1

The Nature of Professionalism in the Context of School Reform

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Introduction

A theme in the school reform movement has been the call by educators and reformers alike for the professionalization of teaching. What follows in this chapter deals with this theme, and it is useful to describe the context surrounding professionalism in teaching. Efforts to professionalize teaching have become embedded in the plethora of other efforts to improve schools and the education of children. In professional development school initiatives the lines between these efforts tend to overlap and become indistinct. At the same time that educators and reformers began calling for the development of teaching as a profession, the general public was calling for broader and dramatic overhauling of schools. The early and mid-1980s saw the proliferation of commission reports detailing what by the close of the 1980s Sarason referred to as "the predictable failure of school reform" (1990). This predictable and continued failure, according to Sarason, was due to the "intractability" of schools. Raywid offers this explanation:

> Schools are notoriously difficult to change. One major reason is their interconnectedness. Indeed schools are very much like jigsaw puzzles; everything is connected to everything else. It is impossible to modify any one piece without also altering those pieces connected to it—which in turn can require changing successively larger rings of pieces increasingly further from where one began. (1990, 141)

The response to the outcry of the commission reports, as voiced in *A Nation at Risk* (1983), and the need to address fundamental changes in the "puzzle" of schooling was called "restructuring."

Reform is basically about changing the organization and governance of schools in order to encourage school improvement. Reform efforts are intended to change the "rules, roles and relationships" that are the structure in and around schools (Wilson 1971). Elmore discusses ideas around which reform efforts have been organized, including "empowerment of teachers, students and parents to play a more influential role in determining what schools do," "holding schools more accountable for the results they produce with students," and "orienting schools and the people who work in them toward serious, sustained engagement in academic learning" which includes "teaching for understanding" that in turn requires "very different knowledge and skills on the part of educators and very different conditions of work in schools" (1990, 5–9).

One facet of this reform effort has been the attempt to move teaching from at worst an occupation and at best a semi-profession to a full-fledged profession recognized by the public as such. Part of this work has been to change the nature of schools as suggested above, and professional development schools have been one initiative in that direction. The Holmes Group and NCREST (National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching) are two national organizations that have been leaders in this approach to reform. Both groups have proposed visions of what schools would look like under PDS ideals, and both groups' proposals help to describe the kind of work that teachers would do that would, in these organizations' eyes, be deemed professional (NCREST 1993; The Holmes Group 1990). Central to each group's recommendations is the idea that in order for schools to be more valuable institutions for children in their learning and educational well-being, they have to become different kinds of places for the adults who work in them. Both reform groups argue for school cultures that promote and sustain professional renewal and growth. This process includes a particular focus on teachers and principals who see themselves as critical and reflective practitioners, and as professionals who construct, work from, and act on a knowledge base generated out of the contextual life of schooling.

The following discussion is based on several premises. First, there is an ongoing and concerted effort to make teaching more like a profession in the public eye. Second, the efforts to professionalize teaching have been problematic at best and have had little impact at worst. Third, part of the diffi-culty in the professionalization of teaching is the misappropriation of models of professionalism that have been abstracted from other professions, namely medicine. Fourth, and most importantly, because of the unique, highly contextual nature of the work of teachers, discussions of teaching as a profession should begin with that context and with the daily lives of teachers. Such discussion would be a critical component in school reform.

Top-down, outside-in efforts at professionalization have at their base the assumption that if teaching is treated like vocations that have been successfully

professionalized—medicine being the most noted—then it, too, will become a profession. Much of what has been written focuses on how teaching has failed in the quest to achieve the status and rewards commensurate with being a profession, and how it might, like medicine before it, become a profession.

The Critique of Teaching as a Non-Profession

The current lack of public confidence in education as well as other professions is not a new phenomenon, and even the much-emulated medical profession has a mixed history. Oliver Wendell Holmes commented in 1869 that "if the whole materia medica, as now used, could be sunk to the bottom of the sea, it would be all the better for mankind—and all the worse for the fishes" (Numbers 1988, 55). With the same disgust for the medical profession, one of its members stated in the mid-1850s:

> It is very well understood among college boys . . . that after a man has failed in scholarship, failed in writing, failed in speaking, failed in every purpose for which he entered college; after he has dropped down from class to class; after he has been kicked out of college, there is one unfailing city of refuge—the profession of medicine. (Numbers 1988, 58)

In an age when medicine, in spite of persistent problems in areas such as cost escalation and malpractice, continues to rank supreme among professions in this country, it is hard to imagine the depths of social disrespect from which it has risen. It is equally difficult to imagine that education, currently the target of criticism such as medicine suffered a century ago, might ever even approach the professional status and privilege that medicine attained in the first half of this century.

A Nation At Risk (1983), in paralleling the tenor of Holmes's critique above, sharply criticized the occupation of teaching for "being drawn from the bottom quarter of graduating high school and college students," for suffering from training in a "curriculum [that] is weighted heavily with courses in 'educational methods' at the expense of courses in subjects to be taught," for unacceptably low salaries, for lack of autonomy, and for staffing the most important courses in school with people unqualified to fulfill those positions. This landmark statement on public education and the 1986 publication of *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the Twenty First Century* by the Carnegie Foundation highlighted the perilous nature of teaching as a "profession" in this country. Efforts since 1983 have too often focused on applying external models of professionalism to teaching, models that typically disregard the contexts and organizational environments in which teaching occurs. Our effort here is to

refocus on that context, and on the relationship of the development of teacher professionalism with professional development schools.

The point is not to argue that models of professionalism that have worked in other contexts such as medicine fail entirely to speak to teaching. An examination of the history of professions in general, and the history of medicine in particular, contextually could speak rather profoundly to the professionalization of teaching. But that is different from adoption and application of models that have worked in other contexts.

Professionalization is not about oft-cited characteristics of collegial control, client centeredness, and scientific knowledge, but about shared experiences between those who are to fulfill professional roles and those for whom professional roles are filled. Professionalism is about shared experiences between professionals and clients, professionals and knowledge, professionals and colleagues, and professionals and the public, which ultimately grants symbolic authority to a profession. The professionalization of teaching is not about recruitment and retention, improvement in entrance requirements, and improvements in a body of knowledge. *Teacher professionalism* is something unique to the act of teaching. Teacher professionalism is born in and exists in the drama of teaching. It is an artifact of teaching, not a status applied to it. And it is an artifact broadly created and defined by teachers, students, administrators, policymakers, and anyone who participates in the construction of what we call a "teacher." This is in opposition to teacher professionalism defined as new people, new requirements, and new knowledge; instead it is defined as new understandings and new appreciations of the shared experiences in the lives of teachers.

Those shared experiences of teachers are the basis of the discussions of professional development schools that follow in this book, and the lives of teachers to be presented are the essence of the new forms of teacher professionalism that could lie at the heart of not only teaching but school reform and restructuring in general. The experiences that follow—of changing perspectives on what it means to be a teacher, on the changing relationships between teacher practice and professional preparation programs, and on the new relationships between teachers, between teachers and students, between teachers and school administrators, and other relationships—provide the context out of which teacher professionalism can be constructed and understood.

Problems with Theories of Professionalism

In his analysis of problems involving the definition of the teaching "profession," Kimball (1988) states that recent literature promoting strengthening and improving the occupation of teaching can be reduced to three general categories: 1) recruitment and retention of "good" individuals by the profession,

2) improvement in the entrance requirements of the profession, and 3) improvements in the body of knowledge for the profession as well as training in that knowledge (Kimball 1988, 5). Noddings, citing some of the same concerns as Kimball, argues that the Carnegie proposals, as well as those by the Holmes Group, reduce to three themes: standards of practice controlled by the profession, abolishing the undergraduate teaching degree, and establishing "positions of advancement for teachers" (Noddings 1989, 19–20).

In *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the Twenty First Century* (1986), the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching As a Profession tackled the issue that Kimball proposed as a roadblock to professionalism for education. The Task Force proposed that we:

> Restructure schools to provide a professional environment for teachers, freeing them to decide how best to meet state and local goals for children while holding them accountable for student progress. (55)

These commentaries speak of "professional" in the abstract as a value that exists outside and prior to the occupation and as a goal toward which it should be striving. The concept of "professional" has been established for and can be applied to the teaching occupation. The task is to alter the working conditions of teaching such that they meet the professional model. Cooper (1988, 47) states that the problems in and of teaching have been well documented and that teachers have actually begun to own this "blueprint" of their failures "as if they had written it themselves." She continues, "They have become passive and dependent in pursuit of their own voices."

As an alternative to the imposition described above, it might prove useful to examine closely those ideas upon which "professionalism" rests, and review them in light of the unique conditions of the teacher workplace and educational needs. Reform movements and the literature produced by them, while tinkering with the possibilities of school reorganization, have held the notion of professionalism constant. Reification of the literature on professionalism, coupled with the scarcity of literature about the everyday lives of teachers, has left the relationship between the concept of professionalism and the teacher workplace problematic.

Teaching as a "Profession"

Accepting the argument that there is no abstract model of professionalism that can legitimately be imposed on teaching, educational reform pointing toward the professionalization of teaching has no ready-made standard by which to measure success. The usual calls for raising teaching to the status of other professions such as medicine become less credible.

[People] take for granted that this is what medicine and law are really like and that occupations striving to become professions have only to work hard enough, become more and more like this symbol until they finally achieve professional status themselves. (Becker 1970, 98)

Even under the assumption that an ideal definition of profession could be applied, it is foolhardy for educational reformers to aim at such an ideal. The concepts or attributes that embody "professional" in medical terms were developed for and within medicine. To assume that such attributes are directly transferable to teaching might hinder reforms for teaching rather than help. There are several reasons for this concern. First, while medicine as a profession requires the public's *acceptance* of it as a profession, it hardly requires public control (as is attested by recent attempts at medical reform). Clearly "public" education implies a far greater role for society in terms of control than does medicine. Not only does each of the states hold implied constitutional authority over education (and thus teachers) as power reserved to the states in the federal Constitution, the federal government wields its authority through the granting and denial of categorical aid to education, and local education agencies wield theirs through administrative detail (Spring 1989). On this issue alone, the public exercises ubiquitous control over education well beyond that exercised over medicine. And as the last decade of reforms can attest, legislators, policy makers, and administrators do not hesitate to exercise that control over education.

Education is also unique among the occupations in terms of the familiarity the public has with schooling. Practically speaking, the entire population of the country more than six years old has had some (and generally a great deal of) experience with schools and teachers. This creates a license for "lay preaching" about schools and teachers because the public sees their beliefs about schools and experiences to be all there is to school. This perception of institutional-ization (Meyer and Rowan 1983) exists more strongly in education than possibly any other occupation. The public exerts great pressure in terms of what teaching is believed to be and expected to be.

But the uniqueness of teaching as an occupation aiming to become a profession entails more than degree of public control. Sykes (1989, 263–267) points out several "teaching circumstances" that make education unique among professions or those occupations attempting to achieve professional status: 1) Teaching is a public monopoly featuring conscripted clients. 2) Teaching is a mass profession (considerably larger than medicine). 3) Teaching is heavily unionized. 4) Teaching is a feminized occupation delivered to low status clients serving an "equivocal" mission. 5) There is no awe of teaching practice. 6) Teaching is a combination of special and ordinary knowledge. 7) There are no texts, artifacts, or celebrated cases of teaching. 8) The liberal arts serve as

entitlement (privilege to become) and a performance standard (knowledge base to do) for teaching. Sykes (1989, 267) summarizes the unique character of the teaching occupation by commenting, "Teaching cannot in any crude way emulate other fields. Too much about teaching is unique; its special circumstances are judgmental, not peripheral." Sykes also argues that attempts to embody the ideal attributes of profession may, in fact, be detrimental to value issues for teaching and teachers. First, the quest for technical knowledge may compromise the sense of caring and compassion associated with human services. Second, the professional attempt to be objective may distance the professional from the client, and violate the democratic ideal of schooling. Third, "professionalism may be incompatible with equity goals" (Sykes 1987, 21).

Arguments such as Sykes's point to the notion that teachers face a unique struggle in gaining the stature granted to other professions. Schon has argued that much of what we generally label as professional practice suffers from a lack of regard for "complexity, uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value con-flicts" (Schon 1983, 14). Schon argues, in a new vision of what constitutes professionalism, that what we cannot say and do not know about professional practice is as important as what we think we do know and can say vis-à-vis "professional knowledge." It is this lack of understanding that has not only highlighted the question of what a profession is, but also has even raised doubts about what the roles and abilities of professionals are. This lack of under-standing of knowledge and practice lends doubt to current definitions of what it means to be a professional, and of professionalism:

> [A]s we have come to see with increasing clarity . . . the problems of real world practice do not present themselves to practitioners as well formed structures. Indeed, they tend not to present themselves as problems at all but as messy, indeterminate zones of practice. (Schon 1987, 4)

Hargreaves, in a discussion of teaching quality, has translated Schon's concern with the practical indeterminancy of professionals in general into teaching in particular. He argues that quality of teaching is more than a matter of competency; it is a matter of ". . . teachers actively interpreting, making sense of, and adjusting to, the demands and requirements their conditions of work place upon them" (1988, 211). Hargreaves (1994) reinforces these same points as critical in understanding the nature of teaching and how professionalism is constructed in the "situations that teachers understand best" (4), at the "grassroots of the profession," and from the perspectives of "those who work at the frontlines of our classrooms" (11). Munby, in a discussion of metaphors in teacher practice, supports this issue of uniqueness and indeterminancy of teaching. He argues that the unique circumstances and constructions of teaching are "fundamental to how teachers act" (1987, 378). Grundy, in a critique of

professionalism as a fixed model, argues that such unpredictability and uncertainty are the "hallmarks of professional practice, and teaching practice" (1989, 85). Finally, Lieberman and Miller argue that teaching practices are "highly personal, if not idiosyncratic," and are "forged in the dailiness of work . . . " (1990, 153–154). And overgeneralization about professionalism would tend to ignore the "flesh and blood of teaching" (156).

Cooper (1988) argues that discussions of reform in teaching have become distant from the day to day lives and culture of teaching. In a discussion of how we have "diverged" from actual practice, Cooper describes how we might reacquaint ourselves with the realities of the occupation. In one divergence, she argues that reformers treat teaching culture as something that can be created for and laid over teachers. Cooper contends that cultures are born, grow, and exist in history, (1988, 47). Second, Cooper asks, "Whose culture is it anyway?" Harkening back to the Carnegie Report, Cooper states that if teachers must accept someone else's "blueprint" for professionalism, they will not have generated a culture but "received" one. Third, Cooper states that by accepting schools as "living organism" (47), we can more easily see professional overlays as inappropriate, and can take advantage of the idiographic nature of teaching as opportunity for reform. Fourth, in similar vein to Sykes's comment on caring and compassion mentioned earlier, Cooper argues:

> The milieu of schools is written in the lives of children as well as professionals. Yet the lore on school professional culture ignores the client. The notion of service, the personal nature of the relationship to youngsters and families, the caring and bonding context of the event are embarrassingly absent. Have we extracted the least admired characteristics of the professional models, characteristics that divert teachers from their core tasks with children? (1988, p.48)

Thus far I have argued the following points. One, professionalizing teaching has been part of the reform agenda in education. Two, exactly what constitutes professionalism in its broadest sense is problematic. Three, applicability of professionalism as defined by other professions is problematic due to the unique and idiographic nature of teaching. Considering the possibility of variable definitions and of context-specific definitions, those who seek to professionalize teaching might need to call "profession" as a concept into question. Part of the effort to make teaching a profession should include developing a concept of "profession" that takes into consideration the unique conditions of teaching. As Grundy suggests, "In many ways 'professionalism' is a tired old concept which could well be left behind. What is needed is a fresh way of looking at teachers' work and human action through which educators can move 'beyond

professionalism'" (1989, 79). One "fresh way" is to define profession in context; to ground the definition in the work that teachers do.

My problem with attempts by reformers to professionalize teaching is not that education is not worthy of the benefits of professional stature (as we know them), but that to mimic ideal types of professions or traits embodied in other occupations might be unsuitable for teaching. In order to arrive at a workable notion of what is professional for teaching, we must ground the definition in the work that teachers do. To do so would face up to what Hargreaves describes as "people striving for purpose and meaning in circumstances that are usually much less than ideal and which call for constant adjustment, adoption and redefinition" (1988, 216).

Even if those who advocate the professionalization of teaching could determine an ideal definition at which to aim, it is not certain that the target would be appropriate for teaching. Given Friedson's argument, any analysis of what professionalism means for teaching should focus on what is particular to teaching, not what is generalizable to "professionalism" as a fixed ideal. Jackson (1987), in a critique of the Holmes Group's suggestions that teacher education focus on technical skills and clinical needs, argues that medicine provides an inappropriate model for teacher professionalization:

> Those who point to the medical profession as a standard for teachers to emulate doubtless think they are doing teachers a good torn by making the comparison. Here is an enviable goal to which teachers might well aspire, they probably reason. What they fail to realize is that the comparison is ultimately degrading to teachers. It is so not only because the goal is so ridiculously out of reach in social and economic terms as to be almost cruel in the making but also because the analogy fails to consider all that is unique and ennobling about the teacher's work. (Jackson 1987, 388)

Jackson subsequently argues that educators can generate exciting reforms for teacher professionalism, but to do so would require less attention to "our dreams of a science of education" (1987, 388). He also suggests that our alternatives exist in the everyday lives of teachers.

Toward a New Construction of Teacher Professionalism

How do we go about the task of moving toward a definition of teacher professionalism such that we center on the unique nature of the work of teachers? If we professionalize teaching solely to gain greater economic reward for teachers with little connection to the improvement of education, we take two giant steps back by taking one small step (or stumble) forward. Inherent in plans to "strengthen" teaching through the three themes as presented above, our goal

has become professionalizing for professionalism's sake, not for education's sake. Such plans also reflect the subtle distinction between professionalizing and professionalism. Professionalization efforts are concerned with building claims to rewards that the public generally gives to occupations as professions. That requires, as Becker argues above, taking on the characteristics of already recognized professions. Soder argues this case well:

> Make teaching a "real profession" (like medicine), and all will be well the argument runs. That is to say, status discrepancy [the difference between the way an occupation perceives its value and the public perceives the occupation's value] will be reduced, with teachers getting that which they believe they deserve. (1990, 53)

First attempts toward a construction of teacher professionalism can begin from the notion that teacher professionalism consists of shared experiences—and understandings of shared experiences—in the activity of schooling. In their everyday lives, teachers articulate what they do "professionally." Their actions and interactions with students register the trademarks of teacher professionalism continuously. The concept of teacher professionalism exists as the privilege of the shared experiences generated in school. As Carr argues:

> Because teaching is a purposive activity . . . it cannot be learned or understood in isolation from the social context in which it occurs. Since teaching is essentially a social practice, the conceptual schemes governing a teacher's "way of seeing and doing" are derived from tradition and deeply imbedded in the institutional settings in which teachers work. (1989, 12)

These shared experiences generate the "contextual knowledge" on which teachers base their practice. These experiences include those teachers have with children, with colleagues, and with the public (or should have with the public), and their own reflections on that contextual knowledge. Teacher professionalism exists where all these relationships come together in the generation of knowledge and practice. Professionalism, in this sense, is not about new knowledge and new people injected into the arena of teaching. Instead, it is defined by relationships and the understanding of relationships for teaching.

Given these shared experiences, discussions about moving toward a theory of teacher professionalism should center on the issue of contextual knowledge and the role contextual knowledge plays in service to students. Subsequently, discussions of teacher professionalism should center on the ability of teachers to represent that context to the public in terms of teaching's symbolic status. For the sake of clarity I will attempt to explain each of these areas

separately as they relate to teacher professionalism, but I believe that in practice they are exceedingly difficult to separate. In practice they may be inseparable; each one's role in the generation of contextual knowledge cannot be singled out from the others.

Teacher Professionalism, Knowledge, and Service

In order to move toward a conception of teacher professionalism, we will first have to come to terms with professionalism's usual need for a "scientific" body of knowledge in which to base practice. Such a body of knowledge for teaching, as a century of research attests, is not only difficult to define, but antithetical to the idiographic nature of teaching experiences. Professionalization efforts to date have emphasized not only the existence of such a credible knowledge base for teaching, but expansion of it. Both of these are accentuated at the expense of a different, possibly much vaster "body of knowledge," and a potentially much more significant one—what we do not know about teaching. The knowledge base important for teaching is that which is created in context, and it is that knowledge that can help us understand the shared experiences of teaching. Goodlad speaks to this same issue when he discusses the "richly layered context" of teaching he discovered in his own research (1990, 19). As he comments:

> Arguments for a profession of teaching in schools must arise out of the special layered context of the work, the complexity of this context, and the special knowledge, skills, and personal characteristics required for the burden of judgment. (1990, 6)

First of all, the knowledge ''base'' for teaching is the shared experience of teaching. And it may be uniquely so, for definitions of professionalism at least, in that it is based in uncertainty. McDonald argues:

> I want to call special attention to two thematic threads. . . . One is that the experience of teaching involves a struggle for complex, and ultimately tenuous, control. A second is that as a result of this struggle there is an inevitable and morally legitimate tension between teachers and students. I believe that this struggle and its tensions are at the heart of . . . the uncertainty of teaching, its messy practicality, which theorists generally sidestep. Most theory about teaching . . . supposes that teaching is at best simply the rational application of means to given ends. (1986, 377)

Contrary to "scientific," in the more widely used sense of the term, accepting the idiographic nature of teacher knowledge means basing knowledge

of practice not in what can be abstracted, but in what cannot. This suggests that knowledge most important in teaching is not scientific at all, at least not traditionally speaking. Teaching's bodies of knowledge "based" in practice would accept uncertainty as a foundation for teacher knowledge, and make "teachers' intimate knowledge of uncertainty and its central and creative role in practice . . . as much a cornerstone of theory as it is a reality in the classroom" (McDonald 1986, 37).

Given this highly context specific body of knowledge, the source of knowledge of practice becomes teachers themselves, and what knowledge their contextual voices can offer. This body of knowledge, by definition, would be accessible nowhere else. The key question for the knowledge base of teacher professionalism, as posed by McDonald, would become, "how to frame a portrayal of teaching that is true at once to its banality and its mystery" (1986, 363).

A knowledge base for teacher professionalism would need to differ from more general theories of professionalism in that in professions, practice is justified through knowledge. Boreham (1983) argues that professional practice sometimes maintains more jurisdiction than can always be justified given the level of knowledge and skill claimed by professions and professionals. Given this argument, some professional jurisdiction would be illegitimate, in as much as knowledge is key to that jurisdiction. But an important assumption in Boreham's argument is that knowledge justifies practice.

In moving toward a theory of teacher professionalism, the reverse may actually be more appropriate. We would alternatively start with a justification for knowledge in practice, rather than practice in knowledge, or at least a recognition that the two happen concurrently. In moving toward a theory of teacher professionalism, it might be useful to work from the perspective that both processes occur, paying special attention to the justification of knowledge in practice. To do so would pay proper respect to the uncertainty of knowledge in teaching, in that "knowledge" would be contextual. This approach would also guide teacher professionalism toward what teachers do in the immediacy of their contexts, as well as what teachers "know" in the more traditional use of the term. This perspective would highlight and celebrate the uncertainty of teacher knowledge, and defend its "inherently provisional" (McDonald 1986, 363) nature against accusations of being "unscientific."

Finally, Boreham argues that in discussions of professional knowledge, the question arises as to how expertise gets organized as knowledge and how knowledge gets organized as work:

> During the processes of professional socialization organized systems of attitudes and values surrounding the application of professional knowledge are constructed. Knowledge becomes institutionalized as expertise. (1983, 696)

Questions need to be addressed concerning, first, the process through which the work activities of professional occupations come to be established as legitimate derivations of "recognized knowledge" and, second, how their development and utilization becomes organized and controlled. More generally, as Boreham puts it, the key issue is how knowledge gets organized as work.

Again, because of the uncertainty of teacher knowledge, it may be useful in working toward a theory of teacher professionalism to reverse these two questions as well. One, how do we institutionalize expertise as knowledge? Two, how does work get organized as knowledge? Singly, how do we comprehend teacher knowledge in the context in which that knowledge is generated and in which it has meaning?

Efforts based in a vision of professionalization as tantamount to filling the ranks of teaching with "better and brighter" people and subjecting them to more "rigorous" training in a more "scientific" body of knowledge give little attention to the context in which teachers—professional or not—work. Such efforts, while not inherently unimportant or unnecessary in the overall process of teacher professionalization, ignore teaching contexts, students, and the relationships between teachers and students (outside the ability to expose students to more "intelligent" teachers).

Noddings, in her work on caring, offers both disheartening and heartening critiques of the role of professionalism in teaching. She argues (1984) that to move toward an ethic of caring in education, teaching must be deprofessionalized. She also argues (1989) that as teaching progresses (or fails to progress) toward professional status, we must come to grips with the connection between professionalization and better education for children. First of all, it may be jumping the gun to assume that education can be deprofessionalized. That implies that teaching is a profession, and that is debatable, if not false. Secondly, if those who work for the professionalization of teaching fail to come to grips with the issue of client needs—in this case the education of children—then professionalization efforts are probably doomed to failure. In her question "What is the connection between professionalization and better education for school children?" Noddings has proposed the issue on which the professionalization of teaching will and should be judged and ultimately will succeed or fail (i.e., the relationship between teachers and students). It is also the question that lies at the essence and success of the professional development school concept.

The issue of "caring" offers a fresh perspective on how we might look at the issue of professionalism in general and the professionalization of teaching in particular. Caring invites us to look at professionalism not as a sterile organizational phenomenon, but as an artifact of relationships between human beings. Caring also provides us with new ground on which to examine just what the "knowledge base" of teaching is. The truly important knowledge that is produced in good teaching—and caring teaching—may be that knowledge that we do not

know, and cannot know, unless we are in the context in which it is created—the interaction between students and teachers. Caring as a perspective requires that we move our thinking on teacher professionalism "toward relational modes and a new emphasis on professional/client relationships" (Noddings 1989, 2).

Caring offers opportunities for discourse on the professionalization of teaching by providing a route to what Smyth (1987) calls the "deconstruction of relationships," and a better understanding of the relationships and interactions that occur in schools. A consideration of caring might also plant discussions of the professionalization of teaching in what teachers do, rather than in the currently rampant discussions of what teachers do not do.

Teaching requires connections between students and teachers, an intimacy. Such connections cultivate an interdependency between student and teacher, or as Gilligan says, "a view of self and other as interdependent and of relationships as networks created and sustained by attention and response" (1988, 8). Gilligan goes on to comment on the importance of caring:

> Being dependent, then, no longer means being helpless, powerless, and without control; rather, it signifies a conviction that one is able to have an effect on others, as well as the recognition that the interdependence of attachment empowers both the self and the other, not one person at the other's expense. The activities of care—being there, listening, the willingness to help, and the ability to understand—take on a moral dimension, reflecting the injunction to pay attention and not turn away from need. (16)

Teaching relies upon the generation of experiences that allows students to trust that teachers will be nurturing. The ability of the teacher to involve himself or herself in the child's world and in the child's success measures to some degree the existence of caring in the experiences that students and teachers share. Noddings claims that "the test of caring" partly lies in "whether the free pursuit of his projects is partly a result of the completion of my caring in him" (1987, 337).

Attention, response, and communication—both physical and verbal—come together in the construction of an atmosphere of care. This care exists in the experiences teachers share with their students, and they "know" it "through the experience of engagement with others" (Gilligan 1988, 17). This knowledge of care, constructed in the shared experiences of teachers and students, offers insight into a realm of teachers' knowledge rarely discussed in professionalization efforts, or in educational reform at all. This knowledge originates, develops, and emerges in the context of the experiences students and teachers share. And this knowledge can only be fully understood in the context of these experiences.

Belenky et al. (1986), in a discussion of women's ways of knowing about their worlds and experiences, offer "constructed knowledge" as one perspective of women's knowing. They refer to constructed knowledge as, "a position in which women view all knowledge as contextual, [and] experience themselves as creators of knowledge, and value both subjective and objective strategies for knowing" (15). Belenky et al. also describe "connected knowing" (1986, 101) as that form of knowing that rests upon an orientation toward relationships and conversation. Belenky et al. expand their discussion on knowing from work by Gilligan (1982) and Lyons (1983). Whereas Gilligan and Lyons speak of relationships between people, Belenky et al. include relationships between people and ideas or between knowers and known (Belenky et al. 1986, 102). This expanded definition reflects care as knowledge both constructed and connected—cultivated in the shared experiences of students and teachers. "Connected knowing builds on the subjectivists' conviction that the most trustworthy knowledge comes from personal experience rather than the pronouncements of authorities." "Truth" becomes that knowledge ". . . that is personal, particular, and grounded in firsthand experiences" (Belenky et al. 1986, 112–113; 113).

In the perspectives represented by Belenky et al., Gilligan, and Noddings, empathy plays a vital role in establishing care, and enhancing shared experiences between students and teachers. For teachers, coming to an understanding of the emotional, social, and psychological location of students enhances these shared experiences, in essence by sharing the students' locations. Connected knowers "learn how to get out from behind their own eyes, and use . . . the lens of another person" (Belenky et al. 1986, 115).

In constructed knowledge and connected knowing, "All knowledge is constructed, and the knower is an intimate part of the known" (Belenky et al. 1986, 137). Conversely, and appropriately, the known is a part of the knower and resides there. In the case of care for teachers, it resides as well with the students and in the experiences between teachers and students. And it places what teachers construct as knowledge on an important level:

> To see that all knowledge is a construction and that truth is a matter of the context in which it is imbedded is to greatly expand the possibilities of how to think about anything, even those things we consider to be the most elementary and obvious. Theories become not truth but models for approximating experience. (Belenky et al. 1986, 138)

Understanding and accepting the role that constructed knowledge and connected knowing play in teacher knowledge accords a "richness" to teachers' knowledge, and raises the value of their contribution to the "knowledge base" of teaching. If we can accept the importance of the shared experiences of teachers,

students, and others who have roles in schools in a meaningful way and we respect, those experiences as the source of teachers' constructed knowledge and connected knowing, then we remove some of the more "scientifically" based barriers to knowledge production and teacher empowerment. Teachers then, to some extent (and I believe to a great extent), can begin empowering themselves through the valuing of their contextual experiences and constructed knowledge.

To encourage this process and enhance the professionalization of teaching, we must rethink our definitions of professionalism, particularly from the standpoint of what we consider to be a "knowledge base" and how we expose fledgling teachers to a knowledge base. We must look to alternative perspectives of valuable teacher knowledge, professional-client relationships based on that knowledge, and resist embedding ourselves "in technical language and elitist hierarchies" simply for the sake of being "professional" (Pickle 1990, 73–74), and in the process, "going over the heads of those whom we teach" (Noddings 1986, 503) in the name of reform. This requires that those who wish to professionalize teaching resist the imposition of predominant models of professionalism, particularly those borrowed from medicine, where scientific methods distance professionals from clients (Gilligan and Pollock 1988; Noddings 1989). It also means that constructed teacher knowledge buttresses the knowledge base of teaching.

Fenstermacher, in his critique of professionalization efforts, claims that "the first characteristic of [the] uniqueness" of teaching as an aspiring profession is "the demand that the best practitioners remain closest to the learners" (1990, 146). He also makes the following argument:

> If those who argue for the professionalization of teaching have medicine and law as models for the transformation, serious difficulties for teaching lie ahead. The capacity of the teacher for moral development is seriously impaired by the kind of professionalization that is so rooted in expertise and skilled practice that it increases the distance between teacher and student, hides needed knowledge from the student, and places the student in the role of passive recipient of skilled treatment. (1990, 138)

As Noddings has suggested, education in many ways reflects issues that have arisen in law, nursing, and theology as models of human caring make their way into those arenas. Yet those models are yet to manifest themselves in any meaningful way in education. It may very well be that an important contribution that the discourse on caring can offer to the professionalization of teaching is to steer discussions in directions they might not have otherwise gone. What does it mean to be "professional" from the context of care? What do professional-client relationships mean from the context of care? The most significant role that caring plays in professionalization efforts in teaching may be to suggest to us

that we rethink the theoretical underpinnings of professionalism in general by looking at the everyday lives of people in particular. Noddings suggests that, "We rarely ask how things might be changed so that teachers can accomplish the work they see as teaching, nor do we ask what this work is . . . " (1986, 502)

Teacher Professionalism and Teacher Politics

Meyer and Rowan (1983) argue quite articulately that in order for organizations to survive, they must "institutionalize" the norms and expectations of the society in which they operate. This "isomorphic" relationship between organizations and society invests society in the organization.

Boreham makes a similar argument in saying that organizations must be understood within the total social context in which they operate:

Organizations are structural facticities but they represent only part of the wider structural facticity which constitutes the totality. Organizations are thus structural elements of a wider structure which they reflect and from which they derive their existence. (1983, 706)

Boreham goes on to argue that authority for professions is not just a matter of attaining legislative licensure and protection/insulation through state certification. For professions, authority is as much a matter of social and broad political acceptance as legislative acceptance (1983). Indeed, political acceptance, narrowly defined as state licensure, is not enough. The attainment of professional stature requires a more widespread and authentic sociopolitical acceptance.

Boreham's argument implies that at least part of the authority vested in professions originates not necessarily in what professions do, but in what society perceives professions to do. For vocations attempting to professionalize, such as teaching, this point cannot be treated lightly. Teaching has to pay particular attention to the symbols it offers the public considering the current negative status granted to teaching by the public.

Starr (1982) states that "power of the professions primarily originates in dependence upon their knowledge and competence" (4). When dealing with professions, the public tends to defer to this knowledge and competence, and we are left to conclude that society does not consider to be knowledgeable and competent those arenas to which it will not defer, or at least accept into the fold of professions.

Starr's analysis, because it comes from a *critical* perspective on the rise of the medical profession, offers lessons to which those who wish to make teaching a profession might attend. Starr places the development of medical professional authority in three contexts. One, Starr places medicine as a profession in its historical context, examining the actions, ideals, and interests involved in that

history. Two, he places medicine in a social and political context quite broader than medicine itself. Third, he places the rise of the medical profession's authority in the context of moving from the establishment of cultural authority (I will refer to this later) to market authority and power. This cultural authority cannot be understood outside the context of political economy, nor can medicine's political economic value be understood outside medicine's cultural authority (Starr 1982, 7–9).

When Starr speaks of authority, he branches into two types of authority, cultural authority and social authority. Social authority involves the giving of orders, rules, and regulations. Cultural authority, on the other hand, "entails the construction of reality through definitions of fact and value." Social authority resides in social actors, but cultural authority may reside in social actors, documents (religious texts, for example), standards of reference, scientific publications, and law (13). Significantly different from commands, cultural authority "also refers to the probability that particular definitions of reality and judgements of meaning and value will prevail as valid and true" (13).

Starr moves on from cultural authority to argue that professional authority becomes a type of "dependency condition" (15) where clients acquiesce to the competence of the professional, and this acquiescence is based in cultural authority. And part of the strength of this cultural authority, and clients' submission to it, originates in the professions' ability to develop and instill the belief in society that such submission is important. Starr points out that historically speaking, this trust is a relatively recent phenomenon for medicine, arising in this century. "Authority signifies the possession of a special status or claim that compels trust, and medicine lacked that compelling claim in nineteenth century America" (1982, 17). Prior to attaining that trust, society vested its trust in particular individuals rather than in medicine in general. Medical authority was personal authority and personally won. But by the middle of this century, that trust and authority had become general and a trust in the medical profession as well as individual doctors (19).

This discussion of sociopolitical authority and cultural authority brings to teacher professionalism an important component. If teaching is to professionalize, teaching as a vocation in this country will have to come to grips with where it is located in the psyche of authority in the American public. And this process will require an examination of teaching's political sense both inside teaching and out in the public.

Optimistically, this examination would reveal a level of professional autonomy that teachers may already have but do not articulate to each other or the public very well. To present itself to the public in a way that would cause the public to grant teaching symbolic status, teaching should rely on the very traits that so far have kept it from becoming a profession, its contextual knowledge base and the contextual nature of teaching.

Teachers would need to celebrate, for public consumption, the unique nature of the contextual base of teacher knowledge. This nature takes on a quite ironic character here, given that school is one of our most common cultural experiences. This ubiquity only adds strength to the contextual knowledge base, because it reinforces the notion that the knowledge exists in the experiences of schooling. And the best we can do is carry memories of those experiences away with us, the connection and construction of knowledge being left to another generation of teachers and children.

This necessitates getting the public "in" schools where they can come to a better understanding of the "legitimate complexity" (Soder 1990, 63) of teaching. Having the public "in" schools carries a literal and figurative meaning. Literally, of course, the public may be physically present in schools. Figuratively, the public can be brought into schools through teachers' articulation of what they do in their everyday lives. This requires on the part of teachers an opening up of themselves, an invitation to the public.

Teacher Professionalism and Professional Development Schools

Any attempts at transforming teaching into a profession will have to come to grips with the importance of the contextual nature of teacher knowledge. This contextuality is critical on two counts. One, the truly important knowledge upon which teachers base their practice on a day to day basis is generated in the shared experiences of schooling. Two, because this knowledge is contextual, and not "scientifically" derived, it fails the test of rigor associated with the knowledge base of other professions such as medicine. This failure demeans the status of teaching relative to ideal types of definitions.

For teacher professionalism as a unique situation, we must begin to ask not what knowledge privileges teaching, but how knowledge accords practitioners the ability to carry out their tasks. For teachers, this would seem to be, at least in part, the contextually constructed knowledge of their shared experiences of school.

By what process do we move teaching toward professionalism? The stories and lives presented in this volume suggest that we do so by turning our eyes toward teaching as a moral endeavor, what Fenstermacher defines as, "human action undertaken in regard to other human beings" (1990, 133). Fenstermacher argues that much of the same literature on the professionalization of teaching that I have critiqued here ignores the moral nature of teaching. "It is as if the moral dimensions of teaching were lost, forgotten about, or—to put the best possible light on the matter—simply taken for granted" (1990, 131–132).

The everyday lives of teachers give rise to the contextually constructed knowledge in which so much of teaching is based. As Carr states:

Once the language of teaching is construed as an ethical form of dis-
course, the division between professional knowledge and professional
practice begins to break down. Professional knowledge no longer appears
as an externally produced body of value-free theoretical knowledge but as
that implicitly accepted body of value-laden knowledge which teachers
use to make sense of their practice. On this view, teachers develop profes-
sionally by reflecting critically on their own tacit practical knowledge
rather than by applying theoretical knowledge produced by academic
experts. (1989, 11)

The knowledge that is most important for teaching, the contextually based
knowledge of the shared experiences that go on in classrooms and schools, gives
to teaching a status that scientific knowledge, rigorous training, and the best and
brightest people do not give it in and of themselves. The direction that we should
move in making teaching a profession is to highlight the human relationships
where teachers ground their everyday lives as professionals.

Noddings, in her call to examine the relationship between professionalism
and better education for children, has in essence raised the connection between
teacher professionalism and professional development schools. These questions
are nested in the claims for the power of context presented in this chapter, and
the chapters to come nest questions about the nature of professionalism in the
lives of educators in professional development schools. The educators to be
discussed have lived experiences that reflect the power of context, constructed
knowledge, relationships in schools, and how they are born out and enhanced in
professional development schools. These experiences include discussions of
new structures in schools, the exercise of constructing professional knowledge
and of putting that knowledge to use in classrooms, schools and professional
preparation programs, and of celebrating the uniqueness of the lives of teachers.
Themes that cut across these stories reflect many of the issues embedded in
teacher professionalism as discussed here—interdependence, connection, rela-
tionships, empathy, and understanding.

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