

Chapter 11

Towards Professional Ownership

Introduction

This chapter consolidates the conclusions about evaluation and professional development derived from the qualitative and quantitative analysis in this research. It also addresses from these conclusions the impact of the standards analysis being conducted in Tasmania, because this development alone could dramatically alter the evaluation environment and undermine progress towards reflective evaluation. Based on the negative feelings already manifested by some teachers who have never experienced evaluation, as well as the established mistrust generated by the appraisal system in Case Study School 4, it is suggested that reforming professional development in the first instance may represent a more productive means of advancing the cause of professional evaluation of pedagogy. The establishment of a professional body of teachers, independent of schools and sectors but in association with the University of Tasmania, could establish an environment to both enhance the professional profile of teaching and allow the development of accredited post-graduate recognition of classroom pedagogy focussed research.

Evaluation in Tasmania

Results of the state wide survey conducted in this research indicate that not only is evaluation a minority activity in Tasmania, with a participation rate of around 20%, but also that enhancement of teaching practice is not its principal aim. Existing evaluation practices are not defined in pedagogical terms but rather seek to fulfil organisational or promotional requirements. The figures suggest that, after a surge of 26.7% in the 21-25 year age range, probably associated with allocation of tenure, there is minimal evaluation again until above 35 years of age, possibly corresponding with advanced skills certification or promotion. More significantly, up to 70% of teachers may never have been evaluated formally in their professional careers. Where evaluation by superiors was practised, it generally appeared to be fair and respectful, conducted with professionalism, and focussed on teachers' work. Notably, the state wide survey revealed that, even in evaluations directed to tenure and promotion, teachers were still motivated to reflect on their pedagogy. The extent and persistence of such reflection cannot be gauged, but these teacher responses suggest that merely pausing to reflect in any evaluation environment may have some beneficial effects on teaching practice.

The more detailed analysis of individual responses in Case Study Schools 1-3 revealed that evaluation, as currently practised as a selection tool in the form of appraisal by superiors, reinforced the successful teacher, but could alienate other staff to both the particular school procedure, and perhaps evaluation in general. In the case of those failing to achieve promotion, evaluation was associated with unfair judgements about their pedagogy or suitability for advancement. This negative impact appeared to be accentuated when other teachers were seen to advance without evaluation, suggesting that it was not essential for promotion. Consequently, unsuccessful teachers suspected not just that evaluation had damaged their career prospects, but also that it was applied inconsistently and unequally at the behest of the school administration.

In Case Study School 4, the only school with an active evaluation system not directed primarily towards promotion, questions of trust, the intrusion of personal factors, and procedures for redress, as well as concerns regarding the capabilities and suitability of the evaluator, caused over half of the respondents to express reservations with the system. Such feelings were sourced in the opinion of around half of the teachers in this school that the evaluation process was owned by the hierarchy and applied through it primarily for organisational purposes, evidenced by use of terms such as *employees*. Despite this, teachers in this school also were motivated to reflect on their practice, even the very hostile Teacher 4O. This may say more about teachers' willingness to actually reflect on pedagogy given the right environment and motivation, rather than the evaluation process conducted in this particular school. Because there was no guidance or direction in the school's evaluation documentation about the areas of pedagogy to be covered, there were significant variations between teacher responses to the list of pedagogical inputs proposed in the survey instrument. This variation suggests the absence of any serious and systematic discussions of teaching practice. Teacher responses may thus have indicated what teaching issues they thought were, or expected should be, covered in the evaluation.

Even if the intention of School 4 was to enhance the quality of teaching, the absence of a clear pedagogical focus in the documentation, organisational ownership of the evaluation process, and teacher distrust, created a combination of factors that probably undermined any such intention. In the survey responses, teachers who felt successful, and strongly supported the evaluation process and the school, also considered they were performing well. However, such views may have resulted from reward perceptions based on organisational conformity and compliance behaviours. Such feelings of success could obscure issues of teaching practice.

Thus, the potential existed for a downward spiral of poor teaching being countered by increased compliance and conformity behaviours. If subsequently confronted with shortfalls in pedagogy, such teachers could deny their problems in the face of previous certifications of success by the school evaluation process. In a similar fashion, the primacy of the organisational focus in School 4's evaluations may also have thwarted any reflection on pedagogy as teachers, concerned at ensuring their organisational survival, put evaluation out of their minds for another year.

Despite appraisal systems having the secondary effect of encouraging teachers to reflect, this appears to be limited in depth and transitory in duration, and not necessarily to generate classroom improvements. This may result partly from the distrust and suspicion that organisational factors and procedural weaknesses generate, but probably also flows from the evaluation not translating into professional development designed to enhance both teacher capabilities and student outcomes. Meanwhile, teacher feelings of distrust and avoidance are generated by the fear of exposure, or simply as a consequence of the desire to protect oneself from what is perceived as an intrinsically hostile event. Where there is no evaluation, teachers appear to assume that the absence of any validation of their practice is the normal state of affairs. This research suggests that Tasmanian teachers are not initiating any independent self-monitoring activity. It is simply not in the duty statement; a mentality perhaps more appropriate to process workers rather than professionals.

The review of the evaluation system in Case Study School 4 was particularly useful for this research, in that it raised doubts that teachers could expect any progressive changes to evaluation practices within the current school system. School 4 essentially restated its accountability procedures and revealed a lack of awareness of, or sensitivity to, the failure of its previous evaluation process to change either teacher practices or student learning. The reasons for this are unclear, but may reside as a characteristic of the bureaucratic, hierarchical system of modern schooling being unable to acknowledge that alternate methods of enhancing teacher performance may exist other than increased surveillance and control. In portraying itself as a revision and advance in evaluation practices, the review undertaken in School 4 potentially reinforced a system that was failing to improve teaching and learning. This suggests that, for teachers themselves to orient evaluation towards greater professionalism, and to accept responsibility for monitoring their own work practices, they may have to move beyond current procedures and structures.

Students in most case study schools failed to see evidence of changes brought about by evaluation practices. Only School 4 involved the students in evaluation. However, this was restricted to the formal evaluation conducted every four years, so that student consultation would have been infrequent and unusual. Furthermore, teachers motivated by the need to produce evidence of having completed the surveys as an evaluation requirement would likely seek to mask weakness rather than derive objectives for pedagogical improvement from student comment.

Teacher perceptions of the success of their current practices appeared to be underpinned by an absence of open and honest daily classroom dialogue about teaching and learning. Students in other case study schools were well aware of the shortfalls of certain teaching approaches. Attempts to convey this to senior teachers were often ignored, dismissed, or, in some cases, resulted in disciplinary responses. The example of Student 7 in Case Study School 3, where he was sent to the office for saying that he 'didn't get it', is illustrative. This student was making an extremely important statement: he didn't understand. How he said it was the problem. His inability to adequately convey his frustration to this teacher meant that the learning issue was subsumed beneath issues of respect and control. Student 7 acknowledged in the discussion that he could have expressed himself in a better and nicer way. Admission by other students of planned disruptive behaviour directed at teachers whose methods were disliked suggests that Student 7's case was not unique, and that disrespect or open criticism may often underpin student concerns about their learning. A convergence of such concerns, as mentioned by students in Case Study School 2, could be the source of at least some class misbehaviours as students transmit their collective opinion on teaching through the only means available to them. This research identified students who were both interested and willing to participate in serious dialogue about their learning with teachers. However the school system placed them in a position of subservient weakness. This was in accord with a recent British study which also found that students

talked constructively about what did, did not and could help their learning...They did not...use the opportunity to make complaints...They seemed to value the opportunity to reflect and to talk seriously about what helped them to learn (McIntyre et al. 2005, p.152).

Dismissive staff statements, such as 'Some teachers are better than others' in Case Study School 3, in response to student complaints about the practices of certain teachers, may in fact reinforce disruption and disobedience as the only communication option available to students.

School classroom control measures that are deployed to support a teacher who is seen as lacking in classroom management skills may focus on the symptom instead of the cause, and by superior pressure reinforce the agenda of control ahead of learning. Meanwhile, in the staffroom and senior teachers' offices, it is less likely that the teacher in question would be seen as failing to promote understanding. Rather, they could be viewed as lacking 'control', and thus might need to attend a classroom 'management' course. The students in question, meanwhile, can be labelled as unruly or disrespectful, a 'bad lot', and so on. As Elmore pointed out:

When the core technology of schools is buried in the individual decisions of classroom teachers and buffered from external scrutiny, outcomes are the consequence of mysterious processes that no one understands at the collective, institutional level. Therefore, school people and the public at large are free to assign causality to whatever their favourite theory suggests: weak family structures, poverty, discrimination, lack of aptitude, peer pressure, diet, television, etc (Elmore 2000, p.9).

Perhaps most insidious is the fact that, beneath the subliminal message that they are alone in the classroom, and expected to define teaching reality in what has previously been referred to as a "sink or swim" situation, new teachers can interpret success in mastering the demands of the classroom as the senior teacher not coming in to restore order or underpin their authority. Achievement can translate not into quality *learning* but effective *control*, something that the students themselves acknowledged in the case study interviews as characteristic of a good teacher. Teachers thus can come to equate *controlled* classroom situations with positive student outcomes, or at least minimal threat to themselves. As the teacher has fulfilled their part of the bargain by establishing a *learning* (read *controlled*) environment and providing the course content, the responsibility for success or failure thereafter can be relegated to the student and the various external factors impacting on their performance (Elmore 2000, p.9). Consequently, teachers can become focussed not on pedagogy and understanding, but on achieving a balance where the class is reasonably quiet and cooperative and senior teachers do not become involved. Those who have achieved this balance may have no reason to question their practice, because they have achieved what works for them, and are delivering prescribed content in an approved fashion. They can feel they are successful and doing a good job within the intimated parameters of the school.

The lack of pupil consultation is not unique to Tasmania. McIntyre, Pedder and Rudduck (2005) found the same in British schools. Any consideration of teaching standards and

evaluation should not ignore the students for whom the school exists, or as these researchers stated 'It cannot be claimed that schooling is primarily intended to benefit pupils if pupils' own views about what is beneficial to them are not actively sought and attended to' (McIntyre et al. 2005, p.150). If student learning is the focus of the classroom, then open communication between student and teacher about the success of approaches and strategies would appear sensible, as would the establishment of effective procedures for students to communicate their individual needs, since it is those that the teacher serves. The absence of such communication will perpetuate outbursts like Student 7 in Case Study School 3, as well as the requirement for senior teacher supervision and support of failing classrooms.

The displacement of such control by learning for understanding can only occur when students, such as those interviewed in this research, feel able honestly and freely to communicate their learning needs, and have them attended to. However, the problem is that, whilst control remains the agenda, the conduit for communication remains diminished. Nevertheless, this research suggests that, in order to make the transition to better and honest communication with students about their needs, teachers should be increasingly confident and secure in themselves as professionals, and focus on their pedagogical effectiveness rather than bureaucratic function. This requires individual change in a mutually supportive and non-judgemental framework, something that cannot occur in an isolated and distrustful environment. The British study (2005) demonstrated that teachers who listened to students did not just accept their suggestions, but were motivated to develop and synthesise such suggestions into improved teaching behaviours (McIntyre et al. 2005, p.159).

The issue of communication is not restricted to that between teachers and students. If teachers were acting independently of the appraisal systems, and reflecting on their own practice, one could expect to see regular evidence of consultation with, and observation of, fellow teachers. This is because professional colleagues would be the first avenue of assistance and support. However, this research suggests that such open and frank interchange of pedagogy does not occur. Rather, teacher isolation appears to remain a norm in Tasmanian schools. The reported rates in the state wide survey of being observed at 24.5%, and observing others at 33.3%, may well decline further if classroom control observations referred to by the students in the case studies, student teacher practicum, and promotion appraisal related observations, were factored into the data. Addition of the further revelation that around one third of all teachers, and more in the younger teacher range, rarely meet formally with others to discuss and plan curriculum, strongly suggests that teachers are not participating in the type of activities and dialogue that

would characterise a profession that is open, interactive, and truly responsible for its own performance standards.

A low level of reflective practices affects evaluation on two levels. In the first instance, it reveals that teachers are not independently conducting evaluation of their individual pedagogy, through which they could develop an increasingly professional attitude to their work as educators. Secondly, it intimates that teacher interactions are characterised by the exchange of classroom ideas and strategies alone within a culture of classroom isolation where there is minimal honest and detailed exchange with colleagues on the fundamentals of teaching and learning. In all such interactions, the individual is protected, because the reality of the classroom remains opaque.

At the same time, describing teachers as *isolated* seems unusual for two reasons: discussion of schools often refers to the establishment of a learning community that involves teachers, student, and parents, in the mutual construction of a positive and enhanced learning opportunities. Also, teachers continue to perform in rooms full of children, probably the least isolated working environment of all. Nevertheless, teachers continue to be isolated from their peers with regard to the intimate sharing of their experiences, both good and bad. This appears to be revealed in the strong correlations in Chapter 4 for whole staff and consultative group, as opposed to individual, influence against evaluation, initiative/cooperation, and professional development factors. These results suggest that teachers feel collectively empowered and individually weak, particularly as compared to the formal level of the principal and senior staff, of whom they remain suspicious. However, this collective does not necessarily yield a proper collegial environment, as demonstrated by even enthusiastic and positive respondents in the case study teacher surveys expressing reluctance to openly discuss their classrooms or seek to feel less isolated. Fellow teachers appear to be under suspicion because, as practitioners, they are best qualified to identify weaknesses. Within the current evaluation environment, identifying such weakness by any means is seen as threatening; it potentially risks exposure and thus threatens livelihood.

In 2002 Kleinhenz, Ingvarson, and Chadbourne suggested that the situation for evaluation in Australia was a *tabula rasa*, or blank slate. Whilst this may have been the case for effective professional standards based evaluation, the situation certainly appears not to have been neutral as regards evaluation in Tasmania. In this research teacher responses of suspicion, fear, and distrust - particularly amongst those who had never experienced evaluation - suggest rather a

negative environment where isolation, the absence of true professional cooperation, failure to deeply reflect on teaching practice, and contrived collegiality, are the daily reality. It appears unlikely that the introduction of any evaluation process could survive without addressing this condition. The ingrained effect of the past would have to be considered and countered if the transition to real, as opposed to superficial, change was to occur. Ownership and motivation have been constant themes in both the literature analysis and survey responses in this study. They suggest that, irrespective of the paternalistic language used as in Case Study School 4, standards and evaluation imposed from beyond the realm of the classroom teacher will inevitably highlight that those outside (and more often than not above) consider teachers' work to be imperfect at the very least. In the current teaching environment, this could translate into a threat to each individual who is professionally isolated, and imbued with fears and suspicions that are, at worst, embedded and reinforced within the very organisational structure of the school.

A sudden questioning of teaching standards and approaches would come into direct conflict with classroom teachers who have established their own formula since their first "sink or swim" days in the classroom. The potential disruption would not be welcome, because it would undermine job stability significantly, and illuminate issues and practices that the teachers might wish to remain hidden. As a consequence, in the absence of outright opposition to an imposed evaluation regime, coping strategies could be invoked to re-establish equilibrium. The standards and evaluation mechanism might be established, but the classrooms would be quarantined and not necessarily change. Meanwhile the cause of teaching and learning would be significantly undermined as teachers retreated further into compliance behaviours and isolation. Concurrently, if the aim of the formal level is to 'buffer' the technical core of teaching, in accordance with Elmore's (2000) theory of 'loose coupling', then it can be surmised that school management also would desire stability not ferment, and consistency rather than dramatic change. Such 'buffering' could motivate the principals (or Minister) to direct evaluation to manifest and reinforce success, instead of exposing too much failure, which would be demoralising to the workforce and threaten teacher numbers and recruitment. In this sense, broad based imposed evaluation such as is suggested by the Tasmanian standards proposals, may carry within them the seeds of their own failure, or at least ineffectiveness, similar to the evaluation process in Case Study School 4.

Professional Development Practices

Any reflective evaluation system must be founded on the premise that teachers actually want to improve their practice continually. The efforts of teachers who worked together with academics to establish the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in the United States, clearly illustrates what can be achieved by teachers determined to put their efforts into a context where they have an ongoing goal of improvement. The Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers standards represents an Australian step towards the same end, but its application is not widespread. Even in the absence of standards across the whole profession, it should be possible to identify the desire for improved practice through the manifestation of individual self-evaluation efforts and considered professional development selection. Neither the quantitative nor qualitative data collected in this research suggest that such conditions are in place.

There appears to be little consideration in current professional development practices of the stages of teacher development, or the encouragement of autonomous professionalism and risk taking in an embedded process of pedagogical enhancement. In a situation where there is no measurement of outcomes, and teachers are able to make professional development selections based on personal preference alone, professional development cannot achieve optimum outcomes. The purpose of professional development in Tasmanian schools is open to serious question if the foundations for a cycle of identifying teacher learning needs, effective training, validation, verification of application of learning, and the derivation of further learning requirements, do not exist. Case study school students reported little to no manifestation of professional development results, suggesting that the professional development may often not have been directed to the classrooms, but towards the fulfilment of organisational or administrative demands (Ramsey 2000, p.83). The absence of evidence of long term outcomes, meanwhile, generated the cynical view among students in Case Study Schools 1 and 2 that professional development was a chance for teachers to get away from class, whilst parents wondered why professional development days were required after such long holiday breaks. Even when teachers attempted to apply new knowledge from professional development, the absence of a complete cycle of learning appears often to have resulted in failure. As if to underpin both these points, case study teachers frequently saw managed whole school professional development events as ineffective, class time wasted, and opportunities for hierarchical self-promotion. There appear to be few real beneficiaries of the present professional development system in Tasmanian schools; certainly not the students, because the impact on teacher practice and student learning was effectively ignored in most cases.

Existing professional development procedures and records in the case study schools appeared to make no clear distinction between individual pedagogical requirements and activities undertaken on behalf of the school to meet specific organisational needs, such as first aid or occupational health and safety certification, representation, and attendance at conferences. The reported prevalence of teachers waiting for fun and interesting options to appear each year, closely followed by advice from the supervisor and professional development officer on professional development attendance, as opposed to individuals reflecting on their own pedagogical needs, suggest that most teachers are unaware of this shortfall and are being transformed into passive consumers or obedient employees rather than professionals engaged in an ongoing effort directed towards critical independence and self-improvement. As a consequence, teachers seem to take no responsibility for validation of their own professional development and its impact on student learning. Having no real ownership of their professional development, teachers appear to feel they do not have to worry about outcomes. This may explain the 48.5% dissatisfaction level reported in the state wide survey, or the complaint of case study individuals, that the professional development system was not responsive to teacher needs, and was letting them down.

Passive consumption of professional development raises issues of incentive and motivation. One could ask what would drive teachers to focus on their practice in an environment where permanency regardless of performance is the norm; where promotion to advanced skills level is based on seniority and not pedagogical excellence; and where permanency is based on time, willingness to serve in a remote locality, and the availability of budget funding. Individuals might have a personal desire to teach better, but in the absence of any measurement mechanism, significant individual professional development efforts may have little impact on career success in terms of advancement and remuneration. Furthermore, if professional success is measured as classroom control rather than risk taking in the search for better learning, there may be less motivation to focus on individual teaching standards and activities that might threaten stability. Although mentioned in some case study schools, Individual Professional Learning Plans did not figure prominently in the surveys or documentation. Had they done so, they would have been suspect because of the high incidence of opportunity and enjoyment as the basis for professional development activity choices, and the absence of any outcomes validation.

The current professional development system may also be hindering self-awareness of independent professionalism by making teachers unquestioning consumers of professional development product. Data in the school governance survey verified that teachers see professional development as a collective activity; it is something *we* rather than *I* do. With over half of these teachers indicating that professional development programs were generally not followed up, and supported by the case study majority responses that professional development staff did not validate the training or its impact on learning, teachers appear not to be encouraged by current professional development mechanisms to actively reflect on, or take steps to rectify shortfalls in, their learning. They consume, perhaps take home some resources or new skills, but do not demonstrate evidence of progress from each learning experience to generate their own further training needs. Again, the current professional development environment helps encourage this view. Whilst the professional development managers may have broad objectives for school programs, the impact on the individual teacher is assumed as consequent to delivery to the whole staff. A superficiality of programming and participation, where outcomes in the classroom and impacts on student learning are not measured, becomes standard, and teachers are lulled into a position of equating attendance as the endpoint of their development behaviour (Ramsey 2000, pp.83, 161). Professional development records focussed on expenditures, rather than outcomes, further support this trend.

The allocation of professional development funds and time to disseminate curricular change, and for workshops to help teachers introduce new curricular requirements, may also erode the professional development initiative of teachers. Because the curricular change is meant to redress perceived educational shortfalls, teachers could interpret participation and conformity to the new curricular direction as the improvement of practice. Those who change in accordance with the directives from above may be less motivated to focus on their own teaching when the problem has been apparently solved for them. As an example, the Essential Learnings visit to Canberra in Case Study School 2 may have been portrayed as a major cross-curricular initiative, but the student perception was that it was incomplete and of little long-term learning benefit. However, the failure to progress to real learning outcomes, identified from the students' perspective, appears to have been lost beneath the conduct of the event itself.

At another level, and in a similar fashion, inadequate teaching and any incentive to rectify it can be masked under the umbrella of widespread public change that claims improvement has occurred intrinsically. Whilst there undoubtedly will remain those teachers who will nod and close the door and do nothing differently, enthusiastic proponents could really feel that they are

teaching better. Whether they are, or not, cannot be stated because the means of verification of their performance does not exist either before or after the curricular change. However, there may be fewer incentives for teachers to stop and look at themselves individually when the educational system claims they have improved by meeting the new curricular demands. It is reasonable to assume that there are ways of teaching beyond old style “chalk and talk” based on rigid subject lines, and the form advocated by new integrated curricular approaches. The role of the teacher as professional should be to continually search for and develop any teaching that will advance the learning of their particular students, providing it is within the bounds of ethics and reason. It is questionable whether such experimentation would be welcome and encouraged at a time when conformity to a particular teaching style is a political and bureaucratic imperative. Not only could reflective pedagogy be retarded, but also professionalism as the definition of good teaching is handed over to conformity to external agendas rather than student understanding. As Tickle pointed out:

There is a distinction between the recital of curriculum requirements to be performed as an instructor, and curriculum understanding developed by an educator. If new teachers regard themselves as educational professionals they should not be engaged solely in relaying other people’s selections from prescribed knowledge, or filtering it for transmission to the young (Tickle 2000, p.64).

If evaluation is seen as threatening by teachers, there might be a good argument for setting the revitalisation of professional development as the first agenda for change. Teachers encouraged to select seriously and validate their own learning, and to determine outcomes on their teaching practice, may ultimately find their way to reflective evaluation through the process of enquiry. However, this can only commence if professional development in its current form is redefined, and a clear distinction made between organisational training, representation, and professional learning to enhance pedagogy. The selection, conduct, and outcomes of the pedagogical learning would then be open to scrutiny. Issues of time, cost, and external providers versus collegial interaction could then become secondary to the primary objective of improved teacher practice and student learning. However, for such a change to eventuate, professional development would also need to move from being a secondary requirement, to a primary activity of teachers’ everyday lives, a situation that this research suggests does not exist at present in Tasmanian schools.

Tasmanian Standards

The work being undertaken on Tasmanian teacher standards under the Australian Government Quality Teacher Program ought to be a cause for some optimism in that it potentially fills a gap by establishing a starting point for evaluation and professional development. However, there is no evidence that this process has taken into account the research referred to in this study and directed towards either independent reflective evaluation or effective professional development. In spite of claims that the standards were written by and for classroom teachers, the drafts have not been circulated to all practitioners for discussion or input. Anecdotal evidence is that, even those among the fifteen teachers selected to form the subject of the “unpacking” process have not seen the outcomes of their attempts to define their teaching practice. The results may have been scanned by a select few, but they are certainly not transparent to the profession as a whole. The consequent impact of the promulgation of the standards may well be negative, and raise teacher concerns and fears such that compliance behaviours become misinterpreted as standards achievement. The end point may look the same, but the motivation will have created a significant gap that is not in the interests of pedagogy and student learning in the long term. As Cumming and Jasman neatly pointed out: ‘The “trick” in standards design is achieving *clarity* about the purpose for the standards, or conceptions of their use’ (Cumming & Jasman 2003, p.16).

In seeking to increasingly define teaching, the drafters of the Tasmanian standards established some interesting indicators: ‘A4.1 foster a climate that produces positive morale’, ‘B2.2 recognise, value and engage others’ expertise’ and ‘C2.1 demonstrate a strong belief in the optimal learning capacity of all students’ (Tasmanian Professional Standards Framework (Draft), March 2005). The means for assessing these indicators externally are problematical, particularly as they appear to be value judgments influenced by the perception of any external assessor. For the standards to be used effectively, they probably will have to be school based since it will not be possible for any outsider to view and verify such performances in a short visit to the school. This suggests that the standards as drafted will rely on the principals of schools and their hierarchies to administer what could otherwise be a rather unwieldy process. The Teachers Registration Board involvement could participate in the final stages, but it could not, for example, observe the subject ‘B2.5 [being] honest and approachable to students’ (Tasmanian Professional Standards Framework, March 2005).

Given the number of indicators across the whole framework, the relative value of each indicator and the elements are open to question. If the standards were to be used to determine

the competency of teachers, an algorithm for calculating competency ought to be made visible to ensure equity. Similarly, given the assertion of this study that it is essential for professional development to be developed concurrently with evaluation if the value of both is not to be undermined, the standards developers ought also to specify the manifestation of shortfalls, and mechanisms by which these can be rectified. Not to do so would be to make the standards assessment a tyranny that finds fault, but fails to support, and leaves the teacher to struggle to rectify a weakness by whatever means possible. Contrary to the research, the stage would be set for a summative evaluation without any formative stage. This cannot be in the interests of teacher learning.

The assumption that school systems would be able to manage the specific training required by such a procedure cannot be borne out, since the research in this paper reveals that they currently effectively fail to manage the training and learning process for teachers. The teachers themselves, by basing their choices on personal preference or convenience in the case studies, do not appear capable of assuming the responsibility themselves under present conditions. It would seem an essential element of the implementation of such a Tasmanian standards process that, in the first instance, it teach the teachers how to learn and reflect on their practice, because this is a prerequisite skill not just for remediation, but also to meet the standards initially. Furthermore, if teachers are made to pay to retain their jobs under the mantle of standards that are administered through their school hierarchies, then what would could eventuate is an environment based on conformity, and ideological soundness underpinned by a prescriptive regimen of what behaviours a teacher must manifest, rather than the advancement of independent learning based on inquiry and rationality. The introduction of student mandatory benchmark testing and reporting procedures, in response to Australian federal government pressures, would support such an environment by further limiting teacher professional autonomy and drive them to 'teach to the test' to avoid criticism from low outcomes that would lead to questioning of their standards. The ideal in the literature of teacher experimentation and risk taking to develop new teaching styles, and responding to students diversity and needs in a dynamic learning process, could be forsaken for a checklist of Pavlovian performances.

Unfortunately, this may not be readily apparent to drafters of standards for teachers. The revision of the appraisal procedures in Case Study School 4 suggests that neither the departmental bureaucrats nor school hierarchies will interpret standards in a way that will reduce control of teachers. From the most cynical point of view, the imposition of so-called teacher standards could be interpreted as a natural follow on from recent unsuccessful

curricular initiatives where the formal level has attempted to prescribe how “learning” is to take place. For Tickle, the most worrying aspect of this is

the deprofessionalization of the education services being brought about especially by the casualization of work; the disengagement of teachers from curriculum decision making; and the redefinition of teaching as a process dominated by testing pupil performance (Tickle 2000, p.20).

The danger is that the bureaucracy can designate not just what is to be *learning*, but also lay down what behaviours are considered *teaching*. For such a structure, the existence of the innovative and non-standard teacher who manages to find a unique key to student accomplishment can be seen as threatening, because both teacher and student may reject the system. In such an environment, where education becomes increasingly controlled and stultified instead of liberated, moving teachers beyond their present condition appears a difficult proposition. This view is similar to that expressed by Parr (2004) who referred to the dominance of managerialism practices, the erosion of professionalism, and a consequent environment of compliance. Parr criticized mandated curricular reforms and their associated professional development support programs as underpinned by ‘a conceptualisation of teacher knowledge as a stable and fixed commodity, unconnected to the social or cultural context of the learners to be consumed and then passed on in simple series of learning transactions’ (Parr 2004, p.4).

From the perspective of this paper, only one indicator of practice within the Tasmanian draft standards framework approaches the truly reflective evaluative concepts outlined in this study: ‘A.2.2 reflect on and evaluate own strengths and weaknesses of teaching practices’ (Tasmanian Professional Standards Framework (Draft), March 2005). This ultimately is what all teachers need to do, providing that the focus of that reflection is student learning. Unfortunately, this most fundamental issue is devalued by reduction to one of many duties and expectations. By inclusion in a myriad of other prescriptions, it appears to be no more important than obscure requirements such as ‘B.3.3 assume multiple roles within teams’ or ‘C.3.7 make negotiation processes visible’ (Tasmanian Professional Standards Framework (Draft) March 2005). The real agenda is learning and teaching. The Tasmanian standards framework makes the error of subsuming student learning with teacher behaviours and compliance (Ramsey 2000, p.24).

If teaching standards, evaluation, and professional development are to make any sense at all, then it is critical that sectors and schools determine what is the ultimate aim, since a

proliferation of inconsistent aims threatens to undermine all. If real learning based on teaching for understanding is the objective indicator of practice, then A.2.2 in the previous paragraph ought to be the starting point. The expectation should be that teachers would continue to teach students and evaluate their understanding until success is achieved, at which point new learning can be introduced. Concurrently, teachers should be evaluating and reflecting on their own pedagogy until the best approach is achieved, after which reflection should continue to identify even better ways of achieving student learning. Within such a framework little more needs to be said, because the teaching and learning act is unique to each student-teacher pair within each circumstance. The communication with parents, interaction with other students, liaison and cooperation with colleagues, and so on, hinge on the particular critical element of student understanding and real and meaningful deep learning. A teacher so motivated does not have to be checked for parental negotiation or interaction because, together with them, the teacher is oriented towards the individual student's future. If the particular teacher is not so motivated then the assessment of parental communication and other behaviours becomes irrelevant, since it would be misdirected. The manifestation of the duty itself ought not be the standard. Rather, the standard should be the appropriate application of such duties to the furthering of student learning and understanding, the core purpose of education. This is not so easily measured from outside, but should be embedded and reinforced constantly within the teacher's work as a professional.

The Tasmanian standards process could represent another step towards the de-professionalisation of teaching by enhancing accountability. This attempt to establish standards follows closely on the heels of mandated forms of teaching under the guise of curricular change and the imposition of national benchmark testing under the Schools Assistance (Learning Together—Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Regulations 2005, by an Australian federal government seeking greater control over education. Concurrent with the conclusion of this study, teachers in Tasmania might be plunged into a regulated environment where they have to answer to a state government for the implementation of a curricular framework with mandated functions and centralized standardized reporting, to a federal government for the literacy and numeracy outcomes in their individual classrooms, and in the near future to a body set up by employers and the bureaucracy for their standards. Meanwhile, this research suggests that teachers have progressed no further forward in developing their own professional structures, not just for the quality control of their own teaching, but also to speak for them in a professional sense regarding such massive changes.

Teachers see collective security as necessary for a range of issues affecting their employment. This collective consciousness can benefit evaluation in that, for a reflective evaluation environment to work effectively, teachers must confront their pedagogy from an independent professional viewpoint within a collegial framework. Teachers need to be secure individually in their professional persona to be able to assume an objective perspective of their pedagogy, admit the need for change to themselves, and then make adjustments. The actual manifestation of this process should involve colleagues. However, the acknowledgement of shortfalls remains the responsibility of each individual who must feel secure enough to reveal themselves to others as part of the process of mutual professional reconstruction. To be independent is not to be alone or isolated. To work collegially to reinvent one's pedagogy is not to lose individuality. However, what we appear to have in Tasmania, as illustrated by the research in this paper, is isolation and not individuality, and collective anonymity within contrived collegiality. The foundation for this condition appears industrial rather than professional, and the former clouds the latter. The relative weakness of existing subject based professional bodies, and greater identification with schools and sectors, hinders the development of an honest professional culture across teachers as a whole.

This condition may be attributable in part to the development of separate educational systems and school sectors in Australia, as well as the traditional physical of schools and classrooms. However, it also could be connected to the way teaching issues traditionally have involved unions as the representatives of teachers' rights. Whether in the Advanced Skills Teacher implementation process in the past, or the more recent registration of teachers in Tasmania, the only organisations capable of representing teachers on a broad scale at present are their industrial associations. Procedures to deal with issues of pay and conditions of work in a collective industrial bargaining environment may not be appropriate to issues of teaching standards and quality by reducing teachers to an arbitrary status of equality. Processes to enhance the professional improvement of the individual can be subordinated by actions to favour the collective good of the many. In this sense it is notable that the Australian Education Union (AEU) web page on its position on professional teaching standards notes under Advanced Standards that 'The AEU reaffirms its position that teachers should be paid on a common scale. Higher salaries contingent on the acquisition of advanced standards should be accessible to all teachers' (AEU 2001; Cumming & Jasman 2003, p.20). Thus, in the mind of the union, standards are connected to issues of industrial equity and access to remuneration rather than pedagogy (Ramsey 2000, pp.32-33).

Against such a background, one teacher under threat due to the implementation of teaching standards quickly could escalate to a threat to employment of all. Union membership on the Tasmanian Teachers Registration Board probably seeks to counter the potential disruption from this issue, as well as to achieve some form of teacher involvement. However, the advancement of a few might be seen as equally threatening to the industrial status quo. The Advanced Skills Teacher implementation clearly illustrated the capacity of the equity and access agenda to undermine the development of, and reward for, high levels of professional practice. If the same factors came to bear on teacher standards and evaluation, then history might repeat itself. The practical demands of teacher re-registration may divorce evaluation from real standards and true competence, just as far as Advanced Skills Teacher categorization is from exemplary teaching skills. Meanwhile classrooms could become increasingly opaque as teachers attempt to protect their livelihood and entitlements and avoid detection of error. The development of independent professional and reflective teaching could be discouraged. Ingvarson and Chadbourne were well aware of the problems of governmental regulation when they wrote over ten years before this research that:

It is not realistic for government to claim that it can be the sole locus of authority or expertise when it comes to setting standards for all the areas in which teachers specialise. If it does, it might be promising more than it can deliver. Government policy in education is unlikely ever to be a sufficient basis for determining what teachers should know and be able to do anymore than it is in any other profession (Ingvarson & Chadbourne 1994, p.39).

In this research the response of teachers to evaluation cannot be excused as merely the product of an older teaching force coming from a less enlightened base, because the results illustrate that younger teachers are rapidly and solidly socialised into an environment where isolation, defensiveness, tokenism, and compliance are ingrained. Furthermore, the emergence of these results within a changing educational environment where teachers may be increasingly regulated suggests that negative behaviours may be distilled into newer and more sophisticated forms of compliance and contrived cooperation as teachers are moved further away from professionalism and more towards educational process work. Extracts from the New South Wales Institute of Teachers Act 2004 provide warnings of this trend for a smaller Australian state. Under this Act:

The Minister is to appoint a person to hold office as the Chairperson of the Board...

The Board is to consist of the following members: (a) the Chairperson, (b) 3 persons appointed by the Minister, being persons having such experience and expertise as the Minister considers relevant, (c) the Chief Executive...

The Minister may, from time to time and having regard to the advice of the Institute, approve of professional teaching standards...

the approval by the Minister of those persons or bodies who may provide professional development (NSW Government 2004).

Ten members of the Council are elected teachers, but these are balanced equally with ministerial appointees, so there is little doubt where the power lies. It was for this reason that the New South Wales Teachers' Federation opposed the bill, which it claimed 'was pushed in deliberate haste through the Parliament in the heat of the teachers' salaries dispute' (NSW Teachers Federation 2004).

Julie White and Trevor Hay (2004) in their paper to an Australian Association for Research in Education conference made a similar point regarding the Victorian experience, noting that the:

homogenised and seemingly neutral standards...manage to reduce teaching, and ultimately teachers, to a conforming and compliant "managerialist"...workforce, rather than the notion of "professional" suggested in all of the rhetoric preceding the establishment of the Victorian Institute of Teaching. What is ironic, of course, is that rather than *representing* teachers in Victoria, the professional organisation established to represent them, the Victorian Institute of Teaching, is actually complicit in implementing the controlling agenda of both state and federal governments in reducing teaching to bundles of skill and competence...The form of portfolio-based registration as proposed by the VIT appears to us to be very clearly couched in the language of control rather than the "language of possibility" (White & Hay 2004).

Professional Development as the First Step

Kleinhenz, Ingvarson, and Chadbourne's (2002) *tabula rasa* judgement was based on the absence of evidence of any factors that directed teachers towards a system of fundamental and independent reflective practice and self-remediation. Since that time there has been some progress, with the publication of the *National statement from the teaching profession on teaching standards, quality and professionalism* by the Australian College of Educators, and

the involvement of colleague teachers in the Level 3 classroom teacher position evaluation in Western Australia (Kleinhenz & Ingvarson 2004, p.41). However, even the latter had shortfalls in that it was initiated not by teachers but by the education department, and it:

fell short of involving teachers in the central task of developing professional standards that could be relied upon to show teachers what it is they need to be able to do in order to become better teachers. This was understandable, if not inevitable, since there is not, as yet in Western Australia or any Australian state a professional body which could take up this responsibility (Kleinhenz et al. 2001).

Meanwhile, the New South Wales Institute of Teachers legislation has been enacted, and the Experienced Teacher with Responsibility procedure in Victoria revealed to be seriously lacking (Kleinhenz et al. 2001). In Tasmania the bureaucracy is moving on its definition of standards with the inclusion of organisational stakeholders, but without the involvement of the full teaching profession. This suggests that the situation has not been static, but one where teachers themselves are making no progress, whilst bureaucratic accountability processes are set in place to demonstrate control of teachers in response to the usual claims of declining standards, or to ensure conformity to defined teaching behaviours. The cause of teacher professionalism appears to be going backwards.

This research reveals factors in place which hinder advances towards teachers assuming accountability in a professional fashion:

- established suspicion of, and negative attitudes to, evaluation by those who have never experienced it,
- a residue of mistrust established by appraisal systems focussed on organisational conformity rather than pedagogy, and
- inefficient professional development that fails to verify and encourage classroom change.

There is no evidence that these negative factors will disappear of themselves. Consequently there is doubt that cause of reflective evaluation of teaching will be advanced until such time as teachers are willing to imprint their own professionalism on their work, to remove the negatives, and to establish themselves a condition of professional autonomy. This research strongly agrees with the statement by Kleinhenz, Ingvarson and Chadbourne that the way forward:

is to start not at the level of the administrative superstructure but at the instructional core, by encouraging teachers themselves to build a critical, knowledgeable and dependable profession that will assume responsibility for developing standards as the basis for evaluating the work for its own members (Kleinhenz et al. 2001).

The same researchers made a more recent statement that suggests that there is a paradox in this area requiring resolution:

No existing body has the capacity or acceptability across the Australian professional education community to undertake this role of a national professional certification body. Success in introducing and operating a national professional certification system will depend on the creation of an entirely new kind of body in Australian education. It will need to be independent of existing s and stakeholders if it is to carry out its core task of providing a certification credible to the profession and the public (Kleinhenz & Ingvarson 2004, pp. 47-48).

The paradox is that teachers need to be encouraged to work for their own standards and professional autonomy, but organisations or structures to encourage them towards such efforts currently do not exist. Whilst the Australian College of Educators may develop standards, at the time of this research this did not appear to involve or motivate classroom teachers in Tasmania, many of who may be unaware of such work.

The review of evaluation in Chapter 2 and the feelings manifested by some teachers in case study schools suggest that the pursuit of domestic standards and the introduction of evaluation in whatever form may not be the best way forward initially. Any external attempt to establish broad based evaluation would threaten an association with imposed standards and raise suspicions of further accountability through stealth, particularly as there is no independent professional body to administer such a system. An alternative may be the modification and enhancement of professional development, for no other reason than that teachers accept and support it as part of their current work lives. Properly constructed professional development owned by teachers could lead eventually to reflective self-evaluation by stimulating validation of individual pedagogical learning through classroom practice.

The school governance survey results in Chapter 4 demonstrated that teachers in Tasmania overall are aware of the requirements for effective professional development. They see their input as an essential component of a process that ought to focus on the fundamentals of teaching and learning in an ongoing structured fashion. However, the low rating of the individual as a factor in achieving these outcomes, as opposed to the influence of the collective, suggests that each teacher alone feels powerless. The consequence is that, in the absence of a professional collective body, and the fact that they work within schools as organisations, teachers effectively abdicate responsibility for professional development to the formal authority level that manages the structure in most functional areas. Any moves towards a reflective professional development framework would have to assume professional authority and replace the organised in-school collective in teacher consciousness if it was to fulfil expectations of beneficial outcomes.

Almost all of the case study teachers welcomed professional development as a significant element of modern practice. Unfortunately, survey questions on professional development did not examine whether the teachers actually understood what it was they were doing, and how it fitted into their teaching. There appears to be an assumption, made by this researcher also at the start of this study, that teachers, by virtue of being engaged in the activity of education, understand the function of professional development, and can be relied upon to manage their own independent adult learning. To the contrary, this research suggests that teachers often have difficulties planning, implementing, and validating their own professional development. Within increasingly demanding school days, teachers can seek the line of least resistance, and look for professional development as a relief rather than as a challenge. The multi-faceted nature of workplace training and the support of individual professional learning are substantially more complex than they appear initially. Understanding the differentiation between and coordination of both cannot be assumed purely because it involves educational workers within educational s. In the absence of fully effective integrated programs in the case study (and probably all) schools, it is unlikely that management would be able to overcome this trend towards least resistance, because the professional development staffs seem unable to communicate with the teachers, in the same way that at least some teachers cannot communicate effectively with their students.

One further matter revealed by this study is that research literature and discussion on teacher standards, evaluation, and professional development do not appear to have penetrated schools and the teaching profession in Tasmania. This accords with the work of Pedder, James, and

MacBeath who expressed concern about the 'low value that [British teachers] across our sample attributed to research' (Pedder et al. 2005, p.234). If research had manifested an impact, then one could expect some evidence of self-evaluative practices, instead of nothing, or appraisal systems that clearly fail to enhance teaching and learning. Professional development that fails to improve teaching, resulting from the complete absence of an effective learning cycle, and contravention of all of the design elements that flow from well-established literature, would also not exist. In the absence of detailed analysis, debate, and references to literature, issues of teaching standards that are starting to penetrate Tasmania may owe more to demands for administrative accountability and teacher registration than teacher quality. Limited coverage of the research, and the presence of external agendas, such as registration, threatens to repeat past mistakes and further retard the development of best practice pedagogy. Within this environment, teachers appear to be uninformed, and not exposed to best practice developments in their own profession, unless it is fed through the bureaucratic hierarchical system, or via individual and apparently uncommon post-graduate learning. As Ramsey noted, what is required are 'Strategies for disseminating research findings in teacher education, curriculum and pedagogy...Unless it has impact in some form on education, teaching and schools there is little point in undertaking the research' (Ramsey 2000, p.35).

For teachers to advance towards truly professional evaluation of their pedagogy, it appears that they need to be engaged in open democratic dialogue about their own profession, both internally and with schools, students, and parents, in a manner that is non-threatening and encourages them to progress further. Few of the case study teachers had engaged in post-graduate training, so it is unlikely that the university alone could meet this need. Forums and discussions may help, but the impact of these would be limited by attendance and frequency. Furthermore, if a dialogue is to occur, it ought not be restricted to evaluation and professional development alone, but should be capable of expressing teacher professional opinion on all educational issues on a continuing basis.

Towards Reflective Professionalism in Tasmania

This study suggests a number of requirements to advance the cause of reflective evaluation of pedagogy and its integration with effective professional development, as well as teacher professionalism.

- (1) Evaluation and professional development must develop in tandem since one feeds the other. As suggested, professional development can lead the way, but it is important that

the process not stop there. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards procedures, and their requirement to actively reflect on teaching, represents a potential way forward. The issue should be not whether the standards or procedures are completely home grown, as argued by the drafters of the Tasmanian standards, but that they represent an available means to focus on reflection, empowerment, and subsequent developmental learning to improve pedagogy in real terms.

- (2) If the intimate exposure of teaching practice strengths and weaknesses is to be a function of enhancing the quality of pedagogy, then any structure facilitating the evaluation/professional development nexus cannot occur through the bureaucratic hierarchical chain, where organisational theory suggests that suspicion and distrust are fundamental characteristics. This has been underscored by the results of this research, with teachers rejecting the principal and senior staff as influence and trust factors in both evaluation and professional development, and case study teachers manifesting mistrust and suspicion of the use of evaluation as a control mechanism. Teachers should embrace Tickle's caution that 'education's managers, in their desire to prescribe and assess performance, carry a quite different mantle from educators whose interest is to debate, counsel, facilitate initiative, and encourage self-appraisal' (Tickle 2000, p.19).
- (3) In the absence of any alternative, school and sector affiliations appear to represent defining identification factors in the daily life of teachers. Whilst there are positives in this, such loyalties may also undermine true professional consciousness, and contribute another layer of isolation additional to the classroom. Teachers should feel individually empowered, and collectively supported, within a manifested professional consciousness that transcends, rather than supplants, loyalties to sectors or schools.
- (4) Teachers ought to take ownership of their professional standards, and develop and maintain the same, regardless of standards imposed from outside the profession. The Australian Government Quality Teacher Program standards developments in Tasmania thus should be considered separate from standards that may be set by, and for, the profession of teaching. Any level of standards that are prepared by, and declared for, teachers would provide a feeling of ownership and professionalism. They would not have to be perfect in the first instance; interim standards could form a basis for development based on experience and discussion about pedagogy. No evidence has been presented to support the suggestion that standards have to be locally developed

exclusively. Even the adoption of the framework proposed by Danielson (1996) would represent an advance, as teachers could then focus on the elements as a basis for reflection and modification. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards procedures, in the opinion of this researcher, would be better and direct teachers immediately in an active way to reflect on their practice. It may be useful to focus away from standards ownership, to ownership of pedagogy focussed on student learning. This is because the power to argue about the nature of education, curriculum, and pedagogy rests in the professional will to do so and the quality of understanding of these matters. That quality needs to be based on evidence of professional practices and their consequences, and adequate conceptualisation and articulation of educational issues (Tickle 2000, p.73).

- (5) Teachers should not have to wait for external curricular direction, but utilise ongoing and effective reflective evaluation to continually enhance their teaching and meet evolving classroom needs. If broad curricular solutions are proposed or implemented in schools, practitioners should be able to participate in such developments as equal and essential partners in the educational process. Teachers need to be able to challenge, criticise, and even oppose, from a considered professional viewpoint in the public domain.
- (6) Teachers must develop a truly independent professional consciousness and assume a right to speak out on matters of professional standards, ethics, and conduct, separate from all other areas associated with their employment. Once again there is something of a paradox here. Teachers need to acknowledge they are entitled have a voice in educational debate, but to demonstrate that right they need to establish a structure to do so, and start speaking out.

If reflective evaluation practices have not developed, professional development is not achieving its potential, and increasing bureaucratic involvement in the learning process threatens to further undermine teacher independence, it appears unlikely that anything will change without the injection of some additional factor that will give teachers a voice and establish the conditions for independent professional practice. This additional factor ought to be the active participation of teachers themselves. In the United States this occurred with the establishment of The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Currently, there appears to be no movement towards such a national body in Australia. However, that should not prevent Tasmanian teachers from taking the initiative, particularly as geography and the small

population make possible regular state wide, and therefore school system, meetings of teachers. An association of teachers that transcends school levels and subjects, sectors and systems, and focuses on the common element of *teaching*, could move evaluation and reflective professional development out of theory and into reality. It could also fill the gap in teacher professional representation and make a positive contribution to the establishment and maintenance of teacher professional standards.

With the various developments already underway, such as registration, curricular change, and soon imposed standards, the establishment by government of an “institute” in Tasmania such as that in New South Wales likely would have to be viewed as another constraint on teachers. Given the benefits of small population and limited geography, Tasmania provides an opportunity for teachers to assume responsibility and establish a professional (in all senses of the word) structure for themselves on a state wide basis. Such an association, named for example the Tasmanian College of Professional Educators (TCPE), could enhance teacher pride both in their own eyes and that of the public, and establish the basis for enhancement of the quality of teaching for teachers, by teachers. It would also complement unions, speaking and representing teachers on professional issues, whilst leaving the unions to deal with industrial matters (Ramsey 2000, pp.118, 127, 146). In taking such a step in advance of the bureaucracy and legislation, teachers could demonstrate that they are professionals, that they do have a right to speak on educational issues, and that they are concerned with developing and maintaining their own standards. Such a step may launch teachers towards the positive pedagogical self-management advocated in this and other research.

However, it may be excessively idealistic to assume that a call to participate in a professional organisation would bring teachers running. The results of the quantitative and qualitative research in this study suggest that teachers exist in an environment of compliance, isolation, and ignorance of research on teaching standards, reflective evaluation, or effective professional development. Any professional entity focussing on standards would have to overcome these obstacles and establish credibility in advance of departmental, school, and sector allegiances, and appear to be other than a dissatisfied fringe group. Furthermore, teachers established in successful behaviour patterns would require some incentive to participate.

For these reasons, it is suggested that a professional college of teachers focussing on developing professional practice through a reflective framework could best be established in affiliation with the key teacher education body in Tasmania, the University of Tasmania. There

are precedents in the association of professional bodies in areas such as law and medicine with their corresponding faculties. It is just that a professional body does not yet exist for teachers. The development of a Master of Teaching Practice course centred on teacher research of the fundamentals of each individual's classroom practice, and directed to enhancing individual and public professional persona, would yield a practical outcome for the efforts of established teachers that could eventually be transferred to improved remuneration or career advancement (Tickle 2000, p.174). Furthermore, the awarding of *Fellow* status to successful postgraduate candidates by such a college of educators could highlight the role and involvement of professional teachers as a group in pedagogical research, and demonstrate peer acknowledgement of the achievement. An expansion of this process eventually might see individual teacher salary increases based not on seniority but on real advances in teaching standards. The myth of teacher equivalence would be dispelled and this in turn would add impetus to further standards improvements. Expansion would rest upon the process being developmental, professionally centred, and beyond issues of administrative approval and workplace tenure.

In addition to certifying advanced teaching practice in association with the university, a professional college of teachers in Tasmania could provide the following benefits:

- (1) *Become a focus for professional recognition of teachers throughout the community.*

The isolation and dispersion of teachers has demonstrated that they cannot alone overcome issues in pedagogy. Society also is unlikely to ascribe any professional status until it can identify a representative body that has a constitution, code of ethics, standards of practice, and a public voice. As Ramsey noted, any such body also would have to meet the requirements of the Australian Council of Professions (Ramsey 2000, p.95).

- (2) *Act as a clearing-house for research on professional matters relevant to teacher quality and best practice.*

If teachers are not aware of the issues involving professional standards and evaluation, as well as other significant developments in pedagogy, they cannot respond and effectively voice their views. It is easy to expect teachers to do "professional reading", but, with busy lives, time is at a premium. Furthermore, there is no professional journal for teachers in Tasmania helping them as a whole remain abreast of developments in the profession or in research, and this ignorance can be exploited against them. Information

is power, and, in the age of 'e-zines', the financial hurdles could be reduced substantially.

(3) *Promote research on teaching practice and quality teaching.*

The evidence is that few teachers currently undertake postgraduate research, and there is no avenue for public recognition of their achievements as *teachers*. A professional college would be able to promote *teacher* research to the community at large. It would be able to surpass the opinions of principals, bureaucrats, and politicians, in identifying best classroom practice from a position of demonstrated, respected, and researched insider knowledge.

(4) *Assist teachers who are encountering difficulties to re-establish best practice in the classroom.*

Currently, teachers who are having difficulties have no mechanisms to help them identify the source of their problems, and have nowhere to turn outside of their school. Because admission of weakness is seen as a threat to employment, promotion, or peer respect, teachers can often hide their deficiencies. When these are revealed, the response may be to treat the symptom and not the cause, such as by classroom visits in the case study schools. A professional college, independent of schools and sectors, and focussed on teaching, would give such practitioners somewhere non-judgemental to turn to for support and assistance. This might be essential if the Tasmanian standards are developed and applied by principals, and the Teachers Registration Board attempts to make rulings on competence. There is no evidence that the drafters of the Tasmanian standards are considering how to rehabilitate those against whom such rulings may be made. The best persons to help teachers are other master teachers who are aware of all aspects of practice, and informed by relevant up to date research. Such professional support would also demonstrate to other teachers, employers, and the public at large, that teachers are assuming responsibility for their own quality control and professional training.

(5) *Promote reflective practices through the development of critique materials such as professional development evaluation questionnaires.*

If the current professional development system is not working effectively, then empowering teachers to be responsible in a truly professional manner for their own learning appears to be the best solution. Development and provision of vehicles for teachers to commence critiquing their professional development experiences could both

motivate reflection on learning and assist the identification of further needs. Whilst such measures may not influence school-directed professional development, an established individual validation procedure could yield benefits for teachers themselves. Furthermore, in critiquing their professional development experiences, teachers would be able to identify the structural flaws in the current system and support further autonomy and change. This process, in turn, should generate ongoing reflective evaluation as teachers see their practice improve.

(6) *Act as an independent professional voice for teachers in all areas of educational debate.*

Through a professional college, teachers could express opinions about curricular change, teacher registration, the Tasmanian standards process, and future issues. Currently teachers are limited by both official and unofficial constraints, including their own isolation and perceived individual weakness. A collective professional voice would enable teachers to counter misconceptions about the profession, and also defend all teachers from an established informed standpoint against political and bureaucratic measures that threaten teaching and learning. This is not the function of unions, which are industrial bodies qualified to make judgements on employees rights and working conditions, and not on issues of pedagogy. The establishment of a professional voice for teachers should lead to collective identity, pride, and eventual empowerment.

(7) *Promote the evaluation of teaching practice and standards and be available to support steps for a national teacher standards body.*

Few teachers appear aware of research on teacher standards or evaluation. If they were informed and empowered to undertake research on their own practice at a local level, teachers could become increasingly independent and knowledgeable. They would then be able and motivated to contribute to the development of standards and teacher quality procedures on a national scale. A professional college would provide a venue where teachers could exchange considered and researched opinions and experiences relevant to their pedagogy and the profession. Major topics could develop towards consensus positions that may in turn become statements of teacher professional opinion. Curricular change, ethics, reporting practices, and literacy and numeracy measurement, represent just a few ongoing areas where teachers could contribute to debate. Other matters of concern, such as teacher standards, and registration equity could also be challenged in a researched way that represented the views of teachers as professionals. Teacher ownership and practice of self-evaluation would place Tasmania state at the forefront of

standards and quality teaching in Australia, and encourage teachers elsewhere to assume responsibility in a similar fashion. It would also provide support to an eventual national process, such as in the United States, and counter the administratively directed appraisal and outcomes judgement measures that are either in place or being proposed.

- (8) *Support graduate teachers in their early years by providing access to best practice resources and individuals.*

The data in this research has demonstrated that new teachers continue to be allowed to fend for themselves with no evaluation, and minimal observation or interaction with their peers. Because the early years are critical to embedding practice from theory, it should be the time when support is most available. A professional college could objectively advise and support new teachers. By bringing together new teachers and master practitioners, it should be possible to embed an appreciation and understanding of teaching standards, and foster reflective practice through a process of professional induction that could be recognised by admission to membership of the association as in other professions. Significantly, it would provide a mechanism for the development of the dimension of self referred to by Tickle, as a critical element of new teacher professional identity (Tickle 2000, p.167; Hirsh et al. 2000). New teachers could refine their teaching practice through reflective research behaviours that would set a pattern for a professional career responsive to more than conformity to organisational dictates, because unless one has a sense of self-development and the expertise to examine, develop and appropriately deploy professional characteristics and personal qualities, it seems unlikely that the adoption of a critical perspective on teaching and its circumstances will carry very far (Tickle 2000, p.92).

- (9) *Interact with other stakeholders in education such as parents on matters of teacher professionalism.*

If parents of students have misunderstandings, for example that professional development days are for teacher relaxation rather than learning, or have problems with curricular change, they are currently unable to ascertain the position of teachers. Politicians, bureaucrats, principals, or unions might make statements, but teachers as professionals are unable to interact directly with parent representatives, and the parents have no way of knowing the attitudes of those directly charged with their children's education. A professional college would be able to formally convey teachers'

professional views and judgements without interference from bureaucratic, political, or commercial agendas.

- (10) *Act as a referee for teachers changing employment to certify their ongoing efforts to improve their pedagogy.*

Teachers who hope to move between schools must spend some time satisfying the demands of their principals and superiors if they wish to receive a good reference. The subsequent recommendation may not accurately reflect the teacher's capabilities. Professional college certification would provide an objective validation of efforts towards improving teaching standards. For those who have completed an evaluative process similar to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, certification would verify their standing regardless of their conformity to school management or ideologies. Ideally, such certification eventually might supplant school references in importance.

- (11) *Provide a readily available research base for greater understanding of teaching in Tasmania and the monitoring of teacher evaluative and further learning practices.*

Access to teachers for purposes of research is currently decided by bureaucrats and employers, who may make decisions based on institutional needs or as a consequence of 'loose coupling' behaviours, rather than the furtherance of the interests of pedagogical research. Professional college membership would provide researchers access to a representative pool of teachers, committed to enhancing pedagogy, and interested in researching practice, irrespective of school or sector affiliation. The reality of classroom implementation of new curriculum initiatives, responses to teacher registration changes, and the impact of imposed standards such as in New South Wales (and possibly Tasmania in due course), quickly would be revealed.

Conclusion

In the years since the commencement of this study, the issues of teaching standards and evaluation have received excellent coverage in research both within and beyond Australia. Some positive progress has been made, but this has been overshadowed largely by the forces of managerialism and control that have imposed so-called standards accountability regimes, underwritten by legislation and other governmental regulations, on teachers in other states of Australia. In Tasmania, a legislated and unrepresentative body has for a number of years determined who can and cannot teach based on a recognised university degree, police check,

and fee payment, but without any reference to standards of practice. Real classroom teaching standards and evaluation directed at enhancing pedagogy have made minimal progress because the agenda has not been learning, but the accountability of employees to meet the mandates of governments and employers, albeit framed in terms of societal needs or employer skill requirements.

What have been missing throughout this research are the voices of classroom teachers who remain professionally disenfranchised. Tasmanian teachers remain unaware of issues regarding standards, reflective practice, and effective professional development. They are not participants in the debate or the process which is occurring either within the realms of educational research or departmental offices where their work is being “unpacked”. Quite clearly from this research there are teachers requiring education and support to improve their pedagogy. However, continuing classroom isolation quarantines such issues, and perpetuates negative teaching practice, be it maintaining an agenda of control ahead of interactive learning with students, or the selection of professional development events based on their “fun” value. There are, nonetheless, excellent, dedicated, committed, and skilled teachers in Tasmanian classrooms, but they remain shut behind their classroom doors, within their school walls, and constrained by sector boundaries. They do not have the opportunity to come together as teachers to research their classroom practice in detail, establish some control over their profession, put their voice into the educational debate in the community, and take professional ownership of their pedagogy.

If the missing element of the standards debate is teachers themselves, then it seems logical to attempt to enhance their professional consciousness. The translation of this into teaching standards, reflective evaluation, and a trend of continually improving practice, might not occur quickly or easily because of the need to surmount established practices and habits. Furthermore, no summative evaluation against teaching standards is likely to succeed unless there is a formative process embedded in effective professional development to provide the mechanism for support of areas of weakness and the extension of pedagogical knowledge. Instead of being educated in a banking approach, teachers will need to learn about the issues being raised in research, and the application of standards in reflection about their classroom practice. It is doubted that adoption of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards framework, or even that of Danielson (1996) in the first instance would intellectually compromise standards in either Tasmania or Australia. To the contrary, either could be utilised immediately, and fulfil the dual requirement of teachers researching their teaching practice and

developing their knowledge of professional standards. The public identification of teachers participating in such a process, few though they initially might be, under a professional framework, and in association with the teacher education institution in Tasmania, would provide respectability and credibility both for the individuals and the new professional body. Association with teacher training and induction could further establish credibility and secure ongoing participation by new teachers.

An acquaintance of the researcher recently said to his daughter: 'I didn't pay for a private school education, just so you could become a bloody teacher!' It is up to teachers themselves to answer this challenge, through improved professional identity, and demonstrating that teaching is not just the delivery of packaged product, but the application of essential, ethical, and valued professional knowledge by practitioners who are responsive and focussed on best practice outcomes at all times. Elmore (2000) and Darling-Hammond (1997) would like to see the system changed into new forms of learning and leadership. Increasing centralised managerial control of education suggests that this is unlikely to occur in the short term. Kleinhenz and Ingvarson (2004) have lamented the absence of a professional body to work on standards. A professional college in Tasmania focussed on enhancing pedagogy through ongoing validated professional development, and eventually truly reflective evaluation would appear to be a way of meeting these needs and contribute to better student learning through the continuous improvement of teaching.