

AARE Conference Paper

Developing Professionally: The role of teacher associations in the professional development of teachers.

There is a pressing need for significant change towards a higher degree of professionalisation of teachers (ILO/UNESCO 1998 p. 11).

Attracting the best qualified persons and retaining them in the teaching profession is a basic step in promoting good quality education. In addition to adequate salary scales, working conditions conducive to good teaching, and attractive career prospects, **a matter of the highest priority is the need to enhance the professionalisation of teaching** (my emphasis)(ILO/UNESCO 1998 p. 9).

If education is to meet the challenges posed by social, technological and political changes, and if the status of teachers is to improve, the active and informed participation of teachers and **their organisations** will be crucial to the success of educational policy-making. Teachers bring their professional knowledge and experience to any discussions of change in educational systems. By definition, **teachers' organisations are among the most committed supporters of improvement in the status of teachers, which is a necessary condition for higher quality education in general** (my emphasis)(ILO/UNESCO 1998 p. 14).

These comments from the **Joint ILO/UNESCO committee of experts on the Application of the Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers** give some significance to the value in developing an understanding of the nature of teacher organisations and their actual, or potential, role in the professionalisation of teaching. Teacher unions, as one form of teacher organisation, have received significant volumes of academic and media scrutiny and commentary. However, the less publicly renowned group of teacher organisations known as **subject associations** have barely raised a ripple of academic or media attention. Yet within Australia alone such organisations number in excess of 400 and about 40 per cent of teachers claim to belong to a subject association. It is with the role of subject associations in the professionalisation of (secondary) teachers that this paper is concerned.

This paper will commence with a paraphrasing of the study's conclusion. This conclusion was arrived at following a research project into teacher professionalisation and the role of subject association undertaken by this author. Following the summary of the research this paper examines what is believed to be the most fruitful path towards a 'higher degree of professionalisation of teachers' based on the findings of this project.

The conclusion is:

Teachers will only move into a situation where they may legitimately lay claim to the descriptor 'professional' when they move away from notions of individuality (my class, my room, my teaching, my school) and a reliance on external (to the community of teachers) bodies to set the parameters of their work. Only when teachers move to take on the responsibilities of the 'professional' (as well as the privileges) through the medium of their own organisations and associations will they be able to look the community at

large 'in the eye' and declare themselves to be 'professionals'. The paradigm shift that must take place for this to occur is for teachers to reject being P.D.ed (professionally developed) and embrace the concept of D.P. - to develop professionally.

[PD is something that you have done to you: you are the object of the transitive verb, PD'ed. **DP** is something you do within the community of professionals; the teacher is now the topic of the sentence.]

Aims of the Research Study

To come to a greater understanding of what subject associations are and their role in the professional lives of teachers.

To develop an understanding of what a 'professional' life is.

To develop set of criteria for the 'professional community'.

To ask the question; are subject associations a 'case of' the professional community?

To explore the relationships between S.A.s and current issues in teacher professionalism.

To suggest a way forward for the professionalisation of teachers.

The Literature Review.

The usual literature searches indicated that 'subject associations' had not occupied much of the academic world's time or journal space. So casting a wider net the research was drawn into the writings of significant sociologists on the ideas of group and community formation and the concept of the 'professional'.

Weber (1968) differentiated various groups in society 'at large' into either 'communities' where social action is based on a subjective feeling of the partied that they belong together and 'societies' where expediency, exchange and rational calculation of gain are the criteria for participation. Weber characterised the community as an environment in which 'collegiality' was the operational mode.

Durkheim (1957) accounted for the phenomenon of 'collective action' with reference to the moral forces at work within a community. Significantly, for this research, he argued that occupational activity is fertile ground for community formation. As occupation, he argues, is capable of functioning as a community because it provides for a common culture. Durkheim also commented on the disposition of people to identify themselves and others as belonging to various associations or communities.

Parsons (1968) developed Weber's 'collegiality' and Durkheim's 'occupational communities' into the concept of the 'professional community' of which there are six organisational characteristics. These are:

1. theoretical knowledge,
2. professional career,
3. formal egalitarianism,

4. formal autonomy,
5. scrutiny of product,
6. collective decision-making.

Kanter (1972) wrote of the significance of the individual's commitment to the community. She argued that the community is built on the commitment and the willingness of people to do what is necessary to maintain the community. In a similar vein Greenwood (1972) wrote to the 'consciousness-of-kind' that exists, as he found, among members of a profession, which leads to the formation of professional associations or communities. Vollmer and Mills (1966) saw membership of the professional community as a vital element in an individual's professionalisation. They argued that;

Full professional life cannot be achieved in isolation, or in a narrow groove mixing day after day with the same few individuals. A man (and presumably, a woman) may pass his professional examinations and become entitled to letters, he may have good training and experience but unless he associates formally and regularly with the members of his calling **he is not a member of a profession** (my emphasis)(Vollmer and Mills 1966: p. 166).

In the United States the school improvement movement has been closely associated with the teacher professionalisation movement. Little (1992), in championing the teacher professionalisation movement, has drawn a strong connection between the 'professionalisation' of teachers and the development of collegial communities of teachers, initially as a reaction to her perception of teachers' strong individualism and their sense of isolation. Little understood that the professional community is built on the foundation of collegiality and by developing a culture of professional collegiality teachers would significantly improve the quality of their teaching and thus schools would 'improve'.

An outcome of this study of the literature was the development of a definition of the 'professional community'. This definition, below, was then used as a rule around which this research into the role of subject associations in the professionalisation of teachers could be developed.

Professional Community; a working definition

For the purposes of this research, a *professional community* is:

- A group of people who have come together in a *voluntary* manner, though membership is usually focused on the possession of a set of advanced academic qualifications and knowledge that relate directly to a particular occupation and formal registration may also be a prerequisite.
- The members share a *common set of values*, a commitment to *serve the client* and a *common set of language structures*.
- Their organisational mode is *consensual democracy* and the social structure is *egalitarian*.
- People join the community out of an *a priori* sense of '*belonging to*' or '*consciousness of kind*'.
- The community provides the members with a sense of *common identity* and *status*.
- Members are often subject to the *authority of their peers* on matters of work practice and outcome.
- Authority is based on *knowledge, research and expertise* not positional bureaucracies or democratic popularity.
- *Collegiality* is the hallmark of the group's functioning, members are *inclusive* in that the boundaries of membership are not overly regulated and the benefits of

membership are not only available to all members but may flow to those within the profession who may not be members. Members show a high level of *intensity* in terms of the 'pull' the community exerts on them and their shared values and goals indicate a common *orientation*. This collegiality extends to include the practice of 'collegial accountability' or 'peer review' whereby the community may exercise a level of authority over work practices and outcomes.

A Framework for Examining Subject Associations

The formulation of this definition of a professional community moved the study from a general interest in the role of subject associations in the lives of teachers to the research question; are subject associations professional communities? In order for the study to proceed it was necessary to take this definition and the associated ideas from the literature and develop a framework with which to examine the several case studies of subject associations and teachers as members of a professional community. The Framework that resulted had eight criteria and each of the criteria generated one or more research questions. Figure One is the Framework.

The Research Method

Taken as a whole the Framework set out above, when used to generate a research project, seeks to establish the legitimacy of referring to subject associations as 'professional communities' and whether some certain, or any teachers, may be classified as 'professionals'. This study, then, sought to establish the legitimacy of a basic assumption that subject associations are a 'case of' the professional community and that the teacher members are a 'case of' the professional-in-community'. The use of this terminology directed this research towards the methodology of 'case study' research. This approach to research is one that can incorporate both ethnographic and survey methods of data collection. The ethnographic method was used to collect data on the subject associations as complete entities, while survey methods were used to gather data from teachers on their relationships with subject associations and their views on various related matters. Two surveys were distributed to teachers. Survey One was distributed to secondary school teachers 'in general'. Two hundred of these surveys were returned in a useful manner. Survey Two was distributed to members of the 5 case study associations and 250 of these were returned. The participating subject associations were;

- The Mathematical Association of Victoria (MAV)
- The Victorian Commercial Teachers' Association (VCTA)
- The Geography Teachers' Association of Victoria (GTAV)
- The Victorian Association for the Teaching of English (VATE)
- The Japanese Language Teachers' Association of Victoria (JLTAV).

Figure 2 shows the links between the Framework criteria, the research questions, the particular 'case', the data sources and the data-collecting instrument employed.

The Data Analysis Techniques

Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected was reduced in total volume to that which related to the issues under discussion. This data was used in its 'raw' form, as direct quotation of interview transcripts, written responses from the surveys or quotations drawn from primary document sources.

Quantitative Data Analysis

As this study was primarily concerned with 'description', so the method of analysis for the data generated from the surveys was to use descriptive statistical methods. The mean and standard deviation scores for the responses to each question were presented in graphical form. These graphs were used in the data analysis that deals with the findings of the research process.

The Findings

As the data was collected using the 8 criteria of the Framework, so the findings are reported using the same structure. Within the analysis phases it became obvious that the data could be used to describe variations between teachers who were either;

1. individual members of a subject association or they were not individual members, from Survey One

and

2. individual members of subject association or 'school' members of subject

associations, for Survey Two.

The survey data is presented in graphic form while the qualitative data is presented in its 'crude' form, as direct quote. This paper will focus on the data analysis from three of the criteria, Purposes, Collegueship and Currently Existing Communities.

Purposes

Each of the 5 subject associations studied published a 'mission statement'. These mission statements are public statements of intent or purpose for which the organisation exists and functions. Figure 3 is a presentation of these statements as well as an analysis of the key actions within these statements of purpose. The three most popular actions, support, promote, provide, all relate (naturally) to the teaching of the particular subject. The teaching of geography, mathematics, commerce, Japanese language and English is their primary focus. When the surveyed teachers were asked whom they would turn to for assistance in teaching these subjects when faced with a problem, the data collected (Graph 1) indicated that the subject association hardly entered into their thoughts. In fact, the most popular source of help was **'self-help'**. In fact, all 'authoritative' figures, the faculty coordinator, system consultants, and academics along with the 'education officer from the subject association' all rated in the range, 'not likely' to 'somewhat likely'. The variation between 'individual members of subject associations' and 'those who were not individual members' is clearly insignificant. The general finding to come out of this data is that teachers continue to work in an isolated environment, relying on self-help in times of need or at most confining themselves to their own intimate (school based) peer group.

Figure 1

A Framework For Investigating Professional Communities of Secondary Teachers

Key question: Are subject associations professional communities of teachers?

Criteria Research questions

foundation To what extent does the foundation story of the association show consistency with the formation of a professional community? What motivates teachers to join a S.A. and what does the association do to bond them to the community?

purpose To what extent do the association's purposes reflect those of a professional community? To what extent is the membership satisfied with the activities of the association in terms of their professional needs?

costs & benefits What type and quantity of 'costs' are involved in being a member of a subject association, what type and quantity of benefits come from membership?

colleagueship In terms of Little's three components of collegiality, intensity, inclusivity & orientation as well as accountability; to what extent are subject associations collegial organisations?

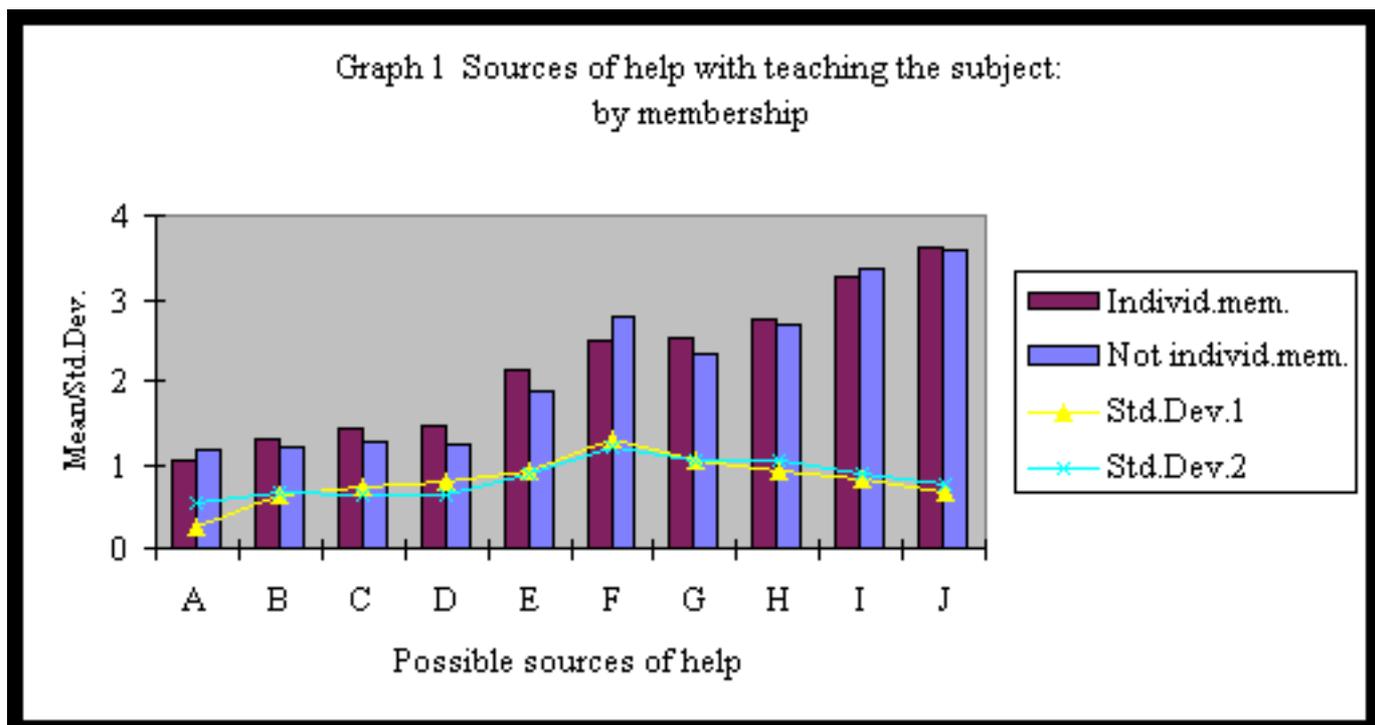
public benefit. In what way does society benefit from the activities of subject associations and to what extent are these benefits recognised by significant stakeholders in school education?

teaching subject How significant is the 'subject' taught to a teacher in his/her professional life?

current communities To what extent do the existing subject associations conform to the expectation of a professional community?

professional teachers To what extent do members of S.A.s and other teachers exhibit professional characteristics?

Figure 3



Survey One Question 14. If faced with a problem in your subject teaching, how likely is it you would consult with each of the following sources of ideas for dealing with that problem?

Individual members = 79 School members = 122 N = 201

Scale 1 = not likely 2 = somewhat likely 3 = likely 4 = very likely

A: A textbook distributor

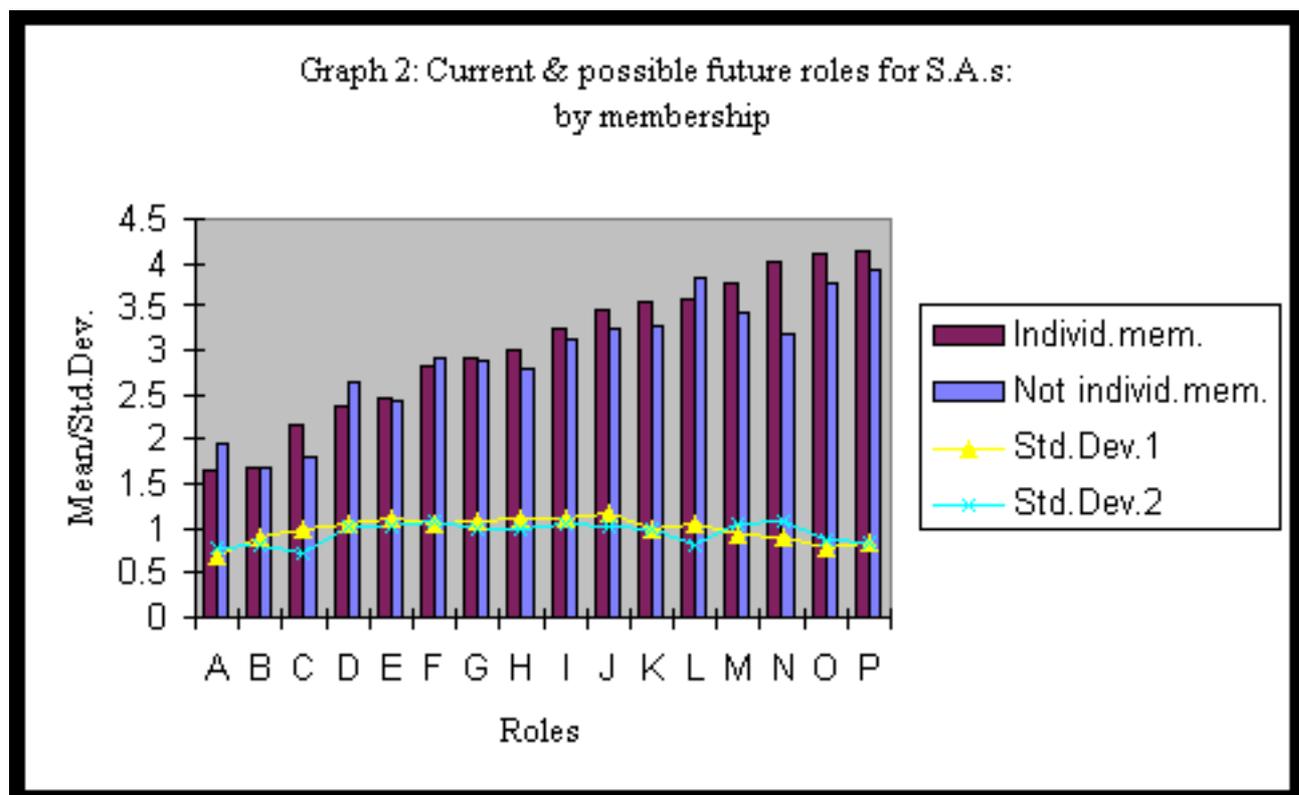
B: University academics

C: A consultant from the system in which I teach

D: The education officer in my subject association

- E: Teachers from other schools
- F: The faculty coordinator
- G: Personal teacher friends not in my school
- H: Other teachers in my school
- I: Fellow members of my faculty
- J: Personal reflection

This pattern of self-reliance was repeated when the teachers were asked to recall the sources of major changes to their teaching practice. 'Personal inspiration' was the only item to rate in the region of 'important' to 'very important' (Mullins 1998 p.156). However, for this measure, subject association activities did rank third in importance. For the question, 'please indicate the extent to which each of the following sources has/does contribute to your understanding of what 'good' teaching is', the most favoured response was 'personal evaluation of my own teaching' (Mullins 1998 p 160).



Survey 1 Question 26. This question aims to ascertain your views on the current and possible future role of subject associations in education.

Individual members = 79 Not individual members = 122 N = 201

Scale (reversed from survey)

1 = strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 = no opinion 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree

A: Primarily social organisations

B: Authority to revoke 'license to teach'

C: Membership a prerequisite to employment

D: Subject associations should NOT be involved in profit making ventures

E: Represent members on issues of wages and conditions

F: Have a role in examining a school's teaching syllabus and teaching practice in the subject

G: Monitor the quality of the teaching practice of members

H: Develop standards for teacher promotion as teachers

I: Subject associations should be involved in setting standards for beginning teachers

J: Main responsibility for professional development in the subject

K: Subject association standards should be used for teacher appraisal and assessment

L: More public promotion of subject

M: Central role in accrediting tertiary courses for teaching credentials in the subject

N: Subject Associations currently provide highly relevant professional development

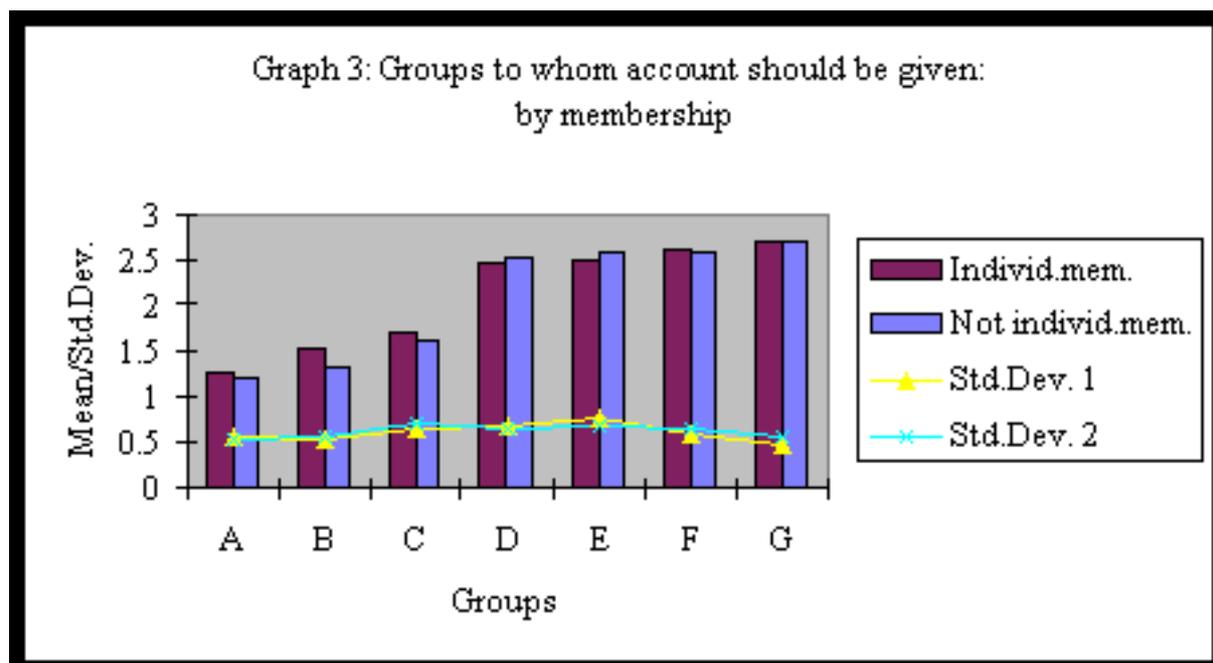
O: Take a leading role in the development of standards for high quality teaching in the subject

P: Subject associations should negotiate with government over curriculum and assessment

The information presented in Graph 2 indicates that there is a strong feeling among teachers, both those who are individual members and those that maybe school members, about the limits of what subject associations should and should not be involved in. Activities that support the subject, *per se*, are fine whereas any suggestion of subject associations being involved directly with a teacher's professional life is rejected. Survey Two offered both individual and school members of the 5 case studies a longer list of possible future roles for subject associations (Mullins 1998 p.167). Here the pattern of responses reflected that of Graph 2. The members of the associations were not

significantly agreeable to their associations being intimately involved with their professional careers.

'Accountability' has become a catch phrase of the 90s, especially as it relates to the delivery of public services. According to Elliott (1979 p. 67) accountability is a hallmark of the professional group. The professional takes personal responsibility for services provided to a client. The professional community sets the benchmarks against which both the client and the professional may judge the quality of the service. Survey One collected data on the issue of to whom teachers thought they should be accountable and to whom they are currently accountable. Graph 3 displays the data relating to the first question.



Survey One Question 17. A number of groups are listed below to whom teachers may feel accountable for the quality of their teaching. Please indicate, for each group, the extent to which you feel you should be accountable to them.

Individual members = 79 Not individual members = 122 N = 201

Scale 1 = not at all 2 = to some extent 3 = to a considerable extent

A : University faculties of education

B : members of your particular subject association

C : system level administrators

D : members of your faculty/department

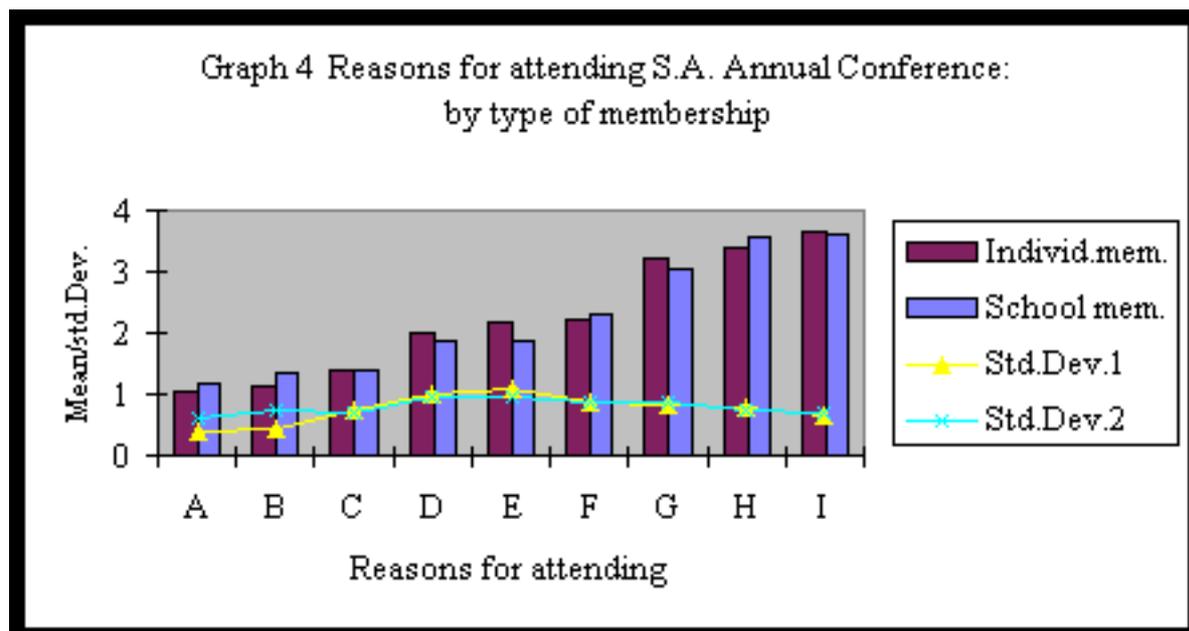
E : your faculty/department coordinator

F : the principal/head of your school

G : the parents of your students

The results of the survey on this issue show a quite clear divide between those to whom account should be given and those to whom account need not be given. The four items that gained positive responses are all within the school environment. The three that rated at the 'not at all' end of the scale were all bodies outside of the school environment. Professional accountability is seen as an 'in-house' activity. (And one would have to question the actual extent to which parents do receive any level of accounting.)

Each subject association holds an annual conference. These conferences are big events in the life of the association. What do they say about the nature of the professional community that supports them? Why do so many teachers see attendance at these conferences as their duty and right? Graph 4 represents the data collected by Survey Two that relates to the rankings given by teachers to a number of possible reasons for wanting to attend the annual conference.



Survey 2 Question 14. To what extent was each of the factors listed below significant reason for you in deciding to attend that conference?

Individual Members Attending = 73 School Members Attending = 62 N = 135

Scale: 1 = of little or no significance 2 = somewhat significant

3 = significant 4 = very significant

A: the travel

B: being away from school

C: the associated social functions

D: the keynote address(es)

E: the chance to catch up with friends

F: the commercial displays

G: the opportunity to discuss teaching issues with fellow teachers

H: the anticipated content of specific sessions

I: the chance to gain ideas to improve my teaching

Clearly teachers go to the annual conference expecting one thing, that to some extent they will come away from the conference better equipped to teach the particular subject. They expect that they will achieve this outcome by attending the various programmed activities and by interacting with fellow teachers. It is usual that the majority of presenters at subject association conferences are members of the association, so item 'I' comes about as a result of the collegiality of items 'H' and 'G'. One the strength of this data (and other from Mullins 1998) one could suggest that the annual conference is the subject association as 'professional community'.

Summary of Findings

1. Findings in relation to subject associations.

What did we learn about Subject Associations?

The research showed:

Foundations:

That S.A.s have had a symbiotic relationship with the history of teaching.

That some 'critical event' often played a significant part in the foundation of most associations.

That successful S.A.s have been founded by teachers who have a focus on assisting teachers do their job more effectively.

That 'the subject' is a focus of identity for many secondary teachers.

Teachers join S.A.s out of a belief that membership will directly benefit their professional practice.

Purpose

That there is a very strong level of support among members for what subject associations are currently doing.

That there is a great deal of disquiet about expanding the functions of the S.A.s to include functions that directly relate to a particular teacher's employment.

Costs & Benefits

The 'costs' of membership are considered to be rather insignificant.

The benefits of membership are real and significant in their impact on teaching.

Colleagueship

That the level and form of colleagueship amongst teachers and members of S.A.s is highly variable in intensity and focus.

Public Benefit

That S.A.s are acknowledged contributors of a great deal of 'public benefit' in the form of improve teaching for society

Teaching Subject

Secondary teachers take much of their identity as a professional from their teaching subject, which often translates into a feeling that membership of a subject association is the 'naturally right thing to do'.

Current Communities

That there are a number of occasions and times when S.A.s behave in a way that is compatible with the term 'professional community'.

Professional Teachers

That the variation between teachers who are members of S.A.s and those who may not be members on measures of professional character are statistically insignificant but they do, globally, tend to favour members.

2. Findings in relation to teacher professionalization

This study found that there are three areas where teachers' perceptions, attitudes and actions may limit the extent to which they may lay claim to the credential, 'professional'. The first limiting factor may be the self-reliant nature of teachers. The model of the professional 'in community' adopted here suggests that behavior that limits reference to the community is counter productive to the true professional state. A professional may be an autonomous worker but he/she is accountable for his/her performance not only to the client but also to the community of professionals with whom he/she is identified. The teacher and the classroom

must not be closed to scrutiny and accountability. The teacher must be open to influence from the expertise that resides in the professional community.

The second difficulty subject associations face in claiming professional status is the reticence of the membership to assign effectual authority over matters, such as defining and enforcing teaching standards to subject associations as professional bodies. Until subject associations can claim authoritative interest in the work out-put of the members, then they will lack a vital dimension of the professional community. Darling-Hammond (1986) highlights the importance of this step in the professionalisation of an occupation when she wrote:

At the core of the definition of a profession is the notion that its members must define and enforce their own standards of practice.... **peer review** and control are the central tenets of professionalism. Members of professions view peer review as essential to developing and maintaining standards because the nature of their work requires both mastery of a body of knowledge and its application in non-routine situations (p. 537) (my emphasis).

The third factor is the marginalisation subject associations have usually experienced when vital decisions relating to employment and curriculum issues have been debated and made. Their comparative powerlessness, their large numbers and their voluntary nature have left them unable to exercise a strong voice in policy-making at the state level. The large numbers of subject, and related, associations which are only loosely tied together through voluntary membership of state-based 'joint councils of subject associations' makes it difficult for governments and their statutory bodies to deal with them directly. This lack of a crucial role in the bread and butter issues of teachers' lives may account, in part, for their limited memberships, which in turn restricts their effectiveness. The major employing bodies, the Department of Education, independent school principals and the Catholic Education Office, have not often felt the need to take subject associations into account when dealing with their employees on significant issues that directly affect their professional role.

On the other hand this study also found evidence that subject associations and their teacher members do, in fact, approach the ideal of the 'professional community' to a significant degree. The gathering of the community for the annual conference is a very visual example of such a situation. In the same vein, teachers sharing knowledge of teaching with each other is the core activity of the subject associations' inservice activities and journal publication.

For subject associations to move into the realm of fully professional communities they will need to convince their members that such a move is in their interests. They would also need to convince the employing authorities of their influence over their members on issues that relate directly to the quality of teaching. They need to be given the authority, by their members, not only to speak on behalf of the members but also to speak to the members concerning their standards of teaching practice. If this authority is not forthcoming the associations' leadership may need to become pro-active in commencing programs that lead their associations along this path of professionalisation. Subject associations will need to win from relevant the authorities recognition of their voice so that they can speak with authority and be listened to. Movement in these directions will move teachers along the path of 'professionalisation'.

The significance of the Study

The significance of this study will be discussed in terms of its impact on three related movements that are seeking to redefine the context in which teachers work. These movements are:

- the de-professionalisation of teaching;
- the pseudo-professionalisation of teaching;
- the emerging professionalisation of teaching.

De-professionalisation

If one is denied the opportunity to be an effective professional then one has been effectively 'de-professionalised'. The de-professionalisation of teaching is a term used to cover those policies and practices that restrict a teacher's professional autonomy and the exercise of professional knowledge and judgement. These practices include, teacher-proof curricula, focusing on student outcomes rather than processes in teaching, mandated syllabuses, weak or non-existent entry standards to teaching, and a focus on mandated procedures rather than student needs. The Australian Senate Committee Report (1998) was able to recognise these dangers. This report listed five changes within the education system that have "the potential to undermine the professionalism of (teachers') work. These include:

- centralisation of the curriculum, with little input from teachers
- Increasing managerialism of schools, with principals as arms of the bureaucracy rather than part of the collective teaching force
- Moves to introduce paraprofessionals into the classroom in place of some existing, qualified teachers
- The focus on fundraising, which diverts teachers' time and effort away from their core work
- Externally devised and implemented standardised assessment.

Pseudo-professionalisation

Pseudo-professionalisation exists when the definition of what it is to be a professional teacher is supplied by a body that is external to the profession itself and that definition is then imposed on members of the profession. In Victoria the Standards Council of the Teaching Profession, a statutory and advisory body, has written standards for the teaching profession that bear closely on the assessment criteria used by the Department of Education in its 'Professional Recognition Program' for all teachers in the government sector. Until recently this body had no direct representation of teachers and even now that representation is obscure. Unless teachers become involved in the process of establishing their own professional standards their professional associations will become increasingly irrelevant to the crucial issues facing teachers and their students. It is also likely that any standards of professionalism developed without the full support of teachers at a grassroots level will fail to gain the support needed from teachers to be effective. This pattern of mandated professionalism is no more than contrived professionalism.

Unfolding Professionalisation

Unfolding professionalisation is a dynamic process. Professional status is seen to be attained when certain conditions are fulfilled and practitioners put in place a set of on-going processes that provide guarantees for maintaining standards of service. Darling-Hammond (1988) describes the basis for such a route to professional status as one that:

Envisions (a) different resolutions of the dilemmas (of professionalisation). In this future, teaching continues its progress toward becoming a profession that is both *client-orientated* and *knowledge-based* (p. 9).

Within the Victorian context, opportunity for greater professional responsibility has come in two ways. The first came as a result of changes in the political context during the early 1990s. When Liberal-National Parties were in coalition government in Victoria they were keen to find alternative voices for teachers as an attempt to isolate the teacher unions from decision-making processes. Subject associations, especially if they are able to speak as a unit via the Joint Council of Subject Associations of Victoria (JCSAV), had a rare opportunity to make a case for becoming **the** legitimate voice of teachers on a range of issues that relate to the work of teaching. Issues that are still on the professionalisation agenda to which subject associations could, and should, make a contribution include:

- Entry standards for beginning teachers, as they relate to the teaching of subjects;
- Career structures for those who wish to remain subject teachers;
- License renewal for subject teachers who have been teaching for a significant number of years;
- Developing structured standards and benchmarks for high quality subject teaching;
- Curriculum development at the state level.
- Student assessment and reporting of student progress in mastering a subject;
- Development of on-going learning programs that relate to 'best practice' in teaching.

A new paradigm: Developing Professionally (D.P.)

The term 'professional development' (P.D.) is has become quite debased. Professional development is now used to describe activities that can range from learning the skills of word-processing, to being in-serviced on the latest government policy to networking with fellow teachers on the best way to teach quadratic equations. Professional development is rapidly losing clarity in its meaning. Also, if this version of professional development, such as in-servicing teachers on government policy or improving the skills of 'learning technologies', dominates it will limit the possibilities open to subject associations as significant and legitimate activities. This may occur in terms of the available resources, both human and capital, and more significantly in terms of the way in which the association is perceived by the membership. If subject associations wish to become fully professional communities, then the training of teachers to implement government policy must not be their first priority. This research suggests, instead, that subject associations focus on **developing professionally** the members of their association in relation to the standards and expectations of the professional community.

To develop professionally (D.P.) as a teacher means to grow in knowledge and skill in an environment that is collegial. Such an environment values knowledge of what and how and when and to whom to teach and it is focused on meeting the needs of the client, within general parameters set by society. In order to become associations founded on the principle of developing professionally two things need to occur concurrently. First, teachers need to confer on their associations the authority to set the professionalisation agenda. To have that agenda taken seriously by the rest of the education sector the associations will need to include issues such as:

- Defining minimum requirements of what it is to be a teacher of mathematics, or science, or history or...

- Setting standards of development in the practice of teaching mathematics, or science or...
- Codifying ethical practice;
- Providing the knowledge base and developmental pathways for teachers wishing to become better at teaching mathematics or history or...
- Specifying what a student needs to know in order to be 'literate' in that subject.

Second, the associations need to take up the challenge of providing their members with a community that works hard to develop them to their potential as teachers and that the association takes seriously the items in the agenda listed above. There are, however, two major barriers to subject associations realising such a future. The first is the nature of the subject associations themselves. Their variable size and the smallness of many of them will make it difficult, if not impossible, for them to have the resources to undertake the agenda set out above. The second is in the attitude of many teachers. Somewhat less than fifty per cent of teachers currently belong to a subject association. Even though teachers want to regard themselves as 'professionals', this study has shown that, many teachers have a limited expectation of the role their subject associations might play in defining and enforcing teaching standards. Teachers seem unwilling, as yet, to accept the demands of an accountable professional life.

The concept of teachers developing professionally places a significant amount of the responsibility for the raising of standards in teaching in the hands of the members of the profession. If teachers can accept that professional growth is a responsibility as well as an entitlement, then possibilities for developing professionally will expand well beyond what the school is willing to pay for. When teachers become willing to contribute freely from their own experiences and learning, while at the same time valuing the skills and understandings of peers, then professional growth will occur and subject associations are well placed to facilitate this process. Current research into, and advocacy of, new models of performance based career paths aim to set in place mechanisms that will encourage such developments within teaching. The findings of this study indicate that it is important that this model of professional growth is not limited to only that which is close at hand, the faculty and the school. The potential of the learning community will be greatly enhanced if teachers can also take (be given) the time to form networks that are inclusive of teachers from a range of school types. Subject associations are one example of this process in action.

Teachers' professional associations need to work hard at winning the confidence of teachers and of the educational community so that they and their members may continue with the process of professionalization. When this happens the potential for high quality teaching will be realised and a higher quality of learning will be the outcome for society.

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