

'Advancing Professionalism in Teaching'? An exploration of the mobilisation of the concept of professionalism in the McCormac Report on the Review of Teacher Employment in Scotland

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ABSTRACT

The report of the recent review of teacher employment in Scotland, commonly known as 'the McCormac Report' was published in 2011. This article explores the conceptualisation of professionalism inherent in the Report. Using a critical discourse analysis approach we interrogate the text in relation to three key issues: professionalism; the notion of teacher 'flexibility'; and the extent to which economic pressures have driven the direction of the Report. The analysis suggests that the dominant form of professionalism being employed in the Report is managerial, and that there is little evidence of alternative conceptions. We conclude that while there is no explicit definition of professionalism in the text of the Report, there is some evidence of the concept being mobilised as a form of control over teacher behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

In January 2011 The Scottish Government invited Professor Gerry McCormac, Principal of the University of Stirling, to lead a review of the McCrone Agreement on teachers' pay and conditions (Scottish Government 2001). The Review team comprised seven members, and although the Report itself does not say how these members were selected, in response to an email enquiry, a Scottish Government civil servant replied that 'The members of the Review Group were simply selected by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning. Membership was not designed to be representative in nature (e.g. representing employers, teachers etc) and individuals were invited on the basis that the Cabinet Secretary believed they would make a valuable contribution to the process.' (Email communication, 10 October 2011).

In September 2011, 'Advancing Professionalism in Teaching: The Report of the Review of Teacher Employment in Scotland' was published (hereafter referred to as 'the Report'). The Report contains thirty four recommendations, clustered under the following headings:

- Twenty-First Century Teaching: A Profession Focused on Outcomes
- Development of the Profession
- Career Structure
- The School Week
- Pay/Job-sizing
- Other Staff in Schools
- Negotiating Machinery

In this article we examine the extent to which the explicit focus on 'advancing professionalism' in the title is progressed in the body of the Report. In so doing, we first outline what can be seen to be contrasting perspectives on professionalism; we then adopt a critical discourse analysis approach to examining the text of the Report, focusing in particular on instances in which 'professionalism' is discussed explicitly; we then move on to consider

how the concept of professionalism is mobilised in relation to discussion of 'flexibility'; and finally, we consider the potential conflict arising between professional and financial imperatives.

UNDERSTANDING PROFESSIONALISM

Discussion of professionalism in academic literature has moved considerably in recent times from its original focus on traditional sociological conceptions of what constitutes a 'profession' (for example, Downie 1990) to the recognition of the term as a much more multi-faceted, contested and political concept. Key questions troubling researchers in this area include: is professionalism a 'thing' (a definable and static state of being) or is it a process (dynamic and shifting)? Is professionalism owned by individual professionals or is it owned by the entire occupational group? Is professionalism something that provides strength, identity and a moral compass for an occupational group or is it something that can be used on or against the professional group as a means of exerting external influence and control?

Sachs' (2001) helpful distinction between democratic and managerial forms of professionalism suggests that it can lie somewhere along a spectrum where at the democratic end professionalism is a critical, politically engaged and proactive attempt to promote social justice through professional action, and at the managerial end it is understood within a business model where keywords include efficiency, targets, compliance and accountability. This spectrum reflects a move from an internally owned concept at the democratic end of the spectrum to an externally imposed concept at the managerial end. In some ways, despite arguing that conceptualising of professionalism has moved in recent years, the distinction between internally owned and externally imposed forms does relate to the co-existence of rights and responsibility advocated in early analyses of the concept. That is, traditional discussion which outlined characteristics of professionalism usually included reference to rights in terms of status and rewards and responsibilities towards individual 'clients' and society at large.

Whitty (2008) contributes to the discussion through what might be seen as an extension of Sachs' two-fold categorisation by suggesting a four-fold typology of teacher professionalism: traditional, managerial, collaborative and democratic, raising explicit questions about the location of professionalism within the individual or within the profession as a whole. Traditional professionalism refers to the original sociological definitions of professionalism which essentially comprised of lists of characteristics which applied to professions, including, for example, a prescribed body of knowledge gained through advanced education, subscription to a code of conduct and societal status and reward accruing to the position of 'professional' (see Crook 2008). The view of managerial professionalism that Whitty discusses is akin to that outlined by Sachs (2001) above, and encompasses a state controlled, business-influenced agenda focusing on targets, efficiency and performativity, hence serving to limit teacher autonomy. It is Whitty's (2008) final two categories, collaborative and democratic, that perhaps have most relevance to contemporary debate. Collaborative professionalism, according to Whitty, takes account of the growing emphasis on inter-professional working in schools, that is, the conception of child welfare services as a broader context than merely formal school education, and requires collaborative training and working amongst, for example, teachers, social workers, health workers and community workers. Whitty (ibid.) acknowledges that this emerging form of professionalism will not only require a shift in working practices but will also entail a 'considerable cultural shift' (p. 42). He identifies democratic professionalism as a distinct category, yet it seems inextricably linked to the notion of collaborative professionalism. His view of democratic professionalism aligns closely with Sachs' view, drawing on critical theory in seeing the democratic project as an enactment of principles of equity and social justice, and seeing teaching as an explicit means through which traditionally marginalised individuals and groups can be empowered. It is perhaps a moot point whether or not collaborative and democratic forms of professionalism can be seen as distinct categories rather than aspects of the same category, but they do clearly serve as distinct from a

traditional conception of professionalism and in direct opposition to a managerial conception.

Evans (2011) acknowledges that professionalism can be seen to encompass a broad range of ideas, summarising that in her reading of the literature it can be represented variously as:

a form of occupational control; a socially constructed and dynamic entity; a mode of social co-ordination; the application of knowledge to specific cases; the use of knowledge as social capital; a normative values system that incorporates consideration of standards, ethics and quality of service; the basis of the relationship between professionals and their clients or publics; a source of specific identity/ies; and a basis and determinant of social and professional status and power. (p. 854)

The above list, while perhaps not exhaustive, goes some way towards illustrating the complexity of the term, particularly given that the listed aspects are neither mutually exclusive, nor necessarily conceptually comparable.

It seems apparent, then, that the concept of professionalism is complex and can be used in multiple ways for multiple purposes. This forms a useful theoretical backdrop against which to analyse how the term is used within the specific context of the McCormac Report. More specifically, however, we seek to draw on Whitty's (2008) typology in analysing how the concept is used in the report. The four notions contained in Whitty's typology, namely: traditional, managerial, collaborative and democratic, are not in themselves discrete categories, rather they are ways of explaining the existence of particular manifestations of power, and in this sense present a useful framework within which to locate the analysis that we have carried out using a critical discourse analysis approach.

Evetts (2009: 20) draws a very useful distinction among the ideas of 'profession', 'professionalization' and professionalism':

'If the focus of analysis is shifted away from the concept of profession (as a distinct and generic category of occupational work) and professionalization (as the process to pursue, develop and maintain the closure of the occupational group) and towards the concept of professionalism, then different kinds of explanatory theory become apparent. Then the discourse of professionalism can be analysed as a powerful instrument of occupational change and social control at macro, meso and micro levels...'

Acknowledging that the concept of professionalism can be used as 'a powerful instrument of occupational change and social control' (ibid.) is central to the analysis in this paper.

APPROACH

The scrutiny of professionalism within the McCormac Report, as presented in this paper, adopts a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach. It is important to stress that CDA is much more an approach than a specific methodology. Indeed, acknowledgement of the importance of the existence and power of different discourses is fundamental, as MacLure (2003: 12) contends:

'A discourse-oriented educational research would attend to the multiplicity of meanings that attach to (and divide) the people, spaces, objects and furniture that comprise its focus – the teachers, children, classrooms, textbooks, policy documents - and to the passion and the politics that are inevitably woven into these meanings.'

If we accept that discourses are ways of sharing meaning in particular contexts or institutions, and that these discourses are worthy of investigation, then we need to

distinguish between simple discourse analysis which might identify similarity and difference between and across discourses, and *critical* discourse analysis, which necessitates explicit recognition of issues of power and inequality mediated through discourse. van Dijk (2001: 253) claims that critical discourse analysis ‘focuses on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of *power* and *dominance* in society (emphasis in original)’. So, implicit in a CDA approach is a sense of political engagement with the subject and context.

The aim of this paper is to explore and analyse how the discourse of professionalism is employed within the McCormac Report, and to seek to identify how regimes of power are channelled through such discourse; a CDA approach therefore seems entirely appropriate. In terms of the actual methods adopted, three key themes have been identified within the Report: explicit reference to professionalism, the use of the term ‘flexibility’ in relation to the concept of professionalism, and the relationship between matters of finance and concepts of professionalism. Key terms were identified and searched for in the text: professionalism; flexibility; and finance/ budget/ money/ economic. Each appearance of the key terms was then analysed in context and considered in relation to notions of professionalism. The scrutiny of each of these three themes is now considered in turn.

EXPLORING ‘PROFESSIONALISM’ IN THE REPORT

The word ‘professionalism’ appears thirteen times in the Report, including in the title. Of these thirteen mentions, nine arguably imply a deficit view. That is, the Report appeals for more, or greater, professionalism using terms such as:

‘advancing professionalism’ (title and p. 8);
‘enhance professionalism’ (pp. 4, 7, 19 & 52);
‘reinvigorated professionalism’ (p. 6);
‘extended professionalism’ (p. 11); and
‘increased professionalism’ (p. 52).

The use of such terminology suggests a view that teachers are not currently professional enough, or are not professional in the ‘right’ ways. What the Report does not do, however, is to articulate explicitly what constitutes professionalism, making it difficult to assess whether individual teachers or the profession as a whole are indeed ‘professional enough’. The Report does allude to holding a view of professionalism when it states that although it supports the view that ‘teachers should use opportunities, such as holiday periods, to engage in high quality CPD activity’ that ‘... in line with our view of professionalism, we do not believe that this should be made a contractual requirement at this time’...’ (p. 20). So, while professing to hold a view on professionalism, that view is not made explicit; rather, readers are left to extrapolate for themselves. In the context of this particular utterance it would appear that the term professionalism is being used as a bargaining tool: positioning the review group’s view as being supportive of teachers, while actually delivering a message that teachers should be using their own holiday time to engage in CPD. Indeed, it could conceivably be considered to be a veiled threat that if teachers do not behave in sufficiently professional ways, that the possibility of making CPD engagement during holidays a contractual requirement could become real.

The choice of title – ‘Advancing professionalism in teaching’ – is particularly significant, and begs a range of questions such as: Who is advancing professionalism? What conception of professionalism is being advanced? Why does professionalism need to be advanced at this particular time? While for many readers the title may not seem important, it nonetheless provides a subtle message about how the writers want the Report to be received. We illustrate this by proposing two alternative titles that appear to us to be sensible given the contents and context of the Report:

'Advancing teaching' – if we delete the 'professionalism' aspect does it make a substantive difference, or merely a semantic one? It could be argued that the insertion of the word professionalism in the title makes an implicit moral appeal to teachers to accept the contents of the Report; after all, surely it is not professional to object to the advancement of professionalism? This illustrates a very subtle, but powerful, use of the term professionalism as an instrument of control in the way that Evetts (2009) above highlights, or as Hargreaves and Goodson (1996: 20) so eloquently put it when they suggested that professionalism could be viewed as 'a rhetorical ruse – a way to get teachers to misrecognize their own exploitation and to comply willingly with increased intensification of their labour in the workplace'. Indeed, one of the other instances of professionalism in the Report itself illustrates this conception of professionalism in a particularly blunt way:

We believe that the quality of the teaching profession is paramount and the capacity for schools and local authorities to utilise professionalism in a flexible manner will ensure the best possible educational outcomes for our children and young people. (p. 52).

The idea that professionalism can be 'utilised' by schools and local authorities in a 'flexible manner' implies a very explicit and intentional attempt at using the concept of professionalism to impose control over teachers and their work. This is a clear and unambiguous example of a managerial conception of professionalism; one where to be professional is to be compliant.

'Maintaining professionalism in times of economic austerity' – this version of the title would, in our view, represent a more honest acceptance of the contextual constraints within which the review was commissioned. Indeed, in his 'Comment from the Chair' Professor McCormac acknowledges that:

Teachers, employers and trade unions hold strong views about issues raised by the Review, and acknowledge that the financial context within which it has taken place is challenging. Local authority budgets are shrinking, a new curriculum is being implemented and wider changes to the way in which public services will be delivered are being considered. (Scottish Government 2011: iii).

This explicit acknowledgement, while perhaps more accurate, seems inconsistent with the actual choice of title which implies a much more principled and educationally based rationale for the instigation of the Review, rather than the reality of the somewhat pragmatic and responsive rationale as suggested by the above comment.

So, one reading of the Report would be that the conception of professionalism which is being advanced is very much a managerial one, in response to increasingly tightening budgets. There are few, if any, examples of a democratic conception of professionalism being promoted explicitly within the Report. That said, there is reference to the drive for improvement in Scottish education being stimulated by the desire to close the gap between the lowest performing pupils and the average. Reference is made on page 4 to the oft-quoted phrase in the 2007 OECD country report on Scotland: 'In Scotland, who you are is far more important than what school you attend' (OECD 2007: 15). However, despite setting the scene in this way, the text of the Report does not embrace a democratic conception of professionalism. Perhaps the nearest it gets to issues of diversity and social justice is in relation to the desire to fulfil the demands of Curriculum for Excellence:

Full realisation of the potential of Curriculum for Excellence can only be achieved through the professionalism of teachers, working as leaders of the educational process, engaging with others who can contribute to the diverse educational and social needs of children and young people. (p. 7).

While acknowledging the need for teachers to work with a diverse range of children's needs, the central focus here is on the implementation of CfE rather than taking an explicit

social justice stance as the primary motivation. Thus, we conclude that from the instances of 'professionalism' contained in the Report there is good evidence of a managerial conception being promoted and little evidence of democratic or collaborative professionalism even being considered.

'FLEXIBILITY' AS AN INDICATOR OF PROFESSIONALISM?

The Review claims to be focused on raising professional standards to develop educational outcomes for Scottish pupils. One 'challenge' that the Review faced in furthering this aim was to '...enable necessary efficiency and flexibility' (p. 6). It is interesting that the first use of the term 'flexibility' in the Report is linked alongside 'efficiency', setting the notion of flexibility within an efficiency savings framework. Thus, when the Report states, '...we make our recommendations on the basis of the considered assessment of the evidence we have received' (p. iii), it implies that the recommendations have been established through the gathering of evidence and not as a direct response to the current challenging financial context. However, when in section 8 the Report states, 'Our recommendations in this area, it must be emphasised, are not driven by potential financial savings' (p. 45), this perhaps suggests that the previous recommendations, up to and including this point, have been made with financial savings in mind. We contend, therefore, that the context within which 'flexibility' has been used throughout the Report should be considered in relation to the aim of securing efficiency savings. We consider the influence of the financial context in greater detail later in the article.

Flexibility within the teaching profession is not a new concept. Indeed, the Report highlights the McCrone Report's view of flexibility as, '...essential and vital to the future of education in Scotland' (p. 7). However, flexibility can be used to imply different things, and the Report suggests that McCrone's vision was not sufficiently structured into existing teachers' terms and conditions. As such, the subsequent recommendations outlined in the McCromac report argue for a greater need for teacher flexibility in order to deliver educational outcomes for Scottish pupils. However, if we consider the statement, 'Twenty-First Century Teaching: A Profession Focused on Outcomes' (p. 54) it might be inferred that the Review's central focus was on teacher accountability in performing efficiently in response to set targets. This managerial approach to teacher professionalism could be at odds with one key aspect of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) – the learning and teaching *experience*. By ignoring the word 'experience' the Report arguably implies that a teacher's main focus is to deliver measurable results. Therefore, instead of offering flexibility for teachers to enact their professionalism as appropriate to their specific contexts, the Report focuses its lens on accountability related to externally defined outcomes. Arguably, then, the flexibility factor is to be deployed by teachers' employers rather than to be enacted by teachers themselves in ways that might be consistent with a democratic approach to professionalism.

This concept of flexibility is illustrated through one aspect of the Report which may have the most significant impact on the working lives of teachers: the recommendation for a flexible approach to working hours. The Report recognises that it is not unusual for teachers to work in excess of 40 hours per week and recommends that the annual class contact time should remain at 855 hours. However, the use of, '...a flexible professional approach clearly allied to positive outcomes for children and young people...' (p. 34) suggests that the Report is using the word 'professional' in order to beguile teachers into agreeing to the proposed change to working hours: the implicit assumption being that if teachers do not support this change then they are not being professional. Again, the semantic use of the word 'professional' is significant here, as the phrase would arguably work equally well without the word 'professional' in it. Its inclusion here suggests an ideological conception of professionalism linked to matters of control (Smyth 2000).

In pursuit of greater flexibility, the Report makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 31: The involvement of external experts in the delivery of teacher-led school education should be facilitated. Schools should be encouraged to draw on appropriately skilled individuals to enhance the learning of pupils. Headteachers should determine whether these individuals may work directly with a class on their own.

Recommendation 32: The GTCS should develop a validation process to assist local authority schemes for the involvement of specialists who can contribute to positive learning outcomes for pupils.
(Scottish Government 2011: 46)

The deployment of 'appropriately skilled', but non-teacher qualified individuals in the classroom would undoubtedly lead to increased flexibility, but it is important also to consider what this move might say about teacher professionalism, particularly in relation to teacher status; status being an important aspect of traditional perspectives on professionalism (Downie 1990; Whitty 2008).

The idea of increased flexibility in this instance is arguably managerial flexibility, driven by economic imperatives. If the rationale were simply educational then it would make sense for the teacher to be present with the 'external experts' in order to facilitate learning. In the context of these recommendations, flexibility appears to be a tool designed to exert greater efficiency savings: it is difficult to see how this move could be considered to be 'advancing professionalism', particularly in relation to democratic and traditional conceptions of professionalism.

If flexibility is to be considered to be central to advancing professionalism, then why, despite the report stressing that the vast majority of teachers are hard-working and dedicated professionals (p. 36), does recommendation 23 argue for teachers to remain within school during the pupil day even if they are not engaged in direct class contact? The Report proposes that, '...sensible flexibility within a school – that does not detract from the core educational role of the teacher – should be the norm...' (p. 14), but this raises a number of questions, namely: who gets to exercise such flexibility; who will decide if a member of staff is being suitably flexible; and who decides which duties distract individual teachers from undertaking their core educational role? The Report provides little by way of compelling evidence that the recommendations relating to increased flexibility will lead logically to improved pupil outcomes. Rather, the notion of flexibility is a response to increasingly challenging financial contexts. We now move on to explore the extent to which financial imperatives might be seen to be the key driver for the Review and examine the resulting implications in relation to conceptions of professionalism.

FINANCE: THE REAL DRIVER?

The McCormac Report states clearly, both in the title and in the body of the Report, that "Advancing Professionalism in Teaching" is the goal of this review" (p. 8). The thirty four recommendations made in the Report claim to be seen as 'recommendations to enhance professionalism in teaching in ways which ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people' (p. 4). The Report asserts that 'many of our recommendations propose change related to increased professionalism,' whilst those recommendations which do not have the direct aim of raising the bar of professionalism, at least serve to 'support existing practice' (p. 52). With such clear emphasis on the notion of professionalism and its advancement, it could be expected that much of the Report might deal with issues central to the concept of professionalism such as pedagogical expertise, knowledge of curriculum development and 'critical reflection on practice and classroom based research' (Pring 2011: 12). Such an expectation would accord with characterisations of professionalism such as that put forward by Pollard (2010: 2):

'The practice of teaching framed and informed by a shared and structured body of knowledge. This knowledge comprises experience, evidence, understanding moral purposes and shared transparent values. It is by progressively acquiring such

knowledge and mastering the expertise...that teachers are entitled to be treated as professionals.'

However, on closer inspection of the main body of the Report, contrary to expectations, it is difficult to identify specific engagement with such essential components of professionalism. Instead, what close examination of the Report reveals is a substantial and detailed discussion of matters related, both directly and indirectly, to issues of finance. The main body of the Report, excluding preliminaries and summarised recommendations, is comprised of ten sections. Each section contains various numbered points, totalling 140 points overall. Of these 140 points, 44 make direct and explicit reference to finance. This direct discussion of financial concerns ranges from general speculation over 'the issue of affordability', 'spending priorities' (p. 8), 'education budgets' (p. 11), 'budgetary control' (p. 28) and 'financially straitened times' (p. 44), through to more specific matters such as 'Perceived anomalies in pay', 'Salary conservation' (p. 27), 'teacher grade' (p.26) and 'measures to control costs' (p.52). However, in addition to what can be termed as explicit or primary discourse pertaining directly to financial concerns, as noted in the above points, much of the Report is also concerned with what might be termed secondary discourse, whereby, although there is little direct reference made towards economic issues, there is, nonetheless, a clear financial agenda apparent in the discussion.

For example, although certain sections of the Report appear to deal, at least prima facie, with the day to day organisation of teachers and schools, there appear to be underlying concerns of a more financial nature. Section 6, which is entitled 'The School Week' (p. 33), makes no direct reference throughout its 16 points to financial concerns. However, it is clear from the very nature of such a discussion which involves examining the 'working week' and in particular, one which scrutinises the number of hours teachers should work – prescribing precise numbers of class contact hours – that an extremely robust subtext involving financial matters such as pay and resources underpins this entire section of the Report. This is made explicit in the Report's treatment of the 'contracted 35 hour working week for teachers' in comparison to the findings of the Bell Report (2011), which states that 'it is not uncommon for teachers to work well in excess of 40 hours per week' (Scottish Government 2011: 34). What is of particular interest here is the fact that the Report puts forward this evidence from a report commissioned explicitly for the Review, which is inauspiciously entitled 'Pay and Conditions of Scottish Teachers: Recent Evidence'. Indeed, one wonders why Section 6, which deals with the 'working week for all teachers' (p. 34) makes no direct or explicit reference to financial considerations. This begs the question: what exactly is the main purpose of the Review. Is it, as stated in the title, to advance professionalism or is it to advance a financial agenda? An unequivocal answer to this question can be found in 2.4, Section 2 of the Review entitled 'The Review in Context' where it states:

'As part of the recent spending review agreement with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), an independent Review of Teacher Employment in Scotland was set up (this Review) in January by Michael Russell, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning' (p. 10).

The Report also goes on to add that the main purpose of Review is to act 'As part of the recent spending review agreement' (p. 10). We suggest, therefore, that a more candid, albeit incongruous, title for the Report would perhaps read: 'Advancing Professionalism in Teaching: A Spending Review'. A more open, honest and accurate one still, would simply read: 'Teachers' Pay and Conditions: A Spending Review'. To what extent then, can the concept of professionalism be viewed as a political lever, used to mask the main objective of the Review, that of reviewing spending?

A good example of the incongruity of the title, 'Advancing Professionalism' in relation to the recommendations being put forth in the Report relates to the recommendation that 'the Chartered Teacher Scheme should be discontinued' (p. 30). In 2009 the Scottish Government published a review of the Chartered Teacher Scheme in which it stated that

'The Chartered Teacher is an accomplished innovative teacher who demonstrates sustained enhanced expertise in practice. The Chartered Teacher embraces and actively promotes the values, principles and practices of equality and social justice in all areas of work.' (Scottish Government 2009: 1). Such a position appears very much to capture the sort of democratic concept of professionalism put forward by Sachs (2001), Whitty (2008) and by Eade (2011: 49), who states that: 'An enhanced professionalism will depend on teachers being prepared and encouraged to base their pedagogy on a well thought-through and evidence-informed approach and being trusted to exercise professional judgement.'

What appears in the McCormac Report, however, seems to convey a much more managerial, and indeed narrow, conception of professionalism. The Report begins discussion of Chartered Teachers in the following way: 'In response to concern that there were too few opportunities for career progression for teachers who wished to remain in the classroom, a new chartered teacher grade was introduced.' (p. 26). The contrast between the purpose of the Chartered Teacher put forward in the McCormac Report with that of the vision of the scheme presented by the Scottish Government could hardly be more stark. Talk of professional values, knowledge and understanding, commitment and expertise is replaced in the Report with a 'concern that there were too few opportunities for career progression' (p. 26) - the term 'concern' being vaguely connotative of 'nagging complaint'. Rather than viewing the Chartered Teacher Scheme as a 'Standard', the Report refers to it simply as a 'grade' (p. 26), which implies 'grade of pay' or 'salary grade', and relates clearly to financial imperatives.

The McCormac Report's recommendation to discontinue the Chartered Teacher Scheme appears not only to promote a market-driven agenda but also appears to be based on woolly, and in places contradictory, reasoning. In the Section entitled 'Development of the Professional' the Report cites: 'a report by McKinsey (2010) 'How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better' [which] suggests that higher skill levels produce more innovative, motivated and fulfilled professionals' (p. 19). This sentiment is echoed throughout the Report where it is stated that 'teachers must be able to...develop their skills as their careers develop' (p. 7) and that 'improving teacher quality and enhancing the sense of professional purpose in teaching is a better indicator of improved outcomes for children' (p. 8). The Report later describes the Chartered Teacher Scheme as being created for teachers 'to engage in a robust, self-funded continuous professional development programme' (p. 29) and appears to express some praise for 'the excellent practice we are sure some chartered teachers bring to schools' (p. 30). However, these views seem to be at odds with the Report's main reason for recommending discontinuation of the scheme, namely, that the Chartered Teacher Scheme has shown 'no improved outcomes for children and young people' (p. 29). It is worth looking closely at the reasons and/or evidence the Report provides in support of this statement: 'While we received evidence that demonstrated the commitment and professionalism of many chartered teachers, the widely held view is that the existing cohort of chartered teachers does not singularly represent the best teachers in Scotland.' (p. 29). There are at least two formal fallacies involved in this line of reasoning. Notwithstanding the vague and unsubstantiated nature of the 'evidence' in question and the quixotic appeal of the expression 'widely held view,' it seems a bizarre strategy of argument and persuasion to weigh an immeasurable 'widely held view' against actual 'evidence' and come out in favour of the former. Supposing there to be tangible evidence that many chartered teachers are committed and professional; are we then to accept on the basis of, say, staffroom hearsay, that because many people in the staffroom believe that some of the many chartered teachers who are committed and professional are not the best teachers, then it must be the case that some of the many chartered teachers who are committed and professional are not the best teachers? Given the fallacious nature of this reasoning it seems surprising that the Report should then reach the conclusion that: 'The available evidence does not show that the 'best' teachers have remained in the classroom rather than pursuing promoted posts.' (p. 30). It is worth drawing on Reeves' (2009) contention that Chartered Teachers are problematic for some in the education system as they have carved out a new professional space which does not always sit easily alongside more traditional

notions of teacher professionalism. She warns that they 'assert a form of professionalism which is in marked contrast to educational operationalism' (p. 110), highlighting the potential conflict between managerial and democratic or collaborative enactments of professionalism.

Our contention that the McCormac Report conveys a managerial concept of professionalism driven and controlled by a financial agenda is further illustrated through the statement that: 'We have sought to make recommendations that...provides the taxpayer with value for money.' (p. 8). Some twenty years ago, Downie (1990: 12) perceptively warned of the dangers posed by following such a narrowly fixed managerial conception of teacher professionalism:

'the search for the 'best deal' by professionals and clients will destroy both the professional relationship and the independence of the professions...it will lead to a search for commercially-led funding, to cost-cutting and subservience to non-educational values...These dangers do exist and are a threat to teaching considered as a profession.'

CONCLUSIONS

In exploring the mobilisation of the concept of professionalism in the McCormac Report, we contend that while some superficial appeal is made to notions of democratic or collaborative professionalism, the body of the text and resulting recommendations imply clear subscription to a managerial conception of professionalism.

The semantic importance of the terms 'professionalism' and 'flexibility' in the Report should not be underestimated, and it is important that such terms are interrogated in ways that serve to expose the underlying conceptualisations and the resulting implications for the lived experience of teachers and pupils. This is particularly important when we consider what Evetts (2009: 22) has to say about the implications for (professional) workers when professionalism is constructed from above, as opposed to being negotiated from within the profession:

When the discourse [of professionalism] is constructed 'from above', then often it is imposed and a false or selective discourse is used to promote and facilitate occupational change (rationalization)... This discourse is grasped and welcomed by the occupational group since it is perceived to be a way of improving the occupation's status and rewards, collectively and individually.

She goes on to warn that the reality of this situation is that external control is consolidated, and control from within the professional group is quashed. In the context of the teaching profession in Scotland, this situation seems particularly ill-suited to the espoused aims of the Curriculum for Excellence, a context which is acknowledged in the McCormac Report as being central to the Review, and one in which success will rely on having innovative, autonomous and intellectually engaged teachers.

We appear, then, to be presented with a series of contradictions: a desire to 'advance professionalism', yet no explicit statement of what professionalism means; a need for creative, innovative and autonomous teachers to fulfil the aims of Curriculum for Excellence, yet a set of recommendations which support a managerial approach to teacher professionalism; a societal context in which inter-professional endeavours to improve children's services - Whitty's (2008) notion of collaborative professionalism - are increasing in prominence, yet a Report which treats the teaching profession in a vacuum; a title which appeals to advancing professionalism, yet a text, and sub-text, which respond primarily to financial imperatives.

Menter (2009: 221) observes that 'the deep irony of these processes of curtailing the independence and autonomy of teachers is that they are usually presented within a discourse of "professionalization"'. In highlighting the apparent contradictions in the McCormac Report we appeal to readers, to stakeholders involved in implementing the

recommendations, and most importantly to those impacted on by the reform suggested in the Report, to interrogate the overall policy trajectory and to be sceptical and critical of claims about means of enhancing professionalism.

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