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Title: Counting, Classifying and Comparing:
Contemporary Policies and Practices to Govern and Control the 21st Century Teacher

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Abstract : Across many English speaking countries a set of policies and practices have been established to construct the 'quality' teacher. Many of these reforms involve the collection of data about teachers with the aim not only to know and control the teacher, but to enhance the efficiency of educational systems.

The paper focuses on the effects of techniques that operate to count, classify, and compare the twenty-first century teacher. Two categories of reforms in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the U.K. and the U.S. are reviewed. The first consists of mechanisms for the collection and tabulation of statistical data about the teaching body and includes registers, databases and digests. The second, those reforms related to the appraisal of teachers, includes portfolios, profiles and personal learning plans. Together, these policies signify an intensification of processes to track and tabulate the teacher in quantitative and qualitative terms. These practices have a normative function, in the production of the teacher as a transparent and accountable subject.

The paper is situated within an historical context, tracing nineteenth century transformations in the nature of the nation-state, which provided the impetus for the collection of national statistics of the population. In many ways, contemporary processes to collect and codify data about teachers mirror the nineteenth century rise of interest in statistical studies, as the population became something to be known, analysed and controlled. The main argument is that through the development of these new calculable spaces, the teaching population (like nineteenth century populations) can now be more effectively governed and controlled.