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# **Teacher Education in the UK in an Era of Performance Management**

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## **Abstract**

In common with all education systems world wide, those of the United Kingdom have been subject to rapid change and development in recent years. Much of the management of this change has been supported by methods, including performance management of individuals, borrowed from industrial or commercial spheres of activity (Peters et al, 1999). This has led to a redefinition of concepts of teacher professionalism. In the two principal UK systems - those of England (often itself referred to as the UK system) and Scotland - there have been different emphases in terms of managing and developing the profession, although concerns of staff development and professional accountability are encapsulated in both. In this paper we argue, firstly, that staff development - of whatever variety - has to result in better learning for young people within schools. Secondly, we assert that the construction of teacher professionalism is a contested area in the UK, both in terms of initial teacher education and in terms of continuing professional development and that there has to be a recognition of this debate. Ultimately, however, both sides need to come together to create systems which support and develop pupil learning.

## **Conceptions of Teacher Professionalism**

Much has been written on the contested nature of professionalism, yet there is still - at least within the UK - no consensus on what it means to be a professional. The

terms *profession* and *professionalism* are generally used without due regard to their meaning. This leads to difficulties in trying to define teacher professionalism, and to the use of largely 'common sense' notions of what it means to be a professional teacher. Such ill-defined ideas and taken-for-granted assumptions have come to underpin teacher education in the UK. It is not the intention to attempt to define professionalism at this point (*see* Avis, 1994), but rather to reflect on the confusions surrounding concepts of professionalism which are evident in UK teacher education today, and to examine ideas relating to teacher performance and professional autonomy.

It may broadly be said that teacher professionalism inhabits a complex reality and is constructed of a range of abilities, behaviours and understandings. Some of these include: a body of specialist knowledge; a code of ethics (notably lacking in both Scotland and England); autonomy from influences which might negatively affect professional judgement (Danaher et al, 2000); a critical function which implies a duty to subject the profession to scrutiny and review (*see* Tomlinson, 1995); the development of the practical and affective components which are aspects of a sense of responsibility, duty, obligation, and accountability (Carr, 1992); plus a requirement for abilities across a range of organisational, social, managerial and presentational skills (Mortimore & Mortimore, 1998). To these may be added Eraut's views on the interplay of professionalism and accountability in increasingly more complex patterns (Eraut, 1994).

The Scottish and English systems of teacher education, both in terms of initial teacher education and continuing professional development, differ in some fairly major respects as to their underlying conceptions of professionalism and their assumptions of what it means to become educated towards professional expertise. We shall look more closely at aspects of discourse which reflect some of these underlying assumptions later in this paper. However, there is a sustainable view that within both systems in the past thirty years, there has been a reduction in the status of teaching as a profession in public and political consciousness and the role of the teacher has changed considerably. Post-war, the UK education systems were seen as being part of the provision afforded by the welfare state, and teachers were regarded as having an important function within the systems to deliver education as a social good. But teaching in the postmodern quasi-market is a different matter: following Thatcherite reforms in the 1980's teachers are now often conceptualised as service providers who are accountable for implementing externally imposed, politicised policies (see Wright and Bottery, 1997). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, 'New Labour' continues the trend to external imposition of ideologically based education policy where concepts of the professionalism of teachers rest upon factors such as accountability, quality assurance and standards of competence. Indeed, New Labour education ministers

*'have exhibited many of their predecessors' negative attitudes towards, and low expectations of, teachers'* (Mortimore & Mortimore, 1998: 206).

Neo-Liberal policy has affected most aspects of education in the UK since 1979. Greater centralised control of teacher education - for example in Scotland, through Scottish Office guidelines and the necessity for accreditation of courses by the General Teaching Council) has affected the form and content of initial teacher education courses and continuing professional development (which tends to be viewed as further development of teaching skills, though it must be said that this trend has been more marked in the reforms to English teacher training than it has been in Scottish teacher education). In terms of teacher education,

*the implications of strict and measured accountability, conveyed by the emphasis upon developing national standards and direct links with student performance, raise questions about the political will to promote teacher development which is genuinely 'professional' as opposed to attempting to achieve a strategically planned programme of technical training. (Helsby, 1996: 135)*

Initial teacher education, induction/probationary periods, and continuing professional development need to be more effectively related to each other (Barber, 1995:77), but it is questionable that the way to do this is to view these areas as merely the development of a set of discrete skills which can be improved over time. This approach does not lead to the development of areas such as professional judgement or to awareness of the critical social processes which impinge on education and learning.

Moreover, all of the above aspects may be seen as embedded within a global context of trends towards 'new managerialism' or 'new public management' (Peters et al, 1999: Boston et al 1996) which increasingly sees measurable performativity as a key aspect in public services. This has come to be accepted - however reluctantly - by professionals, because it is intrinsic in the management frameworks by which they are circumscribed. That, however, does not necessarily mean that it is particularly appropriate in terms of effective governance of the activities in which they are engaged, or indeed that it fosters the teacher development process. Indeed, we suggest that there is some evidence to the contrary.

Of course, this is not to say that pre-79 teacher education was uniformly excellent or based on clearly defined conceptions of the professional practice of teaching. In the 1980's the content of many teacher education courses concentrated on academic disciplines such as psychology, philosophy and sociology, and the courses might not be said to have adequately prepared student teachers to begin to understand the complexities of classroom practice (Young, 1998: 56). Change was required in a somewhat moribund model of initial teacher training. However, the reformed systems of teacher induction in Scotland and England have moved to competence-based models which continue to struggle with the adequate preparation of teachers for the demands of the classroom, although in our view there have been some perceptible benefits such as foci on the importance of language and equal opportunities. Furthermore, the reforms that have been put in

place since the 1980's have not 'given priority to teachers, their professional skills or their professional development' (Barber, 1995: 75).

The competence-based model of teacher induction carries with it implicit conceptions of professionalism: that the professional is one who is competent (as opposed to excellent) and that professional skills and abilities can be mapped, defined, and delivered. Teacher education curricula are now either imposed (England) or heavily influenced by prescribed competences/benchmarks (Scotland), yet the content of teacher education still 'lacks explicit justification of its aims and assumptions' (Ovens, 2000: 178).

Teaching is, of course, a highly skilled profession, and teacher education has had to cope with the imposition of a reductivist training model based on behaviourist principles which do not themselves sit well with the broader ethos of initial teacher education: to educate the beginning teacher holistically taking account of the theory-practice continuum. Hegarty notes (2000:456) that competence-based approaches

*have an instrumental orientation and tend to focus on teaching as a craft as opposed to a knowledge-based activity. Competences or skills are of course important but an excessive focus on them leads to an impoverished notion of teaching which reduces it to the unreflective application of rules devoid of insight and creativity.*



Such reductionism can be seen in some teachers' views of their work. Research by Wright and Bottery (1997) shows that participating teachers were highly concerned with functional aspects of their job, but few saw much importance in broader aspects which could be regarded as being core to professional activities: reflective practice, professional autonomy, understanding ethical dilemmas posed by legislation and the consideration and application of educational theory/research. Those interviewed in Helsby's study (1996) showed similar tendencies to categorise their work instrumentally, and to display very varied but often implicit notions of professionalism. Some teachers viewed the 'professionalisation' issue as unproblematic: for them, teachers *were* professional simply because they had entered the teaching profession, and only particular incidences of 'unprofessional' behaviour could alter that situation' (Helsby, 1997:138, original emphasis). It could be that teachers who are trained rather than educated may fail to develop a robust sense of themselves as creative, knowledgeable professionals rather than as skilled practitioners alone.

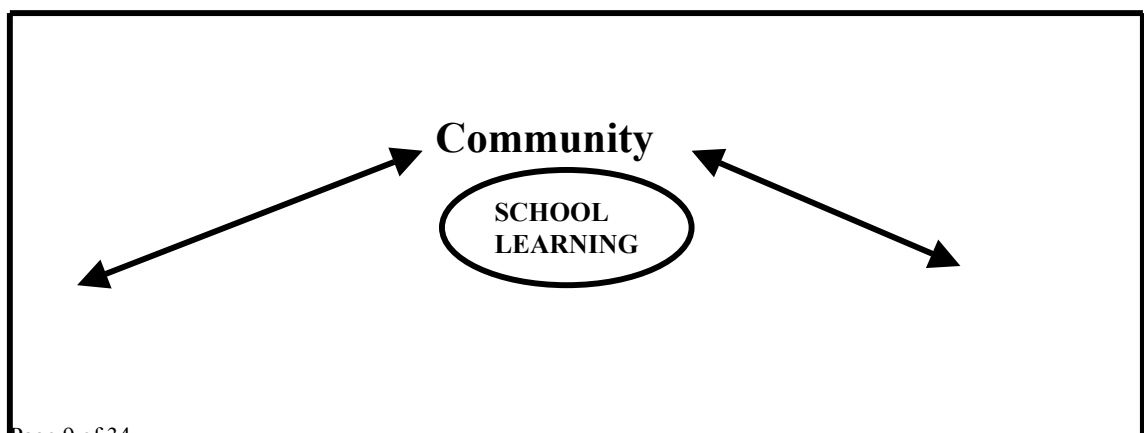
A profession should generate its own development and instigate change from a position of knowledge and expertise, while accepting responsibility for providing a quality service. Recent reforms in teacher education have not facilitated a reconceptualisation of the teaching professionals as being duty bound (Eraut, 1981,1994) to develop their own understanding and expertise within research and knowledge based practice, if they are to continue to be regarded as professionals

rather than as technicians. Instead, the reforms have moved teacher education towards accountability for delivering the curriculum (England) or implementing curriculum guidelines (Scotland) and for meeting standards which do not often tell us a great deal about the quality of teaching which is to be found in schools.

Wright and Bottery (1997:251) conclude that the reforms in England have

*'begun to create a centrally directed, highly accountable... teaching force which is not required to think too much or too deeply about the larger, social, moral and political issues, which a richer conception of professionalism would commit them to...'*

Technical rationalism would thus seem to have some pre-eminence in the minds of some commentators. However, the possibility of a different emphasis, as we shall see, does exist. Our conceptualisation of the teacher development process is as below, representing the centrality which learning must have.



**Provider** ←————→ **Individual Teacher**

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For us, the central notion is that the teacher development process, however it is managed, must ultimately result in better learning for pupils. Different approaches to teacher education and development have to support this: the school is the site of practice and performance, and the development process needs to link into this.

**Initial Teacher Education**

Consideration of aspects of teacher education in the UK can be seen as falling into two distinct phases - initial teacher education or initial teacher training, and continuing professional development. Initial teacher education may, naturally, be seen as the foundation for a continuing development, since at is presumably at this stage that important professional knowledge, skills, attitudes and understandings are formed. Part of that formation is a commitment within the developing individual to undertake activities which will lead to an incline of improvement throughout a career and a developing sense of self as professional (Diamond, 1991).

Consideration of initial teacher education involves consideration of some of the fundamental principles which are involved in the formation of teachers. There are a number of considerations relevant to the patterning of pre-service teacher education in the systems of the UK. These might include the nature of the task of

preparing teachers for the challenges of the classroom: the kinds of knowledge and understanding which it is necessary for them to have; the pedagogical skills which they need to develop; the underlying values and attitudes which are necessary to support a professional career; the best location for initial teacher development to take place, and so on. All of these aspects have been the subject of discussion and review over the last 20 years or so: indeed, the process of review has been continuous.

Firstly, a short examination of the discursive frameworks within which teacher education is developed in the UK might well be worthwhile. Commentators have noted that many of these discourses have been located within broad neo-liberal, neo-conservative ideologies since the nineteen eighties (eg Ball, 1994: Buchberger and Byrne, 1995). As we have seen, these particular discourses appear to have survived changes in government since 1997. In England and Wales, the process of development is referred to as 'initial teacher training' (ITT); those who undertake it are called 'trainees' (DfEE, 1998). Likewise, courses are circumscribed by 'requirements'. Institutions who undertake the task of training are categorised as 'providers'. This model again resembles the discourse of an industrial or a managerial process. In Scotland, the process is known as 'initial teacher education' and those engaged upon it are 'students' or 'student teachers': initial education is given by 'institutions', taking account of the interests of 'stakeholders' (QUAAHE, 2000). Courses are, and have been for some years (eg SOEID, 1998) constrained

by 'guidelines' and by 'benchmarks', in contrast to the legal status attached to the documentation in England and Wales.

From the above, it might appear that the process in Scotland is somewhat differently conceptualised from the way it is in England and Wales (the 'UK' system). In fact, both in Scotland and in England and Wales, teacher education has been, over the last twenty years or so, subject to an increasing degree of central control (eg Cameron-Jones and O'Hara (1994): Hill (1992). In both systems, the conceptualisation and definition of the professional role of the teacher has been undertaken by governmental agencies. This has raised concerns amongst teacher educators and academics: terms such as 'classroom technicians' and 'classroom mechanics' have been used (Ball, 1995: Carr, 1992). The fear, in terms of this viewpoint, is that prescription by government of what is taught in school, and also how it is taught, impacts significantly upon the nature of the task of the teacher and therefore also upon how the professional formation of teachers is undertaken.

In England and Wales, responsibility for formation is taken on behalf of the Department for Education and Skills (formerly DfEE) by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA). A General Teaching Council for England (GTCE) is in process of development, and this will have the responsibility of monitoring the profession there. In Scotland the strategic task undertaken in England by the TTA has traditionally been undertaken by the Scottish Office and since the re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, by the Scottish Executive Education

Department. However, there has been in place a General Teaching Council for Scotland for some 35 years now, and this has exercised a very considerable influence upon initial (and now continuing) teacher education north of the border (MacIver, 2001), retaining the power to accredit all courses of ITE. The McCrone developments (Committee of Inquiry 2000:63 / 66) extend this power into CPD, too. Until recent reforms which saw a broader spectrum of stakeholders appointed to the Council, the GTCS was very much an organisation run by teachers for teachers. Thus, the task of preparing teachers for the classroom has been variously undertaken within the UK systems by differing agencies, utilising different discursive frameworks.

A second consideration might be the skills, knowledge and understandings necessary to support a professional teaching career: in other words, the curriculum of a course of initial teacher education. Allied to this would be the values and attitudes which might underpin such a course. Much has been written about such a curriculum: and within this framework, a great deal has centred around the theory-practice interface in various systems and the crucial relationships which are in play at that point (eg Winitzky and Kauchak (1997), Norris (1994), Bengtsson, (1995). These perspectives are useful in assisting us to conceptualise what such a curriculum might look like either in theory or in reality. However, in the UK systems, curricula for courses of initial teacher education or training are in many ways circumscribed by government policy.

In England and Wales, the DfEE Circular 4/98 (op.cit.) delineates requirements for all courses of initial teacher training. There are requirements for course entry, for the length of the course and importantly for the present discussion, requirements for what must be taught. Thus, there are standards for knowledge and understanding of various subject areas within the primary and secondary school curricula: for planning, teaching and class management; for monitoring, assessment, recording, reporting and accountability, and for other professional requirements. The award of qualified teacher status is entirely dependent upon trainees reaching these nationally prescribed standards - a performance management approach is implicit here. If you do not perform to the specified standard, then you will not qualify as a teacher. National agreement on what the standards should be is in fact imposed by this documentation. Certain specialised areas deemed to be of national priority - primary and secondary English, primary and secondary mathematics, primary and secondary science and information technology for subject teaching all have clearly laid down initial teacher training national curricula. These specify not just *what* should be 'taught' (so much for a constructivist approach) but also *how* it should be taught. To exemplify this, in primary English, a phonics-based approach is clearly specified for the initial teaching of reading. Central to the whole process of teacher induction is the ability to deliver the National Curriculum in the manner in which the Government wishes it to be delivered. The effect of this is that in England and Wales there is the benefit of clear and unambiguous specification of how trainee teachers should be inducted into the profession, and what that induction should consist of. However,

there are also tight constraints of central control which leave little or no latitude for curriculum development and progression or for the development of alternative philosophies of teacher development.

In Scotland, on the other hand, the competence-based approach has not been taken in this direction. There, the initial thrust was to the development of National Guidelines which outlined a number of areas in which competence could be demonstrated, and which would be assessed by institutions of initial teacher education in the process of certificating students for provisional registration with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (the equivalent of Qualified Teacher Status in England). Since Scotland does not have, ostensibly, a National Curriculum other than the National Guidelines 5-14 (Kirk and Glaister 1994) and the Framework for National Qualifications which encompasses the upper secondary stages, then clearly guidelines for initial teacher education cannot be framed in terms of the delivery of such a curriculum.

Rather, in Scotland, the approach has been to focus upon the knowledge, skills and professional values which would enable a student on a course of initial teacher education to achieve generic classroom competence across a variety of areas of professional concern. These areas have most recently been encapsulated into a series of benchmark statements (QUAAHE, 2000), subsuming the previous governmentally produced competences, and which have been produced by an interesting combination of The Scottish Executive, the General Teaching Council



for Scotland and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (a UK national body). There is no national prescription of teacher induction curricula, and there would appear - though it is early days yet - to be greater autonomy for institutions to develop their own approaches. However, the obvious lighter touch of central control in Scotland must be seen to be offset by the lack of nationally set, consistent approaches such as apply in England.

A third area for discussion might be the location where initial teacher education and training should take place. Both systems of the UK are agreed that there should be a substantial element of practical experience in schools and that partnerships with schools are crucial and central to the experience of the beginning teacher. It is perhaps in this area that differences in the management of initial teacher induction courses within the systems of the UK are most apparent.

Whereas in Scotland, the universities - currently six are thus engaged - are the sole location of initial teacher education, in England there are a number of different possibilities (eg Townshend, 1994, DfEE, 1998). These include school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT), where consortia of schools provide training on-site, as well as more traditional university and college routes. In addition, the Graduate Training Programme allows on-the-job training with grants towards the payment of salary. It could thus be said that in England there is a flexibility of approach which is not present in Scotland in terms of the routes available for those intending to enter the profession. In addition, the Teacher Training Agency provides entrants with information on the performance of each consortium or

institution based on Ofsted inspections to enable an informed choice to be made (TTA, 2001).

In England and Wales, further, there is a programme of mentoring within schools in which individual teachers assume responsibility for the development of their trainees. This system has been thoroughly researched and appraised over a number of years and has become embedded into the system as the normal means of operation for teacher education in the UK (England) system (eg McIntyre, 1990; Bridges 1993, McIntyre, Hagger and Wilkin 1993, Tomlinson 1995, etc). Amongst the benefits seen in the system are enhanced professionalism in that teachers assume responsibility for the development of their own colleagues (Bridges, 1993). While such a system was proposed for Scotland during the mid 90s and indeed a pilot operation established, this proved unacceptable to the profession and has not been instituted in a similar way. While England has moved in the direction of practice-based initial teacher education, Scotland has retained a greater balance between theory and practice, and this is seen in firstly, the assumption of the old colleges of education into the university system (complete in 2001) and the rooting of the education of teachers within a theory-practice balance and continuum.

Considerable variations, both structural differences and differences of emphasis, thus distinguish the initial education and training of teachers within the systems of the UK. That of England is concerned with creating a training environment, within which the necessary skills to deliver a nationally prescribed curriculum are

absorbed. The curriculum remains largely practice based and delivered in the schools: concerns of theory, while not entirely absent, are certainly secondary in importance. In turn, this relates to an environment where considerations of performance management are of considerable importance. It should be noted that recent research (Furlong, 2000) suggests that this model is effective in creating teachers who are indeed able to deliver the National Curriculum in schools and that it has found acceptance within school communities. However, this may have been achieved as a cost. As Graham (1996) observes:

*"The incremental progress of 'government by contract' in teacher training has significantly challenged notions of academic freedom and professional autonomy." (Graham, 1996: 53)*

On the other hand, initial teacher education in Scotland is based in the university environment, and although this method has attracted some commentary (eg Darling-Hammond, 1999), the volume of material discussing the system in England is much greater - almost indicating an acceptance of this as the correct way to do things. Nevertheless, the Scottish system has retained a significant theoretical component, and a perception of balance between theory and practice. This has led to an approach directed towards generic skills, rather than those prescribed by the delivery of particular curricular requirements. Although it would be naïve to suggest that there is no drive - explicit or implicit - towards the delivery of 5-14 and National Qualifications, it does appear that there is a greater

recognition within the Scottish system of elements of teacher autonomy and professionalism and that these are conceptualised in a different, less performance oriented manner. The following section will develop our views in terms of the next stage in teacher education and development.

### **The Continuing Professional Development of Teachers**

As we have seen from our discussion of initial teacher education there is considerable debate and variation within the UK regarding the purpose and content of initial teacher development programmes which reflect different ideological positions, resting as they do on different understandings of ‘professionalism’.

When we come to the area of the continuing professional development of qualified teachers we can again see diverse approaches emerging in the different educational systems in the UK which reflect different conceptualisations of ‘professionalism’.

Here also there are some interesting comparisons that can be made which raise some fundamental questions of our understanding of the nature of teacher education in an era where there is considerable pressure across all educational systems in the UK to ensure improvement in the performance of schools, *as evidenced by pupil attainment.*

There are two broad ways we can seek to achieve an improvement in the performance of teachers in school which are broadly parallel to those found in ITE.

We can either adopt a developmental approach by showing staff development to foster change and improvement of performance in the classroom, or we can adopt

an accountability model in which clear standards or targets for performance are defined. The monitoring of the achievement of these in the classroom then becomes a key role undertaken by the line manager.

There has been an emphasis on staff development as the major means of bringing about improvement. One of the most significant and consistent findings of the large body of work related to school effectiveness and school improvement has been the centrality of teacher development. A perennial concern for both the providers and the recipients of continuing professional development programmes within the school or classroom is the relationship between theory and practice in the development of learning programmes that are relevant and applicable within the work place. More recently the question has been raised whether the traditional provision of opportunities for teacher development will necessarily translate into progressive outcomes for the pupils. As a result of these concerns the focus within each system oscillates between emphasising staff development as the means to enable teachers to become more effective, and performance management, which emphasises the accountability of individual teachers for the level of their performance in the classroom in terms of demonstrable pupil learning.

The two contrasting approaches being adopted by different educational systems in the UK are worthy of discussion in terms of the implications for the design and provision of post initial qualification teacher education and for our understanding of the contested nature of the term 'professionalism'. It is necessary to consider

how one can draw upon aspects of both approaches, in order to develop more coherent strategies to support teacher development that will move us from a position where we view improvement in terms of narrow definitions of attainment (currently predominantly in terms of public examination results) to a more holistic understanding of pupil achievement.

A cursory glance would suggest that there is a significant divergence in the approaches to CPD adopted in the system in England and Wales and that adopted in the Scottish system. The Department of Education and Skills (DfES, formerly DfEE), the government department responsible for public education nationally in England and Wales, has been developing approaches to performance related pay. The government's stated agenda is the modernisation of the teaching profession, and performance management is a key concept in this. Following from the 1998 Green Paper *Teachers: meeting the Challenge of Change* (DfEE, 1998), the Performance Management Framework (DfEE, 2000) was established. These reforms have already brought tangible outcomes for teachers with the introduction of payments for eligible teachers reaching the Threshold Standard. Here teachers are required to demonstrate the required standard of performance, largely through portfolio and assessment of performance. On the basis of this achievement, they will receive a threshold payment. It would seem that the main strategy is to specify the tasks of the teacher in the classroom in relation to the delivery of the prescribed curriculum, to monitor teachers' implementation of this in the classroom and to reward in monetary terms what is defined as successful practice.

Scotland has also undergone a major review of the teaching profession, published in *A Teaching Profession for 21st Century* (McCrone Report, 2000). It would seem from the outcomes of this enquiry that a contrasting approach is being adopted in the Scottish system. A number of initiatives is being implemented which look to staff development as the key to modernisation and improvement. Amongst these is the introduction of the training year, where probationary teachers will have a significantly reduced teaching commitment (0.7 FTE) to enable them to undertake professional development activities. However, perhaps most noteworthy is the recommendation for the Expert Teacher. This has now been taken up in the development of a Chartered Teacher Programme in which experienced teachers can achieve Chartered Teacher Status by undertaking a substantial development programme - six years in length - leading to the award of a Masters degree by a University and Chartered Teacher Status by the General Teaching Council for Scotland.

Thus, at one level the contrast between the two systems is startling with the English and Welsh system seeming to adopt an approach based on teacher accountability while in the Scottish system, a developmental model is foremost in current thinking. However, this is too simplistic a division. As we can see on further probing, both systems adopt a combination of performance management and developmental approaches within the reform of the continuing education of teachers.

Within the English and Welsh system we can see clear linkages between development and improvement. Although the requirements for teachers are explicit through the National Curriculum, through the setting of targets for individual teachers annually these approaches are being accompanied by substantial support to enable teachers to develop their practice as illustrated by the document *Learning and Teaching - A Strategy for Professional Development* (DfES, 2001) which reports that some £92 million will be invested in teacher development over a three year period to enable the provision of an extensive range of staff development opportunities for teachers.

When we turn to the Scottish system, there too a little probing reveals that there are clear elements of performance management within the strategies proposed although these may not be overtly acknowledged. Competences have long featured as a part of the assessment of performance in the school within pre-service programmes (SOEID, 1993, 1998) and more recently these have been translated into benchmark standards for the induction stage followed by benchmark standards for the status of full registration. In addition, the standard for Headship (SOEID, 1998) which underpins the Scottish Qualification for Headship Programme (SQH) has been established and currently work is ongoing developing a standard for Chartered Teacher (Chartered Teacher Partnership, 2001). Assessment of performance in the school or classroom is a central feature of both the SQH and the anticipated Chartered Teacher programme. The Chartered Teacher programme



will essentially be a progress related pay scheme with the achievement of chartered status being reward by a substantial increase in salary. We summarise the above arguments in the following table:

<b>Performance Management</b>	<b>Professional Development and Review</b>
Threshold Payments / Performance related pay	Progression linked to Development
Premised on National Curriculum delivery	Guidelines, but achievement at disposal of the institution
Advanced Skills Teacher - competence skills	Chartered Teacher - benchmarks developed from ITE
External Assessment	Self-Evaluation
Limited autonomy in achieving objectives	Greater autonomy in achieving objectives
LEAs have limited power	Local authorities have more autonomy - crucial in CPD for professional teachers
More central control	The centre provides the framework for the development
Individuals apply to central agency for NPQH	Local authorities are gatekeepers for entry to SQH

Thus, both the English and Welsh system in England and Wales and the Scottish system are developing solutions which both provide staff development opportunities matching the current orthodoxies about what it means to be a teacher in a classroom, and the current policies on curricular content and delivery, which combine with some form of performance related pay. Both are using salary increases payable through the demonstration of successful practice. However, to our minds these complex schemes in themselves are not sufficient to bring about the type of systemic change that is being sought in the classroom. We need to consider more fundamentally how we enable teachers to reform their practice

within their classrooms. The solution lies not in the adoption of a simple rewards-based model of motivation nor in providing staff development whose content is narrowly determined by the current policies. We need instead to consider more fundamentally the process of learning that will enable serving teachers to change and reform their practice within the demands of the specific context in which they work.

### **Conclusion**

In recent years considerable development has been undertaken in seeking approaches to teachers' learning that enable them to use the theory - practice relationship more constructively. For example, there is an increasing use of experiential and work based learning, portfolio based learning. Some issues of access have been overcome by expanding the use of open and distance learning and more recently e-learning. However, both in the minds of the provider and the recipient, the focus is on the learning of the individual candidate, predominantly defined in knowledge with limited skill development often in a situation outside the classroom.

Is this then an argument for teacher education at all phases in a teacher's career - from initial education to advanced level - to be sited largely within the school setting and that it should focus on developing a prescribed set of technical skills? Our response would have to be no. Instead we are arguing that we need to consider

more carefully how the notion of performativity reshapes, rather than reduces, our understanding of professionalism.

Focussing solely on the school as the location and the provider of teacher development, the content of which is technical, will not bring about the level of improvement currently being demanded of the teaching profession. Nor will approaches to teacher education which emphasise the acquisition of knowledge as a prerequisite for the development of professional expertise. Many of us have had the experience of witnessing the frustration of students and particularly serving teachers who, eager to take forward ideas into practice, are faced with insurmountable barriers in school. It is important to recognise that these barriers are not simply others teachers who have yet to 'hear the message' nor is it the impracticality of the theoretical ideas. Instead it points to a more fundamental issue in teacher education which the current debate about performance management has helped to highlight. What are the learning processes that enable teachers to acquire and apply ideas to improve their practice?

For teachers and for school managers rethinking and reforming performance, the discussion is not simply about acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills but the application of these within the context in which they work. Given our currently models of collaborative working and collegial institutions we need to move away for focusing solely on the development and accountability of teachers as individuals. Payments to individual teachers alone will not do, nor will

providing programmes and staff development which demand that individual teachers work in isolation.

In the paper *Learning and Teaching - A Strategy for Professional Development* one of many areas for development is the task of

*“identifying the characteristics and conditions of schools which function most effectively as professional learning communities”* (DfES, 2001: 4).

We suggest that, instead of the current debates about whether the construct of professionalism should relate more to understandings of professional autonomy or professional accountability, we have to rethink our understanding of professionalism within the dynamic social context of a school environment. We need to consider ways of enabling groups of staff, both teachers and managers, to come together in communities of learners in which the reform and improvement of practice becomes a collective and normative process.

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