

CONTROLLING

THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

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This paper has emerged from earlier work with Victorian rural teachers enrolled in tertiary courses (Barnett & Nicholson 1990) which found a marked level of criticism of the locally developed professional development activities, the in-service and cluster based programmes provided within the structures established for teachers working in the Victorian government system. Teachers evaluated the in-service and cluster based programmes as often irrelevant and poorly presented. The reactions of teachers to in-service programmes were in line with other evaluations of in-service programmes. (Teacher Quality, 1989). Fullan (1991) argues that most professional development fails because

- one-off workshops are ineffective,
- topics are selected by people other than those for whom the in-service is intended,
- a lack of follow up;
- neglect of the perceived needs of individuals;
- the lack of a sound conceptual basis;
- insufficient account of variations from place to place;
- "quick-fix" solutions are offered.

Following our work, we were interested to locate the professional development programmes offered to teachers who worked outside the metropolitan area in Victoria. These teachers, we predicted, would have less access to professional development by political context. Some schools, in particular small schools, appeared to go through the motions of dealing with professional development routinely and reflected the interests of the School Support Centre. This suggested that the Department was using its professional development programme to remedy deficiencies within the system and promote particular instrumental objectives which emphasise the classroom skills of teacher development. In terms of any discussion of policy, teachers were encouraged to verse Department policy, without engaging in any analysis of alternatives.

The material suggested that a group of teachers, already geographically isolated from the mainstream of educational debate, may have been further marginalised by a programme which, whilst purporting to be a responsive school-based programme, emerges as a mechanism of control. Our study raises pertinent questions about who controls professional development of teachers and to what end?

discussion of policy

Other professionals are able to help determine income, conditions and entry

to the occupation. Teachers are more akin to public servants, dependent on government for their employment, conditions and curriculum. As Walker (1990) notes: "They (teachers) appear to be forced to adapt to policies, frameworks and procedures conceived outside the profession (p 145)." Walker argues that these policies have derived from corporate approaches to education which have reduced the education of teachers to a narrow and bureaucratically conceived enterprise. Although Walker was referring to pre-service education, the interpretation can be also applied to professional development, particularly as the Department of School Education has continued to be the major provider of programmes to teachers.

The issue then becomes one not so much of professional development as one of control. Smyth (1991) presents an interpretation of professional development within a restructured system of education displaying tensions of central control and devolution.

Management has always been caught on a cleft stick on this one, wanting to simultaneously control the work process by prescribing knowledge and action, but at the same time realising that they are unable to maximise output unless they successfully appropriate workers' knowledge. (p 225)

Maxwell (1991) is critical of earlier professional development programmes for their lack of coherence and close relationship with system-initiated curriculum. Our concern is that the autonomy of teachers is under threat from a number of fronts (DEET, unified business, politicisation of education) and, by allowing professional development to be confined to the elaboration of isolated teaching skills, teachers are locked into an instrumental view of the purposes of schooling, determined by the employer and implemented through what are in effect training modes more akin to an industrial model.

Deprom providers other than the Victorian Department of School Education, given their geographic location. Hence, the local School Support Centre would be a significant influence on their views and practice.

Given the restructuring of education in Australia and new moves to centralise schooling at state and national levels, the need for a critical, independent teaching profession is evident. Anecdotal information suggests teachers are being overwhelmed by devolved 'busyness' and consequently they have been marginalised, unwilling to engage in debate and often unaware of the very nature of the changes which have been taking place. So, whilst managers are involved in making changes to schooling which reflect major changes of emphasis, some of which may be incompatible with the history and culture of Australian schooling, teachers are being kept preoccupied with industrial concerns, or minor curriculum matters.

It would appear that the central priorities and initiatives have been translated into professional development objectives through a programme which was intended to enrich the professional abilities of teachers. Instead, it evidences the characteristics of a management plan designed to limit the function of teachers employed by the Department to the transmission of a defined curriculum. To explore this connection, we obtained copies of a regional programme of activities from a School Support Centre located outside Melbourne and individual school development plans from schools within a sub-region of the Department of School Education. For this paper, we have limited our discussion to the programmes developed by 61 primary schools located in this sub-region of the Department. Most of these schools were located within a provincial city, and all schools were within commuting distance of the city. Schools were provided with a pro-forma by the Support Centre which was to be used to summarise each school development plan for 1992 using the following headings:

- Areas/Issues which will be the focus of the school's development activities
- Brief outline of related professional development activities
- Timeline
- Proposed Resourcing from school, School Support Centre and other funding sources

The Regional School Support Centre compiled a programme of activities 'following an extensive survey of school priorities for 1992' (Regional Programme, 1992). Despite its apparent school-based focus, the programme reflected the priorities of the DSE and was structured to reflect central policies in terms of objectives and outcomes compatible with these policies. ~~ÆÆ-6-Æ~~

The Department, therefore, defined priorities which helped shape programmes and, as we shall see, schools were responsive to the School Support

Centre's proposals.

Utilising a raw measure of topic areas, of the 159 activities offered, most (88) were related to presenting classroom curriculum.

However, we need to note the primacy given to areas of priority like computer training, literacy and numeracy which together contributed two thirds of the curriculum based activities. The Department also used its professional development programme to implement policy and foster organisational growth.

A preliminary categorisation of the activities located a pattern which identified a predominance of training activities which could be defined as classroom based, system development and industrial. The categorisations

are broad, but they capture the directions of programmes and suggest something of what Caldwell (1 in twenty three words. We have expanded this to give the activities meaning.

Linked to personal Development Program as done in 1991. Focus of Whole School Plan for 1992 [Bike Ed, Science and Computer Ed, Art and Music Ed, Library and Administration, Spelling/Writing/Reading, Physical Ed, Integration] Language, Personal Development, Integration Policies. and then nominated four pupil-free days, three staff meetings and requested \$200 for the programme. This was not exceptional. A number of schools were similarly brusque in their outlines and drew upon providers like Vic Roads or the School Support Centre for programmes somewhat like a meal which is ordered from numbers.

(988) calls the 'supermarket approach to professional development' where programmes attempt to address a diverse series of issues, many unrelated.

Classroom Skills

Characteristically, these were skill-based and represented a broad spectrum of often unrelated themes for instance, using spreadsheets, exploring how children read, networking and developing teaching and learning skills.

System Development

Activities in this category supported central policy and worked to encourage its implementation. Progra to help teachers understand the shift which had occurred they needed to be given the opportunity, through system sponsored professional development, to carry out what Bolman and Deal (1991) refer to as "reframing". Our examination of the programs designed by the schools established the following patterns amongst primary schools:

- involving parents
- evaluating school practice
- an acceptance of policy (profiles, excellence, social justice)
- dependence on the School Support Centre for Profesional Development ideas
- developing basic computer skills
- developing literacy, numeracy, technology and science policies

Primary schools seemed ready to incorporate central policy into their programmes. Again, we are not surprised by this, given the employee/employer relationship between teachers and the Department, but the cohesive nature of programmes was a concern. Individual programs were often shallow and influenced by pragmatic outcomes. Even a school which integrated its Professional Development programme into a whole school policy gave more details about school facilities and the need for "bins with lids" than any description of its plans for the professional development of staff.

Few schools had what could be called Vision Statements or comprehensive policies which suggested local autonomy. For the most, schools were like

a franchised operation where similarities were valued over any suggestions

schools still talked of 'community involvement', 'developing school programmes', 'coping with mixed ability groupings' and 'maximising the opportunities for students to reach their full potential' following the language of the Ministerial Papers of the 1980s, despite the fact that the philosophy upon which the papers were based had been superseded some time ago in response to changing emphases for education which were more concerned with the values of economics, efficiency and measurable outcomes for students.....

Other schools were more articulate, but they showed little awareness of the place of professional development within their school. For instance looking at the use of computer maths software already in the school-familiarisation.

Schools recognised a deficiency in their teaching programmes, but they seemed to be unable to articulate their needs, drawing instead upon undefined shortcomings as a justification for 'practical programs for use in an integrated curriculum'. Staff from another school also expressed their concerns, but they were unable to translate these concerns into an effective programme:

As a staff we feel there is a need for us to become more multi-skilled in the various curriculum areas.

From our work it seems the primary schools were unable to develop their own professional development plan. They reacted to central policy, were unsure of their own position as educational leaders and appeared to be dependent on School Support Centre consultants. Very few schools drew on external sources to contribute to their programmes; only four plans indicated intentions to draw upon academics, consultants or community resources.

Boomer recognised that professional development had a skills component and suggested programmes may be driven by interests other than those of teachers; deliberate adult learning activity initiated by teachers themselves, by their employers, by tertiary institutions, or by other agencies with a stake in education (p 5). Brennan (1990) defines professional development as "the training of professionals after their initial, preservice training and The language of post-initial professional experience is diverse. Boomer (1988) talks of 'in-service training', Brennan (1990) of 'continuing professional education' and the Victorian Department of 'professional development'. The different emphases include; a coherent focus of long term development or pragmatic and instrumental

concerns

a direct link to employment needs or the development of a theoretical framework to analyse the work of teachers.

induction or licensing into professional practice.

The language is significant, for it stresses the skills component of development, rather than elements of critique, analysis and creativity. Brennan's definition is a umbrella term which is meant to apply to a range of professional occupations, some independent, others, like teachers, dependent upon employers and industrial associations for their professional status.

Unlike other professions, teaching is centralised. For most teachers, what they teach, their career opportunities and their work environment are all determined by one employer, the State. Only those employed in non-Catholic schools are able to deal directly with their employer outside systemic structures, but even these schools are not truly independent in the sense of being able to chart their own directions away from government guidelines and prescription.

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The DEET Paper, "Teacher Education: A Discussion Paper" (1992) reflects this view, emerging as it does from the economic rationalist debate, and projecting a concept of teacher education which is narrow and practice oriented, with little mention of the need to develop an understanding of changing policy. The spirit of the document fails to endorse the value of critical analysis skills on the part of teachers, creating the ironical situation of the "competent" teacher who will assist in developing the "clever country" emerging as a "product" who asks fewer questions, is socially uncritical, and displays little inventiveness. It is not difficult to see how this attempt to develop the proverbial clever country on the cheap will be counter-productive.

Within this context, it is not surprising to see that teachers appear to have been using professional development to focus on classroom orientated activities, rather than analysing school or system level structures and policies.

ÆÆThis argument is followed through in a paper by Sachs and Logan (1990) who suggest that in-service education is ÆÆembedded in assumptions rooted in bureaucratic control, (and) increases teacher dependency through a process of deskilling and reskilling (p 473).ÆÆÆ-4-Æ"

ÆÆThe Commonwealth appears to endorse professional development which provides outcomes to both teachers and the system. ÆÆThe process must begin with the individual's determination of priorities, but individual teachers must accept some responsibility to take account of the priorities of the

administrative agencies (p.50-51). (DEET 1991) The system, claims Fullan (1991), is very limited in what it can offer for change. It must free individuals and groups of interactive colleagues to develop their knowledge and skills together as a power base for change. Policy pronouncements cannot effect change, no matter how much in-servicing surrounds them (1991, p. 9). Agencies outside the system, he states, for example universities, have an important part to play. Further, teachers and schools will benefit from widening their horizons to encompass an understanding of broader societal change, as it is only an understanding of these which provide the context for the understanding of change within the school system. With this sort of understanding, some have "successfully blunted aspects of reform that they considered inappropriate or wrong" (1991, p.10). In this way, a critical perspective can be developed. In drawing up guidelines for principals, Fullan encourages principals to "use bureaucratic means to facilitate, not constrain", and to "connect with the wider environment" (1991, p.12).

2-ay reduce tertiary institutions' autonomy as providers of professional development programmes. Other than Maxwell (1991), our review of the literature has located material which was urban based and presumed a range of providers. For teachers in concentrations of population, access to higher education, conferences and professional associations is available, so contrary views can be located. Maxwell focused on the Catholic system centred on Armidale, but the work is more concerned with describing the lim

Kennewell (1992) has noted similar trends in the UK as school-based INSET became an entitlement of all teachers, but the nature of the programmes increasingly served the interests of employers rather than teachers. Seddon (1991) has explored the growing influence of state employers at both the preservice and professional development stages of teacher education and warns of that partnerships with employers' imitations of a training model rather than exploring the implications of locking teachers into an employer provided programme. The Department of School Education (Victoria) noted the objectives for professional development during 1991 as: the coordination and integration of services for professional development and provision of high quality statewide programs in order to improve the expertise within the OSA and in school

communities.' (Min Ed & Training, Victoria. Annual Report 1990-1991. p 141) Our argument is not so much with these objectives of the Department as it is with their implementation at the school level and the close relationship which emerges between central policy and professional development programmes. For example, during the period 1991-1992 initiatives reported by the Department included negotiation and implementation of requirements for national reporting, stress prevention initiatives, and implementation of plans to improve the career structure for women.

Industrial Issues

These activities included support for teachers returning to the classroom, AST training, the develop of collegial support, and teacher appraisal. In terms of the allocation of programmes, the classroom based programmes were the most frequently occurring activity, but closely followed by system orientated programmes.

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In the same period, within the Education Programs and Projects Planning Subprogramme, priorities were allocated to

- support development of National Frameworks
- Integration
- District Provision
- Social Justice
- implement the Action Plan for Girls
- support for literacy and numeracy programs in primary schools
- develop strategies to promote excellence in learning
- revise and expand Frameworks
- review student discipline policy
- improve the morale and performance of teachers

public acknowledgement of student achievements through awards, displays, assemblies and newsletters. Other schools seemed to regard the whole issue as an additional burden imposed on them from a Department which already overloaded them with tasks unrelated to teaching. These schools provided brief outlines of their plans, quickly written and lacking in any detail or rationale. One school outlined its programmes. Other than a series of seminars and guest speakers sponsored by the Centre for Science, Mathematics and Technology, teachers had restricted contact with presenters who represented interests from outside the Department.

The programmes made education unproblematic and marginalised teacher input to the role of recipient. Apart from a workshop on the National Statement on Mathematics, no specific discussion of policy was incorporated into the programmes. Some policy analysis was considered in an incidental manner because of the nature of programmes. Amongst them were sessions concerning Equal Opportunity, Social Justice, Ministerial Papers 4 and 6. However, the context of the programmes was quite divorced from the broader debates of self-managing schools, increasing central control of curriculum, incorporating schooling into national economic objectives and the politics of education.

School submission/

Few programmes offered an independent analysis of schooling within the Department. The assumption behind the programmes was that there should be uncritical acceptance of policies which, in reality, have generated intense debate amongst educators. A few activities did, however, lend themselves to developing a critique of education. These included a series of workshops exploring research strategies for students, a reaction to the National Mathematics Statement, Social Justice workshops, a school and

community needs analyses. However, these were the only programme areas which encouraged debate on broad educational issues. Even here, we need to acknowledge that debate was not a stated outcome; the programmes were planned to encourage information sharing, but offered the participants a limited opportunity to raise questions.

Another concern which emerged from the schedules was the insular nature of the prog

-5 -mmes included school reorganisation, District Provision, Integration, School Councils and the VCE.

Classroomskills

System development

Industrially related

-7-improving standards of literacy and numeracy, to provide better access to quality programmes, to engender an ethos for high achievement, to encourage high expectation and to create a school environment characterised by rigorous academic standards, orderly behaviour and a concern for the safety and welfare of individuals (Planning for Successful Schooling: Victorian State Schools 1992- 1994, p 5).

In order~

One school did develop activities which reflected a developed sense of leadership, drew upon models of curriculum, exemplars and sequenced the plan coherently within the context of the school's total programme. However, this was uncharacteristic. Professional development amongst the schools we surveyed represented an uncritical view of education, located outside current debate and divorced from a contemporaron of difference. Only one school gave any indication of a willingness to present itself as different. It identified as one of its long term focuses, the need to present

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-----13- These values were conveyed by the Department quite clearly in documents distributed to schools which advocated-----8-
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the Victorian Department of School Education did not encourage the consideration of alternative ideologies of education (like those of the Coalition or employer groups), its advocacy of National Curriculum, the growing influence of business and its objective to redefine the purposes of government schooling by improving standards of literacy and numeracy, to provide better access to quality programmes, to eng .

These central priorities and initiatives have been translated into professional development objectives through a programme which was intended to enrich the professional abilities of teachers. Instead, it evidences the characteristics of a management plan designed to limit the function of teachers employed by the Department to the transmission of a defined curriculum. We obtained copies of a regional programme

Within this context, it is not surprising to see that teachers appear to have been using professional development to focus on classroom orientated activities, rather than analysing school or system level structures and policies. (AEC,1991) The Commonwealth appears to endorse professional development which provides outcomes to both teachers and the system. The process must begin with the individual's determination of priorities, but individual teachers must accept some responsibility to take account of the priorities of the administrative agencies (p.50-51).(DEET 1991)The

system, claims Fullan (1991b), is very limited in what it can offer for change. It must free up individuals and groups of interactive colleagues to develop their knowledge and skills together as a power base for change. Policy pronouncements cannot effect change, no matter how much in-servicing surrounds them (1991b, p. 9). Agencies led by employers for promotion or remuneration. Short term specific purpose programmes usually designed to meet immediate needs in the teaching workforce in specialised teaching areas. In-service courses noted included Aboriginal education and teaching computer awareness parent participation. Outside the system, e.g. universities, have an important part to play. Further, teachers and schools will benefit from widening their horizons to encompass an understanding of broader societal change, as it is only an understanding of these which provide the context for the understanding of change within the school system. With this sort of understanding, some have "successfully blunted aspects of reform that they considered inappropriate or wrong" (1991b, p.10). In this way, a critical perspective can be developed. In drawing up guidelines for principals, Fullan encourages principals to "use bureaucratic means to facilitate, not constrain", and to "connect with the wider environment" (1991b, p.12).

Definition

For the purposes of the discussion, we have used the term professional development and drawn on Brennan's paper to define professional development as 'the training of professionals after their initial, preservice training

and induction or licensing into professional practice.' (Brennan 1990) The language is significant, for it stresses the skills component of development, rather than elements of critique, analysis and creativity. Brennan's definition is a umbrella term which is meant to apply to a range of professional occupations, some independent, others, like teachers, dependent upon employers and industrial associations for their professional status. Unlike other professions, teaching is centralised. For most teachers, what they teach, their career opportunities and their work environment are all determined by one employer, the State. Only those employed in non-Catholic schools are able to deal directly with their employer outside systemic structures, but even these schools are not truly independent in the sense of being able to chart their own directions away from government guidelines and prescription. In this context, Anderson (1991) notes the last profit making school in Australia closed 60 years ago and few individual teachers have developed businesses drawing upon their teaching skills.

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