PROFESSIONALISM AND CHANGING CONCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS' WORK

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on work in progress from a research
project that is exploring teachers' views about: their
professional status, the role of teacher development in
their working lives, and the changing nature of their day
to day work. The project draws upon data collected from
in-depth, unstructured interviews conducted with a small
group of teachers from a co-educational secondary school
located in a provincial city. The drive toward
articulation and use of competencies in describing
teachers' work carries with it certain assumptions about
the nature of the 'professional' teacher. This is evident
in the work of the NPQTL and the direction of school
reform being instigated in Victoria. The work described
offers insight into how teachers view changes to the
nature and prescription of their work within the context
of the 'professional' teacher.

Introduction
     This paper explores the issue of teacher
professionalism and its currency in the debate about
teachers' work by drawing upon some data from an

unfinished research project to illustrate the position presented. The use of terms such as "professional" and "professionalism" in describing teachers, their work, development practices, or simply occupational status and aspirations is common. These labels can however be used somewhat loosely and generously, often without the precision that might come from any common understanding of their meaning within the context of education and teachers' work. Developments in this country would appear to indicate that there is indeed no such common understanding and that it is debatable whether such terms are appropriate in descriptions of teachers and their work.

Professionalism
    There exists a large body of literature on the sociology of the professions and the evolving nature of professional work. The topic has been tackled from almost every conceivable position with much of it focussing upon the history of work in occupationally specific groups and finding a way through such a large and varied collection of views is difficult for the uninitiated. In addressing the focus of this paper much of this material is best considered as simply a backdrop against which views about teachers as professionals have been developed.
    Michael Schudson's (1980) three definitions of profession is a useful place to start in developing some overview about what is contained in the literature. Firstly, there is what he calls the "conventional" view where the nature of the work performed is the essential element and in this view a professional is somebody in possession of a form of specialised knowledge that has been obtained through a period of intensive training, and the performance of the tasks which form professional work are therefore dependent upon the knowledge and skills thus attained. In his second "revisionist" position the criteria of the first position are regarded as insufficient in providing an adequate definition and the social recognition and status which is bestowed upon the practitioners and the occupation is regarded as the most suitable distinguishing feature of a profession. The third or "critical" definition builds on the revisionist position above with the important acknowledgement that social acceptance occurs within an autonomous political context that allows control of the work processes and entry to the profession.
    The many positions put forward in the literature would seem to fit into one or a combination of these categories. Significant in the ongoing development of the debate in this area has been the work of Margali Sarfatti

Larson (1977 & 1980), Barbara and John Ehrenreichs (1979) and Charles Derber (1982).

In an attempt to explain why professionals have become so important in late twentieth century society, Larson (1977), in her important book "The Rise of Professionalism", argued that the traditional model of professions based upon the ideal of the free professional, as represented by the nineteenth century practice of medicine, no longer provided an adequate model for understanding the professions as they exist today. The growth in bureaucratic organisations which employ highly educated workers has given rise to a wide range of organisational professions, including teaching, and she argued that a more accurate feel for the place of professionalism in today's society can only be found in an understanding of these, including the technobureaucratic professions such as engineering. For these occupations, if there is a common trait to their professionalism, it is the aspiration for status and remuneration found at the middle to higher levels of large organisational workplaces. She believes that in these cases any defining framework has more to do with what she calls the ideology of professionalism (Larson, 1988:143) rather than usual signposts such as specific work practices or professional autonomy. It is the set of beliefs about professionalism, which have origins in understandings of the older professions, that are generalised and shared by diverse groups aspiring to be 'professional', and which permeate the occupational culture, that define any conception of being professional. Larson's position on this would seem to have impacted on those studying the work of occupational groups since there are case studies which claim that it is the ideology of professionalism which influences teachers' views of their occupation and its relative status to other like occupations (Densmore, 1987).

The expanding and evolving place of educated labour in our society's workforce, particularly in bureaucratic organisations and large corporations, has called into question the conventional Marxist view on the traditional class positions of bourgeoisie and proletariat and prompted Marxist theorists to reconsider the position of the organisational professions in class relations. The Ehrenreichs postulated an expanded in-between class location, the Professional-Managerial Class (PMC), that lies between capital and labour, and which plays a role in the reproduction of capitalist relations and culture

without necessarily having a capitalist outlook. In addressing the position of professionals as employees within large organisations, Charles Derber has argued that they are more like other workers in important ways than the conventional literature about professionals would suggest. By having to sell their labour, the work of professionals is subject to forms of control and

organisation not experienced by those whose labour fits the conventional view of professional work consistent with the 'older professions'. He strongly advanced the thesis of professional proletarianisation which had been developed by others, notably Larson (1980), and argued that the work of bureaucratised professionals is controlled by management and is becoming increasingly organised into discrete, fragmented tasks in much the same way that is the case for less skilled workers. Again, this work has been adopted by those analysing the work of teachers and there are many instances of the ideas of the proletarianisation theorists being applied to analyses of teachers' work. (Harris, 1982; Densmore, 1987; Apple, 1988; Apple & Jungck, 1992; Hargreaves, 1992)

Teachers as Professionals
        There is an expansive literature that considers the relation between professionalism and the work of teachers. Much of it focuses upon the question "Are teachers professionals?" and similar questions variant on that theme. Some work looks at historical analyses in the hope of insight (Bergen, 1988); some looks at specific characteristics such as professional autonomy (Pratte & Rury, 1988); some looks at the role of the state in the organisation of teachers' work(Lawn & Ozga, 1986); some uses the particular lenses of class and gender (Apple, 1985 & 1988); some looks at the use of professionalism as a vehicle for educational reform (Darling-Hammond, 1989); some focuses upon the proletarianisation thesis and changes to the nature of teachers' work (Lawn & Ozga, 1988; & Apple, 1988); and there are a number of studies which look a selection of these issues empirically by observing teachers at work and talking to them about their work (Densmore, 1987, Ginsburg, 1987; Hargreaves, 1992).
        It seems only fair and reasonable to ask what can be concluded, about the basic question being asked, from all of this work? Are teachers professionals - or not? Even after surveying the massive literature on this issue it is possible to remain as confused as ever - as indeed are many teachers. However, there is a dominant trend which

runs through most of this work which is unmistakable -
there is an assumption that teachers either are, or at
least are realistic in their aspirations to be,
professionals.

Lawn and Ozga sum it up pretty well in their
assessment of teachers as educational workers as "the
quest for the signifying characteristics of
professionalism is one on which researchers on teaching
seem constantly engaged. Its dominance in the research on
teachers seems at times to lie not just within the
contributing disciplines or ideological viewpoints of the
research, but in an overwhelming 'commonsense' view that
there is no other conceivable position. Professionalism
and teaching seem synonymous" (1988:81).

My own research, in talking to teachers, confirms
that they are see their work as professional and
themselves as professionals. Furthermore, they believe it
to be a commonly held view in the occupation and, with
some exceptions, beyond.

Reflecting on his brief experience as a teacher,
Bob, a second year teacher, has had his initial images of
the teaching as a profession confirmed by what he has seen
in the school where he works.
I felt I was joining a profession when I became
a teacher. ... My perception is, I think almost
universally, the teachers I've come across at
this school, that I've had contact with, care
and I think that's a wide perception, that they
are professional.
He does acknowledge that there may be those who hold the
contrary view, but regards them as being misinformed.
I think also the perception of the time involved
in teaching is vastly inaccurate ... I mean
generally people think that doctors and dentists
work long hours and they work hard and study for
five or six years. Teachers, some teachers study
for three years and they work from nine to
three-thirty or something, that wouldn't help
[the image of teachers as professionals]
because it doesn't look like a very demanding
job at all from the outside, does it? I think that there probably
is in a lot of people a
perception that teachers aren't professionals.
If I had to give a reason for that I would say
the hours issue is probably the most important
one, that people don't realise the time that is
spent.

Benita, an experienced teacher approaching retirement who has taught in the same school as Bob for twelve years presents much the same position in her remarks about teacher professionalism.

I do believe that teachers are professionals, they should be seen as professionals and that should be part and parcel of the whole thing. Well, I think you're in a very responsible position. I don't think people stop and realise that you do have control of those students and you can influence them and I think that you do need to be professional about that. You need to be treated as a professional, because there are many years of study that have gone into that and as I said you have to keep up to date ... I mean you're just as much a professional as anyone else, as a doctor or an accountant or anyone like that ... [and] ... I think most teachers would share that [perception].

But as with her younger and less experienced colleague, there were reservations about any acceptance

beyond occupational boundaries.

I think that we would like to think that we are professional, that we are seen as professional, but I think that sometimes that the general public don't see us as being as professional as we should ... but I think the majority of parents certainly would see us as professionals, I think probably their main expectation is the fact that you try to do your best by the student.

Subsequent comments by Bob and Benita (and from their colleagues) would suggest that they believe that those outside the occupation do not have an adequate knowledge of the breadth of skill required for successful teaching and little understanding of the ever increasing demands on time and the physical and emotional resources that teaching places on a classroom teacher.

The real progress made in work on teacher professionalism is to be found in the work of those who accept the proposition and look at how the construct influences the way teachers, employers and the state view the work of teaching. This is, again, succinctly put by Lawn and Ozga: "instead of asking 'are teachers really professionals or not?', let us ask 'what has been excluded from our understanding of teachers through the dominance of a priori assumptions about professionalism and its

significance?'". (1988: 82) It is here that my research has been focussed in an attempt to explicate and penetrate assumptions (about professionalism) teachers carry in their understandings of the nature and purpose of their work, which may aid the development of better understanding about the work of teachers, how it is defined, the controls it is subject to, and who has influence on these things.

From my stance as teacher cum researcher, writings about professionalism as an issue in teachers' lives only take on significant meaning when they are located closely with analyses of what it is that teachers do and what is expected of them by employers, at both local and global levels, through constraints exercised by administrators and government, as might be embodied explicitly in policy or implicitly through the culture of the workplace or the folklore of the occupation.

In many respects this means looking at the issue from the other end of the tube to that done thus far. Rather than imposing the sociology of the professions onto the occupational culture of teaching in the hope of using it as a filtering lens to find aspects of teaching appropriate to accepted analyses of professionalism, there is more to be gained by those who value the work of teachers from doing the reverse and using the fabric of teachers' work itself as a framework to identify useful ideas from the literature of "the professions/professionalism" which may be helpful in

understanding the richness and diversity of what teachers engage in in schools and classrooms.

It is the work of people such as Linda Darling-Hammond (1985 & 1988), Michael Apple (1988), Jenny Ozga (1988), and here in Australia the likes of John Smyth (1987 & 1991), who have made some progress in this respect by focussing positively on what teachers do and the position of teachers as agents in the control of their own working lives. These authors clearly identify important areas which lend support to the argument that the real issue in the discourse on teacher professionalism must be about how the construct of professionalism can enhance our understanding of teachers' work and whether it has real meaning for teachers (themselves) in their attempts to support and understand the reality of daily life at the chalkface.

Importantly, Darling-Hammond (1989:60) identifies that the state "pays lip service" only to the notion of teacher professionalism and will use the term in its own

interest in seeking to exert control over teachers' work.
This she argues has the "very definition of
'professionalism' turned on its head ... the
'professional' teacher is one who does things right
rather than one who does the right things " [her italics]
(1989:61). This important distinction is very significant
in any debate about teacher professionalism because the
difference between the workplace behaviour in teaching in these
two instances and clearly the expectations on
teachers, in doing their work, as set by administrators,
employers and parents would be very different in each case
- on the one hand it would mean 'standardised' practice
and on the other 'appropriate' practice (Darling-Hammond,
1985:212).

Here in Australia the tension between these two
opposing positions, and the issues at stake, can be seen
reflected in national and local developments which are
giving explicit messages to teachers about their
professional status, where it is loctaed, why it is
important, and what professional behaviour entails.

In February 1991 the National Project on the Quality
of Teaching and Learning (NPQTL) set out on a three year
mission to address a range of professional issues to do
with teaching. The work of the NPQTL has focussed in three
major areas, namely: the explication of what makes good
teaching through the development of National Competency
Standards for teaching; studies of how changes to the
organisation of work in schools can enhance student
learning through the National Schools Project; and the
establishment of a national body representing the
'professional' interests of teachers - a National Teaching
Council. Now, at the end of 1993, as the NPQTL draws
toward the end of its three year term we have seen the
launch of the Australian Teaching Council (a professional
body of teachers for teachers) and we await the

publication of a competency framework from the NPQTL
working party on Teachers' Professional Preparation and
Career Development.

There can be no doubting that the NPQTL accepts the
use of the term profession in relation to teachers' work.
The flavour is unmistakable with each issue of the
project's 'teacher information' publication "Quality Time"
liberally salted with that spicy trio:
profession/professional/professionalism and now even the
promotional brochure of the Australian Teaching Council,
which was sent into schools to encourage teachers to join
the ATC, has used that apparently incontestable trio

thirty-seven times in almost as many sentences. However,
in returning to the point made by Lawn & Ozga (1988), it
is not the acceptance of the term that is significant, but
rather it is the scrutiny of dominant assumptions in
relation to the nature and purpose of their work (within
that acceptance) which is important.

It is claimed that one of the things that the ATC
will do is "build confidence in the profession and support
for teachers work" (ATC,1993) which the NPQTL believes
teachers should be aware is lacking. Dianne Peacock, the
Director of the NPQTL Secretariat, explained it this way.
In recent years confidence in teaching as a
profession has tended to decline. To counter
this situation there is need to make explicit
both within and without the profession what competent
professionals need to know and be able
to do, and to establish agreed standards and
make them public. The successful development of
NCS, of explicit and public statements of
professional competence, should provide a
considerable fillip to teachers' professional
self confidence and stimulate public confidence
in teaching, in general. (1992: 28)

It is pertinent to ask who is being referred to here,
whose confidence in teaching is it that is supposedly
lacking? The teachers that I work with and talk to appear
to be full of confidence about what they do and are very
supportive of each other. If there is any lack of
confidence about teachers and teaching it seems to lie
outside the occupation and its domain, the schools. The
comments of Bob and Benita (and others) would seem to
suggest just that.

The formation of the ATC and the development of NCS
is being sold to teachers as being important for
professional recognition of teachers' work, but it must be
remembered that the initiative for setting up the NPQTL
came from the federal government's desire to find a
"vehicle for advancing the award restructuring process for
the education sector ... (so that) ... the education
sector, along with other sectors of the economy, is
participating in award restructuring and microeconomic
reform to improve Australia's economy" (Ruby et al,

1990:32). In other words, whilst it may be true that the
ATC and NCS will possibly enhance the professional
standing of teachers in the public eye, it is pertinent to
remember that the motivations for such developments lie
not in a desire to improve the lot of teachers, in pursuit

of some altruistic goal of making teachers feel better
about their work, or in improving public image of teaching
per se, but in a broader social agenda that seeks to
control and harness the work of teachers to improving the
nation's economic standing and productivity.

It, therefore, is relevant to ask of the NCS, are its
findings about what constitutes competent teaching likely
to be about doing things right or doing the right things?
The answer to this needs to be pursued vigorously by
teachers and those who value teachers' work. It is beyond
the scope of this paper to go further in seeking the
answer but Smyth (1993), and Watkins (1993), have clearly
identified in recent comments the important issues that
are involved finding it.

In an address given at a conference in November last
year, the (then new) Minister of Education in Victoria
told School Council Presidents and Councillors, and School
Principals that "we are moving towards an education
culture which recognises teaching as a true profession ...
(and that as such they would) ... be able to exercise
their professional skills and judgment in the classroom".
In the same month, his (then newly appointed) Director of School
Education sent a memorandum to teachers and
principals on the topic of "industrial action and other
matters" in which he called on them " ... to behave as
committed professionals and not be involved in 'guerrilla
warfare' ... (and went on to say) ... I cannot stress too
much how inappropriate such activity is for the profession
in the eyes of the public" (Spring, 1992:4) Later, in the
last week of the 1992 school term and immediately prior
to the long summer vacation, shortly after the announced
closure of 52 schools and the loss of 4000 teaching jobs,
the minister wrote to all teachers in Victoria thanking
them for their understanding and stating: "at the
beginning of the new school year, we have the choice of
putting these decisions behind us and working together to
improve student learning and enhancing the professionalism
of teachers. I believe it is time to begin a new era for
the teaching profession in Victoria. As Minister for
Education, I am committed to the enhancement of teachers'
professional status and their public esteem".

Once again, as with the NPQTL, there is this link
between professionalism and the public view of teachers'
work - as if this were where teacher professionalism has
its meaning. Is it any wonder that teachers like Bob,
Benita and their colleagues have doubts about the wider
perception of teacher professionalism when they are
exhorted to work toward improving their professional
status and esteem against citeria based on unarticulated

and often unknown assumptions set by groups external to the occupation? Given that they already believe in their professional status, and have confidence in their own work, are such messages likely to be seen as supportive of that view? Most probably they will be seen for what they are; the reverse side of a belief that blames teachers and schools for all manner of social and economic problems. (Burbules & Densmore, 1991)

There are interesting conclusions to be drawn from what the Minister and his new administration believe constitutes professional behaviour from teachers. Clearly, truly professional teachers must confine their attention to the micro-world of classrooms and children and leave decisions about policy and wider issues to do with the provision and organisation of state schooling to the bureaucrats and their political masters. It would seem that professionalism in Victoria means accepting school closures, job losses and the subsequent re-organisation of teachers' work because that is the right way for professional teachers to behave - or to use Darling-Hammond's phrase, doing things right. The loss of input over the bigger picture of work in schools is part of the Victorian government's articulated desire to rid teachers of their "blue collar" mentality and counteract the perceived "provider capture" of education in Victoria by restricting the opportunities for teacher contribution to the local level organisation and administration of schools in that state.

These attempts at setting clear boundaries to the behaviour of professional teachers in Victoria fits the description of what Grace (1987) has called 'the ethic of teacher professionalism' where there is "an implicit understanding between organised teachers and the agencies of the state in education ...which involves... the idea that teachers will accept their legitimate realm, their sphere of 'proper' professional activity, as within the classroom and the school system and the state, for its part will grant them a measure of trust and autonomy, professional salaries and occupational securities and professional respect and dignity" (1987:221). There is the possibility that the ATC, despite being a professional body for and of teachers, and other products of the NPQTL will, perhaps by default rather than intention, end up being used by employers and the state as a vehicle for promotion of 'the ethic of professionalism'. There are real dangers here for teachers because, as Grace (1987:222) points out, the trade-offs carry the potential for de-politicisation and incorporation which over time

are a major disadvantage to teachers in the retention of
control over the macro-level aspects of their work.

Yet, amazingly, whilst the very essence of what it
means to be a teacher is being called into question within
the context of teacher professionalism, there are those
(Beare, 1992) who would want to return to the theoretical

cul-de-sac of assessing teacher professionalism against
context free typologies.

Changes to Teachers' Work

Concurrent with the expanding literature on teacher
professionalism and the evolving frameworks being used to
define the work of professional teachers, the nature of
what teachers do in classrooms and schools has been
undergoing significant change over the last two decades
and therefore, realistically, any debate about the meaning
of teacher professionalism must take place within the
context of changing work practices and educational policy.

In the early 1970's the Whitlam era in federal
politics brought schooling into focus as a political means
of addressing social justice through the identification of
educational disadvantage in the Australian community and
targeted funding. The launch of the Schools' Commission
and all of its subsequent spin-offs saw investigations
into, and reports from specific projects in, curriculum,
school organisation, resource provision, teacher
development and the needs of specific groups of students
which variously impacted upon the identity of schools and
the work of teachers, in often dramatic and rapid ways.

This has been especially reflected in the broadening
of the constitution of the mainstream curricular offerings
and in the diversity of co-curricular activities now
considered the norm in most schools. The development of
school programs in life skills, work experience,
multiculturalism, outdoor education and so on are a
partial reflection of this. Of course, this can happen in
large or small ways - locally or globally.

Benita's considerable experience in schools means
that she has been exposed to the changes of the last two
decades and has seen the impact which they have made to
the work that teachers do. She put it like this:
 schools are expected to teach much more now,
than they were before it was sort of just tended
to be the disciplines that you taught. Now
there's all these other fringe things, like
health and sex education and driver training
,and outdoor type things, and all of those sorts
of things now being taught or expected to be

taught within the school and I think the parents
have given a lot of that responsibility over to
the school; the parents are too busy ... a lot
of those sorts of things are just aren't being
done in the home and so schools, more
responsibility is being put over onto the
schools to teach those sorts of things.

When asked about the impact of this on teachers, she
replied:

when I look around here I feel that teachers
are, or do have a lot more pressure on them now
and I think that they have difficulty in coping
with that, I think that there is a lot more

stress, morale is down ... I feel that teachers
are under a lot more pressure now.

In Victoria the introduction of the two year
Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) has brought
significant changes in the organisation and provision of
mainstream post-compulsory schooling in that state. For
teachers the VCE has meant increased workloads, new
teaching material, new teaching styles and new forms of
assessment as well. Whilst these changes to assessment
methods have a sound footing in making for fairer and more
even marking of students' work, they have brought a
massive and time-consuming additional set of complex
administrative tasks on already overworked teachers.
Mandy, the VCE co-ordinator, when asked about changes, put
like this:

certainly in administrative work and definitely
with the VCE. There has been a lot of changes,
different sort of record keeping and that thing.
There always was record keeping, but it's a bit
different now ... you have to be a bit more
meticulous about the records that you keep ...
report back to the students about what they've
done in more detail and give them reasons for
why they lost marks ... go through all the
criteria and say why so. Record keeping and
reporting back has changed.

School organisation changes also impact on the nature of
teachers' work. The current drive to self-managing
schools, as evidenced in Victoria with the 'Schools' of
the Future' program, is focussing the attention of
teachers into an examination of how their work contributes
to the survival of the school in a competitive
environment, where enrolments and funding are
market-driven. Teachers are becoming caught up in the

"selling" of the school to its clientele and are becoming
conscious of the impact their work may have on the
survival of their school and its programs, and indeed
their own jobs. Decisions made by schools and teachers
about programs and teaching must be made against a
backdrop of how it may be interpreted by a market that
makes assessments of worth on a range of criteria which
may or may not include any in common with those used by
teachers and school administrators. The following extract
from an internal school document alerting teachers to
their responsibilities for marketing the school gives an
indication of the pressures teachers will experience in
this regard.

As a teacher what is your job description when
it comes to marketing the school? Lots of people
in schools think they don't need marketing - the
attitude is that it is self evident what we
offer - the need is obvious - that we are a
school not a business which sells commodities.
The reality is we need to aggressively market

our service. We are a business - we need
customers - if we don't think in terms of the
customer we will run out of business. As staff,
as employees and stakeholders in a company with
a mission and a marketing job to do we all have
a responsibility to be living examples of the
image of our institution.

 The non-teaching load including administration has
increased markedly and teachers often feel overcome by the
extra things that they have to do as part of their work.
Often they feel that these extras are imposed upon them
and feel swamped by them. Bob, the second year teacher, is
already feeling the pinch.

I'm new to teaching, but I suspect it will go on
and on, is that I find myself flat out for the
ten weeks [of term], you know working long hours
already and the thought of doing more is
unsettling. I teach about twenty two lessons,
which is seventeen hours or whatever and I spend
probably sixty hours a week at school or working
on schoolwork. That's less than a third actually
teaching and if you include preparation in that,
I still imagine it would be about half or less
of my time would be teaching.

He has noticed that the administrative tasks just keep
coming:

a week and a half before school started, I was just flat out

making sure that everyone got
their forms in, their lesson times forms in,
arranging days when people could come in so that
we'd have enough rooms, chasing up forms for the
first two weeks was fairly intensive as well ...
then the next little job is report time, which
is very soon now, where I've got to read an
extra two hundred reports or so.

Bob seemed a bit demoralised by this because he had hoped
the pressure would ease off after his induction year:

I thought this year would be, would take less
time maybe, I think I'm getting more efficient
at the initial job that I had, but the extra
load has made it, well my load has gone up quite
a lot actually ... and my admin time has gone
up.

Teachers are feeling that they are more accountable for
what they do, especially in the area of grading student
work and providing advice through the normal school
business of counselling and pastoral care, and are
concerned that this will become more of an issue given the
increasingly litigative nature of our society in the area
of dissatisfied performance from service providers. As the
notion of quality assurance gains currency in other human
service sectors like medicine, it begins to have some
impact on teaching and learning as well. Every teacher I
interviewed raised this when asked to forecast likely

career challenges and changes to work practices over the
next decade, and in the words of Mandy, it is a major
concern.

We're becoming more and more accountable.
Australia is sort of vaguely following in
America's footsteps. I think that the likelihood
of being sued for doing something wrong, for
perhaps a student not getting an A when they
should have, I think is maybe over the horizon
and I think that's probably a huge worry,
because it's pretty hard to prove that you've
done all you can do.

The work of the teachers I have met in my research,
like those referred to by Hargreaves (1992) and Watkins
(1993) is expanding into ever more areas outside of just
classroom teaching and simultaneously the clerical tasks
associated with classroom work are burgeoning. There is a
feeling of being overloaded to the point that important
things can no longer be done because of constraints on
time. Usually these are things to do with collegiate

support and teacher development. This was poignantly put
by Benita who responded to a question about the reality of
being a teacher with:
there are so many other things that we are
called on to do, looking after the students, you
know the pastoral care and all those sorts of
things and they just impinge on what you're doing ... but that's
just the reality, that you
get just bogged down ... you just get so bogged
down in the day to day running of things that
you have to do, that you really don't get around
to doing those things [things for yourself and
your development and well being as a teacher].

The comments, like the one above, from teachers used
to illustrate the changes to teachers' work would seem to
match well with the following list of common
characteristics for the intensification of the labour of
educated workers (Hargreaves, 1992:88). Intensification
leads to: reduced time for non-work activities; lack of
time to keep up with one's field; persistent overloading;
reductions in quality service; enforced coverage of
personnel shortages; scarcity in preparation time; and a
misplaced sense of professionalism. The evidence presented
here would appear to fit the thesis for the
intensification of teaching as put forward by Michael
Apple and others and link the debate about
proletarianisation of teaching with the evolving nature of
teacher professionalism. The work of these teachers is by
their own accounts professional and by the same accounts
intensifying.

Conclusion
The research thus far would seem to indicate that
teachers do regard the issue of their professionalism as

important, but feel much more at ease with it and
confident about its application to their work than do
others, most notably educational agencies which have some
stake in the work that teachers do but exist outside the
immediate occupational domain. Additionally the teachers
interviewed were clear about how their work was changing
and the pressures these changes placed on them in their
working lives. Much of the work on the professions and
teacher professionalism offers little in the cause of
advancing teacher understanding about the evolving nature
of teaching because of the narrowness of its focus and
what it excludes about teaching. That which does is the
work of the proponents of proletarianisation of teachers'

work because it is only in this work that changes in the
work of teaching are being interpreted within a dynamic
definition of professionalism. As a result of the attempts
to more closely define what good teachers should do within
the construct of professionalism, teachers are receiving
negative and constraining messages about their
professional status. For this researcher, it is not
difficult to view the attempts by employers and the NPQTL
to do so with some scepticism given the origins of such
moves within the decline of the welfare state and the
popularity of economic rationalist solutions to problems.
Professionalism is used as a rhetorical term in
descriptions of teaching and teacher's work and as such
there is an ever present danger that its use is just as likely to
limit as empower teachers in their attempts to
understand, and exercise control over, their work.

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