Perspectives and Imperatives

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION AND THE REDEFINITION OF WHO DOES IT IN SCHOOLS

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In the current climate of educational reform (or restructuring, teacher empowerment, leadership, etc.) some profound changes are occurring in educational supervision. Age-old forms of authoritarian hierarchical surveillance are breaking down. Collegial forms of site-based management, participation, and other forms of devolution are replacing the old methods.

The widespread rekindled interest in teacher collaboration, in particular, is neither incidental nor accidental. It is part of a broader strategy (deliberate or otherwise) to harness teachers more effectively to the work of economic reconstruction. The ultimate irony is that while teachers and schools worldwide are being sold the idea that they should be more autonomous and responsive to local needs, they are also being told in no uncertain terms what their outcomes must be and how they must strive to meet national priorities and enhance international competitiveness. Teachers, therefore, are supposedly being given more autonomy at the school level at precisely the same time that the parameters in which they are expected to work and against which they will be evaluated are being tightened and made more constraining.

Hargreaves and Dawe describe this peculiar paradox of teachers “apparently being urged to collaborate more, just at the moment when there is less for them to collaborate about.”

A change is occurring in the “pedagogic codes” of supervision and evaluation—from ones that were visible and strongly framed to ones that are invisible and weakly framed. But as Hargreaves and Dawe say, the managerial is still decidedly there, it just has a different face. The emphasis is on “building

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a professional culture of teaching which is more responsive and receptive to change, [and this has become] an important managerial priority."

The dilemma confronting us hinges on wanting to develop collaborative structures but using them for essentially managerial ends. This "hanging on while letting go" syndrome is a solution characteristic of the wider economic crisis facing Western capitalist countries. For an explanation of how this phenomena is being worked through in the wider educational arena, we have to turn to the dual crisis of capital accumulation and democratic legitimation afflicting Western capitalist economies—their desire to reproduce labor power of the right kind to serve the requirements of capital (thus the strong moves toward centralizing the curriculum as the mode of ensuring conformity) while devising ways to maximize the flexibility, creativity, and understanding teachers have of their work processes and of how learning occurs (thus the moves toward acknowledging teachers' practical knowledge, teachers' theories of action, and their potential to work collaboratively). In labor process terms:

Within capitalism there is a perpetual tension between treating workers as a commodity to be hired and fired (thus the lack of regard for teachers' capacity to conceptualize their work and the need for people other than teachers to do that) and harnessing their ingenuity and co-operativeness (thus the trend toward an apparent relaxation of control and allowing teachers the flexibility to make decisions collaboratively about their work).4

Management has always been caught on a cleft stick on this one, wanting to simultaneously control the work process by prescribing knowledge and action but at the same time realizing that they are unable to maximize output unless they successfully appropriate workers' knowledge. This reality is especially so in periods of protracted international crisis when profits are falling and competitiveness is declining and where the nature of work needs significant restructuring.5 This situation is no different in schools than it is in any other kind of industrial enterprise. According to Taylor, that doyen of scientific management, one of management's first duties is "the deliberate gathering in on the part of those on management side of all the great mass of traditional knowledge, which in the past has been in the heads of workmen and in the physical skill and knack of the workmen which they have acquired through years of experience."6

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My argument is that the notion of collegiality is becoming intricately bound up with the nature of teachers' work and questions about who exerts the predominant influence in shaping it at particular historical moments. Collegiality is, therefore, much more than a desirable teacher-to-teacher relationship. It is a policy option being effectively wielded at the moment to dramatically redefine what skill and competency in teaching mean in the light of national economic imperatives. We need to focus discussion, therefore, on explanations that cast light on why collegial and cooperative processes are being so widely touted as attractive policy options.

In my own state of Victoria, Australia, for example, we have seen over a decade of moves by the state to restructure education in the direction of devolution. Part of the state's efforts have focused on fostering collegiality among teachers. We have also had an extensive history of professionalism being used as the whipping horse with which to manufacture forms of consent that constrain teachers' work. In Australia, we are experiencing, as well, an unprecedented rash of corporatist moves to create continuums of professional development for teachers and all manner of local partnerships between education systems and inservice education providers. These partnerships are specifically aimed at engineering the "intellectual ferment and the development of critical analyses of practice and performance [deemed] essential to the health of systems." The emerging partnerships claim to provide collegial on-the-job professional development for teachers, but in this context the steerage and policy directions are unquestionably being framed from outside of schools, with teachers being incorporated (co-opted?) to work out the implementation details.

Little has a similar opinion of U.S. teachers. According to her, American teachers have generally been excluded from curriculum policy decisions, a situation that further underscores the "dim view of teachers' knowledge" widely held by outsiders. Although there is much discussion about collegiality in Australia, too, the reality is that most teachers are excluded from the substance of policy decisions affecting them and, at least partly, for reasons of their own making.

This situation fits with what Hargreaves argues is a "contrived" form of collegiality characterized by

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a set of formal, specific bureaucratic procedures to increase the attention being given to joint teacher planning and consultation. It can be seen in initiatives such as peer coaching, mentor teaching, joint planning in specially provided rooms, formally scheduled meetings and clear job descriptions and planning programs for those in consultative roles. These sorts of initiatives are administrative contrivances designed to get collegiality going in schools where little has existed before. They are meant to encourage greater association among teachers: to foster more sharing, learning, and improvement of skills and expertise. Contrived collegiality is also meant to assist the successful implementation of new approaches and techniques from the outside into a more responsive and supportive school culture.\footnote{Grimmett pinpoints the problem. The difficulty with this approach, he says, is that it stresses "fulfilling the form of collegiality without regard for the spirit or underlying assumptions of interdependence. It is as if it has become mandatory that practitioners collaborate voluntarily."\textsuperscript{13} What results, according to Grimmett, is a form of "collaborative pretense" that avoids a "public outworking of beliefs" and values about teaching, and in its place is substituted a procedure to satisfy the "requirements of the bureaucratic hierarchy or those of the innovation under experiment"\textsuperscript{14} Instead of teachers engaging in a process of critiquing "the purposes and processes inherent in the required actions"—or as Harris says, exploring "an ensemble of particular lived ideologies each of which [represents] a socially constructed set of practices, rituals, and behaviors interrelated with one another and with certain concepts and images"—what we have, instead, is a process that construes participation as a "co-requisite of responsible professionalism."\textsuperscript{15} To become involved with one's colleagues in observation, talk, and sharing is to become implicated in "impression management" to avoid being labeled unprofessional.\textsuperscript{18} A set of structures are, therefore, set in place that produce a measured response from teachers as they find a way of acquiescing and playing the game. After all, what does a teacher have to gain from having his work examined? Since there are no punishments for not exposing one's behavior and many dangers in doing so, the prudent teacher gives lip-service to the idea and drags both feet.\textsuperscript{19}}

\footnotetext[14]{Peter Grimmett, "Teacher Development and the Culture of Collegiality, Part 2," \textit{Australian Administrator} 11 (No. 6, 1990): 1.}
\footnotetext[15]{Ibid, p 2}
\footnotetext[16]{Kevin Harris, \textit{Education and Knowledge: The Structured Misrepresentation of Reality} (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 87.}
\footnotetext[17]{Peter Grimmett, "Teacher Development and the Culture of Collegiality, Part 2," \textit{Australian Administrator} 11 (No. 6, 1990). 2.}
\footnotetext[18]{Ibid}
CONTROLLING THE WORK OF TEACHERS?

Professionalism in teaching is becoming a hot issue again. We are witnessing a resurgence of the idea that to act professionally, teachers must be prepared to enter a partnership with the state in return for varying degrees of "limited or licensed professionalism." This "mock partnership" in which "teamwork" and "cooperation" are becoming central expressions of the new work relations amounts, in effect, to an ideological form of control over how teachers relate to others in the course of their work. To display "collegiality" means to be able to work as "part of groups and teams" in the policy and decision-making process in schools and amounts to a form of "indirect rule" that is increasingly coming to characterize discussion about the management of schools. Lawn and Ozga borrow the term indirect rule from the notion of British colonial administration, which had "the appearance of decentralization and devolution, with a quasi autonomous role for the 'natives' which ensured their co-option, while the major powers of government remained firmly in British hands."22

In education, indirect rule has meant a gradual "rejection of direct prescriptive controls" and in its place a process that relies much more on engineering broad forms of consensus.24 Lawn and Ozga note that as with the colonial experience, emancipation is only for parts of the system—it does not mean endangering "real tactical control," but rather dispensing with some of the more burdensome aspects of unnecessary central power.24

Against this background, such newspaper headlines as "Teachers are switching from order-takers to decision-makers" need to be tempered with a healthy degree of skepticism.25 Indeed, the Pittsburgh Teacher Professionalism Project may turn out to be a particular case in point. Although its laudable goals may well be "to expand professional roles for teachers, to broaden instructional leadership opportunities for teachers, ... to provide general advancement opportunities for teachers, ... [to] bring teachers into the policy making process, ... [and for] management and labor jointly [to] establish

23Ibid.
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instructional teams to work out teaching problems," we need to be extremely careful about the downside of schemes like this one. As Lawn says, schemes preaching collegiality can often be about new forms of delegated management in which teachers take on jobs that "make them supervisors of other staff," with the principal "no longer [being] sole manager of the school . . . [but] a kind of middle manager not creating but enforcing policy in a more directed way." Under these circumstances, collegiality and teamwork actually mean "the spread of management and supervision and its fragmentation so that an element of it is now included in [teachers'] job description." Rather than becoming equal collegial peers, teachers become agents charged with policing one another's oppression.

One thing becomes clear from the Pittsburgh Teacher Professionalism Project. Little real devolution of control to teachers will occur. In exchange for being accorded more "professional status" and an unspecified involvement in the policy-making process, teachers will be expected to engage in "peer review." According to Superintendent Wallace, "if teachers truly wish to be professional and to participate in decision-making they need to be willing to evaluate each other, as other professionals do." These schemes purporting to employ collegiality are being pushed in the United States under such labels as lead teacher, consulting teacher, team leader, mentor, learning strategist, support teacher, peer coach, teacher trainer, and clinical resident teacher.

This "contrived collegiality" is posited as an enlightened alternative to "telling teachers what to do" and is an approach designed to "empower" teachers and make them "majority shareholders in efforts to push public schooling ahead in the 21st century." According to Berry:

This conceptualization of school reform and teacher professionalism posits that teachers establish the standards of teaching while administrators (primarily principals)—as school stewards—facilitate and nurture collegiality and experimentation to create the time and space for professionalism to develop.

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26 Pittsburgh Post Gazette, 1 June 1987.
28 Ibid., p. 167
30 Pittsburgh Post Gazette, 1 June 1987.
34 Barnett Berry, "Creating Lead Teachers. A Policy Alternative for Rewarding Talented Teachers" (South Carolina Educational Policy Center, University of South Carolina, 1988), p. 20.
35 Ibid.
Further:

Lead teachers are a vehicle for rewarding excellent teachers, retaining them as classroom teachers, and empowering other teachers to act independently, to collaborate with others, and render critical judgment... [They] will assume new responsibility for curriculum, student discipline, and community relations... [and] will be paid comparably to other professional managers.36

Berry notes that U.S. teachers have been skeptical of practices differentiating between categories of teachers.37 He cites Devaney, who claims teacher leadership has meant "privilege for a few teachers whose elevation will help convince taxpayers that rare teaching excellence is being rewarded and will stand as incentive for other teachers to improve."38

CONSIDERING THE CHANGING CLIMATE

We need first to view these changes in the context of what Demaine argues has been a dramatic shift in control over teachers’ work: away from a form of “producer capture” that was supposedly characterized by laxity, an ascendency of the “soft” subjects, teacher control over the curriculum, and declining standards and toward a form of “consumer capture” that stresses rigor, accountability, common standards, stringent appraisal, assessment, and evaluation.39 In short, according to Sachs and Smith, a shift to forms of privatization of education based on a culture of competitive and possessive individualism has occurred.40 In Britain, professionalism has come to mean “cooperativeness,” and teamwork and cooperation have been co-opted as part of the new work relations. Teachers’ involvement in the policy-making process and the surveillance of their colleagues will become just another “part of the formal organization of schoolwork... described as the ‘corporate development’ of the school.”41

The shift in emphasis from direct to more participative forms of control has been an extremely deft slip of the hand. In moving from one form of professionalism characterized by classroom-based isolation, we have embraced another form of professionalism that involves collective schoolwide responsibility “based on narrowly defined though complex tasks within a

36Ibid, p. 10.
37Ibid.
38Kathleen Devaney, “The Lead Teacher: Ways to Begin” (paper prepared for the Taskforce on Teaching as a Profession, Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1987), p. 6
context of shared management functions, clearly defined and appraised." In Australia, if Western Australia is anything to go by, the state has certainly not devolved to schools the power to determine what the ends of education should be. In decidedly candid terms, Angus says.

Quite the opposite. Underpinning the paradigm is the belief that better performance will result from *sharper focusing on systemic priorities*. What is being devolved to schools is the actual authority (and capacity) to determine the way in which the school will achieve the agreed outcomes.

The situation is much the same in the United States, where, according to the Carnegie Forum, teachers will be free only to "decide how best to meet state and local goals for children while [being held] accountable for their progress." Under these conditions, collegiality is, therefore, not a desirable personal characteristic of teachers, but rather becomes a "technical requirement" embodied in job descriptions and specifications.

Needless to say, while many (perhaps even most) schools and school systems still rely heavily on directive, prescriptive, and oppressive forms of control, teachers' work is becoming increasingly controlled through the orchestration of explicit meanings attached to notions like professionalism, cooperation, and teamwork. Although equality of status for teachers may seem to be accorded to some, in reality a constrained form of professionalism results that is heavily conditional on teachers promoting and exhibiting specific kinds of professional behavior. Expressed in these terms, professionalism becomes a measured response to the need to structurally rework the relationship between the economy and schooling in periods of legitimation and motivational crisis in capital accumulation. Professionalism thus becomes a way of "controlling teachers ideologically... by means of finely tuned tactical control in a system which now need[s] guiding, not directing."  

Hartley's discussion of teachers' inservice education in Scotland poignantly illustrates what he calls "guided volunteering" in a style of "consultative centralism." The policymakers there preferred the collaborative model of staff development being mandated over the directive model. As Hartley points out, however, "consultation" and "collaboration" occurred "only between contiguous strata of the educational bureaucracy,... [and] in the last

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42Ibid., p. 166.
44Ibid, p. 166.
analysis, the needs of officialdom will prevail over those of teachers.\(^4\) In what is becoming an all too common scenario, he cites a government document on inservice education clearly stating that the "collaborative, consultative staff development strategy only permits the discretion of teachers within the broad parameters of its educational policy. [The] central government defines the premises and sets the agenda for action, the teachers 'develop' professionally within that framework."\(^48\) In the words of the document.

The strength of personal professional development is that it generates enthusiasm and commitment among teachers who are doing things which they themselves have chosen. Its weakness is that teachers may not be channeling their energy and enthusiasms in directions which seem important. . . . It therefore does not guarantee that the most important needs of the school or the authority are being met.\(^49\)

Despite the outward appearances of teachers being sold a collaborative and consultative model, teachers actually remain, through the management of consent, the servants of the state. A nondirective management strategy at work here has the external gloss of modernity, but it amounts to eliciting teachers' compliance to old underlying forms of authoritarianism.

In Australia, too, we see precisely the same tendencies. Teacher appraisal is being implemented through mechanisms of "performance review interview." Teachers (and university faculty as well) are being courted to hold collaborative discussions with "trusted colleagues" (usually hierarchically superior to them and in the line management function of the organization) with a view to simultaneously satisfying their individual needs and those of the organization in a framework of institutional profiles and mission statements.\(^50\) Here the "culture of collegiality"\(^51\) becomes considerably tarnished in a context where teachers' professional development needs are considered relevant only insofar as they fit within organizational objectives.\(^52\)

**CONCLUSION**

The increased international interest in teacher collegiality through its various forms of school-based professional development is not what it seems at first glance. We are experiencing a worldwide phenomena similar to earlier moves that restructured control over teachers' work by redefining professionalism. The strategy gives the outward appearances of participative and collabo-

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\(^4\)Ibid., p. 233.  
\(^46\)Ibid.  
\(^48\)Ibid. (Hartley's italics).  
\(^51\)Basil Moore and Alan Reid, 'Appraisal. Teachers or Teaching?' *Curriculum Perspectives* 10 (October 1990): 58–62.
rative ways of working, but on closer inspection it amounts to a policy option that co-opts teachers and gives them little more than control over the implementation aspects of teaching in a context of rigidly formulated, centrally prescribed educational guidelines. If collegiality is in fact being used as a managerial tool in the guise of a professional development process to coerce teachers into doing the bland work of economic reconstruction, then we should not be altogether surprised if most teachers shun the process and adopt ways of effectively neutralizing it.53

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53This is an abridged and shortened version of “International Perspectives on Teacher Collegiality: A Labour Process Discussion Based on the Concept of Teachers’ Work,” a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Comparative and International Education Society, Pittsburgh, March 1991.