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## "NEW PRODUCTION CONCEPTS" and the Reconstruction of Teacher Education: A Post-Fordist Critique<sup>1</sup>

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### 1. Introduction

Education, as Simon Marginson (1993: 3) reminds us in his book *Education and Public Policy in Australia*, "is an important social activity... It plays a central role in public policy and political debate. [However] the politics of education are changing and volatile, with little consensus on some issues..." Nowhere is the political nature of change (and yet the lack of consensus about what is to be done) more apparent than in the confused and even muted debate over the restructuring of teacher education in Australia.

So why is this the case? The answer to this question would appear to lie in the fact that teacher education has been part of a constant state of change for more than a decade. This change has been occurring on at least two fronts. On one front teacher educators have faced the structural reorganisation of higher education. It began in earnest in early 1981 with the announcement by Prime Minister Fraser that "thirty tertiary institutions with high proportions of teacher education must amalgamate or receive no funding from January 1982 onwards" (Porter, 1986: 36)<sup>2</sup>. This resulted in a bitterly-fought round of inter-institutional power struggles which, at the same time, *recast* the colleges' relatively harmonious existence.

This process was painfully repeated in a second wave of amalgamations from 1988, following the collapse of the binary system of tertiary education and the establishment of the Unified System of Higher Education (Dawkins, 1988). The result of these shifts for many education faculties has been toward a narrowing of approaches<sup>3</sup> and the politicisation of institutional life, as education faculties have been forced to fight for their slice of the institutional cake.

When linked to the escalation in tertiary student numbers, the pressures to expand the role of the "academic" teacher educator to accommodate the newly-acquired research role, and a substantial decline in relative salaries, it is small wonder that many teacher educators have developed what can best be described as a siege mentality.

On a second front, rapid changes have followed a radical restructuring of the government schooling sector. Throughout the 1980s, all States in Australia sought to devolve significant responsibility to the school-site. This was an attempt to resolve a burdening financial crisis, while at the same time off-loading the political ramifications of diminished state services. This process of devolution, while cast in the rhetoric of democratically-oriented self-determination and a newly-found professionalism for teachers, was nonetheless bitterly contested and opposed by both teachers (Riley, 1992) and teacher educators. They argued that the shift toward new, leaner, corporate structures, and the unproblematic embracing of corporate managerialist and economic rationalist ideology and discourse, has undermined the potential for the realisation of educational and social values (Pusey, 1991). Some went further to argue that the devolution of schools might more accurately be described as the semi-privatization of the schooling system (Connors, 1989, cited by Knight *et al.*, 1993). These opposing discourses about devolutionary restructuring have, I would argue, created tensions between more critically-oriented teacher education faculties and the central administrations of the public schooling sector. In some cases, these traditional links have been severed altogether.

These changes in the schooling sector, as a result of devolutionary trends, have been further complicated by the Federally-driven shift toward a national curriculum, national testing, national standards, the implementation of workplace competencies, and the proposed establishment of a National Teaching Council (and national teacher registration).

An alarming consequence of such turmoil in the educational ivory tower has been that little attention has been given to the proposed restructuring of teacher education. In fact, like many of their school-based colleagues, the general stance of teacher educators has been that if the proposed changes are ignored long enough, they will obligingly disappear. However, I would argue that this stance is something akin to the frog and the slowly boiling water. The signals are simply not recognised or processed. Clearly the heat is being

turned up - yet many teacher educators have failed to grasp the fact that our wider environment is being transformed according to an agenda we know little about.

The purpose of this paper is to critically analyse the proposed reconstruction of teacher education in order to initiate a more systematic debate. To undertake this task, I will first locate the current proposals for the reform of teacher education in a brief historical context, before moving on to outline the proposed changes to teacher education (Ebbeck, 1990; DEET, 1992; Beazley (1993). I will argue that these policy shifts must be understood within the wider post-Fordist debate and that the *new production concepts of skilling, reprofessionalism and task integration* provide a useful basis on which to critique the current restructuring proposals. I will conclude my analysis by arguing that while there are significant advantages to be gained by moving toward a system of school-based training, these gains will not be made unless teacher educators have clear sense of the new policy terrain and its game rules.

### 2. Teacher Education in Australia: Responses to Crisis

Until the 1960s teacher education was primarily conducted in small, State-run specialised colleges, accounting for around 60 per cent of trainees. These colleges could accurately be described as traditional and practical.

In 1964, the Martin Report argued the case for increased Federal funding, greater autonomy, and an enhanced status for colleges. The result was "an influx of Commonwealth funds into teacher education [which coincided] with the conversion of many teachers colleges into colleges of advanced education" (Battersby and Retallick, 1988: 9).

By the late 1970s, the political and economic crisis in Australia, following the collapse of the Keynesian settlement, had directly impacted on the provision of education. This placed teacher education under the bureaucratic and media microscope. A continuous flurry of analyses followed. In 1978, Bassett reviewed teacher education in Queensland, to be followed by the Vickery Report in Western Australia (1980), the Correy Committee Report in New South Wales, and various Commonwealth reports, including the Auchmuty Report (1980).

These reports had two significant features (Battersby and Retallick, 1988: 11). Firstly, they were oriented toward *system maintenance*, with the reports focusing upon concerns such as an

adequate teacher supply, teachers' capacity to cope with changing circumstances and community confidence in teachers; secondly, they viewed the professional development of teachers as a *process of assimilation* into existing structures and values which public schools were seeking to instil. In other words, despite significant social and political pressure for change, these reports sought to maintain the existing hegemonic relations.

In critiquing what was regarded as a politically and socially moribund approach to teacher education, some teacher educators argued for a *paradigm shift* in the way in which teachers' work and teacher education were viewed. Drawing upon the work of critically-oriented cultural analysts such as Henry Giroux, Stanley Aronowitz and Peter McLaren, they sought a more emancipatory approach to teacher education. In Battersby and Retallick's words (1988: 12), "teacher education could be viewed as a counter-public sphere where the classroom is seen as a cultural milieu characterized by contestation, struggle and resistance". While there have been no revolutions led by teacher educators in faculty corridors, and indeed little inroads made into the development of a counter-hegemonic curriculum, it would be fair to argue that new sociology, critical theory and critical pedagogy have found their way into at least some undergraduate and postgraduate teacher education curricula.<sup>4</sup>

By the end of the 1980s the quality of teachers and their work, and by implication the nature of teacher training, was firmly on the agenda (c.f. OECD, 1989, 1989a; Schools Council, 1989, 1990, 1992; DEET, 1992; Beazley, 1993; Western Australian Ministry of Education, 1987; 1990). By this time the political and economic crisis was reflected (although some still sought to argue a causal relationship) within education itself. A string of reports highlighted concerns about the teaching profession: low self-esteem of teachers, poor career and salary prospects, a perceived lack of professional development opportunities, the lack of a meaningful dialogue with management, problems of teacher over-supply, and the pressing demand for accountability.<sup>5</sup>

A common feature of the reports was the linkage between teacher quality and economic performance<sup>6</sup> and the implication that teacher education institutions had failed to deliver a program relevant to the needs of teachers and students in schools or the Australian economy. Indeed, teacher educators were viewed by the "reforming zealots" as limited by their ivory tower mentality, thus compounding the problems for reform within the schooling system.

The first hint of a paradigm shift for teacher education came with a series of Federal reports placing the precise nature of teacher education squarely on the restructuring agenda. However, I will argue that these proposals, far from viewing teacher education as a counter-public sphere, had, as their purpose, its reformulation, in a bid to exercise greater social control. These proposals follow a similar pattern of teacher education restructuring in the United Kingdom.

### 3. Ebbeck: Radical Proposals for Change

In February 1990 Dr. Ebbeck presented to the Australian Education Council a report commissioned by the AEC entitled *Teacher Education in Australia*. The report, however, was hastily withdrawn following a major outcry from professional associations and teacher education bodies. Two brief statements have subsequently followed the Ebbeck proposals: *Teacher Education* (DEET, 1992) and *Teaching Counts* (Beazley, 1993).

These reports pursue the centralist stance of the Federal government, arguing the case for a preferred model of teacher education throughout Australia. The most significant of the recommendations was the proposal to offer a three-phase model of teacher education (with the emphasis on the first two phases). Phase One would involve students in a three-year degree comprising seven semesters. During this phase, trainee teachers undertake a programme of general and educational studies focused upon content knowledge and teaching skills. The report proposed that trainee teachers be encouraged to develop cognitive flexibility (in up to ten areas of expertise) and managerial and technical competence.

What is evident, however, is that trainee teachers would not be given the opportunity to develop critically-oriented and reflective competencies (such as in sociology, policy studies, educational politics). Further, these outcomes would be achieved by the extension of the trainee's normal six-semester academic program (over three years) to seven (over three years), having important implications for the labour process of teacher educators in Education faculties.

The most radical of the proposals for the restructuring of teacher education relates to Phase Two. Following the award of a first degree, students would then work as interns for a further two years period (on a prorata salary) in an assigned school under the supervision of an Advanced Skills Teacher in a form of "on-the-job training". This would have the effect of relocating

responsibility for the development of teacher competence firmly within the school. Interns would be regularly supervised by ASTs, expanding the role of the Advanced Skills Teacher considerably.

Not surprisingly, Ebbeck's proposals were received with more than mild hostility (although my sense is that few teacher educators have read the report or are even aware of the implications of the changes). This scattered hostility was not sufficient to deter the strategic and substantive intent of the state, as two later reports on teacher education (DEET, 1992; Beazley, 1993) reveal. In early 1993, the move toward school-based practice was formally announced, with the redirection of funds currently allocated to Universities for teacher professional development purposes (such as the practicum) to a Teacher Professional Development Fund (Beazley, 1993: 15). However expanding teachers' work roles in schools to include responsibility for teacher training will require substantial renegotiation of the Teaching Award - a process that is already under way.<sup>8</sup>

### 4. Workplace reform and post-Fordism

The transformation in the nature of schooling, teachers' work and thus teacher education, parallels a wider process of workplace reform in Australia, and is associated with a shift in thinking about the labour process, economic development and knowledge production within advanced western economies (Marginson, 1993).

This aggressive reform of all facets of teachers' work within Australia and internationally (curricula, training, work organisation) clearly suggests that the prevailing patterns of schooling and teacher training are no longer useful, and that a transformation is essential to underpin a new political and economic settlement.

In essence the game rules for policy production and implementation have altered with the emergence of a new regime of accumulation and new hegemonic strategies. Linked to this is a new public discourse regarding teachers' work which is consistent with the wider pattern of workplace reform: value-adding, enterprise bargaining, entrepreneurialism, working smarter, market niches, multiple-skilling, technological literacy, workteams, communication skills, and flexibility.<sup>10</sup> It is a discourse which provides a clear picture of the new type of skilled "teacher worker": a smarter, more highly skilled, self-managing, multi-skilled and flexible worker, able to work in teams and on a variety of tasks.

A number of analysts in Australia (Mathews, 1989; Campbell, 1989; Carmichael, 1989, 1989a) have taken up the wider international debate concerning the transformation of work and social relations (Aglietta, 1976; Rustin, 1986; Piore and Sabel, 1984; Roobeck, 1987; Kenney and Florida, 1988; Jessop, 1989; Wood, 1989; Harvey, 1990), arguing that these reforms represent a shift from Fordist to post-Fordist patterns of work organisation.

But what does Fordism and post-Fordism mean? The answer to this question is dependent upon which particular theoretical perspective is adopted (Watkins, 1993). Nonetheless there is some commonly observed phenomena: that (a) an essential feature of the Fordist era is as a strategy of work organisation and mechanization oriented to mass production and consumption, marketing, and utilizing economies of scale; (b) the control of workers was based upon Taylorist management strategies (such as the separation of conception from execution and a division of labour based upon specialized tasks)<sup>11</sup>; and (c), (while drawing out different implications) the Keynesian state has played a significant role in capitalist production since the Second World War.

A dominant perspective shaping the restructuring debate in Australia (c.f. Carmichael, 1989); Mathews, 1989; Curtain and Mathews, 1990) draws from the work of flexible specialization theorists such as Piore and Sabel (1984). In this perspective, flexible specialization is viewed as a particular pattern of economic organisation based upon a mass production industrial model. This pattern is a result of the tendency toward fragmenting markets made possible through new technologies. In short, the mass-production industrial model (which Piore and Sabel argue constitutes the first industrial divide) is increasingly obsolescent, and transformations are essential in order to regain competitiveness and productivity. In order to be competitive and productive in an environment increasingly fragmented and unstable, individual firms must move toward a system of "flexible specialism" - a strategy of permanent innovation requiring accommodation to constant change through the use of flexible machinery, small firms, and skilled craft workers.

In Australia, Carmichael (1989), Mathews (1989), Curtain and Mathews (1990) and Campbell (1989) have taken up the work of the German flexible specialization theorists Kern and Schumann (1989). Kern and Schumann (1984, 1987, 1989) argue that within Fordism, labour was viewed as an obstacle to productivity and competitiveness, and therefore had to be controlled by managed

patterns of work organisation - as in Taylorist forms. Taylorist practices, by reducing task autonomy and centralizing production knowledge away from the workplace, deskilled workers and exposed them to increasingly intensified work practices (Kern and Schumann, 1987). Not surprisingly workers found their own means of resisting such practices, ultimately sabotaging productivity.

However, Kern and Schumann argue that in a growing number of modernized and competitive core industries in Germany, Taylorist patterns of work organisation are being challenged and changed by new ways of viewing labour and the value of labour (1984: 59). These new ways can be identified as a set of *new production concepts* and include an explicit reliance on (i) increasingly skilled labour, (ii) task integration, and (iii) *reprofessionalisation* (Kern and Schumann, 1987: 161). According to Campbell (1989: 255), this (post-Fordist) worker is illustrative of "a new consciousness of the qualitative significance of human work performance and a new appreciation of the qualities of living labour."

It is easy to be tantalised by the hopefulness and opportunity these shifts in the labour process suggest. However, it is critical that we look more closely, not only at the precise form these workplace relations take (such as integration, reprofessionalisation and autonomy), but at the silences and omissions in the various arguments. For example, there is little talk by Mathews and Carmichael of some of the important distinctions and qualifications Kern and Schumann (1989) make about the post-Fordist worker. First, the new type of worker has *little real autonomy* but is integrated into the logic of a system that she or he has not devised and may not comprehend. More importantly, the new skilled worker must endure a greater degree of managerial control over the performance of the work. Second, there are "winners", "losers" and "tolerators" (see Kern and Schumann, 1987: 165-66) in the restructuring process typically resulting in a *core and two tiered periphery* workforce. The "winners" are a small group of well qualified workers who form a core workforce. The "losers" are an increasing number of workers who are either in industries where there are significant barriers to change, on short term contracts, or are casual and intermittent workers. These peripheral workers will become an increasingly larger but marginalised group. "Tolerators" on the other hand are a group of workers who, while supporting the core workers, are themselves blocked from entry into the core labour market. Third, the new production concepts are never likely to entirely replace Taylorism.

Rather, flexible specialism will result in a plurality of approaches (including Harvey [1990] argues Taylorist-oriented mass production, piecework, and various types of cottage industries). As a result, any benefits flowing from implementing "new production concepts" will not be widespread throughout the workforce. Fourthly, the emergence of the new skilled worker has gone hand-in-hand with the increased segmentation of unskilled workers whose prospects have worsened as a result of blockages to them entering the core workforce.

In Australia, policymakers and advocates such as Carmichael (1989) have made much of the need for increasing levels of and quantities of highly skilled labour (including in education) for future economic development. However, not all analysts agree with this likely future scenario. Campbell (1989), for example, queries the nature of skill that will be required by the new workers, arguing that there is little room for high level skill or competency. Rather, Campbell notes the likelihood of scope for greater managerial and technical competency.

A final comment concerns the neglect by some analysts to highlight the tendency toward deregulation within post-Fordism. As Roobeek (1987: 147) observes the "flexible use of labour depends not only on new production technologies, but also on the deregulation of labour conditions and wages as stipulated in collective bargaining agreements." As a result, the pressure has been to negotiate, not with trade unions, but directly with employees, making trade unions increasingly redundant. These trends are already evident within education.

##### 5. A post-Fordist critique

The shift toward devolving to schools significant responsibility for teacher training can be argued as having significant advantages. For a long time progressives have argued for more site-based practice in an effort to link theory and practice. In such an approach, trainee teachers could be exposed to a variety of role models in their active search for "the teacher within" (Nias, 1986: 3). As Nias observes, the professional development of teachers is a complex process concerned in a proactive way with the development of the person. It is nurtured by diversity and opportunities for reflection. However, current patterns of teacher education and the traditional structuring of the labour process of teaching (as an individual and isolated experience) results in a limited grasp of the range of alternative roles which might underpin a more critical practice.

Some teacher educators have gone further in their critique of existing practices, arguing that currently constituted teacher education programmes have been "damagingly bereft of any social conscience and social consciousness." Rather, they argue

*teacher education programmes have de-emphasized the struggle for teacher empowerment, serving merely to reproduce the technocratic and corporate ideologies that characterize the dominant society. In fact, it is reasonable to argue that teacher education programmes are designed to create intellectuals who operate in the interests of the state, whose social function is primarily to sustain and legitimate the status quo (Giroux and McLaren, 1988: 159-60).*

What is required is the reconstruction of teacher education as a public site, underpinned by a logic which Rconnects knowledge and power, doing and acting... commitment and collective struggles (Giroux and McLaren, 1988: 159) where teacher educators and teachers work together to theorize for schools rather than about schools.

So does the proposed restructuring of teacher education offer a terrain on which to rethink a more democratic approach to teacher training? My answer to this question is a guarded "yes". However, there are three qualifications I wish to make here. The first is that the current policy initiatives, when located and critiqued within the post-Fordist paradigm, can be seen as having the potential to constrain possibilities for emancipatory action. As I will argue below, the new production concepts of *task integration*, *reprofessionalisation* and *skilling* currently structuring the reconstruction of work within Australia are clearly evident in the policy discourse on teacher education.

My second point is that teacher educators must expose, through critique, the real agenda for the reconstruction of teacher education in order to exploit the opportunities for a recasting of teacher education. My third point concerns the need for teacher educators to work closely with teachers and trainee teachers in order to explore opportunities for collective and individual action in the search for new possibilities for democratic social action.

*(i) New production concepts and the language of critique*

The shift toward site-based approaches to teacher education, as in other areas of workplace training, has much merit. It offers opportunities for flexibility and relevance, and for keeping students

informed and up-to-date with regard to current curriculum initiatives in schools.

It is a shift, however, that has been motivated by a need to reduce state expenditure on teacher education faculties. Supervision, currently a large expenditure item, will be undertaken in schools in the proposed restructuring. Funds will then be reallocated to schools for professional development activities. The general view is that Advanced Skills Teachers (a result of the recent award restructuring process and the development of a career path in order to retain qualified teachers within the profession) will take on significant responsibility for the management of the intern programme.

This restructuring of the labour process of teaching also moves closer toward a core and tiered periphery labour market of teaching. In other words a small core of workers (administrators, advanced skills teachers, teachers) direct the activities within the school within the framework established by the central agency. The tiered periphery, made up of interns and paraprofessionals employed on contract or casually, provide increased labour flexibility. Reduced core staffing costs allows both the school and central agency to act responsively to changes in a more uncertain *market driven* environment. In anticipation of this shift the federal government has flagged the diminishing responsibilities of Education Faculties and initiated a process of down-sizing in its push toward labour flexibility in higher education.<sup>12</sup>

These shifts will have important implications for the labour process of teaching and for teacher education. Firstly, teacher labour will be typified by increased *task integration*. The AST will take on a broad range of activities: from the induction and supervision of interns and parent labour to the management of curriculum and decision-making activity within the school. This will intensify the work of the AST and other teachers within the school, leaving little opportunity for a critical engagement with interns within the school. My recent experience of this, while supervising students on an extended teaching practice, highlighted the need students have for thorough and systematic feedback.

The student intern, on the other hand, will be expected to undertake normal duties when at school, while at the same time, undertaking part-time studies (and paid on a pro-rata basis). However, unless carefully managed, this dual approach to the training of teachers is more than likely to result in little time for adequate

experimentation or reflection on the part of the student teacher or intern. Rather, the intern is likely to be caught in the daily struggle for survival in the classroom, leaving little opportunity for observation, for linking theory to practice, and sharing ideas.

Nias has argued that the professional socialization of teachers is concerned with the development of the person. It is not a matter of picking up a set of skills and thus determining one has become a teacher! "Doing teaching" takes time and requires opportunities for systematic and critical reflection (1986: 22). This process must be linked to an understanding of our social and political histories - our pasts and our futures. When teachers fail to make these sorts of connections - to feel competent as workers and persons - evidence suggests that teachers experience this both as an ethical matter and as undermining their professional and personal integrity (Nias, 1986). In short, simplifying the process of teaching takes away any opportunity for empowerment of teachers and, consequently, for the empowerment of students.

Much of the argument for restructuring the work of teachers and teacher education has been couched in the rhetoric of a new professionalism, or the reprofessionalization of teaching. However, I would argue that the proposed limited curriculum experiences during Phase One within the universities (focused on *skills* and *specific content*), coupled with a significant loss of control over the curriculum within schools (in the move toward competencies, standardized testing, and the national curriculum), suggest a significant loss of autonomy and control. There is little to indicate opportunities for an authentic professionalism here. Rather, as much of the literature on professionalism has made clear, notions of professionalism merely act to neutralize and depoliticize teachers, instead incorporating them as agents in the reproduction of the system of inequality.

Further, as Soucek (1993) also points out in relation to the Mayer/Finn school-based competency debate, the move toward skills and specific technical competencies ignores complex areas of morally and socially infused contextual knowledge central to the development of a critical and emancipatory schooling practice. The asymmetrical relations of power (as a result of gender, ethnicity or class), which structure the social relations of schooling, are left unproblematic. Teacher education thus collapses into the realm of technical competence. What might have been a site for debate and reflection



about social justice, democracy and political possibility is denied.

It remains to be seen whether developments such as the Certification Authority in Teacher Education (CATE) in the UK find their way onto the Australian scene. The recent vetoing of the National Teaching Council by the various States leaves in doubt, at least for the immediate future, the precise nature of controls over teacher education courses.

Finally, I would argue that the radical restructuring of teacher education and notions of skilling have importing implications. That is, a transformed process of teacher education is central to the production of the new "skilled" teacher worker for schools. Such teachers will, in turn, reproduce the new social relations of production (focused around co-operative approaches, team-work, flexibility, workplace skills, and so on). This process is best "administered" or "managed" in a controlled environment (away from the critical voices of academics).

The second issue related to skilling concerns what I would argue are the limitations resulting from an inadequate level of professional knowledge amongst teachers. This curtails supervising teachers' capacities to offer real insight to teacher trainees over a range of theoretical and practical issues. In their 1989 *Profile of Teachers in Australian Schools* sponsored by the Australian College of Education, Logan et al (1990: 23) report a disquieting percentage of teachers of Year 12 students who reported no formal post-school studies in the subject they were teaching. And while between 50 to 70% of teachers in areas such as English Literature, foreign languages, mathematics and humanities had completed an honours degree or three years of tertiary study in the subject they taught, the question arises as to whether this is sufficient to promote excellence in teaching. The data suggests that classroom teachers are least likely to be undertaking formal courses (around 40%) (Logan et al., 1990). Clearly classroom teachers carry many burdens throughout the school year which make it difficult for them to devote time to full-time study. However, engaging in a major process of skill upgrading and professional development will be an impossible financial burden for the state. This will only be mediated if, somehow, teachers are encouraged to assume much of the cost themselves. This raises important equity considerations given the heavily gendered nature of teachers' work.

### (ii) the language of possibility

There is no doubt that the shift toward new work structures and practices for teachers and teacher educators marks out a period of fundamental change for education in Australia. Such shifts, as many analysts are quick to remind us, can be something of a double-edged sword. While these changes have arisen as a result of system imperatives, they also provide an opportunity for discursive interventions by teachers and teacher educators.

Clearly there is much to be debated. Notions of skilling, reprofessionalism and task integration are key new production concepts in the post-Fordist labour debate. However, they offer limited promise in teachers or teacher educators bids for greater workplace democracy. Neither have been provided or promised an opportunity to negotiate the changing shape of their work. Rather, their work has increasingly been moulded by economic imperative and expediency, and is largely the outcome of the state's struggle for control. The outcome of this struggle for teachers and teacher educators has been to take on diverse pedagogical and managerial tasks, at the same time undermining what can be best described as already diminished pedagogical opportunities. To date there has been little interest in what educators themselves might want as a profession. It would appear that promises of increased professionalism have been largely empty rhetoric. Rather, I would argue that teachers and teacher educators will be confronted with increased control over the conditions and nature of their work at the same time as their labour intensifies within a context of institutional "down-sizing" and the deregulation of schooling.

### (iii) Collective action and teacher educators

This dramatic shifting in the political and ideological terrain will result in the proletarianization of the labour of teacher educators. It remains to be seen whether these bastions of conservatism will foster resistance and contestation. Some of us already observe the onset of the withdrawal of labour by our colleagues. However, it is only when this contestation is linked to a capacity to conceptualize teacher education as part of a wider political and social struggle that the moment of collective struggle and emancipation will become possible. This requires teacher educators to move beyond their siege mentalities and out of their ivory-covered towers, and to work collectively with teachers and student teachers to theorize for schooling and schooling reform.

I would like to argue that teacher educators, along with their school-based colleagues, need to formulate and progress their own agenda for change. This must entail an articulation of the nature of *professional knowledge* and *levels of competence* and these must be placed on the table for debate. Such notions of competency must critically evaluate the way in which the political and economic spheres have linked workplace competence and skill to the industrial agenda. Clearly our notions of competence must be infused with a moral and ethical imperative tied to the development of a critical citizenry.

Second, as teacher educators we must work to *create an environment* within academia and at the school site which values diversity, complexity, difference and questioning. Student teachers must feel free at every point in their development as potential teachers to make problematic the nature of knowledge and social relationships in our society in order that they can link their insights and critical reflections to emancipatory action.

Third, we must be constantly *strategic* in our action. As teacher educators we need to ask questions about the changes that are occurring and ask: who is being represented, whose voices are heard, in whose interests does this occur? This includes lobbying for a legitimate place in key forums such as the proposed National Teaching Council, by undertaking strategic research, and working on a terrain that opens up possibilities for discursive intervention and action.

Finally, as teacher educators we must use their *public voices*. They must develop a genuine dialogue and partnership with teachers in schools. We must present our views in key forums, undertake research and make those results known. It will only be through this kind of leadership that a more critical teacher education will be placed on the restructuring agenda.

## 6. Conclusion

In this paper I have sought to describe and provide a critical analysis of the proposed radical restructuring of teacher education. Such restructuring, I have suggested, must be addressed and negotiated by teacher educators. Further, I argued that while there has been a series of reports into teacher education since the early 1980s in response to the political and economically induced crisis in education, the current proposals for reform have failed to really provide opportunities for a more radical set of changes that would ultimately work in the interests of students.

The radical transformations taking place in the political economy have resulted in a new set of production rules for how policy is both formulated and implemented and is linked to a new phase in the mode of production some have labelled as "post-Fordist". According to "new production concept" theorists, it is a system rooted in flexible technologies, division of labour and working methods. At the same time there is increasing evidence of changes to the way in which labour is employed and controlled.

I have also argued that the focus on teachers' work organisation, and more particularly the structure and nature of teacher education, emerges from an agenda seeking to establish a new accumulation regime with tightened ideological and structural controls. Neither the teacher educator nor the intern will be valued for their pedagogical insights and their capacity to develop students critical thinking and intellectual and social autonomy. Rather teacher educators will be valued for their capacity to deliver, efficiently and cheaply, the essential necessary skills for the labour market and the appropriate attitudes to facilitate social integration in what will be increasingly experienced as hard and troubled times.

The new regime's themes of skilling and flexibility have become a powerful conservative vortex, recasting the nature of worker and citizen captured in a state of total administration. Their increasingly one dimensional, depoliticized, and privatised lives are progressively sapped of their own inner hopes, desires and dreams. Teachers and teacher educators must work together to find their own political voices in a counter-hegemonic struggle as impassioned crusaders for a more democratic and socially-just future.

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#### End Notes

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank my two reviewers for the comments they made on this manuscript. While I accept responsibility for the final form, their views were very helpful in refining sections.

<sup>2</sup> These forced amalgamations were the result of (a) the Federal government's economically-driven desire to prune the cost of higher education; (b) the need to promote institutional diversity for economic competitiveness; and (c), the specific need to reduce teacher education as a result of demographic factors.

<sup>3</sup> For example, when the three colleges which later made up the Western Australian College of Advanced Education merged, pressures arose for courses on each of the campus (e.g. education), to be common with regard to objectives, readings, and examinations, effectively curtailing the possibility for diversity on each of the campuses.

<sup>4</sup> For example, in areas such as educational sociology and educational policy studies.

<sup>5</sup> I would also point out that teachers increasingly reported job stress, while large numbers took their protests to the streets and engaged in strike action.

<sup>6</sup> It is nonetheless important to make a distinction between very different interpretations for the crisis. One view maintains that the economic crisis is in large part a consequence of the failure of the education system to turn out literate and skilled graduates. The other perspective is that the crisis within the education system is a result of the economic and legitimacy crises which have plagued most western economies since the early 1970s.

<sup>7</sup> This body is made up of all State Ministers for Education and the Federal Minister for Education.

<sup>8</sup> The Teachers' Award is currently being examined by the Industrial Relations Commission. This would facilitate a change in the precise nature of responsibilities for teachers and payment for their involvement in the training process.

<sup>9</sup> This discourse is consistent across industries, for example the type of competencies required to effect education and workplace reform, or the metals or high-tech industries.

<sup>10</sup> See as examples of the shift in terminology the Mayer Committee's 1992 Reports Putting General Education to Work or Employment Related Competencies, and the School Council's 1992 report Developing Flexible Strategies in the Early Years of Schooling: Purposes and Possibilities.

<sup>11</sup> Those who focus upon the labour process itself and mass production, such in the techno-economic/flexible specialism perspective, date Fordism from the First World War. Mass production became a force especially in the munitions industry. It was taken up as a more universal strategy in the period following the Second World War where it was widely viewed as the golden age of mass production. The Regulation School, because of their focus upon the political economy and institutional structures, focus upon the period following the Second World War.

<sup>12</sup> With an allocation of funds from the Federal government to assist this process (c.f. Beazley, 1993: 12).