

**THE TEACHER EDUCATOR AS (RE)NEGOTIATED PROFESSIONAL:  
CRITICAL INCIDENTS FROM AUSTRALIA  
IN STEERING BETWEEN STATE AND MARKET**

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## **BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS**

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**ABSTRACT**

A dominant discourse in western higher education circles is currently concerned – even obsessed – with the marketisation of knowledge as a commodity to be purchased and traded (Healy, 1998; Poole, 1998; Richardson, 1998). These developments are broadly allied with managerial changes that some have called ‘steering at a distance’ (Kickert, 1991; Marceau, 1993), whereby the impact of the state on individual higher education workers is maintained and intensified at the same time that pressure is applied to ‘wean’ universities from government funding. This paper explores a different kind of ‘steering’, the kind that is being engaged by Australian teacher educators confronted by developing competitiveness in higher education. We argue that these changes compel teacher educators to (re)negotiate their professionalisms; to re-examine their attitudes towards, and values within, education and its practices as they (individually and collectively) steer new courses through the state and the market. We illustrate our argument by referring to three critical incidents in the professional lives of teacher educators located within a globalised, multi-campus and provincial Australian university, yet with important implications also for teacher educators outside Australia. We posit the (re)negotiated professionalisms manifested in those incidents as a few among several potential kinds of steering by Australian teacher educators.

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**[1] INTRODUCTION**

This paper is concerned with one set of outcomes related to recent and ongoing changes in Australian teacher education: namely, how teacher educators now conceive of themselves and their peers as ‘professionals’ working in diverse fields and how they attempt to construct and achieve commonly understood and accepted professional goals. Professionalism is an important concept in teacher education and for teacher educators because it legitimates particular understandings and practices, setting boundaries around what is possible and desirable (Shacklock, 1998). In this paper we examine teacher educators’ responses to certain ‘critical incidents’ as devices for understanding their ongoing (re)negotiations of their respective professionalisms. We take the view of Tripp (1993), that incidents are rendered critical through analysis which broadly identifies whose interests are best served by current arrangements. We are also of the view that understanding the professionalisms of teacher educators – the parameters and particulars of acceptable practice – requires an account of ‘inside’ voices and an appreciation of incidents from the ‘inside’. Hence, our methodology begins from the standpoint of teacher educators, the view that they have of themselves as professionals and of their professional worlds.

The focus is on teacher educators located within an Australian provincial university (hereafter referred to as ‘the University’) and their responses to three critical incidents. This textual strategy does not imply that ‘the University’ is a particular institution, although it is located within the Australian higher education system. Data for the paper were gathered while two of the authors were on leave, visiting various institutions of higher education. In particular, texts quoted in the

paper and referenced as ‘Postings’ are derived from e-mail messages circulated throughout the University at the time of the second critical incident discussed below. In all, twenty-six comments relating to the incident were made by members of the University. Numbered references to them reflect the chronological order in which they were posted. Similar to the practice followed elsewhere in this paper, the texts have been adjusted to maintain the anonymity of the institution.

The University attained this status in the early 1990s, having previously been a college of advanced education (CAE) under Australia’s pre-1987 binary division of higher education into research universities and teaching colleges (a change that paralleled the transition of polytechnics to ‘new universities’ in Britain). Several of its teacher educators have made this same transition, from college to university, and in the process have had to engage with a new emphasis on research and a repositioning of teaching in the publicly valued order of priorities. Since the change to university status, staff members have also been appointed from other universities. All of these teacher educators, regardless of the length of their association with the institution, have had to grapple with rapid and substantive changes to policies, roles, structures and values, with a commensurate impact on their sense of professionalism.

As will become clear, we reject the notion of a single, undifferentiated ‘professional’ whose image of knowledgeable, just and autonomous conduct provides an absolute against which all other actions are judged as being deviant. Rather, we conceive of professionalisms in the plural, as constantly shifting social constructions that ebb and flow as the currents of educational change challenge their meaning and purpose. At the same time, these constructions can function as powerful and energising frameworks to guide practitioners as they steer through the shoals of such change. As we explain below, two specific shoals are the state and the market. We begin

with a brief overview of the 'state of play' in Australian teacher education before turning to the critical incidents in question.

### **[1] THE STATE AND THE MARKET IN AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Markets in education (including teacher education as a component of the higher education sector) are not new phenomena in Australia, although in some respects their increased intrusiveness has emerged less dramatically than in Britain or the United States. Since the inception of mass schooling, there has always been some sense in which market concepts of 'supply' and 'demand' have influenced the provision of education. Until recently, however, Australians have rarely suggested that market forces should 'have their way' with respect to education. Not only have state agencies and policies been determined to maintain substantial and direct control over educational provision and operation, they have also stressed state-centric cultural, political and economic rationales for educational provision. Even with the fall from favour of the Keynesian welfare state in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and the advent of neo-classical economics – initially advocating that the public sector partake of particular efficiencies and effectiveness associated with the private sector – education in Australia largely retained its status as a state-provided and -regulated service. John Dawkins' policy statements on Australian higher education, introduced in the late 1980s and early 1990s, are indicative of this more restrained incorporation of economic rationales within the state, which has been described elsewhere as a 'quasi-market' orientation (Whitty, 1997).

Since the election of the Howard Federal Coalition Government in March 1996, there have been at least two significant changes in the political and economic life of the Australian state that have influenced higher education and teacher educators within Australia. At the macro level there has been a resurgence in a conservative or 'restoration' politics conjoined (uncomfortably, at times) with a more fully neo-classical orientation to managing the Australian economy and its education

industry. At the micro level, and again echoing similar trends in Britain and the United States, these political and economic imperatives have achieved greater reach into the working lives of Australian teacher educators (amongst others) and the institutions in which they (once ‘collectively’) work(ed); a managerial ‘achievement’ referred to elsewhere as ‘steering at a distance’ (Kickert, 1991; Marceau, 1993). Yet, it is not so much the presence of these discourses that represents change but the significant deepening of their influence and dominance, evident in a growing legitimacy and pervasiveness of market ideology within the Australian state and its institutions.

The shift towards a more robust market disposition for the state has had significant ramifications for institutions of higher education (and for those who work within them), whether in Australia or elsewhere. Now, universities are not only required by the government to be more efficient and effective in their use of state resources but are also required to compensate for their reduced government funding by attracting funds from private sources, primarily secured through the commodification of their knowledge products and their peddling within lucrative (established and emerging) markets. However partial, the recent lifting of state restrictions that were previously imposed on Australian universities and that restrained them from charging Australians fees for undertaking undergraduate degrees, is just one example of the neo-liberal preference for smaller government and greater deference to the market. One of the outcomes of this reorganisation of higher education has been the emergence of greater competition among universities (both locally and globally) as they attempt to access similar resources, in the form of financial assets and students (particularly those who have the most potential to contribute to an institution’s finances).

Australian teacher educators (along with other academics) have become increasingly caught up in Australia’s transition from a welfare state to a ‘competition’ state (Cerny, 1990). Teacher

educators' work practices valued by their institutions now incorporate activities that contribute (directly and indirectly) to the generation of institutional income. Highly prized are activities that attract finances from sources other than the state as well as activities that secure state resources outside those that constitute an institution's normal operational grant; entrepreneurial activities that are often innovative but always required to be economically productive. Other more traditional academic work (although 'new' to some teacher educators who come from a previous college era) has been reworked to emphasise its economic contributions: for example, the more external research grants the teacher educator acquires and refereed research publications s/he produces, the more government will contribute to a university's operational grant. There are moves within the higher education sector to make these economic linkages stronger for teacher educators. Recently, in the face of demands for increased salaries by academics, the Universities of Sydney, Melbourne and New South Wales floated the notion of a 'performance pay' system that would more closely tie the financial interests of individual teacher educators to those of their institutions. More generally, doing the work of a teacher educator has become increasingly seen in economically productive terms and the circumstances outlined above have introduced a new level of competition among teacher educators themselves.

### **[1] (RE)NEGOTIATING PROFESSIONALISMS: ONE CASE, THREE INCIDENTS**

These are matters with significant influence on the professionalisms of Australian teacher educators. These issues, which we explore in this section, are organised around conventional understandings of professionalism that are distinguished by (i) a body of specialist theoretical knowledge, (ii) a code of ethics that governs relationships with others, and (iii) an autonomy from influences that might jeopardise professionals' judgments and practices. We see value in aspects of these three traditional claims of the professional but also want to amend them in significant ways. We are concerned, for example, to ensure that what teacher educators claim to know is worth knowing and claiming, that their relations with others are not simply self serving,



and that the freedoms that they desire are cognisant of the desires of others. In short, we want to emphasise that the professionalisms of teacher educators need to be informed by a collective and collaborative dimension that involves the contributions of others in general and not just teacher educators in particular. This also necessitates an appreciation for context in the social construction of specific teacher educators' professionalisms.

Such issues have relevance for the discussions of the critical incidents that follow. The first of these provides an account of the responses of Australian teacher educators to challenges to their established cultural knowledge base. The second highlights the ethical dilemmas associated with conferring honorary university degrees (usually doctorates) on potential benefactors. And the third addresses the introduction of 'teaching scholars' and the associated constraints on teacher educators' freedoms. It is to the first of these incidents that we now turn.

## **[2] Cultural exchanges**

Underlying much professional practice is the notion that it is informed by a specialist theoretical knowledge base. Yet, the social construction and reproduction of specialist knowledge does not occur in isolation from the contexts in which they are realised. Professional knowledge is subject to a range of influences and is not informed by epistemological inquiry alone. Teacher educators identify no more or less with this than do other professionals. What is important, however, is the extent to which teacher educators identify, make sense of and engage with the range of 'external' influences that impinge on the profession as a whole, influences which privilege, marginalise or colonise teacher educators' work and the specialist knowledge that inform it. The critical incident examined in this section is concerned with these issues; that is, with the formation of Australian teacher educators' epistemologies and their resistance to accommodate cultural understandings informed by a more international orientation. We begin briefly by setting the scene, relating contributing influences of the market and the state.

Australian university campuses are undergoing transformations in their student populations. No longer can we speak of a homogenous Anglo-celtic or even a European-centric student group that by and large has been educated in a western system of education. Successful recruiting by Australia Education Inc. in the Asian and Pacific regions is changing steadily the cultural and linguistic base of students in Australian higher education institutions. Not surprisingly, then, the cultural assumptions, the ideologies and the understandings in which their own learning is based can be, and often are, at odds with the knowledge on which the vast majority of Australian teacher educators draw. The case is strong and growing stronger for Australian teacher educators to reassess their own practices in the light of their changing student clientele.

At the same time, teacher educators' practices have come under closer scrutiny by Australian governments eager to improve the quality of teacher graduates and to align more closely the underlying knowledge bases and skills promoted by teacher education programs to the needs of industry, society and the state. Perceived major directions for change have resulted in taken-for-granted issues in education being questioned: curriculum and the role of the teacher being one, and teacher education and the specialist knowledge bases of teacher educators being another. These changes can be identified and witnessed through state interventions into education and external influences brought about by changing global economies. However, the effects of globalisation - the demands of the state, the market and a differentiated clientele - have to date impacted disproportionately across Australian teacher educators. Resistant till now, they are coming under increasing pressure to embrace change and to reconceptualise the specialist knowledge that has sustained them and the work they have done.

One critical incident or situation that draws these matters sharply into focus relates to academic and entrepreneurial student exchanges. At the University in question, the faculty in which

teacher educators work has established links with an array of universities within Asia and the Pacific. Cohorts of teachers-in-training and graduate teachers arrive at the University from overseas throughout the year to undertake short-term professional development programs. There are some teacher educators in the faculty who are literate in the visitors' cultural understandings and are able to draw on both 'western' and 'eastern' ideas in ways that are both relevant and sensitive to these students' needs. However, other faculty members appear to have neither the skills nor the resources to engage with these exchanges in ways that would reciprocally expand or internationalise the knowledge of either the teachers-in-training or themselves. What could be fruitful cross-cultural academic interactions among individuals from very different countries remain at best, and for the most part, perfunctory, cursory and superficial.

Aggravating this situation is that the University has not put policies in place that would see needed cross-cultural and linguistic inservicing of staff (from all faculties) in these issues. Kennedy (1995) has similarly observed that little enough is done within higher education institutions to allow teaching staff to develop basic teaching skills, let alone to provide them with an understanding of teaching to heterogeneous student groups. This is despite the fact that 'the demands of teaching overseas students are significant and deserve as much recognition as the problems experienced by students themselves' (Kennedy, 1995, p. 38). So, while Australia's Asian Studies Council argued in 1988 for the need to make all Australians 'Asia literate' - as a way of challenging stereotypical beliefs that have shaped Australians' views of Asia in the past - a major hurdle to the development of Asia literacy among teacher educators (as a precursor to the internationalisation of teacher education programs, student-teachers and their prospective school students) is the relative dearth of professionals who have any significant and relevant knowledge about or acquaintance with Asia.

Commenting on like matters, Robertson (1990, p. 57) draws attention to institutions that are 'increasingly internally exposed to problems of heterogeneity and diversity and, at the same time, are experiencing both external and internal pressures to reconstruct their collective identities along pluralistic lines'. Similarly, teacher educators, 'increasingly subjected to competing ethnic, cultural and religious reference points' (Robertson, 1990, p. 57), are faced with a growing urgency to analyse and deal critically with their established knowledge, involving a reconceptualisation of the substantive areas of study in teacher education, yet often without the cultural resources to do so. Possibilities for restructuring the profession may begin with organisational changes but, more significantly, the teacher-education profession needs to focus on rethinking its knowledge base - how it is assembled, represented and imparted. This is important for all Australian teacher educators, in order to better service the needs not simply of international students (those from overseas who study in Australia) but also internationalised students (Australian student-teachers who undertake parts of their course overseas).

Such revisioning will involve more than simply responding to students' languages and ethnicities, and teacher educators can teach only what they know. Not knowing as well as not being committed to the Asian 'other', for example, will mean that the potential internationalisation of Australian teacher education will continue to be frustrated. In an effort to respond to these matters, the faculty described above has plans to promote and support a visit by each of its staff and students to an Asian country over a five year period (1997-2002): strategic ideas that are strongly aligned with recommendations made concerning situating studies of Asia in Australian higher education (Ingleson, 1989). Outcomes of this strategy are seen as threefold: (a) integration of studies of Asia into the teacher education curriculum, facilitating a cultural as well as an intellectual reorientation of its Eurocentric epistemological knowledge base; (b) encouraging teacher graduates to acquire a knowledge of any one Asian country through an extended in-country practicum; and (c) equipping teacher graduates with the skills to incorporate

and articulate their specific Asia knowledge into their own primary or secondary school curriculum specialisations.

The instrument envisaged by the Asian Studies Council to accomplish the Asia literacy project (noted above), was the Australian teaching profession. Yet it has been that teaching profession - because of its largely Eurocentric preparation - that has been the least able to incorporate studies of Asia into the school curriculum (Fitzgerald, 1997). As late as the 1990s many Australian children still completed their education to university level without learning anything about Asia. Indirectly, teacher educators have contributed to this situation. Now they need to contribute to its demise. We must try to avoid a (re)negotiated profession that, as Fitzgerald (1997, pp. 73-74) observes, holds ‘assumptions about ... one world of learning, one universe of intellectual activity and contribution to humankind’ solely derived from Europe and its derivative cultures.

## **[2] Honorary degrees**

A second critical incident that highlights challenges for teacher educators’ professionalism concerns the institutional practice of awarding honorary degrees (usually doctorates). Australian universities have long engaged in this practice of conferring honour on distinguished persons, often in recognition of their outstanding contributions to society. In the sense that this is nothing ‘new’, the critical incident discussed below is different from those that precede and follow it. What makes it critical – the insight it provides of teacher educators as they steer their way through state and market – is not whether honorary awards have been recently introduced but that they are a public signifier of what the University values and that they have more recently come under the influence of market imperatives.

Some may argue that the central values of the market – of the ‘self-interested’ and ‘maximising individual’ – have always been reflected in the practice of bestowing honorary degrees on

persons of influence. Potentially, universities have much to gain from being so associated. One memorable example from the 1980s in Australia involved the conferring of an honorary Doctorate of Laws by the University of Queensland on the serving Queensland Premier, Johannes Bjelke-Petersen. The distinction we would make between such politicking and the more recent incident that we describe below is that with the latter the institutional ‘self-interest’ is primarily economic. As one academic within the University recently noted when comparing these two incidents, the University of Queensland ‘had to maintain relations with the regime in power in the home state; it wasn't to facilitate an entrepreneurial venture’ (Posting 10).

The more recent incident to which we refer occurred at one of the University’s graduation ceremonies – in particular, a ceremony at which teacher educators and their graduating students would normally be in attendance – and involved the conferring of an honorary doctorate on a visiting Head of Government. The award was made to the nation’s leader ‘for [his] many years of work in government, for striving to advance the status of [his native] people, and for support of [the University] in [his country]’ (Official Press Release) – accolades that many at the University understood as code for his leadership in:

...a military coup d'etat against the constitutionally-elected government of his nation, and then [ruling] over a military dictatorship while that nation's constitution was altered so that a major part of its people would effectively have their voting rights limited and devalued.  
(Posting 1)

The University Council’s decision, recommended by one of its sub-committees, which received little (if any), academic input, was announced to staff via an e-mailed copy of the official press release, nine days before the ceremony. There are some evident parallels between this situation and what Coady (1996, p. 38) has referred to as ‘a decline in democratic, consultative and open

procedures and an increase in authoritarian, top-down, cursorily discussed decision-making’.

Coady’s illustration of this trend was ‘The abolition of the election of Deans at the University of Melbourne . . . , and [also] the neutering or down-grading of other representative bodies throughout the system’ (p. 38). Our interest lies in analysing the impact of developments such as these on the (re)negotiated professionalisms of teacher educators as they steer between the state and the market.

It should be noted that not long before the Council’s decision was made, the University’s commercial partner had opened a campus of the University on land owned by this Head of Government in his home country. The responses that followed the announcement of the honorary award, publicly aired on the University’s staff e-mail list, provide useful insights into how the higher education market has influenced teacher educators’ perceptions of themselves as professionals. Drawing on the public (e-mail) comments of University staff that surrounded this critical incident, we posit three discourses of influence in the construction of these professionalisms: those of ‘acquiescence’, ‘resistance’ and ‘appropriation’. It is important to note, however, that none of the academics who adopted these professional positions conveyed support for the University’s decision to confer the award on the visitor.

Acquiescence to the Council’s decision was evident in only a few recorded responses, yet it would be difficult to interpret these as indicative of their authors’ approval of events. Rather, these members of staff appeared resigned to the inevitability of a new professional ethic that they perceived to be creeping into Australian higher education, informed by a ‘crass commercial expediency’ (Posting 10) and expressed in ‘commercially motivated decision[s]’ (Posting 9). Responding to the ‘complete and utter disgust’ (Posting 1) felt by many of their colleagues, their approach – in keeping with the market – was more *laissez faire*, exhorting others to ‘cheer up ... We aren't alone in the sucking up and grovelling stakes. When I was working at [another

Australian] University ... there was regular feting of various ... despots' (Posting 12) from nearby countries. Similar comments encouraged staff to 'look on the bright side ... It increases the employment spread of our graduates' (Posting 4). In effect, the professionalism of these academics involved a reworking of historical notions of autonomy such that it was the freedoms of the market, rather than of their own judgments, that had become sacrosanct. Reflecting on this shift, one academic questioned (and answered): 'what price academic integrity and autonomy? Pretty cheap' (Posting 10). Some who positioned themselves in the acquiescent camp appeared resigned to the dominance of the market while others were simply depressed by it. The latter response is well expressed in the following assessment:

The [honorary] degree affair convinces me that there is absolutely nothing Chancellery won't do for [its commercial partner and his commercial interests]. It is a very sad day when our institution's morals can be seen to be used as pawns in a rather obvious strategy to seek political advantage for [our commercial partner's] new operation in [the recipient's country]. (Posting 20)

A more common reaction to the announcement gave expression to a less accommodating and resistant professionalism often accompanied by a call to action, albeit subdued. Many of these comments appealed to strongly held values and ethical stances reminiscent of an 'older' professionalism, which was informed by 'classical democracy' as a moral ideal (Carr & Hartnett, 1996), and which others felt had already been 'sold off'. Writing from this ethical stance, one early posting announced:

I have a moral obligation to express my personal and professional abhorrence of the University's decision to award an honorary degree to and invite as guest of honour a person whose actions and policies effectively disenfranchised what was at the time approximately



fifty-five percent of his nation's population, and who has never expressed any remorse for his actions. My protest will be to absent myself from that graduation ceremony. (Posting 6)

The appeal here is to a particular system of ethical principles by which actions may be judged as good or bad – principles that have relevance for the actions of individuals personally and for members of a professional collective. Deference to the rights of individuals and to collective rights (and responsibilities) are central tenets in this form of professionalism and it is in response to their perceived threat – by the University itself and by its legitimation of the actions of the Head of Government in question – that caused these professionals to invoke a discourse of resistance. This was well expressed in the ‘call to arms’ at the time:

The apparently commercially motivated decision to give the former military leader a degree with our university's name on it will bring discredit on us all ... If you believe in freedom of speech and democracy, boycott the graduation ceremony. (Posting 9)

Others who held these ethical concerns also conveyed their disquiet with events but questioned whether there might be some explanation, apart from the influence of the market, that would explain them. Perhaps their professionalism had not been deliberately challenged at all. It might simply be a mistake, a regrettable but forgivable error of judgment, or perhaps it was a matter of poor management and communication; serious offences that need to be rectified but not matters that over the long term call into question who teacher educators are and want to be. Indeed, that is one of the roles of the profession: to regulate the actions of its members. The displeasure of these academics was no less apparent, however:

I have a number of serious misgivings about political, economic or institutional self-serving uses of honorary awards by universities ... I expect that the decision to grant the

award went through the appropriate sub committee of this university's Council. I would like to know the grounds on which such a decision was made ... 'Management by media release' does not alleviate our concerns. (Posting 7)

This 'request' for information about how the decision was reached was reiterated a few days later:

I'm sure many of us would be very interested to learn how the decision to confer an honorary degree upon [this Head of Government] was made and upon what criteria this important decision was based. I share with almost all the other e-mail postings my dismay and bewilderment about this decision and also the way in which we were informed, ie. a fait accompli. I would hope that the committee(s) responsible for [this] award would inform the [University] community as to how they arrived at their decision. (Posting 15)

As it eventuated, these comments were reflected in concerns, later taken up with Chancellery by the President of the University's branch of the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) - the largest organisation representing Australian university academic staff members - that the University should 'involve the staff in developing the rules for such awards, [and] make them public and the process transparent' (Posting 22). Moreover, a general meeting of union members, held shortly before graduation, unanimously passed a motion to request that, in future, the University refrain from awarding honorary degrees to:

1. Current serving politicians and similar public figures;
2. Persons who have substantially undermined democratic principles or who have supported practices that discriminate against people in ways that are in conflict with the anti-discrimination laws of Australia and/or the human rights principles of the UN.

(Posting 22)

That new processes of awarding honorary degrees were established in the University in reaction to this incident is in no small way attributable to the actions of the NTEU branch and its Council representatives - elected after the decision to award the degree was made - who followed through on union concerns after the graduation ceremony. What is interesting, though, is how these responses gave voice to a third form of academic professionalism that was played out in relation to the ceremony itself: a professionalism 'seduced' by a discourse of appropriation. The seduction went something like this: teacher education professionals have a 'duty of care' for their students that would be breached if they were to act in ways that would disrupt the ceremony, an occasion primarily held for students and their families. The underlying rationale here is that, in circumstances where a professional ethic has been infringed, professionals are required to respond in ways that are themselves ethical. Professional ethics were thus appropriated to serve the intentions of Council: that the ceremony and the conferring of the award might proceed as planned. Some academics gave unwitting support for this line of reasoning:

Please consider the students. I will go to Graduation because I wish to share the ceremony with them. I will also respect anyone who chooses to boycott the ceremony but would ask them to consider if there was not a better way to register a complaint. (Posting 13)

Illustrated in these comments is the discursive strategy of appropriation: to feature commonalities in discursive positions and to convince individuals that their concerns can be accommodated within a 'broader' discursive position. Its promise is that it allows teacher educators to register a complaint at the same time that they fulfil their other professional obligations. But discourses of appropriation also work to realign the substance of positions previously held. In relation to the incident reported here, the latter became evident in discussions

about the nature of the complaint and the most appropriate way that it should be registered, dissipating dissent in more manageable ways. Again, some academics became mouthpieces for this discursive strategy:

Those who wish to register a complaint, do so with the persons making the decision, not against the intended recipient. What the intended recipient has or has not done should be the target of a separate action. (Posting 14)

Chancellery's reworking of academic professional ethics took a slightly different form of appropriation (and expression). Its view was that public dissent from Council's decision, however expressed, would bring the University into disrepute and violate a corporate professional ethic that implied their 'duty of care' for the institution. Four days before the graduation ceremony, those who had recorded dissenting comments about the honorary award and its recipient were extended an 'invitation to dialogue' with senior members of Chancellery in the Vice-Chancellor's office. Dissenters were divided into three groups that successively met these senior staff for 'discussions'. It would seem that many remained unconvinced by the corporate position, although their subsequent actions were indirectly supportive of it. Two days later the union resolved that 'for the sake of our students, the branch decided not to stage a protest during the ceremony and [to] pursue the matter through the Council instead' (Posting 22, emphasis added).

In the week following the ceremony the Vice-Chancellor circulated a message to 'all of the staff and students involved' – his first public comments on the matter – in which he praised those who attended: 'Your efforts brought enormous credit to the University, and you are entitled to be truly proud of a job well done' (Posting 23). A similar commendation came from the Chancellor who, on Council's behalf, had conferred the honorary doctorate on the visiting Head of Government.

His comments were more revealing of the disagreements that had preceded the ceremony - even though they were couched in terms that could be read as referring solely to administrative and organisational matters - but also served to reiterate the corporate professional stance with respect to ethics and its emphasis on appearances. Addressing the 'great many staff at all levels of our complex organisation' involved in the ceremony, he conceded:

I am aware there are moments of intense pressure and sometimes tensions. But the manner in which these problems were overcome with good grace and extra effort is a matter which compels admiration. As none of this is shown to outsiders it is easy to assume that a graduation ceremony is a simple, easily arranged event. Those directly involved know this is not correct, but that it appears to be so highlights the skill and professionalism of those who are called upon to assist in this task. May I say on behalf of the whole university community we appreciate your efforts and we congratulate you on a job well done.

(Posting 24)

Two final things need to be understood about this critical incident. First, as described it focuses on professional actions that are reactive rather than proactive. This is not to suggest that teacher educators' professionalisms are primarily negative but that it is in their nature is to provide references for action. Second, we see the 'reactive' discourses of acquiescence, resistance and appropriation as illustrative respectively of aspects of 'market', 'state' and 'corporate' academic professionalisms (Marginson, 1995; McCollow & Lingard, 1996). What we also illustrate is that in practice these ideal types are not necessarily discrete but have points of intersection and overlap.

## **[2] Teaching scholars**

A third conventional attribute of professionalism is often referred to as autonomy. This refers to the presumption that a professional should have the freedom to make judgments derived from their specialised knowledge and the responsibility to apply appropriate ethical standards in exercising that autonomy. There are several possible instances of how steering between the state and the market prompts Australian teacher educators to question whether they have greater or less autonomy in the discharge of their professional responsibilities. The advent of formalised quality assurance measures is one example of state-imposed performance indicators that some academics consider an affront to their professionalism and an attack on their autonomy to carry out teaching and research as they consider appropriate. Similarly, the pressure to increase the proportion of a faculty's income from non-government sources means that academics who are hired as consultants to evaluate a project, for example, sometimes believe that their autonomy to conduct an 'objective' review can be under threat.

One 'critical incident' that we believe encapsulates many of these pressures and potentials is the recent decision by the case study's University Council to appoint 'teaching scholars'. When the institution was a college of advanced education, tenure and promotion were decided according to an applicant's demonstrated teaching ability, largely measured by student evaluations of subjects. With the move to university status, there was an associated perceived shift that privileged research outcomes (particularly the receipt of external grants and the publication of research books and refereed journal articles) as the grounds for awarding tenure and promotion. Certainly there was a widespread belief among academic staff that there was little point in submitting an application for promotion based on teaching, administration and community service (the other designated elements of an academic's work) unless they possessed a corresponding strength in research.

The University's administrators were aware of this perception and adopted a curiously ambivalent response to it. At one level, senior university staff publicly praised the enviable reputation for effective teaching that the institution had gained as a college of advanced education, and they urged staff to maintain and expand that reputation as members of the new University. At another level, equally publicly those same officials lamented that the institution was one of the lowest scoring Australian universities in a survey of research outcomes (measured by such indicators as the amount of external funding obtained and the percentage of postgraduate students enrolled). This ambivalence did little to allay the fears of those who perceived the persistent downgrading of non-researching but effective teachers as 'second class citizens' in the university system.

This confusion spilled over into the documents used to brief intending applicants for tenure and promotion. Successively, the authors of these documents have had to be increasingly more explicit (in the documents themselves as well as in the associated briefing sessions) in emphasising that research is not privileged over other aspects of academic work in relation to tenure and promotion. For example, in 1996 applicants were informed that they needed to demonstrate 'excellence' in one area and 'competence' in the three other areas. By 1998 this had changed to become 'excellence' in one area and 'competence' in at least one other area. These developments occurred at a similar time as a university-wide restructure in which each faculty was required to appoint two associate deans to assist the dean. One associate dean was to manage 'research', the other to supervise 'teaching and learning'. At least on paper these administrators might be seen as 'leading' researchers and teaching scholars respectively.

In some ways, changes such as these can be interpreted as reflecting the University's own steering between the state and the market. Under the conservative Howard Federal Government's industrial relations legislation, which favoured enterprise agreements at individual workplaces

over centralised wage fixing, employers and employees were expected to engage in enterprise bargaining (with or without the involvement of unions). The ideology underpinning the legislation was that the market would determine the extent of salary increases and associated benefits. In this context, the University might be seen as using the greater freedom of losing the industrial restrictions of the state to award greater autonomy to staff by allowing them to choose the particular elements of their work on which they wished to concentrate. In practice, many staff remained very sceptical of these new assurances that research is no longer 'first among equals' in their job descriptions.

This admixture of autonomy, state and market pressures, and individual and collective professionalisms is encapsulated in the recent decision to designate certain staff as 'teaching scholars'. The precise criteria for responding to applications for these positions are still being negotiated, but the main requirement will be a demonstrated excellence as a university teacher, presumably determined on the basis of student and peer appraisal. Relevant here, too, are recent enterprise bargaining agreements elsewhere within the Australian higher education sector that require academic supervisors to make judgments about teaching performances, and the collaborative research being conducted by RMIT University, the Queensland University of Technology, the University of Technology Sydney and the University of South Australia to produce a set of indicators for academic supervisors to use in making these judgments. Whatever the criteria, the expectation is that teaching scholars will have heavier teaching loads than their research-oriented colleagues, that they will conduct professional development for other staff members interested in expanding their knowledge of particular aspects of teaching, and that their prospects of tenure and promotion will not depend on their research performance (although they will be expected to engage in teaching-related research, such as evaluations of using particular technologies with students).



Superficially, the decision to appoint teaching scholars appears to represent a strategy of enhancing diversity in the skills of academic staff. Publicly recognising demonstrably effective teachers seems to accord with the University's origins as a teaching-only higher education institution, with the reputation for excellent teaching that it acquired during that period and with its current marketing slogan that foregrounds students. This decision also articulates with the greater industrial freedom supposedly derived from the shift from state to market, whereby individual workplaces develop enterprise agreements reflecting the circumstances and needs of their respective sites. In other words, the decision appears to reflect an increased autonomy for both the individual and the institution.

Closer examination suggests that things are potentially otherwise. Many staff fear that teaching scholars will be steered into a 'dead end' in terms of career progression. As most staff elect the more conventional 'research path' and spend a greater proportion of their time engaged in research, publishing and postgraduate supervision, an associated concern for teaching scholars is that they will become overloaded with larger, and a greater number of, undergraduate classes, to the extent that their capacity to be effective teachers (the basis on which they became teaching scholars in the first place) will be seriously compromised. For both potential teaching scholars and research academics, the appointment of teaching scholars also 'concentrates the mind' about what a university professional is and is becoming. The indications to date are that such appointments are likely to result in a replication of two differentially valued classes of workers, rather than in greater freedoms for teacher educators.

Institutionally, the constraints on enterprise bargaining are far more severe than the ideology of 'the freedom of the market' would allow. Like most educational institutions, the University's salary bill constitutes the overwhelming majority of its total expenditure, and it is considerably hampered in its goal of increasing income (from such sources as private, fee-paying students)

while reducing expenditure, by having few options apart from employing voluntary or forced staff redundancies. It might be that appointing teaching scholars could provide one industrially acceptable means of requiring at least some staff members to take on a greater teaching load, thereby saving on the salaries of part-time tutors and marking assistants.

## **[1] CONCLUSION**

If nothing else, the critical incidents above - each a 'micro site' for the interplay of broader political and socioeconomic changes - suggest that the traditional knowledge, ethics and autonomy of Australian teacher educators are currently under siege. What also is evident, particularly in the second two incidents, are the ways in which this 'professionalism figures as a means of resistance or a means of control or both' (Lawn & Ozga, 1988, p. 82). We have painted a picture of teacher educators being steered, somewhat reluctantly, in the direction of the market while still being 'routed' by the state. Resistance is one option, submission to the state's and/or the market's equally narrow views of knowledge, ethics and autonomy is another. As potential 'consumers', looking for ways to (re)negotiate our professionalisms, we find neither of these options satisfying. Yet, often these are not choices consciously considered by teacher educators; instead, they become the material of thoughts 'last thing at night', when the 'real work' of increasingly busy lives has been done.

For us, steering between the state and the market needs to take a different course. First, teacher educators need to take a proactive stance in relation to these matters. They need to lead the way rather than allow themselves to be steered down paths they do not particularly want to go and then find they have to beat a hasty and undignified retreat. Teacher educators need to eschew what the philosopher John Ralston Saul (1997, p. 21), in relation to globalisation, called 'declarations of passivity before the inevitable – before what is said to be inevitable'. Second, teacher educators need to (re)negotiate more collective and collaborative professionalisms, in

part, as an ‘antidote’ to the utter individualism of market forces but also because they can no longer afford - politically or morally - to isolate themselves from local and global communities. In the past, teacher educators have been just as guilty of restricting the boundaries of influence, replicating their epistemological privileges and their social elitism. This time around, the (re)negotiation of our professionalism needs to focus on building responsive partnerships with others, particularly those who are (and will be) our students as well as those who are (and will be) theirs.

There are at least three fronts on which this proactivity and these partnerships need to occur:

- (i) through an expanded knowledge base that includes understandings of ‘others’ informed by these others’ understandings of themselves;
- (ii) through actions judged by standards widely and collectively determined; and
- (iii) through inclusive forms of governance.

In relation to an expanded knowledge base, we have argued elsewhere (Gale, Erben & Danaher, 1997) that political, economic and social shifts in the contexts framing teacher education simultaneously constrain and enable new negotiations about what is taught and learned, and how, in particular teacher education programs. On the upside, these negotiations provide teacher educators with excellent opportunities to rework their professional roles and responsibilities.

Reflecting on who our students are and what their needs are links productively with posing – and answering – equivalent questions about ourselves. One example of the kind of (self-)questioning that we have in mind draws on Jameson’s (1991, pp. 263-264) proposition that the market, as a feature of human activity, occupies ‘the most crucial terrain of ideological struggle in our time’. The question here for teacher educators is, “What does the market and its portrayal of relations between students and teachers as ‘consumers’/‘producers’, ‘clients’/‘providers’ and so on have to offer the (re)negotiation of teacher professionalisms?”.

With regard to holding our actions up to judgment by widely and collectively determined standards, an example of what we have in mind is a proactive and strategic engagement with the potential benefits, and a simultaneous rejection of the possible drawbacks, of the move towards competencies in teaching and teacher education. The tensions between these two sets of characteristics have been identified by Alford (1998, p. 23):

The application of competencies to education and training has several advantages. It makes desired teaching standards explicit, uniform and national. And it makes education more a part of the 'real world', notably the economy, rather than remain an isolated rarified sphere. However, the advantages of having national and uniform standards for the teaching profession may have been at the cost of teachers' self-determination, their ability to respond creatively to local circumstances, and perhaps also at the expense of teacher creativity and motivation.

We argue that it is precisely at the intersection of these kinds of tensions that the (re)negotiated professionalism of teacher educators will need to be demonstrated if teacher educators are to (re)assert successfully their legitimate stake in the preparation and professional development of classroom practitioners. From this perspective, competencies can be seen as encapsulating the confluence of the state (professional responsibility) and the market (individual accountability); teacher educators' attitudes to competencies reflect their broader capacity to steer their way through that confluence rather than be buffeted by squalls blowing them in opposite directions.

Inclusive forms of governance constitute a further potential means whereby teacher educators can (re)negotiate their professionalism positively and productively. Two examples must suffice to illustrate what we mean here. The first is new forms of preparation of pre-service teachers.

Britain and the United Kingdom have led the move from basing this preparation in schools rather than universities, a move that has been welcomed by some teacher educators and criticised by many others. As Cherednichenko and her colleagues (Cherednichenko, Hooley, Kruger, Mulraney & Ryan, 1998, p. 41) assert, 'It is important to engage teachers and teacher educators in a process of defining and redefining their roles', a process that can be facilitated by new kinds of partnerships between these two groups, and that can in turn prompt greater mutual comprehension and support in facing the challenges to professional status of both groups prompted by the marketisation of education.

Our second example concerns international education. As Morris and Hudson (1995, p. 70) point out, 'Our goal is to make Australian university teachers more aware of the positive implications of international education for their teaching practices and approaches to the choice and design of curricula'. They identified these 'positive implications' as including beneficial changes in modes of delivery, group teaching, generic skills, curricula, teaching locations, communication skills, computer aided learning, assessment and role modelling. The point to emphasise is that what is a relatively new kind of partnership for teacher education faculties in universities such as the one described in this paper provides an opportunity to develop more inclusive forms of governance to take account of partners' aspirations and needs, and in the process to (re)negotiate the professionalisms of the teacher educators concerned as they respond to those aspirations and needs.

Finally, we emphasise that the struggle to achieve positive outcomes on the three fronts outlined above will not bear fruit overnight, nor are they able to be achieved for all time. (Re)negotiating the professionalisms of teacher educators is as much about teacher educators 'becoming' as it is about their 'being'. From this perspective, steering between the state and the market is both a means to an end and an end in itself. And the end is just beginning.

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