

Teacher Professionalism and the Devolution of School Management

Barbara Preston

In this paper I will be considering teacher professionalism and its interrelationships with school organisation. Caldwell (1993, p. xiii) asserts that 'There is a strong body of evidence that decentralisation enhances job satisfaction and professionalism on the part of principals and teachers'. What is meant here by "professionalism", and does the comment arise from any real evidence (perhaps from devolution on the democratic, participative model rather than the market model), or just from the rhetoric of the pro-marketeters?

A key feature of teacher professionalism in the context of Australian schools is a responsibility for the education of all students, not just the "academically able" and not just for the learning in a particular subject by those students who are directly taught that subject by a particular teacher. In other words, teacher professionalism is inherently collective, something which does not sit easily with the essentially individualist nature of markets as conceived by the advocates of market-based devolution. This paper discusses the implications of notions of teacher professionalism for devolution and how they have been used in the devolution debate.

Teachers' Work, Professionalism, Devolution and Markets

Discussion about the collective nature of teachers' professional work leads us to consideration of how different ways of organising schools can facilitate or inhibit effective professional practice. To the list of areas of knowledge which all teachers need for successful practice developed by Shulman (1987), should be added something like, "knowledge of the teaching profession, its patterns of competencies and experiences, values and traditions, its roles and relationships with other stakeholders in the schooling endeavour and its opportunities and limitations within various ways of organising schooling". It is this last matter which will be elaborated now.

Four different ways of organising schooling are outlined in the Table found at the end of this paper. There are two centralised models: Professional Bureaucracy and Corporate Management; and two devolved models: Market and Democratic Professionalism - the participative, co-operative model of devolution. As can be seen from the table, each of the major stakeholder groups, students, parents, teachers, principals and department officers, have

particular roles and responsibilities in each alternative model.

Australian government school systems are generally moving away from the professional bureaucracy model to variations on, and combinations of, the other three. Mark Considine has provided an excellent analysis of general problems of public services moving from professional bureaucracy to corporate management models (1988) and I will not consider corporate management models in great detail here. Rather, I will focus on comparing the market and democratic professionalism models.

In much of the literature promoting teacher professionalism (especially in the US) there appears little appreciation of the distinction between the two and a tendency to implicitly or explicitly support market models. In a major article published in the *Harvard Education Review* last year, David Labaree claims that the 'teacher professionalization movement (in the US) has explicitly chosen to pursue a market-based strategy' (Labaree 1992, p. 131). This is apparent from writings by Gary Sykes, Linda Darling-Hammond and others who, in many respects, can be considered "progressive" educationalists and are not on the right politically. Sykes (1991) compared "bureaucracy" and "professionalism", the latter closely fitting the Market Model of the Table at the end of this paper. He favourably cites Chubb and Moe (1990) and their position that:

Choice in a voucher scheme (is) the only real hope for reform, (Chubb and Moe) arguing that direct control by the people is best exercised through the market, not via politics. They also link their choice scheme to professionalism, for choice must play out on both the supply and the demand side. Supply-side choice means inviting teachers to create schools with distinctive missions that will attract students. (Sykes 1991, pp. 142-143)

Chubb and Moe's book, *Politics, Markets and American Schools*, has been well-publicised and influential around the world. They use data on tens of thousands of students and staff and more than 1000 schools. Yet there is little connection between their empirical data and their market-based proposals for schools. There are serious problems with validity of their measures, for example, their "school organisation" factor was related to the academic practices and ethos of a school (such as homework policies and principal and teacher characteristics). There are other serious methodological problems which are well

canvassed in the literature (see especially Lemann 1991).

Even if their conclusions were valid, those conclusions could be interpreted against a market model for all schools; the "success" of schools purportedly organised on a market model could largely be a consequence of their ability to "cream" students, teachers and articulate parents from other schools and to dump the difficult students or teachers on those schools. Thus the lack of success of the "non-market" schools is a consequence of their relationship with market-organised schools, and if the market were extended (beyond its very limited range in the USA) the damage to other schools (and thus schooling as a whole in the country) would also be extended. (This argument is developed further below.) Chubb and Moe's conclusions that markets in schooling will lead to improved student outcomes are pure speculation and after the initial flurry, the work is now not taken seriously as anything other than a polemic.

It is worth looking at what has actually happened with the sort of school organisation advocated by Chubb and Moe. Since the mid 1980s a number of market-based changes to school organisation have occurred in England and Wales. These are seen by Chubb and Moe as a good model.

English schooling has been profoundly changed by the implementation of per capita funding of schools, open enrolments, movement of schools out of the jurisdiction of local education authorities to independent "grant maintained" status and the earlier establishment of city technology colleges and the "assisted places scheme". The impact of these changes has been researched by, among others, Geoff Whitty (1989 and 1993) and Stephen J Ball (1992 and 1993). They found that three major trends stand out.

First, there is a loss of heterogeneity in student populations within schools - students lose the opportunity for learning from a peer group drawn from a wide cross section of society.

Second, there is an increasing differentiation in the quality and resources available to schools. Resources in schools attended by the children of the professional middle class and the wealthy often improve, while there has been a sharp decline in those schools attended by the children of working people and the poor, and by students with learning difficulties.

Third, and in contrast to what many advocates of the market would hope for, there is a loss of diversity of options and effective curriculum choices. This involves the strengthening of a univalue hierarchy of schools and curricula within schools, with the one curriculum model all should emulate being the traditional academic route to high status occupations. Alternative curriculum models and pathways are weakened in quality and effectiveness. The loss of real diversity and options in a market system is exemplified by the development of City Technology Colleges in England (CTCs). They were initially set up to provide a high quality, technologically and practically focussed alternative to the traditional

academic curriculum. However, as market pressures became more powerful and all-encompassing the CTCs became in ethos and formal curriculum emulators of the independent schools to which they were intended to provide a qualitatively different, but equally valuable, alternative (Whitty 1989).

Markets in Schooling

Markets in schooling are quite different from those in goods and many services. Most importantly, students are not just "consumers" of schooling, but are part of the "product" sold to other students and part of the "raw material" of the enterprise schooling. They are "product" in that the student population of a school is a significant contributor to the real and apparent quality of education and social development which individual students (as consumers) receive. As part of the "raw material" students require differential resources for "processing" to equivalent outcomes - for example, some students have greater learning difficulties than others, some students are difficult to manage, while others can achieve brilliantly with few resources. Therefore, schools have a strong incentive to select and exclude. In the "market" situation it is schools which do most of the choosing, not parents or students.

Teachers are in a difficult position. They have a duty to their employer and to the apparent interests of their existing students (or at least those with the most articulate and influential parents). Yet that is in contradiction to their wider professional duty to facilitate the effective learning of all students (including those whose exclusion improves the market position of the school). Rather than enhance teacher professionalism, a market model places teachers in a position in which their professional duty to the education of all students and the service of the wider community is undermined.

The responsibility for the quality of education for all students also places dilemmas before the profession as a whole because of the operation of a free market for teacher labour in a market situation. Where there is centralised staffing the profession can reach agreement with school authorities to ensure that all schools are equitably and optimally staffed. This may involve some local involvement of selection of staff, especially senior staff, and it certainly may involve ways to ensure appropriate deployments (such as an adequate proportion of teachers with experience, understandings and commitment in Aboriginal education in schools serving Aboriginal communities).

In a free market, desirable schools can take their pick of teachers, while hard to staff schools cannot be choosers and may even be forced to employ unqualified and quite inappropriate teachers. The freeing up of resources in attractive schools which we noted earlier allows them to pay higher wages or provide other incentives or support (such as paid study leave) to ensure their staff is optimally suited to the needs of the school.

This helps them further improve their market position, while the staffing difficulties of hard to staff schools (which are often hard to staff because the students are difficult to teach and need especially skilled and committed teachers) means that those hard to staff schools become more unattractive to students who can move elsewhere. Thus the vicious circle of residualisation gets greater impetus.

One of the extraordinary aspects of the discussion of teachers' roles and teacher professionalism by those advocating a market in schooling, is the pessimistic and denigratory attitude to teachers in non-market school systems - the assumption of crude self-interest manifest in the notion of "provider capture". This contrasts with the unproblematic and rosy view of teachers' motivations and professional work in a market-based system of schooling. Yet there the conflicting pressures are much more powerful, as noted above. "Provider capture" is a central element of the political theory drawn from neo-classical economics called "public choice theory", which is the explicit or implicit theoretical basis of most current advocacy for market-based organisation of schools.

In line with neo-classical economics, public choice theory assumes that human behaviour is essentially both individualistic and self-interested. Thus, it is assumed, the collective representative organisations of teachers, especially their unions, can only take positions which are in the self-interests of the majority of their current members, not which benefit the overall quality of education now and into the future. Likewise, politicians and school authorities who respond to teacher organisations do so in their own narrow self interests - to gain teachers' votes or to enhance their own power and extend their empires (see Quiggin 1987 and Self 1990). This is the essence of Chubb and Moe's theoretical argument against the "democratic", bureaucratic organisation of public schools in the USA and given this premise, it is not surprising that they believe that the only solution to the problems of US schools is a market system of organisation, irrespective of the evidence and alternative proposals.

The problems for teacher professionalism and quality education in market models may seem quite apparent, yet do not appear so to influential Americans such as Sykes. Some are apparent to the radical critics of "teacher professionalism" such as Burbules and Densmore. They make the distinctions among models of devolution and choice which are common in this Forum. For example, in response to Sykes they point out that:

Policies designed to increase 'choice' can be conceived in two fundamentally different ways. One is driven by a market-oriented strategy: Specialists create a range of products and consumers select those they prefer. Placed in the context of professionalism, this apparent 'choice' is severely limited by the options specialists make available. Alternatively, however, one can conceive of choice in a radically different way: as being based on involvement, participation and direct

responsiveness. In this latter sense, choice is not a process of selecting ready-made products off the shelf but of being involved in the conception, planning and design of what those very options look like. (Burbules and Densmore 1991a, p. 155)

Their preferred model is similar to the "democratic professionalism" model of devolution detailed in this paper (especially the Table). What I have sought to argue is that this way of organising schools is not inconsistent with teacher professionalism. In fact, a market model makes it difficult, in many ways, for teachers to act to their full professional capacity.

Teachers would be like the parents who may want to collectively organise to improve the quality of education in the system as a whole, but find doing so increasingly difficult in a market system. If teachers' professional work is not conceived beyond the classroom or the school then this issue is not recognised. Thus, Linda Darling-Hammond (1988), a US educator who supports teacher professionalism and works with teacher unions, while arguing for professional collegiality and 'overcoming teacher isolation', sees such collegiality involved only in 'collective responsibility for instructional quality' and the determination, development and maintenance of professional standards ("teacher quality"). Matters such as system-wide issues of equity or credentials - matters of central importance in evaluating ways of organising schools, are not within the domain of teachers' individual or collective professional responsibility. Rather they are matters for "policy makers".

Part of the task of understanding the possibilities and consequences of various forms of devolution and other ways of organising schools involves a deeper understanding of teacher professionalism - what it might be, how it might be extended, developed or restricted. This paper has sought to open up that agenda a little more.

References

Note: This paper draws heavily from Preston 1992.

Ball, Stephen J. and Bowe, Richard 1992, 'Education, markets and professionalism: some reflections on recent policy developments in England and Wales', *Rationalising Education, Melbourne Studies in Education* 1992, La Trobe University Press, Bundoora.

Ball, Stephen J. 1993, 'Education Markets, Choice and Social Class: the market as a class strategy in the UK and USA', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 3-19.

Brown, P. 1990 'The "third wave": education and the ideology of Parentocracy', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol 11, No. 1.

Burbules, Nicholas C. and Densmore, Kathleen 1991a, 'The limits of making teaching a profession', *Educational Policy*, vol. 5, no. 1, March, pp. 44-63.

Burbules, Nicholas C. and Densmore, Kathleen 1991b, 'The Persistence of Professionalism: Breakin' Up Is Hard To Do', *Educational Policy*, vol. 5, no. 2, June, pp. 150-157.

Caldwell, B. 1993, *Decentralising the Management of Australian Schools: A Discussion Paper*, National Industry Education Forum, Melbourne.

Chubb, J. and Moe, T. 1990, *Politics, Markets and America's Schools*, WA Brookings Institution, Washington.

THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MAJOR PLAYERS (EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OFFICERS, PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS, PARENTS AND STUDENTS) IN EACH OF FOUR DIFFERENT MODELS OF SCHOOLING (PROFESSIONAL BUREAUCRACY, CORPORATE MANAGEMENT, MARKET AND DEMOCRATIC PROFESSIONALISM)

1. Department Officers - roles and responsibilities

Professional Bureaucracy Model	Corporate Management Model	Market Model	Democratic Professionalism Model
<p>Department officers have a major role utilising professional expertise, integrating management with education. Responsibility both up the line of management, and to clients and other professionals. Strict accountability only up the line. Major role in determining the nature of the schooling system, school practices and curriculum. There are known rules and regulations covering procedures.</p>	<p>Department officers have a major management role, but little education expertise required - consistent with the doctrine that 'a manager is a manager'. Responsibility and accountability up the line of management, with a high degree of 'transparency'. High degree of control over many aspects of schooling, significant devolution of others. Consultants employed on contract to carry out developmental work on educational matters which are centrally determined.</p>	<p>Department officers have a minor role, mostly the collection and dissemination of information about the performance of schools and ensuring the unimpeded operation of the market. This may include a central testing program which results in de facto central curriculum.</p>	<p>Department officers have a medium role of co-ordination and responsive system administration, ensuring the equitable and effective development and allocation of resources. Collaboration with parents, teachers and other stakeholders in planning and implementing the direction of the system. Facilitate professional development of teachers, principals and other system employees, and support training programs to assist participation of parents, students and other community members.</p>

References (cont.)

- Considine, Mark 1988, 'Corporate Management Framework as Administrative Science: A Critique', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. XLVII, no. 1, March.
- Crawford, Kathryn and Deer, Christine 1991, 'Do We Practice What We Preach? Putting Policy into Practice in Teacher Education', a paper presented to the Annual Conference of the Australian Teacher Education Association, Melbourne, 7-10 July.
- Darling-Hammond, L. et al. 1983, 'Teacher Evaluation in the Organisational Context: A Review of the Literature' *Review of Educational Research*, vol. 53, no. 3, pp. 285-328.
- Darling-Hammond, Linda 1988, 'Accountability and Teacher Professionalism', *American Educator*, Winter, pp. 8-13 and 38-43.
- Labaree, David F. 1992, 'Power, knowledge and the rationalization of teaching: a genealogy of the movement to professionalize teaching', *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 62, no. 2, Summer, pp. 123-154.
- Parry, Noel and Parry, Jose 1974, 'The Teachers and Professionalism: the Failure of an Occupational Strategy' in Michael Flude and John Ahier, *Educability, Schools and Ideology*, Croom Helm, London.
- Preston, Barbara 1992, 'Teacher professionalism: implications for teachers, teacher educators and democratic schooling', a paper presented at the AARE/NZARE 1992 Conference, Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria, 22-26 November.
- Quiggin, John 1987, 'Egoistic Rationality and Public Choice: A Critical Review of Theory and Evidence', *The Economic Record*, March.

2. Principals - roles and responsibilities

Professional Bureaucracy Model	Corporate Management Model	Market Model	Democratic Professionalism Model
<p>Principals have a medium role of school management and educational leadership. They generally follow guidelines which are centrally determined and which standardise and rationalise the content and processes of schooling.</p>	<p>Principals have a clear role in line management between department officials and teachers. May have major devolved educational or administrative responsibilities.</p>	<p>Principals' major responsibility is marketing the school, ensuring an attractive image is conveyed to the target population, and that the school has a competitive advantage over other schools. Educational and administrative matters are subservient to marketing. Principals also have roles in efficient utilisation of resources; ensuring teachers and other workers support the positive image of the school; and provision of information to central authorities (though there is a clear incentive to massage data to show school in the best light).</p>	<p>Principals have a role similar to departmental officials, but a high level of facilitative and co-ordinating skills is required. Educational and administrative leadership must be judiciously exercised. Support professionalism of teachers through facilitating professional development.</p>

References (cont.)

- Schools Council 1990, *Australia's Teachers: An Agenda for the Next Decade*, AGPS, Canberra.
- Seddon, Terri 1992, 'Teachers' work: how it is changing and who's changing it?' *Education Australia*, no. 16, pp. 9-12.
- Self, Peter 1990, 'Market Ideology and Good Government', *Current Affairs Bulletin*, September.
- Stevenson, Harold W. 1992, 'Learning from Asian Schools', *Scientific American*, vol. 267, no. 6, December, pp. 32-38.
- Shulman, Lee S. 1987, 'Knowledge and Teaching: Foundations of the New Reform', *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 57, no. 1, pp. 1-22.
- Sykes, Gary 1991, 'In defense of teacher professionalism as a policy choice', *Educational Policy*, vol. 5, no. 2, June, pp. 137-145.
- Sykes, Gary 1987, 'Reckoning with the spectre', *Educational Researcher*, vol. 16, no. 6, August-September, p. 19.
- Tickell, Gerry 1992, 'A Teaching Council and Teachers' Continuing Professional and Career Development Issues', in *A National Teaching Council: Issues and Options*. Papers from the Australian College of Education Conference held to examine the options for the development of a professional body for teachers, 29 May 1992. Australian College of Education, pp. 42-47.
- Whitty, Geoff et al. 1989, *The State and Private Education*, Falmer Press, London.
- Whitty, Geoff et al. 1993, *Specialisation and Choice in Urban Education*, Routledge, London.

3. Teachers - roles and responsibilities

Professional Bureaucracy Model	Corporate Management Model	Market Model	Democratic Professionalism Model
<p>There is a division of responsibility between teachers and other professionals, with teachers largely confined to work within the bounds of the classroom, but some advisory and collaborative work when requested by department officers or principals. Much of their practice may be standardised and there may not be a great deal of room to meet students' individual needs except in terms of the subtleties of the student-teacher relationship. Focus is on covering the curriculum, rather than actual learning outcomes.</p>	<p>Teachers are clearly responsible and accountable to principals and on up the line - not to students and parents except through the relevant Minister. Little role outside the classroom, though they may be called on in a consultancy basis for system or whole school curriculum development, or other policy, administrative guidelines or materials development.</p>	<p>Central criteria for judging what teachers are to do or how well it is done is market success with target population. This may mean meeting many students' individual needs very well. Teachers are expected to ensure that troublesome or resource intensive students are excluded from the school (unless part of market strategy). Teachers may be closely monitored to ensure their work appears to be of a very high standard. Those not maintaining appearances have their employment terminated. Teachers compete with other teachers for status, positions and privileges. Teacher involvement in decision-making, especially at the system level, is seen as "provider capture" and is to be avoided.</p>	<p>Teachers have a central role in the educational process. Collaborative relationships with colleagues, parents, students, other professionals and other workers. Sphere of work includes the school and the system as well as the classroom, and responsibilities include educational and other effects on the wider community and on students not directly taught as well as on own students. Teachers, individually and collectively, take professional responsibility for their work and its improvement. Focus is on actual learning (and other) outcomes, rather than covering the curriculum and controlling classrooms.</p>

June, pp. 137-149
 'ectre', *Educational*
 r, p. 19.
 Teachers' Continuing
 es', in *A National*
 from the *Australian*
 mine the options for
 chers, 29 May 1992.
 Education, *Falmer*
 d Choice in Urban

4. Parents - roles and responsibilities

5.

Professional Bureaucracy Model	Corporate Management Model	Market Model	Democratic Professionalism Model
<p>Parents are excluded from participation in educational matters because of lack of expertise and administrative "messiness". Can make few decisions about children's education other than choice between schooling systems.</p>	<p>Parents' roles and responsibilities may vary between those for the professional bureaucracy model and the market model. No participation in educational decision-making other than making choices directly affecting own child.</p>	<p>Parents may chose between schools and perhaps between programs within schools, but will not be involved in the development of programs, practices or positions except through the indirect impact of the choices made. Parents will be inundated by information, as disguised or overt advertising from schools, and from systems claiming to provide impartial information about schools with which parents can make "informed" choices. There is no concern that the choices of some will detrimentally affect the opportunities of others.</p>	<p>Parents have significant opportunities for participation in education decision-making. Communities of which parents and students are a part will also have opportunities for participation. Participation will be possible at the system, region and local cluster levels, as well as in individual schools. Schools and systems support participation through open and welcoming processes, training and other means. Individual choices may be restrained because of their impact on the opportunities of others.</p>

Pro Bur Mod

Stu
ass
pas
acc
pres
curr
gen
invo
mak

5. Students - roles and responsibilities

**Professional
Bureaucracy
Model**

Students are assumed to be passive learners accepting a prescribed curriculum and generally are not involved in decision-making.

**Corporate
Management
Model**

Students may have more active learning opportunities, but what is easily measured as "performance indicators" is given precedence. Not involved in decision-making.

**Market
Model**

Curriculum and pedagogy are determined by the market (what the school believes the target population wants). Students, especially younger ones, are at the whim of parents - the effect of "parentocracy" (Brown, 1990). Older students may have opportunities to exercise "choice". Many students suffer in "residual" schools which have been rejected by those able to choose other schools. Many other students have been rejected by the schools they would prefer because they might damage the schools' image, or simply may not enhance that image as effectively as other students.

**Democratic
Professionalism
Model**

Students are active participants, including in their own learning and decisions about it.

Source: Preston 1992