and also the power and subjectivities invoked through it in the case of Finnish comprehensive education. The research material includes curricular, legislative and education policy texts and national guidelines and textbooks on school and teacher self-evaluation in the period 1970–2014.

The chapter demonstrates how, along with these changes in policy, the ethics of the necessity for self-evaluation in Finnish basic education emerges. It shows how teachers and schools traditionally strictly governed by rules and norms and subjectified as obedient to norms have since the early 1980s transformed into the self-developing and self-evaluative teacher and school. Becoming entangled with the long histories of teachers as reflectors on their own work, these changes enabled the formation of self-evaluation as a normal and self-evident everyday practice of teachers and schools to evolve, and along with this, the related ethics of the necessity for self-evaluation to emerge. This ethics is closely entangled with and supports the governing of education through quality evaluation.

#### **Keywords**

Archaeology of knowledge – Discourse – Ethics – Genealogy – Governing – Quality evaluation – Teacher self-evaluation

#### **Introduction**

Throughout the history of formal education, educational institutions, schools and teachers have been under external evaluative control and surveillance (Alarcón López & Lawn, 2019; Pitkänen, 2019). For example, in Europe, school inspection – the monitoring and supervision of schools and teachers by official school inspectors – has been practised since the emergence of modern mass education around the mid-nineteenth century (Evertsson, 2015; James & Davies, 2009; Knudsen, 2016; Varjo et al., 2016). Recent decades have witnessed a global rise and spread of large-scale assessments and test-based accountabilities (Verger et al., 2018; Sahlberg, 2016; Smith, 2016) and the related politics of quality (Kauko et al., 2018), cultures of audit (Kipnis, 2008) and quality evaluation (Ozga et al., 2011) focusing on performance and quality of education, school and teachers (Ball, 2003; Holloway & Brass, 2018). Through these changes, teachers and schools have increasingly become the objects of intensified external evaluative control and surveillance, increasingly implemented in the name of quality of education in pursuit of global competitiveness between nations (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015).

Concurrently, there is also a long history of teachers reflecting and evaluating themselves, putting their selves and their pedagogical activities under the control and surveillance of themselves. In her article, *Teacher reflection in a hall of mirrors: Historical influences and political reverberations*, Lynn Fendler (2003) traces the descent of the well-established idea of reflexive teacher and reflection in teacher education from the emergence of Cartesian rationality perceiving self-awareness as a source of knowledge. Whereas in the Cartesian scheme, reflectivity refers to the enactment of self-awareness, where the self is simultaneously 'the subject-who-reflects' and 'the object-who-is-reflected', John Dewey (1933), according to Fendler (2003), raised reflection as a pedagogical aim in his *How we think: A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process*. For Dewey, reflection represented the prevailing of reason and science over instinct or impulse (Fendler, 2003), as it 'converts action that is merely appetitive, blind, and impulsive into intelligent action' (Dewey, 1933, p. 17 as cited in Fendler, 2003, p. 18). Since Dewey, reflection has come into focus in the teacher education literature and in the discipline itself, but especially since Donald Schön's (1983) *Reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*, reflection has found its way to the core of teachers' professionalism (Fejes, 2011; Fendler, 2003). Through these different notions of reflection and 'how they work together historically' as Fendler (2003, p. 17) puts it, reflection has come to be seen as a pedagogical ideal to improve the quality of pedagogical practices

(Fejes & Dahlstedt, 2012, p. 23), teachers' professionalism and effectiveness as educators (Fox et al., 2019, p. 369). It has become a 'conspicuous part of education' (Fejes, 2011) and perceived as natural in teacher education and professionalism discourses (Fendler, 2003; Sitomaniemi-San, 2015) as encapsulated in Ken Zeichner's (1996, p. 207 as cited in Fendler, 2003) maxim 'there is no such thing as an unreflective teacher'. Thus, the idea of teacher as 'reflective practitioner' has become 'normalized within the discourse of a "good teacher"' (Perryman et al., 2017, p. 748).

This chapter focuses on how this well-established notion of teacher as a reflective practitioner engages with the more recent trend towards the global advent of quality evaluation in education described above. These have given rise to the notion that it should not only be individual teachers reflecting on themselves and their pedagogical activities, but practising self-evaluation as part of the normal and everyday practices of school communities (Kauko et al., 2020; Pitkänen, 2019), taking the form often referred to as an internal or school self-evaluation.

Like quality evaluation and assurance in general, at the level of policy, school self-evaluation has been offered as a solution to the challenges of the quality, equality and efficiency of school education (OECD, 2013). Along with increased reliance on data received from external evaluations, such as large-scale student achievement testing, school inspection or performance measurements and indicators, a marked tendency towards school and teacher self-evaluation has become apparent. The requirements or recommendations regarding self-evaluation have been included in European policy (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015; European Commission, 2020; European Parliament and Council, 2001) and promoted by influential transnational organizations such as the OECD through their policy recommendations or comparisons (e.g., OECD, 2013, 2020). For example, in Europe, in 2001, the European Parliament and Council (2001/166/EC) indicated that quality evaluation should be perceived as one of the means of achieving its objective of quality education in Europe and as part of making a recommendation 'to encourage school self-evaluation as a method of creating learning and improving schools, within a balanced framework of school self-evaluation and any external evaluations.' By 2014 school self-evaluation, conceptualized as a 'process initiated and carried out by schools themselves to evaluate the quality of the education they provide' in general education had been made compulsory or recommended in the majority of European countries (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015, pp. 41–42). Recently, the development of 'a culture of self-reflection and self-evaluation which

are fundamental for improving all children's and young people's learning and wellbeing' has been acknowledged to be of great political importance and deserving of support from national and regional policymakers (European Commission, 2020, p. 3). This tendency can be called the emergence of the politics of self-evaluation. Consequently, it can be argued that the self-evaluation conducted in schools, mostly by school personnel such as teachers and head-teachers (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015) as an integral part of the quality assurance and evaluation procedures, has become a fundamental element in governing education.

The aim of this chapter is to explore the socio-historical emergence and formation of the current policies and practices of teacher and school self-evaluation. Thus, the chapter is concerned with the question of how it has become commonplace to think about schools and teachers as self-evaluators within the normal and everyday practices of the school community, and increasingly as part of the politics of quality evaluation in education. Importantly, as Holloway and Brass (2018, p. 361) following Ball (2003, pp. 215–217) acknowledge, these policies, practices or 'technologies of reform not only work to govern education systems – but to produce new kinds of teacher subjects'. In consequence of these notions, the chapter aims to analyse the related mobilizations of teacher subjectivities within changing practices of governing through the politics of quality evaluation as well. This chapter presents a one-case analysis of the issue, focusing on the case of Finnish quality evaluation policy discourse in comprehensive education. It asks: 1) How has the politics of teacher and school self-evaluation been socio-historically mobilized? 2) What is the teacher subjectivity raised within the politics in question?

### **The Finnish Case**

Finnish comprehensive school, lasting nine years and compulsory for all children, was established in the early 1970s replacing the previous dual-track compulsory school system consisting of elementary school and selective grammar-school. Comprehensive school is mainly publicly organized, financed and free of cost to pupils. Since the success of Finnish schools in the PISA assessment in the early 2000s, Finnish comprehensive education has become internationally acknowledged as a positive reference society (Takayama et al., 2013; Waldow, 2017), an education system to be seen as a model and learned from.

Compared to other education systems, the Finnish education system and, accordingly, the system of quality evaluation, has remained quite unreceptive to global impacts (Kauko et al., 2020; Simola, 2015; Simola et al., 2009), or as Pasi Sahlberg (2007, 2016) calls it the 'global education reform movement' (GERM). By GERM he refers to a globally disseminated package of policy reforms often including the adoption of market-based and managerial solutions such as school choice, school autonomy and highlighting the mechanism of competition in raising standards and improving the quality of education (Sahlberg, 2016, pp. 185–188). At the core of GERM Sahlberg (2016, p. 188) also raises an 'adoption of *test-based accountability policies*' holding teachers and schools to accountable for pupils' performance, especially through 'the processes of evaluating, inspecting, and rewarding or punishing schools and teachers'.

Even though similar processes, for example, decentralization and increased school autonomy (Simola et al., 2009) and increased opportunities for school choice (Kosunen, 2016), have taken place in Finland, too, as argued elsewhere, Finland has rather been swimming against the global mainstream (Kauko et al., 2020; Simola, 2015), especially when it comes to quality evaluation policy. For example, since the early 1990s there has been no school inspection system. Additionally, Finland has no student achievement testing of the entire pupil population, thus there is no means of establishing and publishing school rankings. Instead, the Finnish evaluation system relies heavily on the combination of national sample-based testing of pupil performance and the local self-evaluation legally required of schools and local education providers. Sample-based testing and other external evaluations are used only for developing the education system, not for controlling or sanctioning schools and teachers. This purpose of evaluation as development is enshrined in the educational legislation (Kauko et al., 2020; Pitkänen, 2019; Simola et al., 2009; Wallenius, 2019). Additionally, there prevails a firm trust in university-educated (master's level) teachers and in the school institution in general (Simola, 2015, pp. 211–212).

The combination of these Finnish peculiarities; comparatively high quality of comprehensive education without a high-stakes evaluation system relying rather on sample-based and local evaluations and university-educated teachers' professionalism, makes the Finnish case an interesting one for analysis. Earlier research on quality evaluation and assurance, especially in the fields of sociology and politics of education, has analysed the power, governance and subject formation enacted through the policies and practices of external evaluation, especially in contexts where the stakes have been high

(Ball, 2003; Holloway & Brass, 2018; Perryman et al., 2017). This chapter raises these issues in self-evaluation taking place in the national context, where the external stakes are lower and trust in teachers providing high-quality education is high. However, this does not imply an absence of evaluative control and governance. Rather, as I argue here, the governing increasingly rests on the mechanism of self-governance by autonomous teachers, as they are persuaded to impose internalized control through the emerging ethics of necessity for teacher self-evaluation.

### **Quality Evaluation as a Technique of Power and the Self**

Theoretically, quality evaluation, including evaluation at all levels of education and education systems, such as school and teacher self-evaluation, can be approached as a technique of governing education, the educated and society (Ball, 2013; Holloway & Brass; Ozga et al., 2011; Pitkänen, 2019). The concept and idea of governing has been applied in many and various ways, e.g., in the fields of social and political sciences or sociology and in the politics of education, studying changes in the governance of and in societies. A discussion around what has been called the analytics of government (Dean, 1999; Rose, 1999; Rose & Miller, 2010), building on Michel Foucault's discussion of governmentality, subject and power (Foucault, 1982, 2000), deserves for closer attention. The perspective of the analytics of government serves to emphasize the nature of governing as socio-historically changing, and thus requiring analysis rather than fixed theories or conceptual definitions of power and governance (Foucault, 1982, p. 778).

Government as one of the main concepts in the analytics of government can be perceived in a very general way as any kind of deliberate attempt to shape human behaviour in accordance with a particular set of norms and ends (Dean, 1999, pp. 11–12). As a 'conduct of the conduct' Mitchell Dean (1999, p. 11) determines the government further as follows:

Government is any more or less calculated and rational activity, undertaken by a multiplicity of authorities and agencies, employing a variety of techniques and forms of knowledge, that seeks to shape conduct by working through our desires, aspirations, interests and beliefs, for definite but shifting ends and with a diverse set of relatively unpredictable consequences, effects and outcomes.

Government, thus, does not only relate to the power and rules exercised by state authority but to a network of governing agencies, to a mixture of techniques utilized based on specific forms of knowledge and rationalities, and supporting and reinforcing specific forms of individual and collective ethos (Rose, 1999; Rose & Miller, 2010). The government then operates with the support of diverse socio-historically changing techniques of governing and power, supported by a specific set of knowledge and related ways of rationalizing, and by operating on people's subjectivities. In this sense, government is operationalized at the point of contact between the techniques of power and the techniques of self (Foucault, 1988; Rose & Miller, 2010).

Thus, the power of government in present-day liberal societies does not rest mainly on the force of the sovereign or the power of discipline, but is elementarily also practised more gently through persuading, caring, guiding but also individualizing ways of pastoral power (Fejes & Dahlstedt, 2012; Foucault, 1982), which shapes people's aspirations, beliefs and conduct (Dean, 1999). It shapes their subjectivities, thus embedding a subjectifying power. It is 'a form of power which makes individuals subjects', both in the sense of subjugating and making subject to (Foucault, 1982, p. 781). These diverse forms of power operate together, or as Perryman et al. (2017, p. 746) put it, they 'interweave, overlap and compound one another'.

In light of these notions, the practices of present quality evaluation are approached here as techniques of governing education – enacted at a distance and put into effect at 'thousands of microlocales', as articulated by Rose (1999, p. 260). This technique and its imposition on the practices of education is not only technical or methodical apparatus or matter, but a technique through which new kinds of subjectivities are called for, and through which the self of the teachers using the technique is constituted. It operates as a technique of the constitution of the teachers' selves complying the rule of the ethics of the necessity for self-evaluation.

### **Genealogical Methodology**

Aligning with the theoretical frame, the research reported employs genealogical methodology (Anderson, 2015; Christensen, 2016; Foucault, 1977; Tamboukou, 1999) – the history of present – in analysing the emergence and formation of the politics of Finnish school and teacher self-evaluation, with a special focus on the relations of power, governance and the subjectivities.



Gerd Christensen (2016, p. 765) describes genealogical methodology as the writing of 'the history of the becoming of the contemporary subject'. Generally, genealogy investigates the descent of some contemporary phenomenon, idea or practice taken-for-granted and deemed self-evident, something very normal and ahistorical (Anderson, 2015; Christensen, 2016), and in Foucault's (1977, 1991) terms, truth, and more precisely, the regime of truth. Genealogy aims at studying the socio-historical emergence, mobilization and formation – not the singular origin, essence, logical-linear constitution or rational evolution – of that truth. It focuses on a series of continuations, interruptions, breaks, transformations e.g., in the constitution of current ideas, practices or phenomena (Foucault, 1977; Popkewitz, 2013; Tamboukou, 1999). Thus, it analyses the socio-historically formulated conditions for the possibility of the current 'truth', which determines the limits of what is thinkable, sayable and practicable.

In their reading of the work of Foucault, Bacchi and Bonham (2014, p. 177) raise discursive practice as the main analytical category in studying those 'practices that install regimes of truths'. Following this notion, genealogical reading is conducted by deploying Foucault's idea of discursive practices, which he refers to as the practices of discourse (Foucault, 1969/2013). In this way he raises the materiality of a discourse. Thus, discourse refers not to language or language use, but to a specific socio-historically constituted formation of knowledge, which contributes to the organizing and shaping of the conduct and way of thinking of people in a specific society in its specific time and space.

In the research presented, school self-evaluation is studied as a discursive practice, and the focus is on its emergence and constitution. The subject of the research concentrates on how through and within this practice, teachers are constituted and mobilized as self-evaluative subjects as part of education governance. Thus, the genealogical focus of the research can be specified as the study of the history of the teacher becoming a self-evaluative subject in the discursive practice of school self-evaluation.

In his *Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault (2013) suggests a variety of possible lines in analysing discursive practices, which can be analysed as being constituted of statements reciprocally referring to each other (Foucault, 2013; Krejsler, 2011, p. 2), and contributing to the formation of discursive practice as its own specific system for reasoning education and its governance. Through statements peculiar to the discourse the specific object, the positions for the subject of the discourse as well as concepts and strategies (Foucault, 2013)

usable and rational from the point of view of intrinsic logic of the discursive practice are construed.

These analytical categories facilitate the analysis of the object constituted in the discursive practice analysed (self-evaluation as an object of a discursive practice) and the subject constituted as ideal in that practice (self-evaluative and reformist teacher).

The research data consists of a sample from a larger dataset which collected to address the socio-historical constitution of the Finnish quality evaluation discourse (Pitkänen, 2019). It includes more than 400 texts on quality evaluation in education, consisting of national education policy and government documents such as curricula, legislation, white and green papers, policy recommendations and documents in which these policies were put into operation in the form of guidelines and textbooks in the period 1970–2014. The texts were published by national authorities with authority or interest in educational evaluation in comprehensive education such as the Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE) established in 1991, currently called the Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI), its antecedent the National Board of General Education (NBGE) (1869–1990), the Ministry of Education (MoE) renamed the Ministry of Education and Culture (MinEdu) in 2010, and the Finnish Education Evaluation Council (FEEC) established in 2003, preceding the current national evaluation agency called the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC), the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities (AFLRA) or other expert bodies on education evaluation. The data includes both hortatory and non-binding texts. Regarding the theoretical frame of the chapter, the data represents the operations of governing as they engage in shaping the conduct of teachers by stipulating the orders and regulations but also indirectly, by appealing to the minds, aspirations and beliefs of teachers, by operating on the free will of the subject and at same time, disciplining the self (e.g., Dean, 1999; Rose, 1999). Thus, the material does not appear in the analysis as cautioned by Popkewitz (2000, p. 1783) as a neutral presentation of school reform but should be read as a site where the governing of teachers and education, ordering the opportunities for action and self-reflection, has been put into operation. Based on close reading of the whole dataset, a selected sample of these texts will be focused on with the aim of illustrating the emergence and formation of teacher self-evaluation as a discursive practice and the site of governance. The sample of these texts includes all curricular documents, main legislative and policy texts concerning teacher and school self-evaluation as well as examples of texts where politics was operationalized through guidelines, textbooks and recommendations during the research

period. The focus is on texts showing the break with earlier policy discourse or when new kinds of statements merged into it.

The analysis was conducted first by identifying and collecting all statements concerning quality evaluation in comprehensive education. These statements were collected into a separate document, which included over 1,000 pages of text and mainly those statements referring to the idea of teacher and school self-evaluation were taken into consideration. For the analysis the analytical categories of object, concept, strategy and subject formation, which intertwine in the constitution of a specific discursive practice were used.

The main focus here is on how school and teacher self-evaluation emerge and take shape as a discursive practice around the objects, subjects, concepts and strategies specific to it, and how it operates in the governing of teachers and education. The overall research frame is presented in Table 4.1.

TABLE 4.1 Research frame

Research questions	1.How has the politics of teacher and school self-evaluation been socio-historically mobilized in Finnish comprehensive education? 2.What is the teacher subjectivity raised within the politics in question?			
Data	Sample of policy texts representing the Finnish politics of teacher and school self-evaluation.			
Genealogical focus	The history of teachers becoming a self-evaluative subject in the discursive practice of school self-evaluation and in the practices of educational governance.			
Analysis of the discursive practice	Object	Concept	Strategies	Subject

### **The Making of a Reflexive but Obedient and Compliant Teacher**

The research data constitutes evaluation as intrinsic and natural to the educational institutions and teachers' professionalism (Granö-Suomalainen, 2002, p. 6; Korkeakoski & Tynjälä, 2010, p. 9; Lehtinen, 1995, p. 9; Lyytinen, 1993, p. 72). It is fundamentally taken as something like an ahistorical constant within the practices of teaching

and education. Teacher self-evaluation is approached in the same way:

There is nothing new in self-evaluation. Some kind of self-evaluation has always belonged essentially to teaching. It has been a central part of the process of teachers' professional development, if not consciously and systematically, but at least it has belonged as a natural part of the planning work of the teacher. (Lyytinen, 1993, p. 72)

The first curriculum of the Finnish comprehensive school (Committee for the Comprehensive School Curriculum [CCSC], 1970), and at same time, the earliest document of this study, raises the idea of teacher self-evaluation. However, it is only marginally discussed, as in evaluation the focus is mainly on guiding teachers to evaluate pupils – using multitudes of ways and techniques of pupil assessment. However, pupil assessment is also acknowledged as a point of reference for teachers to evaluate themselves. Teachers are expected to observe the results of their own work by examining pupils' results and performance, thereby assessing the effectiveness of the teaching methods used.

The variation in the results of schoolwork may result from the effectiveness of diverse teaching practices and methods. By examining the pupils' school achievement teachers gain knowledge of how they have managed to achieve their aims by using specific methods. (CCSC, 1970, p. 158)

In the early years of the comprehensive school system, the idea of the self-reflective teacher is also articulated in the textbooks on evaluation at school (Heinonen & Viljanen, 1978, p. 41; Heinonen & Viljanen, 1980, p. 54). Whereas in the curriculum (CCSC, 1970, p. 158) the idea of teacher self-evaluation was expressed using the concepts of examination and observation, the textbook introduces the concept of self-evaluation. In the textbook, self-evaluation is constituted as a form of self-knowledge, which, unlike in the curriculum (CCSC, 1970), not only focuses on the teachers' own teaching practices or methods, but especially on the teachers' inner selves. According to the textbook it is fundamental to self-knowledge that teachers should contemplate and analyse themselves so as to lay bare and bring everything to the surface. The concepts used in this textbook resemble the conceptual field of psychoanalysis.

At the foundation of teacher self-knowledge lies the principle that one should not repress any individual deficiencies, but each of these should be revealed and analysed. Thus, teachers should carefully examine their own backgrounds, the environment where they grew up and discover those factors which explain their conduct. (Heinonen & Viljanen, 1978, p. 41)

It is characteristic of these early ideas of teacher self-evaluation in the research data is that they appear in a very specific socio-historical context, in which teachers are mainly subjected to rather strict governmental and legal orders and rules. For example, the 1970 curriculum has been considered by earlier research to be in the nature of a handbook or manual of school keeping (Simola et al., 2009), which should concern, direct and guide all the elements of school education (CCSC, 1970, pp. 56–57). In line with the egalitarian rationale and prevailing technique of the so-called planning economy, the main elements in building the Finnish welfare state at the time (Ahonen, 2003) the idea of a strict and very detailed curriculum was to ensure an equal level of quality of education for all pupils, regardless of the school and the teacher. Even though the curriculum allowed teachers methodological autonomy, on the other hand, it was rather sceptical about the ability of the 'ordinary teacher' to provide an equal level of education and equal opportunities for pupils to learn unless the curriculum provided them with sufficient strict guidance.

One should start from thinking realistically what an ordinary teacher having completed basic teacher education is able to achieve in a classroom. It is not enough that in some schools pupils can receive very enthusiastic teaching by extraordinarily diverse and inventive teachers. Instead, teacher education should ensure that all pupils attend classes where they have good opportunities to learn. This cannot be guaranteed by teacher education unless the curriculum states what teachers by themselves should know and master. (CCSC, 1970, p. 59)

Accordingly, the curriculum is full of prescriptive statements telling teachers what to do and how to be: 'it is necessary for the teacher', 'the teacher must show', 'the teacher must use' and 'the teacher is obliged' (CCSC, 1970, p. 44, p. 52, p. 228). Importantly, these statements were not only guidelines and orders directed towards individual teachers themselves. They also counted as frames against which teachers were positioned as objects to be monitored, evaluated and then supervised, gently but firmly, especially by head-teachers or the school inspectorate. In this sense, the curriculum can be

interpreted as an authoritative statement concerning teaching and being a good teacher in comprehensive school, which teachers should learn through the gentle supervision, or pastoral power as Foucault (1982) calls it, of the head teacher.

It is indispensable for a head-teacher to monitor the teaching a lot. The negotiation after monitoring, however, is much more important when it comes to pedagogical supervision. The head-teacher should discreetly but emphatically guide the teaching sufficiently and especially the treatment of pupils. In this task head teachers will achieve results if they can indicate that their intention really is to help and support the teacher, not to pass judgement in a negative sense. (CCSC, 1970, p. 231)

In line with the curriculum, teachers were firmly governed through the education legislation (Decree, 443/1970; Decree, 718/1984). A *Decree on Establishing Comprehensive Education* (443/1970) imposed a hierarchical system of control on teachers and teaching in schools at municipal level. For example, following and monitoring teaching as well as instructing and advising both school and/or teachers, was stipulated as a task for a municipal school board (53§), a school council (56§), a chief education officer or municipal inspector (59 §) and finally the head teacher (109 §). In addition, the educational district administration was tasked with monitoring and inspecting teachers but so also were municipal education administrators and officials and with checking how they performed the official duties assigned to them (185 §). Additionally, the educational legislation stipulated numerous tasks imposing duties on teachers. The legislation stated, for example, that teachers should prepare their lessons carefully and perform their teaching tasks conscientiously, use and develop teaching methods suitable for different kinds of teaching situations and to obey the directions given by the head-teacher, the curriculum and the regulations of the school. The education legislation also assigned the task of pupil assessment to teachers (Decree, 443/1970, 108§; Decree, 718/1984, 108 §). However, the legislation made no references to teacher self-evaluation as currently understood.

In sum, an early and still very tentative idea about teacher self-evaluation was already manifest in the curricular documents and textbooks during the first decades of the comprehensive school system. At that time, teachers were governed primarily through the notion of official duties and detailed sets of tasks and rules to be implemented in teaching and other school activities. In these frames, teacher and school are mostly seen as the object of evaluation and

inspection of multi-layered educational government in relation to the official duties prescribed by the legislation and the curriculum. The position of teachers and schools was externally inspected and monitored as well as strictly governed through legislation, curriculum and other kinds of governmental guides relates to the context of the planning economy and the egalitarian ideal of providing equal quality of education for all pupils regardless of the teacher or the school, (and more generally regardless of the socio-economic background or gender of the pupil). As a result, the compliant and conforming teacher was construed as ideal to achieve these ends.

### **The Rising Practice of Self-evaluation and the Mobilization of the Self-evaluative Teacher**

Since the turn of the 1980s new kinds of statements appear in the discourse, bringing self-evaluation into focus and making it an object of discourse. In the research data, mounting doubts regarding bureaucratically and centrally led school development and governance are articulated (e.g. NBGE, 1982). Teachers and schools are still governed through the notion of official duties and practices of multi-layered monitoring (Decree, 718/1984). However, there arises an idea of and a tendency towards local and school-based development of comprehensive education. Additionally, a gradually increasing emphasis on teachers' professional sense of duty and responsibility at least partly replaces the notion of official duty and the related notion of a teacher compliant with the norms.

Increasingly since the late 1970s, it appears in the research data that the development of schooling/education should arise more and more from the active, pedagogically oriented inputs of individual teachers and schools (NBGE, 1978, 1982, 1986a, 1986b; Lyytinen et al., 1989). Alongside national level reforms imposed from above, which was the main model of school improvement in the 1970s, professionally inspired school-based development is perceived as a prerequisite for more permanent and far-reaching changes in comprehensive education (NBGE, 1978, pp. 22–23, pp. 56–58; NBGE, 1982, p. 1). The practices of educational development based on professionally inspired individual schools and teachers was raised as an important issue and discursively normalized as a natural and indispensable part of the day-to-day practices of teaching and education. It was, for example, determined that 'development should be involved as a natural part of teaching and education' (NBGE, 1982, p. 13). These ideas were promoted both in policy texts (NBGE, 1982, pp. 29–30; NBGE, 1985, p. 18; NBGE, 1986b; MoE, 1982, 1983) and

the professional literature and textbooks (Hämäläinen & Lonkila, 1985; Holopainen et al., 1982).

In the development of school/ing emphasis should be placed on the importance of developmental activity originating from the school itself. Reducing the problems in schoolwork and the development of school by the active input of the school personnel often brings about more permanent and far-reaching effects than development demands imposed from outside the school. (NBGE, 1978, p. 56)

The development of teaching, school and schooling at school level is conceptualized as activities and operations pursuing the socially determined goals assigned to education. The goals and targets of education concerned not only learning outcomes but also those things assumed to impact on good learning achievement. In addition to emphasizing enhancing knowledge and skills, education was expected to contribute positively to pupils' personality development and attitudes. (NBGE, 1986a, p. 3). In response to these demands and to improve the performance of the whole comprehensive school system, school level development was argued to be necessary.

Regarding school improvement, it is not reasonable to focus on and pay attention only to learning outcomes but also to those activities at school which are apparently conducive to the achievement of good learning results in a wider sense. (NBGE, 1986b, p. 20)

In these changing frames of thinking of education and education governance, the idea of evaluating one's own and especially the school's activity was mobilized explicitly and systematically in the Finnish policy discourse. Self-evaluation came to be seen as a necessary activity in developing the school community and teachers and also as part of that educational community. It was raised as an elementary and normal part of developing education at the level of the school. It was specifically the teacher and school-level self-evaluation in relation to educational targets set in the legislation and curriculum which was deemed necessary. Ultimately, this was expected to impact the improvement of comprehensive education as a whole (Hämäläinen & Lonkila, 1985; NBGE, 1982, p. 1, pp. 29–30; NBGE, 1985, p. 18). For example, it was stated:

The independent task of the school is to continuously evaluate the appropriateness of the operations of the school unit in



relation to the achievement of the educational aims and, based on these, to make changes in the operations of the school. (NBGE 1982, pp. 29–30)

The idea of continuous and development-oriented self-evaluation at the level of the school community originating in the early 1980s was absorbed into the Finnish comprehensive education policy discourse by the 1994 curriculum. This took place during the larger reforms in education and in the Finnish administration in general, including a marked decentralization and deregulation coupled with the reforms in school funding policy and the introduction of the quality evaluation system (Basic Education Act 628/1998; FNBE, 1995), which were conducted in line with the doctrine of New Public Management during the 1990s (Simola et al., 2009).

Continuous evaluation is an essential part of the activities of the developing school community. Alongside student evaluation, the evaluation of the entire school community becomes more and more important. [...] The school's self-evaluation is part of the continuous development of the curriculum. It is a necessary tool in the work done in the school which knows its aims and which wishes to produce results. (FNBE 1994, p. 26)

Since the 1990s, the idea of school self-evaluation as a fundamental part of school development has remained in the focus of curricula (FNBE, 1994, 2004, 2014) and education policy (e.g. MinEdu, 2012). Further, it has been promoted by a vast body of literature addressed to the teachers and schools to guide them in self-evaluation and foster the 'quality evaluation culture' in schools (Hämäläinen et al., 1993; Kilpinen et al., 1995; Korkeakoski et al., 2000; Laukkanen et al., 1992; Nikkanen & Lyytinen, 1996). Additionally, specific models and techniques for self-evaluation have been widely published (FNBE, 1995; Oppi ja laatu -hanke, 2003; Räisänen & Rönholm, 2006).

As part of the local-level quality evaluation, school self-evaluation was made a legal obligation in the Basic Education Act of 1998 requiring an education provider to 'evaluate the education it provides and its impact and take part in external evaluations of its operations' (Basic Education Act 628/1998, 21§) with the purpose of developing the education offered. Even if the Act itself does not explicate the school self-evaluation, the preparatory act (SiVm 3/1998, p. 17) declared it an elementary part of local evaluation together with the municipal-level quality evaluation. The idea is also embedded in the current curriculum (FNBE, 2014, p. 11, p. 47) and in the quality criteria for basic education (MinEdu, 2012, p. 21), which highlights self-

evaluation both at the level of the individual teacher and the school community:

The most important task of the teacher is to guide and support the learning process of the pupil. Teachers evaluate the learning of the pupils, but should also evaluate their own actions and participate in the evaluation of the entire school organization.

In the theoretical frame of the chapter it was argued that the introduction of self-evaluation is not only a matter of a neutral or apolitical technique of education governance. Rather, it mobilizes and constitutes teachers as specific subjects. Accordingly, it is argued here that through the emergence and construction of a discursive practice of self-evaluation analysed above, teachers become increasingly positioned as reformist and self-evaluating, as active members of the self-developing school, striving for the continuous improvement of the school system. Along with the emergence of the practice of self-evaluation, teachers are not primarily subjectified as compliant and conforming implementers of strict and detailed rules, but increasingly as active developers of the school system and of Finnish schooling. The early notions of these can be found at the turn of the 1980s:

In general, teachers' self-confidence concerning their own abilities and the importance of their own work needs to be fostered and the importance of the idea that in every school it is possible to develop operations through one's own efforts. (NBGE, 1978, p. 67)

School development requires persevering and systematic efforts. It also requires continuing efforts on the part of the respective educators towards better solutions. New solutions need to be developed by the school itself. These cannot be transposed unrefined from one school to another. However, it is possible to learn from planning. This means that teachers must work through their own processes of school reform. (Holopainen et al., 1982, pp. 106–107)

The mobilization of teachers as reforming and self-evaluative professionals does not emerge at one specific point in time. Rather, the position of reforming and self-evaluative teachers emerges gradually in the discourse in which the position of a compliant and conforming teacher continues to be more or less present. For example, the second national core curriculum (NBGE, 1985) includes elements of both of these subject positions for teachers. Schools and

teachers are required to assume a more active and responsible role than before in improving and evaluating themselves. Therefore, they are given 'a certain level of self-directiveness' (NBGE, 1985, p. 18). Second, the limits of this area of self-directiveness are still fairly tight strict, and nationally co-ordinated development continues to be important. In this sense, teachers and schools are given a position from which to implement these centrally led reforms.

After the turn of the 1990s the texts appeal increasingly to the teachers' professional and moral sentiments, to the professional sense of duty and responsibility of teachers instead of the official duties as they discuss evaluation. For example, the following quote about being a good and responsible teacher requires absorbing the subjectivity of continuous self-evaluator in the area of pedagogy and teaching. The activity based on evaluation is contrasted with random activity. Self-evaluation practised by teachers represents the commitment and will to advance their professional development and also to promote school improvement.

Through self-evaluation teachers can identify their own professional needs and develop strategies through which to process them and thereby improve their own professional actions. This means that teachers are responsible for their own professional development. (Lyytinen et al., 1989, p. 5)

This also applies at the level of the school organization.

School-level evaluation has been found to be conducive to the professional growth of teachers. [...] First of all, evaluation has been found to be an essential part of the activities of a performative school. Randomness does not then form the base for activities; instead, self-evaluation develops the self-awareness of the school community. (Lyytinen et al., 1989, p. 8)

In the 1990s school and teacher self-evaluation become increasingly construed as a necessary activity of a good, regenerative or high-quality and performing school. Also, these statements did not primarily appeal to the official duties of teachers but to the teachers' sense of professional obligation, or even morality. Thus, government of teachers and schools relied on subjectifying techniques in addition to direct regulation through the law, official duties and rules. These statements persuade teachers and schools to practise self-evaluation, for example, by making self-evaluation a natural element of self-reforming school instead of directly stipulating what teachers and schools are required to do. For example, it is stated that 'assuming

that the school takes care of its regeneration it cannot neglect self-evaluation' (Lyytinen et al., 1989, p. 12).

Teachers are considered to be professional and conscientious people who want to develop themselves and their professional practices. Teachers are expected to observe problems in the operations of the school and to present questions as well as solutions concerning the pedagogical development of the school. (Kangasniemi, 1993, p. 119)

It has been accepted that the evaluation of one's own work is a prerequisite for improving quality. Each individual is the right person to evaluate the results of their own work. At the same time account must be taken of the evaluations made by others. (Hämäläinen et al., 1993, pp. 5–6)

As noted in the quote above, teachers constituted as the ideal subjects of the discourse, the regime of truth, are not only willing to self-evaluate or to evaluate the school community of which they are a part, but are also willing to be evaluated by others. These two aspects together constitute the emerging ethics of the necessity for self-evaluation in line with the requirements imposed in the policy discourse of quality evaluation, and more widely in the realms of the evaluation society (Dahler-Larsen, 2011), governed through the technologies of evaluation (e.g. Ozga et al., 2011).

### **Final remarks**

By taking a Foucauldian genealogical approach, this chapter explored the socio-historical emergence and formation of the current policies and practices of teacher and school self-evaluation in the case of Finnish comprehensive education. The analysis presented made visible those lines of thought and practices according to which it has eventually become somewhat natural to think about schools and teachers as self-evaluators as a core assumption in transnational and national policies of education governance. In this way, the analysis not only addressed the question of how these practices have emerged evolved into a policy discourse, but also the history of teachers mobilized as self-evaluative subjects. It was shown how these techniques and subjectivities have become possible in the wider contexts of changing education governance from a centralized planning economy to decentralized education governance relying increasingly on data provided through diverse forms of quality

evaluation. The results of the analysis are summarized in Table 4.2. In the table, discursive formations identified in the analysis are presented (columns) and specified in Foucauldian genealogical analytical axes of techniques of governing and subjectivities invoked in that governing (rows).

TABLE 4.2 From bureaucracy and planning economy to discursive practice of self-evaluation

	Discursive practice of bureaucracy and planning economy	Discursive practice of self-evaluation
Techniques of governing	Duty and rule-based discipline through strict and detailed laws and curricula, inspection, and references to official obligations	Teacher self-disciplined through professional sense of duty, appealing to the rationality and moral sentiments of teacher, normalizing self-evaluation
Subjectivities invoked in governing	Compliant and conforming teacher, teacher as object of multi-layered governance	Reforming, evaluative teacher, a responsible teacher willing to evaluate and to be evaluated

Through the emerging discursive practice of self-evaluation identified in the analysis, self-evaluation is constituted as an indispensable and normal activity of teachers and schools. It also enables and raises the position for self-reforming and evaluative teachers practising self-evaluation individually and as part of the school community, instead of the former subjectivity of compliant teachers which was the ideal in the context of centralized governance and the bureaucratic planning economy.

The analysis showed that during the research period teachers complying with norms and rules gradually became self-evaluative, not only conforming to the official rules but rather constituted as active developers of their own work and that of the school community by practising self-evaluation and internalizing this demand as part of their professional sense of duty. To become a professional, one must not only internalize the demand for continuous self-evaluation but also be willing to be evaluated by others. This is what is suggested here as constituting the emergence of the imperative of internalizing

the ethics of teacher self-evaluation. This continues to be crucial in the context of the current evaluation society (Dahler-Larsen, 2011).

The self-evaluative teacher is constituted in the discursive practice of self-evaluation, which is ruled by the principle of the ethics of the necessity for self-evaluation. The term ethics is used here to refer, to Michel Foucault's (1982, 1988) idea of practices of the self, and under what conditions people might think of and constitute themselves as ethical actors. This chapter claims that the discursive practice of self-evaluation constitutes the limits for teachers to see themselves as decent professionals only if they obey this rule constructed in discourse and in the practices of governing and power. It prescribes the conditions under which they can recognize themselves and be recognized by others as decent professionals.

Even if the discourses on evaluation are continuously changing and new statements and ways of reasoning emerge, I argue that the discursive turn described in this chapter has relevance from the point of view of the evaluation society. The considerations presented also make it possible to focus on discourses as sites where socio-political power is operationalized by determining subjectivities. Thus, as suggested by many researchers in the field (e.g. Ball 2003; Holloway & Brass 2018), the discourses are approached not as neutral but rather as being involved in shaping and organizing the conduct of individuals as well as collectives by outlining and defining the field of possibility, for example, of rational reasoning and action as well as through subject positioning or, as Foucault calls it, disciplining the self.

This chapter examined documents on the politics of teacher and school self-evaluation from the perspective of genealogy, also known as critical history. Not enough is known about how the politics of teacher and school self-evaluation are experienced by teachers themselves, and how they live with the ethics of the necessity for self-evaluation raised in the analysis. Yet it is sure that the technology of self-evaluation is not apolitical, nor separate from power relations and governance of society (e.g., Pitkänen 2022). It would be important to examine how this power is operationalized in the everyday routines of schools, and with what effects. The current globally disseminated discourse constitutes self-evaluation as a technique for improving the quality, performance and equality of education (OECD, 2013) in a very uncontextualized manner, ignoring the diverse educational and societal contexts of self-evaluation. This is why it would be desirable to scrutinize what actually takes place as the politics of self-evaluation is enacted in 'thousands of micro locales' and contexts and influencing innumerable individual teachers and schools conducting self-evaluation in these very specific locales.

## Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Academy of Finland under Grant 332155.

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