

Professional Development for New Times

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Abstract

This paper examines the contributions made by constructivist learning theory and change theories (e.g. systems theory) to the reconceptualisation of professional development for teachers and tertiary teacher educators. The author analyses recent changes in the contexts, principles, purposes, forms, processes and content of professional development in the light of these theories. Insights from this analysis will be used to reflect on the benefits, difficulties and potential of the current emphasis in Australia and overseas on school/university partnership models of professional development for teachers and teacher educators.

Introduction

This paper reviews two powerful trends in the literature. The first is the almost universal agreement by writers in the field that new models of professional development are needed if teachers and tertiary teacher educators are to be able to meet the challenges they are currently facing. The second is the suggestion by many that a feature of new models of professional development should be some form of partnership between schools and tertiary teacher education departments. In this chapter the literature around each of these trends will be reviewed against the following questions:

- Why are new models of professional development for educators needed?
- What features will new models of professional development need to have if they are to be effective?
- Why are school/university partnerships promoted as a powerful form of professional development?
- Do school/university partnerships have potential as models of professional development for new times?

Why are new models of professional development for educators needed?

Traditionally, the professional development of educators has been conceptualised as "knowledge and skills development" (Hargreaves, 1992a). This view of professional development was largely based on a view of knowledge as something that was generated by experts and transmitted to teachers (Hoban, 1997; Lieberman & Grolnick, 1997; Zuber-Skerrit, 1992). Teaching was seen as a technical activity (Nixon, 1995; McRobbie, 1994) that is dependent on mastery of a specific body of knowledge and a particular "set of relatively ordinary and teachable behaviours which can be improved through training and practices"

(Pennington, 1992, p. 43, cited in Webb, 1994, p. 43). Professional development activities tended to be conceived as individualistic, sporadic, uncoordinated and largely provided by external agencies.

There are still many references in the literature to the importance of knowledge and skills development as a significant part of professional development. For instance, a report into professional development by the Review and Evaluation Directorate of the Queensland Department of Education (1991) cited a range of expert opinion to support the view that:

"... professional development opportunities have the potential to make a strong contribution towards improving the quality of schooling by enhancing the knowledge and skills of teachers, and enabling them to address contemporary needs and concerns in their work." (p. 4)

More recently, the document *A Class Act: Inquiry into the Status of Teaching* (Senate Employment and Training References Committee, 1998) contained the statement:

"The nature of teaching is constantly changing, as documented elsewhere in this Report. Consequently, it is imperative that teachers update their skills and subject knowledge throughout their careers. Failure to do so will undermine both their professionalism and their effectiveness in preparing students for a changing world. (p. 217)

The pressure exerted by governments in many countries to make educators more accountable through the imposition of standards and competencies, has ensured that there is an on-going focus on professional development to develop particular knowledge and skills.

However, there are strong criticisms in the literature of professional development that has knowledge and skills development as its sole focus. Criticisms focus on both the processes and outcomes of traditional professional development. Processes are criticised for their:

- individualised nature (Fullan, 1999);
- detachment from the workplace (Retallick, 1997);
- ignorance of participants' individual needs and existing knowledge (Lieberman Grolnick, 1997);
- ignorance of participants' beliefs and values (Nixon, 1995; McRobbie, 1994));
- disregard for the emotional components of learning (Hargreaves, 1997a; 1997b);
- failure to address school-based change (McInerney et al. 1997);
- failure to take account of the effects of workplace culture and structures on learning (Hargreaves, 2000; Bannister & Hill, 1997; Smyth, McInerney, Lawson & Hattam 1999a); and
- lack of attention to learning processes and habits of mind for life-long learning (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992; Day, 2000).

However, the most serious criticism is that inadequate processes have resulted in very little change in educators' thinking and practice, or in the organisations in which they work. Comments such as the following are wide-spread in the literature about professional development for teachers:

"... many in the government and bureaucracy see teacher development as problematic, with respect to the time taken to bring about change, the low proportion of teachers who engage with the requested changes, the funding implications of universal teacher development, the failure to effect discernible

changes in learning outcomes, and the lack of career incentives to entice change." (Bell and Gilbert, 1996, p. 8)

and academics:

"What is now largely left to the individual and to chance, needs to be acknowledged and become part of the discourse within the institution. Specifically, there needs to be an explicit articulation of issues, concerns and expectations about professional development." (Banister & Hill, 1997, p. 177)

These critics have argued for a reconceptualisation of professional development. These arguments centre around three key ideas. The first is that professional should be directed at life-long learning:

"Traditional methods of manager and academic training based on the model of transmitting knowledge and skills from expert to novice, using the most effective transmission techniques, have been shown to be unsatisfactory in recent times. What has been identified as necessary is continuous 'development'. And 'lifelong learning' rather than a one off 'training' course, because the nature of the work and the work situations and conditions are rapidly changing and require different competencies than in the past. In order to facilitate this new kind of learning, staff developers, heads and deans need skills in the areas of individual, group and organisational learning processes." (Zuber-Skerrit 1992, p. 219)

The second idea is that professional development must focus on personal development:

"The metaphors, images and beliefs that teachers hold about their teaching roles are increasingly being shown to be important determinants of their current practice and of their potential for change (Tobin, 1990; Barnes, 1992). Teachers' cognitive and other behaviours are influenced by and interpreted through their personally-held systems of images and beliefs associated with teaching and learning (Clark & Petersen, 1986; Briscoe, 1991)." (Reynolds, 1995, p. 29)

The third idea is that of "professional development as ecological change" (Hargreaves, 1992a) where development of the context for learning is seen as important to the development of the learner:

"In a context where ... improvement and reform efforts are increasingly diverse, wide-ranging, complex and constantly changing, professional development strategies that focus in isolation on specific skills training ... are therefore unlikely to yield much success. As awareness of these limitations grows, other strategies of teacher development are beginning to emerge instead; ones which seem better suited to the complexity, diversity and uncertainty of contemporary reform efforts, and which address the basic workplace cultures of teachers themselves. Paramount among these emergent strategies of teacher development is the principle of collaboration and collegiality." (Hargreaves 1995b, p. 149)

Analysis of the literature reveals that these reconceptualisations of professional development are grounded in the following areas of change:

- changes in global trends;
- changes in thinking about teaching, learning and educational change; and
- changes in the professional lives of educators.

The rest of this section will explore how these changes have created the demand for new models of professional development.

Changes in global trends

The literature identifies numerous changes in global trends that are currently impacting on the context for education. These include:

- globalisation of national economies and new technologies (Conboy, 1994);
- greater social and cultural diversity (Candy, 1997);
- an emphasis on privatisation and marketisation (McInerney, Hattam, Smyth & Lawson, 1997);
- an aging population (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1998);
- environmental issues (Burrows, 1997);
- the changing nature of and sources of knowledge (Martinez, 1996); and
- the changing nature of work (Wideen, 1995), industrial relations (Candy, 1997), employment and job security (Day, 1997).

According to Hargreaves (1994) the cumulative effects of these phenomena is a "postmodern age" that is "characterized by accelerating change, intense compression of time and space, cultural diversity, technological complexity, national insecurity and scientific uncertainty" (p 3).

In these uncertain times, education is seen as the key to creating "an economically competitive and democratic society which can creatively and intelligently respond to challenges which the 21st century poses for it" (Yeatman and Sachs, 1995, p14). In Australia and overseas the educational "buzz word" in the past decade has been "life long learning" (Day, 2000; Blyth, 1997; Candy, 1997; Zuber-Skerritt, 1992) in recognition that education needs to be on-going and should aim to develop those skills, processes and understandings that enable the learner to respond to and initiate rapid change and pose and solve complex problems. Examples of the growing focus on "life long learning" can be seen in the holding of the First Global Conference on Lifelong Learning in 1994 and the declaration that 1996 was "the year of lifelong learning" (Day, 2000).

According to Candy (1997) life-long learning is important:

"... because of the very rapid and pervasive changes and advances in technology, in culture, in social relationships, in internationalisation, in industrial relations, in the economy and so on. There have been such huge changes and advances in the past few years that anybody who is prepared as a professional cannot be considered to be prepared in any final sense, but must continue to go on learning throughout his or her professional life." (p. 12)

Governments in Australia and overseas have acknowledged the need for dramatic educational change to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world. In the main they have been guided by the economic imperative to create a society of "knowledge workers" (Wideen, 1995) to transform resource based economies to knowledge based ones, thereby increasing productivity and efficiency (Review and Evaluation Directorate, Queensland Department of Education, 1991; Coaldrake and Stedman, 1998). Interestingly, in several countries, including Australia, the response to this challenge has not been to increase funding to education, but rather to promote the marketisation and privatisation of education (Grimmett, 1995; McInerney et al., 1997). Governments have also moved to decentralise and devolve many aspects of the management of educational institutions in recognition of the need for a flexible and localised response to community needs. At the same time they have implemented a much more rigorous set of centralised "checks and balances" in the form of "nationally defined codes, competencies and benchmarks, implying singularity and convergence" (Martinez, 1996, p. 4).

A number of theorists have commented on the paradox presented by governments responding to post modern notions of multiplicity and diversity with policies and practices aimed at standardisation and uniformity (Martinez, 1996, Grimmett, 1995; Naisbitt, 1994; cited in Hough and Paine 1997, Day, 2000). In relation to the Australian context Martinez (1996) represented this paradox in the following way:

"One voice acknowledges that Australia is a nation of diversity; a second voice externally imposes central standards which assume that all students, teachers, lecturers and sites can be homogenised to common, measurable, definable batches of commodities, capable of being graded in ways that assure "quality"". (p. 4)

Day (2000) expressed similar sentiments in regard to the situation in England and Wales:

"... national governments have pursued simultaneously a 'loose tight' centralisation (of teachers' pay and conditions of service, curriculum control, testing and school inspections) and decentralisation (delegating school budgets, school management planning and control of management of schools to governing bodies)." (p. 101)

However, there is general agreement that there must be dramatic changes in what Hargreaves (1994) described as "a modernistic, monolithic school system that continues to pursue deeply anachronistic purposes within opaque and inflexible structures" (p. 3). Although Hargreaves was referring to schools, these are similar sentiments expressed about tertiary institutions (e.g. Coaldrake and Stedman, 1998). It is also clear that there needs to be a strong focus on developing on-going learning opportunities for educators if they are to be able to engage in the continuous transformation of sites of education and the teaching and learning that takes place within them.

In summary, dramatic and rapid changes at the global level have necessitated a rethinking of the purpose of education from development of specific knowledge and skills to one of life-long learning for the successful negotiation of an uncertain future. For this to happen, traditional sites for education must be transformed, together with out-dated modes of teaching and learning and there must be on-going learning opportunities provided for teachers and tertiary teacher educators to enable them to reconceptualise the ways education can be delivered.

Changes in thinking about teaching, learning and educational change

Changes in global trends are not the only reason that there have been reconceptualisations of professional development in the past twenty years. Theories about the way learning and change occur have influenced educational thinking at all levels. In particular, individual and social constructivism and organisational change theory have had a significant impact.

Constructivism is a view of learning that has been influenced by the work of a number of theorists. From George Kelly (1969) came a psychological view of learning as the personal making of meaning:

"Kelly proposed that each person constructs a representational model of the world, composed of a series of interrelated personal constructs, or tentative hypotheses about the world, with which past experience is described and explained and future events are forecast." (Kelly, 1969, cited in Bell and Gilbert, 1996, p. 46)

According to Richardson (1999) in broad terms "constructivism refers to the belief that human knowledge is constructed" (p. 146) but the term "constructivist" is used in many different ways. She argued that there are two major approaches to constructivism, the individual and the social, that are usually tied to the learning theories of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky respectively. Individual constructivism focuses on the individual learner while social constructivism focuses "on the environment in which learning is taking place (situated cognition) and on learning that requires social interaction (Vygotskian sociocultural approach)" (Richardson, 1999, p. 147). Bell and Gilbert (1996) also distinguished between a "personal constructivist view of learning" and the "social constructivist view".

In addition to individual and social constructivism, theories about organisational change, such as complexity theory (Fullan, 1997) and systems theory (Senge, 1996) have changed the thinking about what constitutes effective professional development to bring about educational improvement. What follows is an analysis of the influences of individual and social constructivism and organisational change theory on conceptualisations of professional development.

The Influence of Individual Constructivism on Conceptualisations of Professional Development

According to Richardson (1999), "Piagetian (or individual) constructivism focuses on the making of meaning by individuals, and the purposes of teaching within this frame is to lead students towards higher levels of understanding and analytic capabilities" (p. 147). Fung, (2000) summarised some of the other attributes of individual constructivism highlighted in the literature:

"The building of new knowledge or mental constructs, therefore, is dependent upon the preconceptions that a learner brings to the educational experience (Anderson, 1992) and the context in which it occurs (Carr et al., 1994). It will require previously existing knowledge to interact with new experiences (Osborne and Freyberg, 1985; Driver, 1988; Carr et al., 1994). Since learners

have different experiences and prior knowledge, they may construct different meanings in the same learning context (Pope and Gilbert, 1983; Osborne and Freyberg, 1985; Fensham et al., 1994)." (p. 155)

This constructivist view of learning challenged what had previously been a "transmission" view of teaching, in which the role of the teacher was to transfer a fixed body of knowledge to the learners. Instead, the ultimate responsibility for learning belongs to the learners and the teacher's role is to facilitate the learners' interaction with information and experiences in ways that challenge and develop existing constructs and enable them to make new personal meanings (Holliday, 1997, Richardson, 1999). The influence of constructivist views can be seen in the first three principles of the following summary statement of learning principles by the American Psychological Association (1993, cited in Lawson, Hattam, McInerney & Smyth, 1997, p. 11). They asserted that learning is:

- active and constructive;
- goal seeking and meaning-generated;
- directed by learners according to their beliefs, affective states and motivations;
- facilitated by collaboration; and
- and influenced by context.

The influence of individual constructivism in changing conceptualisations of professional development can be seen in the view of "professional development as self development" (Hargreaves, 1992a) or "personal development" (Goodsen, 1992). Proponents of this view of professional development argue that educators are the product of their past experiences, and the values, beliefs, attitude, knowledge and skills that have evolved from these, so that changing their practices involves changing them as people:

"... as Oldroyd and Hall (1991) have commented, personal and professional development are inextricably linked, with self-development lying at the heart of all forms of staff development. Waters (1998) has coined the phrase *propersonal* development to describe this, which he explains as personal development for professional development purposes. He is concerned that this aspect of professional development is largely ignored with the emphasis on 'putting stuff into teachers (theory about roles and processes, for example)' rather than 'pulling stuff out of them (for example, how they see their management role in relation to their broader self-image)'." (Smith, Keating and Turner, 1999, p. 433)

The emphasis on the personal development aspect of professional development can be seen in three related themes in the literature about the professional development of educators: reflective practice; practitioner research; and the personal conditions that support learning.

Reflective practice

According to Bell and Gilbert (1996) "reflection is a skill which is inherently part of constructivism, particularly personal constructivism" (p. 63). The idea of reflective practice can be traced back to John Dewey who differentiated between "routine action" and "reflective action". Routine action is guided by the unquestioning acceptance of the goals, traditions, definitions and authority within a social setting, while reflective action is "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further consequences to which it leads" (Dewey, 1933, p.

9, cited in Calderhead, 1989, p.43). Dewey posited that reflective action depended on development of three personal characteristics: open-mindedness, the ability to be open to a range of possibilities; responsibility, the consideration of the consequences of action; and wholeheartedness, the commitment to putting ideals into practice.

Dewey's ideas have been developed by many theorists over the years and reflection is seen as an important process for educators because it involves identifying reasons for actions and considering how decisions are informed by the individual educator's past experience, beliefs and values. It has been suggested that educators at all levels should deliberately structure "reflective space" in their professional lives (Smyth, Hattam, McInerney & Lawson, 1997; Dobbins, 1994) and many advocates of reflection also recommend reflective writing as an important element of educators' work (Irwin, 1996; Holly, 1997; Dobbins, 1994; Smyth, McInerney, Hattam & Lawson, 1999b). Irwin (1996) argued that keeping a reflective journal:

"... helps to structure private reflections about what has happened and allows one to deal with feelings and situations as well as thoughts. Just writing about an experience often brings us new insights, especially if we avoid blaming ourselves or our students." (Irwin, p. 195)

However, there is some concern that the term "reflective practice" has been popularised in education circles to the point where it means many different things to different people. Zeichner (1993) expressed his unease about the indiscriminate use of this term:

Underlying the apparent similarity among those who embrace the slogans of reflective practice are vast differences in perspectives about teaching, learning, schooling and the social order." (p. 2)

The response of some theorists to the haphazard application of the term "reflective practice" has been to identify different levels of reflection. One of the earliest was Van Manen (1977), who developed a framework encompassing three levels of reflection. These are:

- technical reflection – reflection on actions;
- practical reflection – reflection on the reasons for actions;
- and critical reflection – reflection on the ethical justification of actions.

More recently, Zeichner (1991) and Smyth (1989) have developed Van Manen's concept of critical reflection specifically for educational contexts. Zeichner (1991) defined critical reflection in teaching as:

"How teachers' actions maintain and disrupt the status quo in schooling and society is of central concern, the reflection is aimed in part at the elimination of the social conditions that distort the self-understandings of teachers and undermine the educative potential and moral basis of schooling." (Zeichner, p. 8)

Advocates of critically reflective practice view it as a powerful form of personal professional development for practitioners because it asks them to reflect on their practice in terms of

their reasons for making particular choices, how these are informed by their personal experiences, beliefs and values, and the extent to which these support or impede teaching and learning for students from a diverse range of backgrounds. They believe that this process of confronting personal experience and philosophy can lead to changes in beliefs and understandings that lead to improved practice (Smyth et al. 1999b).

Practitioner research

The literature also promotes practitioner research as a powerful tool for reflection and for transforming beliefs and practice. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1992) contended that, through research, educators:

"... pose problems, identify discrepancies between their theories and their practice, challenge common routines, and attempt to make visible much of what is taken for granted about teaching and learning." (p. 302)

They saw this process as the means of altering, not just adding to, knowledge in the field of teaching.

Action research, in particular, is depicted as a means of engaging practitioners in rigorous cycles of planning, observation, action and reflection, which can lead to change in understandings and practice. The idea of action research originated with Kurt Lewin (cited in Kemmis and McTaggart, 1982) but has achieved particular prominence in educational fields in Australia through the work of Kemmis and McTaggart (1982).

The literature makes a range of claims about the benefits of practitioners engaging in action research. Sagor (1997) reported that educators who have repeated experiences with the action research process develop "the habits of mind and the disciplines of inquiry" and become "more effective practitioners, but also more fulfilled educators" (p. 172). He added, however, that this form of reflective practice does not automatically lead to school change. Grimmett (1995), having analysed reports received from a pilot project of sponsored teacher research groups in British Columbia, claimed that through action research educators become the "agents of knowing and constructors of knowledge" thereby ensuring that their voices are heard "so that any changes can serve the educative and not the political-systematic agendas of schools" (p. 124).

However, there are also concerns expressed about the pressures for teachers to become researchers. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1992) argued that there are serious obstacles to be overcome before teachers can be expected to engage in research. These are caused by "teacher isolation, a school culture that works against raising questions, a technical view of knowledge for teaching, and the negative reputation of education research" (p. 304). Gore and Zeichner (1995), while advocating teacher research as a means of validating teachers' personal, professional and political knowledge, disputed the claim that it necessarily provides a voice for teachers. They suggested that there is "a sense in which the 'scientific' mask of action research, of social research generally, can be seen to devalue what teachers know and the ways in which they have traditionally practised their work." (p. 209)

Personal Conditions That Support Learning

Constructivist theory has contributed to a third trend in recent writing about professional development – a focus on the personal conditions that enhance participants' personal construction of meaning. The work of Carl Rogers (1983, cited in Smith et al., 1999) in studying a person-centered approach to teacher education also helped to draw attention to the importance of the personal dimensions of learning. He found that "by teaching genuineness, care, respect and empathy, better people and better teachers was the result." (Smith et al. 1999, p. 434).

From across a range of studies, a comprehensive list of personal conditions can be identified. Fung (2000), from her work using a constructivist approach to professional development with teachers in Hong Kong, reported that participants required conditions of personal support, autonomy, reflection, respect for their capacities and acknowledgment of their prior views and knowledge.

A recent Australian study of teacher workplace learning in schools in New South Wales by Retallick and Clancy (1998) highlighted other personal conditions that impact on participants' learning. These were participants':

- understanding and valuing of workplace learning;
- needs and priorities;
- responses to change; and
- emotional responses.

Blyth (1997) as part of a report on self-directed professional development for the Queensland Board of Teacher Registration (Queensland Consortium for the Professional Development in Education) identified further personal characteristics that need to be considered in successful professional development. These were a commitment to life-long learning, self-awareness, respect for the views of others, motivation and self-esteem and commitment to a vision of effective learning and teaching.

In summary, individual constructivist learning theory has contributed to changing views about what constitutes effective professional development for educators. In particular it has focused attention on the need for professional development which develops participants reflective processes, especially the ability to be critically reflective. It has highlighted the importance of practitioners constructing professional knowledge through researching their own practice. Finally, it has called attention to a range of personal conditions that need to be considered for professional development to be successful. These include participants' needs, priorities, capacities, emotional responses, beliefs and values, and attributes such as a positive attitude to learning and other learners and commitment to a personal vision.

The Influence of Social Constructivism on Conceptualisations of Professional Development

Those who advocate a social constructivist view of learning, are critical of individual or personal constructivism because of its lack of acknowledgement of sociocultural perspectives (Bell and Gilbert, 1996; Zuber-Skerrit, 1992). They advocate a view of learning which acknowledges the important, role-played by social interaction in the construction of knowledge.

"Thus a social constructionist view of human development asserts that knowledge production is a social process, one aimed at constructing acceptable truth, and seen as involving plays of power within a society. It is not seen as something abstract, corresponding to a reality which everyone agrees on, regardless of their particular culture or outlook. Social processes and practices, such as communication, negotiation, conflict and rhetoric, create particular views of reality and knowledge." (Gergen, 1985, cited in Bell and Gilbert, 1996, p.40)

The addition of a socio-cultural perspective to constructivism has directed the attention of educators at all levels beyond the personal attributes of learners to the attributes of the environment in which the learning occurs. In the literature about professional development of educators two main themes can be identified that are related to the learning environment: professional development that is collaborative and the importance of the socio-cultural conditions that support collaborative learning.

Collaborative Professional Development

According to Hargreaves (1994) collaboration is "one of the emergent and most promising metaparadigms of the postmodern age... as an articulating and integrating principle of action, planning, culture, development, organization and research" (p. 245).

Proponents of collaborative professional development see the traditionally individualised nature of teaching as the greatest barrier to effective learning for educators. Blyth (1997) argued that social interaction creates the conditions for personal transformation and that learning is more effective and more likely to be sustained if it is collaborative. Hargreaves (1995) listed eleven benefits of collaboration: moral support; increased efficiency; improved effectiveness; reduced overload; synchronized time perspectives between teachers and administrators (i. e. shared and realistic expectations about timeframes for change and implementation); situated certainty of collective professional wisdom; political assertiveness; increased capacity for reflection; organisational responsiveness; opportunities to learn; and continuous learning. He argued that collaboration takes "teacher development beyond personal, idiosyncratic reflection, or dependence on outside experts, to a point where teachers can learn from each other, sharing and developing their expertise together" (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 183).

Collaboration is not only seen to be important within organisations, but also across them. Both teachers and tertiary teacher educators are being urged to engage with those beyond the confines of their own organisation. Recommendations include collaborative liaisons across different schools (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992), across different faculties in universities (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999), across schools and teacher education departments in universities (Sachs, 1997; Grundy, 1996; Ramsey, 2000) and with key stakeholders such as the parents of school age students, employers and community groups (Hargreaves, 2001).

On a cautionary note, some advocates of collaboration have warned about its hidden dangers. Hargreaves (1994) warned of the danger of contrived collegiality:

"This occurs when spontaneous, dangerous, and difficult-to-control forms of teacher collaboration are discouraged or usurped by the administrators who

capture it, contain it and contrive it through compulsory cooperation, required collaborative planning, stage-managed mission statements, labyrinthine procedures of school development planning and processes of collaboration to implement non-negotiable programs and curricula whose viability and practicality are not open to discussion." (p. 80)

The Socio-cultural Conditions that Support Collaborative Learning

Hargreaves (1994) argued that what is important for positive collaboration is "who controls it, who is involved in it, what are its purposes, and what conditions are necessary for it to be established and maintained." (p. 248) His identification of the conditions needed for collaboration is tied to the second theme that is dominant in the literature - the need for professional development to focus on transforming the socio-cultural conditions in which educators work. According to Smyth et al. (1999a) the culture of an organisation is "the symbolic and communicational elements that operate to shape the "way things are done"(p 6). Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley & Beresford (2000) elaborated further:

"Cultures are moving mosaics of beliefs, values, understandings, attitudes, norms, symbols, rituals and ceremonies, preferred behaviours, styles and stances and power structures (Nias et al., 1989)and the relationships between the various parts will not be static." (p. 20)

Reculturing means changing these shared attributes of a group of educators because what they do:

"in terms of their classroom styles and strategies are powerfully affected by the outlooks and orientations of the colleagues with whom they work now and have worked with in the past. In this respect, teacher cultures, the relationships between teachers and their colleagues, are among the most educationally significant aspects of teachers' lives and work. They provide a vital context for teacher development" (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 165)

Hargreaves (1992b) typified educational cultures as individualistic, balkanised, contrived collegiality or collaborative and claimed that of these, only the collaborative culture was one that supported positive change. Collaborative cultures are pervasive across time and space and development-orientated. They are based on broad agreement of educational values, but also tolerate disagreement and provide support and help for the sharing and discussion of failure and uncertainty. The characteristics of collaborative cultures are "feminine" in that they are "spontaneous, evolutionary and unpredictable. They intermix the private and public, openly placing teachers' work in the context of their wider lives, biographies and purposes" (p. 235).

Smyth et al. (1999b) used the terms "stuck", "collaborative" and "socially critical" to characterise particular school cultures. They asserted that it is only in a "socially critical" culture that teachers can truly engage with the "moral purpose" of changing students' lives for the better. Their ideal school culture is what they termed a "critical learning community" and it is characterised by the following "touchstones" or conditions:

- teaching and learning are central and are not restricted to what goes on in single classrooms and teachers believe that the curriculum, and the way students and teachers engage with it, is the key to student learning
- teachers make a personal commitment to learn;
- knowledge is continually being shared and exchanged, there is recognition that sharing is educative in itself, and there is a great deal of emphasis on "staying up-to-date";
- everyone had the opportunity to be involved and have a say and there is not an absence of conflict;
- there is continual inquiry and initiation of change from within and risk-taking is prevalent;
- schools have a "moral purpose" of making a difference to students' lives;
- teaching is not seen in technical terms but is about engaging students in big questions;
- leadership is based on the possession of expertise in a given situation;
- schools have shared institutional values but are not bound up with missions, goals or strategic planning
- there is recognition that resources on their own do not produce schools as learning communities. (Smyth et al., 1999b, pp 31 – 35)

It can be seen that those who argue for professional development that is informed by social constructivist theory have broadened the conceptualisation even further, by adding the dimensions of collaborative learning and development of the culture of workplaces as essential components.

The Influence of Change Theory on Conceptualisations of Professional Development

The focus on the importance of the cultural conditions in educational settings can also be seen in recent theories about the ways organisations change. Fullan (1999) referred to the impact of chaos or complexity theory on conceptions of change:

Complexity and chaos theory are the same thing, but I prefer the former label because it is more descriptive. The new science of complexity essentially claims that the link between cause and effect is difficult to trace, that change (planned and otherwise) unfolds in non-linear ways, that paradoxes and contradictions abound and that creative solutions arise out of interaction under conditions of uncertainty, diversity and instability." (p. 4)

This view of organisational change as chaotic and complex has been encompassed in what writers in the area call "systems theory". Systems theory espouses the view that "organisations and people learn, work and socialise in definable inter-relationships which can be codified and analyzed as systems" (Hough, 1997, p. 93). Furthermore systems can be views as "organic, which means that all parts are defined by the whole; thus you cannot take an organization apart to study the pieces" (Hammond, 1998, p. 7).

Proponents of this theory argue that in the past organisations have been viewed more as machines, in which individual parts can be changed without affecting the organisation as a whole. They suggest instead that organisational change should be viewed in terms of changes to living systems, which means that no part of the organisation can be changed, without affecting every other part. Within this view, major improvement can only occur by focusing on improvement of the system as a whole, rather than on individuals or groups in the system (Mant, 1997). According to Hargreaves (1994, p. 245) educational reform has

failed time and time again because "the different components of reform have not been conceived nor addressed as a whole, in their interrelationships, as a complex system."

Two themes that have emerged in the literature in response to change theories are professional development as the development of learning organisations and the need to take a holistic view of the development of personal, structural and cultural conditions to promote individual and organisational development.

The Development of Learning Organisations

One of the outcomes of seeing organisations as complex living systems has been a focus on "system improvement, rather than on individuals or groups who work with the system" (Hough, Paine & Austin, 1997, p.74). According to Hough, Paine & Austin (1997):

"the term "The Learning Organisation" has rapidly emerged as a widely used term to describe the successful, adaptive organisation that is coping with this new, emerging socio-economic order." (p. 7)

In Australia the idea of learning organisations, has become prominent in the literature about change and professional development. For instance in a report into professional development by the Queensland Consortium for the Professional Development in Education (1996) a range of expert opinion was cited to support the view that:

"... the education community would gain much by supporting the evolution of teachers' workplaces into true learning organisations, where the processes of whole school planning can develop in conjunction with the processes of teachers' individual career planning." (p. 57)

Another term that is sometimes used is "learning community". Retallick (1997) contended that although this term is often used interchangeably with learning organisation it is more appropriate to education settings. Regardless of which descriptor is used, the focus on the development of the organisation as a whole has meant that professional development is now seen as a process of developing the complex interaction of structural, cultural and personal conditions that enable learning and productive change to take place.

A Holistic View of the Development of Personal, Structural and Cultural Conditions

The conceptualisation of professional development as development of a learning community brings together the ideas about professional development as personal and cultural change, explored earlier, and the idea of professional development as structural change – changing the 'rules, roles, responsibilities and relationships' within a workplace (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 242) that determine the kind of culture that can evolve. According to Hargreaves (1994), the cultural and structural features of workplaces are inextricably linked:

"Cultures do not operate in a vacuum. They are formed within and framed by particular structures. These structures are not neutral. They can be helpful or harmful. They can bring teachers together or keep them apart. They can facilitate opportunities for interaction and learning, or present barriers to such possibilities." (p. 256)

Wideen (1995) claimed that "restructuring" has become the "buzz word" of the nineties (p. 4). Grimmett (1995) asserted that "the purpose of restructuring becomes one of changing the organisation so that good ideas and strategies born in practice can flourish and not be stymied by existing bureaucratic forces" (p. 210). Much of the literature about restructuring schools and teacher education departments of universities has focused on identifying and changing the structures that impede learning for educators and their students. In educational settings restructuring for educational reform has tended to focus on changing structures such as the use of time and space, groupings of staff and students, staff roles, organisation of curriculum and use of technology (Harradine, 1996, cited in Hattam, McInerney, Lawson, & Smyth, 1999).

Of these, the need to restructure time is the one that has probably received the most attention. Adelman, Haslam and Pringle (1996, cited in Adelman, Panton Walking-Eagle & Hargreaves, 1997) explored the relationship between time and school reform by observing and interviewing teachers in 14 reforming schools in the USA. In reporting on the findings, Adelman (1997) identified lack of time as a significant barrier in each of the reform phases of planning, implementing and continuous improvement.

Retallick (1997) identified a range of other structures that are important in learning organisations. These were:

- leaders who model risk taking and experimentation;
- decentralised decision making;
- skill inventories and audits of capacity learning;
- systems for sharing and using learning;
- rewards and structures for employee initiative; and
- cross functional work teams. (p. 23)

From their study of the academics' experiences of successful professional development, Parer and Benson (1990) found that communication structures, both for information and support, and a well developed administrative structure supported by adequate funding were critical structural elements (p. 22).

Proponents of change theory argue that it is not sufficient to focus on restructuring alone, but that there must be reciprocal development of organisational culture and structures in response to the personal needs of the individuals who work within them, and the external demands of rapid change.

In summary, this section has examined the impact of individual and social constructivism learning theory, and change theory on the reconceptualisation of professional development for educators. It has demonstrated that these theories have been influential in changing understandings about the features of successful professional development. In particular these theories have drawn attention to the importance of reflection, practitioner research, collaboration and the creation of learning communities through the reciprocal development of individuals and the personal, structural and cultural conditions that shape their professional lives.

Changes in the professional lives of educators

Inevitably the changes already described in this chapter have had a dramatic effect on the professional lives of educators in schools and tertiary teacher education departments. Changing global trends, together with changes in thinking about teaching, learning and change have resulted in changes to their pedagogy, roles, teaching contexts and the standards by which they and others judge their effectiveness.

Changing pedagogy

Constructivist views of teaching and learning, and the emphasis on life long learning, have placed pressure on teachers and tertiary teacher educators to change from transmission techniques to pedagogy that includes "a wide array of learning opportunities, engagement and commitment to inquiry, access to real problems to solve, learning that connects to ... prior experiences, (and) opportunities to work with others ..." (Lieberman & Grolnick, 1997, p. 193).

In recent years constructivist approaches to teaching and learning have been advocated and adopted in many schools (Bell and Gilbert, 1996, South Australian Department of Education, Training and Employment, 2001). The same cannot be said for university teaching which, in the main, has continued to be "didactic" and based on a "traditional model of transmission and evaluation" characterized by the belief that "the ownership of knowledge is seen to reside with universities" and "that university personnel then have the role of dispensing the right to their own institutional knowledge" (Burroughs-Lange, 1996, p. 32). However, universities too are under pressure from government to change their practices in order to produce more flexible graduates with generic skills (Dawkins, 1989, cited in Zuber-Skerritt, 1992). Teacher education departments in particular are increasingly expected to "practice what they preach" to their students. According to Richardson (1999):

"Constructivism in teacher education had only recently entered the writing and thinking of practitioners and scholars in this field. This has come about in large part because reformers interested in changing the nature of pedagogy in the schools from a transfer-of- knowledge model to constructivism began to realize the necessity of preparing teachers in the constructivist forms."
(Richardson, 1999, p. 149)

There is wide-spread agreement that now, more than ever before, teachers and tertiary teacher educators need on-going professional development that will help them to transform their pedagogy to match new understandings about how students learn.

Changing roles

The teaching role, as it is described in recent literature, has become one of enormous variation and complexity. Darling-Hammond (1999, p. 223) pointed to the need for teachers in schools to be able develop curriculum and assessments of student performance, coach and mentor each other, work closely with families and community agencies and play an active role in program design and school reform. Martinez (1995) comprised the following list of roles from asking teachers to list activities they had recently engaged in:

"... sophisticated and powerful managers of classroom talk, agents of social production and reproduction, institutionally-moulded conformists, critical intellectual transformers, researchers, middle managers, entrepreneurs, producers, consumers, public servants, workers, and altruistic women and men struggling to place themselves in the multiple discourses that constitute the human condition." (p. 3)

The role of tertiary teacher educators, too, has become far more complex since their move into universities. They have been expected to take on the role of "university academic" with an emphasis on scholarship, research and publication, while still maintaining responsibility for teaching and the placement and supervision of student teachers in schools (Martinez, 1995a; Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999). The dual expectations of scholarship on the one hand, and teaching and liaison with schools on the other, have not sat easily together. Shen (1995) described a "two tier system" in universities whereby "involvement in preparation of teachers had a significant negative correlation with research and scholarly productivity" (p. 142). It is clear from these studies that there is currently considerable role confusion for tertiary teacher educators as they are "caught between the field and academe's conflicting prescriptions for research," (Fulwiler, 1996, p25) and contend with the "gap" between academic and school culture (Fulwiler, 1996; McWilliam and O'Brien, 1993).

Finally, the pressure to transform educational organisations in order to create learning communities that cater for the needs of all students and staff, has meant that, in addition to their many other roles, teachers and teacher educators are expected to be "agents of change" in developing fairer and more inclusive education systems. According to Smylie, Bay and Tozer (1999) teachers need to have "roles in promoting the broader purpose of schooling, particularly those associated with social change and school-level reform" (p. 31). As change agents they must have the professional knowledge, intellectual capacities and professional orientation to be able to manage dilemmas that arise from the "uncertainties, ambiguities, and competing aims and values for schooling" (Smylie, Bay and Tozer, 1999, p. 57). They must be "empowered educators" who "believe in themselves and their capacity to act" and are able to make ethical choices (McInerney *et al.*, 1997, p. 3) and to understand systems of domination and work to transform oppressive practices in society" (Irwin, 1996, p. 283). Fullan (1999, p. 1) refers to this aspect of an educator's role as the "moral purpose in education", by which he meant that teachers work to improve the life chances of all students and contribute to the creation of a more just and democratic society.

The growing diversity and complexity of the role of teacher and teacher educators has significant implications for their professional learning needs. It is clearly impossible for them to sustain such roles on the basis of learning from their initial teacher education course. Instead they need to work in a learning community that provides daily support and opportunities for collaborative sharing, reflection, research and growth.

Changing accountability

In recent years schools and teacher education departments have been under constant attack for perceived deficiencies in the quality of teaching and learning. In the United States, Britain and Australia a series of reports and policy statements have criticised the standard of learning achieved by both school students and teacher education graduates. Examples can be seen in *Education in Schools: A Consultative Document* by the Department of Education and Science in Britain in 1977, *A Nation at Risk* by the National Commission on Excellence

in Education in the United States in 1983 (Schnur and Golby, 1995), and in the Speedy Report and Dawkins White Paper in Australia in 1989 (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992).

Most of these have laid the blame for declining educational standards at the door of teachers and tertiary teacher educators. The effect of such critiques in each of these countries has been calls for greater standardisation and accountability at all educational levels. For instance, commenting on the current situation in the United States, Darling Hammond (1999) noted that:

"Efforts are currently underway to develop and implement more meaningful standards for teacher licensing, companion efforts to develop more sophisticated and authentic assessment for teachers, and the development and integration of national standards for teacher education, licensing, and certification." (p. 240)

She cited the existing examples of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and the recent addition of NCATE 2000, the aim of which is to create a performance-based system that takes into account graduates' performance in the decision about accreditation.

In Australia, national and state frameworks for curriculum and assessment, such as the South Australian Curriculum and Standards Framework (Department of Education, Training and Employment, 2001) have been developed. These include guide-lines for assessing student performance against graduated standards. The recent report *A Class Act: Inquiry into the Status of the Teaching Profession* (Senate Employment and Training References Committee, 1998) recommended the development of a national professional teaching standards and registration body and that teachers' participation in professional development be a pre-requisite for continued registration.

At the tertiary level, Skillbeck and Connell (2000) provided an overview of more recent developments aimed at improving performance:

"Over the last decade there have been moves towards a national approach to quality assurance. There has been a national agreement on a cross-sectoral framework for tertiary education awards in the form of an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Governments have declared the status of institutions that can accredit their own awards by listings on the registers of the AQF. Sector-wide performance indicators relating to students, staff, finance, research, graduate careers, and course experience are published annually by the Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Australian Higher Education Commonwealth in the *Characteristics and Performance of Higher Education Institutions*. There is an annual publication of institutional quality improvement

plans and associated performance measures in the case of Commonwealth-funded

institutions." (pp 3 - 4)

In addition to these developments, the Australian Universities Teaching Committee was established in 2000 with a brief of promoting quality assurance and excellence in teaching in universities.

Another initiative to improve the standard of teaching in all three countries is the introduction of some system of performance appraisal for educators at all levels (Day, 2000; Smyth et al., 1997).

Some commentators do not accept that the criticism of educators as justified or fair. For instance, Smyth et al. (1997) depicted teachers in Australia fighting against governments' use of a "blame the victim" approach to deflect attention from deeper societal causes of inadequate educational achievement, and the "technocratic construal" of their work created by government policies promoting schools as marketplaces, education as primarily vocational and attention to the measurable aspects of their work. They highlighted some of the limitations of such a construal including a narrower, more fragmented curriculum with little connection to students' lived experience (p. 3).

Changing contexts

There have been dramatic changes in the contexts in which teachers and tertiary teacher educators work. Contextual changes that are common to both sectors are the growing diversity of attributes in their student populations, the impact of technology and funding cuts and the aging profile of the teaching force (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1998; Senate Employment and Training References Committee, 1998)

Perhaps the most notable change in the context of teacher education has been the movement of teacher education courses into universities. In the United States teacher colleges had evolved to universities by the early 1970's (Shen, 1995) but in Australia this move did not begin until after the 1989 White Paper, commissioned by the Federal Government. Recommendations from this paper saw the amalgamation of eighteen universities and forty-seven colleges of advanced education into thirty universities by the end of 1991, and thirty-five by the end of 1994. (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1998)

The movement of teacher education courses into the university sector meant that teacher educators were subjected to the contextual changes that have occurred in universities. Coaldrake and Stedman (1998, 1999), in their analysis of the Australian university sector, reported a shift in the last decade from a traditional view of universities that included the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, total autonomy and students as members of a scholarly community, to one of students as clients and universities existing to meet the economic needs of society. They also cited reforms in the vocational education and training sectors, technological advances and the weaning of universities from government funding as changes have had a significant effect. Other pressures on university work were the growth in participation in higher education in recent years, the explosion in knowledge and need for synthesis and changes in industrial relations policy.

In school systems, one of the most notable contextual changes had been the devolution of management to the school site. Schools have been given greater responsibility for goal

setting, school management planning and decision making about the deployment of funding and the employment and professional development of staff (Day, 2000). This has meant a significant decrease in the centralised provision of professional development for teachers. Instead school principals, in consultation with staff, are expected to plan professional development opportunities that will meet individual needs and those of the particular school (Review and Evaluation Directorate, Queensland Department of Education, 1991).

Changing professional identities

The pressure to change so many aspects of their work, combined with the imposition of external standards and accountability measures, appears to have had significant effects on the professional identities of teachers and tertiary teacher educators.

Studies of teacher educators have found that they felt "a severe loss of identity of teacher education" (Shen, 1995, p141) as it became one of many programs in multipurpose institutions, and suffered considerable role confusion as they "live in an impossible world serving two masters: the teaching profession and the academic community" (Reynolds, 1995, p. 222). They also believed that their academic peers did not accept them as equals and that their practical school-oriented responsibilities lead to lower status on campus. (Reynolds, 1995).

A recent government inquiry into the status of the teaching profession in Australia (Senate Employment and Training References Committee, 1998) concluded that "all is not well in the teaching profession, and it is generally agreed that there is a widespread crisis of morale amongst teachers" (p. 1). Key factors contributing to declining morale were found to be:

- the intensification of workload resulting from increased curriculum requirements, the number of changes implemented in recent years, the amount of time devoted to non core teaching tasks, class sizes and the impact of trying to teach students with a diversity of abilities and backgrounds;
- the impact of technology on teachers, students and schools;
- the impact of devolution in terms of teacher workload, diversion from core teaching tasks and loss of central support; and
- changes to school funding practices not keeping pace with recurrent costs of education.

A range of other factors were identified as contributing to the perception of a decline in the status of teaching. These include the low value placed on education, the low status of children, the feminisation of the profession, low salaries, inadequate career structures, poor working conditions, inadequate recruitment, training and induction practices and attacks by media and government.

In summary, the changes in the professional lives of educators described in this section have clear implications for the reconceptualisation of professional development. Educators need professional development experiences that support them to:

- transform their pedagogy to match new understandings about how student learn;
- enact and manage the complexity of multiple roles;
- understand and improve the contexts for their own and students' learning;
- critique and adapt accountability measures for diverse contexts and local needs; and

- develop professional identities that enhance the status of teachers and teacher educators and position them as developers of educational policy, rather than the recipients.

What features will new models of professional development need to have if they are to be effective?

The first part of this review of literature explored the changes that have contributed to the reconceptualisation of professional development for educators. To briefly recap, the complexity and challenge of global trends have changed the purpose of education at all levels from the acquisition of specific knowledge and skills to the development of processes and understandings that enable "life long learning". Individual constructivist learning theory has highlighted the need for professional development that develops participants' reflectivity, enables them to construct knowledge through researching their own practice and acknowledges and develops the personal conditions that facilitate learning. Social constructivism has emphasised the importance of collaborative learning, both within and across organisations, and developing the cultural conditions of the learning context. From change theory has come the idea of professional development as organisational development, in which a holistic approach is taken to the development of individuals and the structures and cultures that support optimum learning. Finally, as detailed in the final paragraph of the previous section, professional development needs to respond to the challenges implicit in the dramatic changes in educators' contexts, pedagogy, roles, accountability and professional identities.

The overall affect of these changes had been the reconceptualisation of the purpose, context, principles, forms, processes and content of professional development for teachers and tertiary teacher educators. An overview of these changes in provided in Table 1.

	Past	Current/Future
Purpose	Mastery of specific knowledge and skills	Lifelong learning to respond to and initiate ongoing change
Context	Decontextualised i. e. little recognition of individual needs and local contexts	Contextualised by the personal, structural and cultural conditions framing participants' capacity to learn
Principles	<p>Knowledge as fixed and objective</p> <p>Teaching as transmission</p> <p>Learning as acquisition of knowledge and skills</p> <p>Learning divorced from the individual learner and the context in which it takes place</p>	<p>Knowledge as personally and socially constructed</p> <p>Teaching as creating the conditions for learning</p> <p>Learning as a social process of making meaning</p> <p>Learning framed by the individual learner and the context in which it takes place</p>
Forms	Individualised, short term, episodic, off-site, externally provided	Collaborative, ongoing, embedded in the life and work of the organisation, cross-organisational
Processes	Transmission of specific knowledge, skills, ideas, techniques	<p>Critical reflection, Practitioner research</p> <p>Organisational development</p>
Content	Specific knowledge and skills	Determined by individual and organisational needs

Table 1

The narrowly focused professional development experiences depicted in much of the literature were clearly not conceptualised with these features in mind. The challenge for those who promote the learning of educators as the key to improved education is to conceptualise and develop models of professional development that are theorised in the light of recent changes in global trends, thinking about teaching, learning and change and the professional lives of teachers and tertiary teacher educators.

Why are school/university partnerships promoted as a powerful model of professional development?

It is clear from the sheer volume of literature that focuses on school/university partnerships, that many believe that models of professional development based on partnerships are the way to address some of the perceived deficiencies of traditional models. Proponents suggest that potential benefits of teachers and tertiary teacher educators working collaboratively include:

- reciprocal development of schools and teacher education departments (Williams & Deer, 1996; Center for Educational Renewal, 1994; Ramsey, 2001);
- improved learning opportunities for participants, and their students (Yeatman and Sachs, 1995; Sealey, Robson & Hutchins, 1997; Turner Field, Hoffman & Cohen, 1999; Beck and Humphries, 2000);
- increased relevance of educational research (Sachs, 1997; Hoban, 1997; Grundy, 1996); and
- reduced isolation for teachers and academics (Scott and Burke, 1995, Sachs, 1997).

However, considering the large body of literature that is devoted to school/ university partnerships, there are relatively few studies that make definitive claims about the outcomes, especially in relation to improvements in teaching and student learning outcomes. For instance, it is interesting to note that Smedley (2001), in her paper *Impediments to Partnership: a literature review of school-university links* which focuses on the literature about school-university links for teacher education, only briefly touches on the "promise" of school/university links, and devotes the majority of the paper to the impediments to such links.

There appear to be a range of reasons for the small amount of published research about the outcomes of partnerships. Writing about the Professional Development Partnerships in the United States, Whitford and Metcalf-Turner (1999) identified two probable reasons. The first is that the academics and teachers who are involved in the partnerships, and who are in the best positions to conduct and publish research, are too busy with the actual design and implementation of the programs. The second is the recency of Professional Development Schools as an innovation. They concluded:

"That we need more data on the effectiveness of the model and its effects on universities, schools, participants, children, districts, and so on is obvious. Such evidence is vital to evaluating and improving the approach and to decisions regarding whether PDS's can and should be sustained." (p. 270)

It is likely that the overload on participating staff and the recency of many partnership innovations are also reasons for the lack of research evidence for partnerships other than those in Professional Development Schools. The literature also highlights other reasons for the lack of evidence about significant outcomes from partnerships. McTaggart, Henry, & Johnson (1994) stated that "whether things are better is not always an easy question to answer" because of the incrementalist nature of the action research process used in many partnerships (p. 136). Grundy (1996) pointed to the limited time-frames of many partnership projects, which make assessing changes difficult, and Baird and Mitchell (1986; cited in McRobbie, 1994, p.35) pointed to the lag between changes in teaching practices and changes in students' learning outcomes, and the difficulty of detecting changes in the latter

The limited literature that does document outcomes has made claims of improvement that fall into the following categories:

- improvement in school/university links (Williams & Deer, 1996; Burrow, 1997);
- changes in participants' thinking (Sealey et al. 1997; Smith et al., 1999); and
- changes in participants' practice (Cryns & Johnstome, 1993; Sealey et al. 1997).

It is interesting to note that in the literature about school/university partnerships there is more written about the difficulties encountered than there is about the potential and actual benefits. It is often suggested that the main source of these problems is the significant differences between the cultures of schools and universities (Dawson (1995; Beck and Humphries, 1999; Turner Field et al., 1999) and the inhibiting conditions under which participants' work. The three main area of challenge to developing and maintaining effective school/university partnerships appear to be:

- negotiating democratic relationships (Smyth et al. 1997; Smedley, 2001);
- reconciling disparate goals and reward systems (Zeichner, 1994; Sealey et al. 1997; Whitford & Metcalf-Turner, 1999); and
- managing time and workload (Whitford & Metcalf-Turner, 1999; Smedley, 2001).

Overall, it would seem that although many see potential benefits to be had from school/university partnerships, the evidence of their actual benefits in practice is still reasonably limited and there are a range of challenges that need to be overcome if they are to be successful.

Do school/university partnerships have potential as models of professional development for new times?

The question as to whether or not school/university partnerships have potential as models of professional development for new times is one that can only be answered through continued trialling of models and research into their effectiveness. It is clear that there are many questions still to be answered about the outcomes of such partnerships and how to address the challenges of bringing two such different cultures together. In addition to these issues is the one that is central to this paper. There is nothing intrinsic to the notion of partnership that ensures that any of the features identified in Table 1 are present in such relationships. Presumably, partnerships could exist, and probably do, that are short term, decontextualised and focused solely on the development of specific knowledge and skills. In closing, I would like to suggest that partnerships for the future need to be framed so that they:

- focus on developing participants' processes and understandings for life-long learning;
- address the needs of individuals, and the participating schools and universities;
- use collaborative learning processes to critically reflect, research practice and improve organisational cultures and structures;
- address the personal, structural and cultural conditions that frame participants' learning;
- are informed by individual and social constructivist learning principles and organisational change theory; and
- are long term and embedded in the life and work of the participating schools and universities.

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