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Is Teaching a Profession: How Would We Know?

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Is teaching a profession? This is an unprofitable formulation of the question. The concept of a profession is an ideal type (Haller & Strike, 1986). An ideal type will consist of a set of characteristics that specifies what constitutes a pure case (Hoy & Miskel, 1987). Among the characteristics that are often supposed to define professions are the possession of an esoteric knowledge base, a long and substantial amount of training required for entrance, the existence of a professional association that can speak authoritatively for the occupation, a code of ethics, significant professional autonomy, and a strong orientation toward service and client welfare. Such characteristics will be fully exemplified only by a few paradigm cases. The usual paradigm cases of professions are fee-for-services occupations such as medicine and law. Most cases of professions will lack some of these characteristics or possess them in lesser degree than these paradigm cases. These will be "quasi-professions." Teaching will be a quasi-profession since it will have some characteristics of a profession, but will have them to a lesser extent than the paradigm cases of professions. What do we gain by trying to decide if teaching *really* qualifies as a profession? Why not focus instead on a description of the characteristics that the occupation does have or should have?

One response might be that if it is believed that teaching is a profession, we will act differently. The status of the occupation will be enhanced. We may pay teachers better. We may find recruitment easier. We may have different policies about teacher education, teacher certification, or the management of schools (Howsam, 1980). We may organize teacher evaluation better. Policies and politics often turn on words and symbols.

But if policy turns on what we decide about whether teaching is a profession, why not formulate a conception of what a profession is to fit the requirements of policy? In this article I pursue this approach. Here I want to ask whether the occupation of teaching has or could have those characteristics, often associated with the professions, that justify certain authority relations. I am especially concerned about deciding whether teaching has characteristics that warrant autonomy and self-governance. Thus I will not seek to decide whether teaching is a profession in any general way. I will instead consider whether teaching is a profession in that it has characteristics that warrant significant autonomy and self-governance.

I shall hold that treating teaching as a self-governing profession involves the erosion of democratic authority over schooling. If so, the arguments for teaching being a profession must justify this erosion. Often the reason given for holding that professions are entitled to significant self-governance and autonomy is that professional practice is grounded in a knowledge base that is esoteric, a product of long academic preparation, and thus not readily available to lay persons or public officials. This being the case, decisions must be made by professionals who, in virtue of superior expertise, are in a position to make competent decisions. My analysis will focus on this argument.

Professionalism and democracy

I begin with two assumptions. The first is that central to the idea of a profession is the relationship between a guild and an esoteric body of knowledge (Kimbal, 1988). The relationship involves authority and legitimacy. The guild claims authority over the work of its members. It will seek to set standards for competent practice, set educational standards, determine membership, judge malpractice, and gain autonomy from interference in practice by the non-initiated. This authority is legitimated by the possession of an esoteric knowledge base that grounds the practice of the members of the guild. The standard argument is that, because practice is grounded in an esoteric knowledge base, only initiates into the profession are able to make and execute the judgments on which competent practice depends. Thus, if clients are to be protected from incompetent practice, significant authority over practice must be ceded to the profession.

The second assumption is that professionalism is a form of governance and accountability. As a form of accountability professionalism is in competition with other forms of accountability, especially free choice and democratic control. Free choice protects consumers of a service by allowing them to choose those whom they believe will provide the desired quality of service. It subjects practice to market discipline. Professionalism competes with consumer sovereignty in that professional licensing restricts market availability. In cases where collective choice is appropriate, the practice of some occupation can be regulated by democratic authority. Practitioners may work for a public agency (schools or hospitals, for example) to which they are accountable. Here professionalism competes with democracy in that the self-regulation and autonomy of professionals diminishes legislative and administrative control over the service professionals provide.

For teaching, it is the competition between professionalism and democracy that is of interest. Most teachers work in public agencies. While teachers work directly for administrators, and while they may work within organizations that are bureaucratically organized, administrative and bureaucratic authority derive from legislative authority. School boards are legislatures. Educational law and policy are made by state legislatures or by those who are responsible to them. Thus, the aspirations of teachers to organize as a self-regulating profession is competitive with this "democratic/bureaucratic" authority.

Professions' claim to authority over their work is justified by expertise. The appeal is to Plato's principle, "Those who know should rule." Values other than expertise are more central to democracy. Democratic forms of government are justified by appeal to such ideas as equal rights and the consent of the governed. Democratic and professional forms of authority can be mixed in institutions. In our society such mixtures are common. Moreover, no form of professionalism that seeks to dispense with democratic sovereignty is likely to succeed. In a democracy, professions will be legitimated by democratic bodies and ultimately accountable to them. Such autonomy and self-governance as they attain must be within a democratic framework.¹ Nevertheless, the professionalization of an occupation requires that democratic authority be kept at arm's length. Otherwise the notion that the profession is autonomous and self-regulating is mere fiction.

Two things follow. First, the principles that justify democratic authority and professionalism are different and competitive. Second, insofar as professionals control their work, their work will not be controlled democratically. The practical result is that, to the degree that teachers actually function as professionals, their decisions and their work will be beyond the immediate reach of legislators, administrators, and school boards.

These initial assumptions about professionalism suggest what is at stake in the attempt to professionalize teaching. Democracy and its associated values are at stake. Professionalization is not fundamentally a matter of training or recruiting better educated teachers or of respecting them and their judgment. It is fundamentally a matter of creating institutions that alter the authority relations between legislative and administrative power and that of the guild. When we are done professionalizing teaching, the guild will have more to say about how children are educated, and legislators and administrators will have less. A successful argument for the professionalization of teaching must show that such diminishment of democratic authority is justified.

The standard argument appeals to considerations of utility. Professional forms of accountability, when they are appropriate, are held to be superior to democratic forms because they yield better decisions and a higher quality of practice, and thus serve and protect the public interest or the interests of clients best. The incapacity of democratic forms of accountability to succeed in those areas where professionalism is appropriate is linked to the fact that the public, consumers, or members of legislatures are not initiates into the knowledge base. It is the lengthy training in this knowledge base that assures us that the judgment of professionals will be sound and that professionals will be attuned to the standards of professional practice and the needs of clients.

Note three things about this argument form.

First, it assumes that the imperative for democratic forms of accountability can be overcome by considerations of utility. Improvement of practice and gains in protection of the public interest must be sufficient reasons to prefer professional forms of accountability. This assumption is not self-evident. It may be far from self-evident to those for whom democracy is justified by considerations where the appeal to utility is not central (as is characteristic of rights based or social contract

theories (Rawls, 1974; Locke, 1960). However, in our society, professions are legitimated and regulated by democratic bodies. Professionalism need not be an abrogation of the ultimate sovereignty of the people. The issue must therefore be posed as one concerning the optimal mix of democratic and professional forms of accountability.

Second, a crucial element in the argument for professionalization must be that a knowledge base with suitable characteristics actually exists. It is fundamentally the existence of a suitable knowledge base that legitimates the control of a profession over its work.

Finally, the knowledge base must play several roles in the practice of the members of the guild. Initiation into the knowledge base must account for both judgment and skill. But it also must account for the loyalty of the professional to the standards of practice of the profession and to the welfare of the client. There are other requirements as well. These are the topic for the next section of this article.

Requirements for a knowledge base

In what follows I shall sketch several standards for a suitable knowledge base for a profession of teaching. These criteria are:

1. Something must be known.
2. The knowledge base must ground practice.
3. The knowledge base must be esoteric.
4. The knowledge base must be the basis of evaluation of practice.
5. The knowledge base must ground a profession of teaching.
6. The knowledge base must provide the basis for loyalty to professional standards and client welfare.
7. The knowledge base must help specify what the work of teachers is and be the basis of a division of labor between the authority of the guild and democratic/bureaucratic authority.
8. The knowledge base must suggest how the kind of teaching done by professionals differs from other forms of teaching in the society.

I shall discuss each of these in turn. Presumably there are two main candidates for a knowledge base (or some combination or integration of them), pedagogical knowledge and subject matter knowledge. Initially, I shall emphasize pedagogical knowledge. Moreover, I shall emphasize pedagogical knowledge that might be held to be quite separable from content knowledge. I readily grant that teachers cannot teach what they do not know, and that, where what is taught is esoteric, the teacher of it must possess esoteric knowledge. At the same time, I believe that a profession of teaching would be quite different depending on whether it was primarily grounded in a kind of technical pedagogical knowledge or whether it was grounded in subject matter. I shall conclude with some reflections on what a profession of teaching would be like if the knowledge base were predominately subject matter knowledge.

Before proceeding, we must differentiate claims about the knowledge base from claims about the capacity of teachers. To assert that there is not an adequate knowledge base for a profession of teaching is not to denigrate the intellectual capacity or wisdom of teachers. It is to say something about the state of educational research. Likewise to say that there is an adequate knowledge base for teaching is not to praise the capacities of teachers. It is to say that there are things they must know if they are to be competent practitioners.

Consider now the eight criteria listed above.

Something must be known

A thought experiment: imagine two choices. You may have one of the great physicians of antiquity, Hippocrates or Galen perhaps, as your personal physician, or you may have a mediocre graduate of an undistinguished modern medical school. One or the other will perform an appendectomy on you. We will allow the ancient to speak English, but whomever you choose must operate using the technology and knowledge of his period. Whom would you choose? Preferring anesthetics, antibiotics, accurate anatomy, and the technology of modern medicine, I should choose the mediocre graduate of the undistinguished medical school.

You may have one of the great teachers of antiquity, Socrates or Aristotle perhaps, to teach your children, or you may have your child taught by the mediocre graduate of an undistinguished modern teachers college. We will again let the ancient speak English. Whom would you choose? I should choose Aristotle.

One might argue that Aristotle would have some subject matter deficiencies. His views on astronomy are perhaps somewhat quaint. Nevertheless, putting aside subject matter for the moment, it is not obvious that much has happened in the last two millennia that would make the mediocre graduate of the undistinguished school of education a better teacher than Aristotle. In medicine, advances in medical knowledge have made the undistinguished modern practitioner a better practitioner than any ancient could have been. Can we say anything similar for advances in pedagogy?

Do we know anything about pedagogy? Of course. Do we know enough to ground a profession? The answer is less obvious. Consider a case that little is known about pedagogy. We may grant that there are numerous pieces of good research and that there are numerous sophisticated theories about teaching. There is also a good deal of worthwhile common knowledge. But the fundamental question about whether anything is known is whether the numerous empirical and theoretical issues raised by this body of content are adequately resolved. For any intellectual profession, there will be, at any given time, a number of open issues. But where there is a strong knowledge base, there will also be a large background of claims where agreement is widespread, and there is likely to be some consensus on how outstanding issues are to be resolved.

The kind of resolution required must be both rational and social. It is necessary

but not sufficient to consider some claim as part of a knowledge base that someone has provided an adequate rational defense of it. This defense must also have produced a reasonable degree of professional consensus. Otherwise, it is not possible for the profession to have standards of practice that are both reasonable and enforceable. On the other hand, professional agreement apart from adequate evidence is not a sufficient basis for a profession. Apart from an adequate evidential basis for the standards of practice of a profession, the formulation and enforcement of such standards amount to a kind of coup d'état. Thus the knowledge base of a profession must be legitimated both epistemologically and socially.

Given this, it is unclear how much is known about the practice of teaching. There are many hypotheses about teaching that are as yet unresolved by research. It is unclear that there are many agreed-upon claims. But the matter is far worse than this. Educational research shows little agreement at the level of research programs (Shulman, 1986a). Consider that those who find the product process research tradition limited, often do so for theoretical reasons rather than methodological or empirical ones. They find the results platitudinous, not directed to the right questions, or not oriented to the most significant learning outcomes (Phillips, 1988). Thus, research on teaching not only has a large number of unresolved empirical issues, but exhibits considerable disagreement about what would constitute an adequate account of teaching. Many issues are not only unresolved but, apart from some theoretical unity, unresolvable.

Is enough known? Some things are known. Do they add up to a knowledge base for a profession? How much is required? Such questions are matters of judgment. One can say, however, that if the purpose of the knowledge base is to legitimate a high level of self-governance, then it seems that the knowledge base must be adequate to ground most of the routine practices of teaching, and it must be able to provide an approach to adjudicating outstanding matters of controversy about practice. A knowledge base for a profession must play a variety of social roles. It must show why the judgment of professionals is to be preferred to that of nonprofessionals about a wide range of practices. It must be able to resolve disputes about practice. A large list of things known about teaching that does not do this will not suffice. Given this, the claim that we possess an adequate base of pedagogical knowledge is doubtful.

How might this difficulty be dealt with? I can think of three strategies. First, the facts might be disputed. We do know enough. I think this is doubtful and dangerous. It is doubtful because the degree of professional consensus about the knowledge base required to meet the social condition for knowledge has not been met. It is dangerous because the desire to produce a knowledge base is likely to produce a professional consensus that is not warranted by the evidence. The long-term welfare of teaching is not likely to be served by an epistemological coup d'état.

A second strategy is to hold that in the development of a profession the creation of the guild must precede the knowledge base (see Howsam, 1980). Perhaps apart from the creation of a guild it is not possible to have a knowledge base. A current profession of teaching is to be founded on a future knowledge base for which the

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professionalization of teaching is a prerequisite. One might give an epistemological argument. The growth of knowledge presupposes not only good research but the organizational ability to affirm ideas that have succeeded and to exclude ideas that have failed. A guild is required to meet the social conditions for a knowledge base. There cannot be a paradigm unless there is first a guild. Perhaps there are other arguments. What is crucial for this strategy is to give reasons why the guild must be organized and given authority over practice in order to secure a knowledge base.

A third strategy is to argue that skepticism about an adequate knowledge base assumes an incorrect view of how ideas connect to practice. It assumes what I shall call a *truth-dependent* view of the contribution of ideas to practice. That is, it assumes that practice is improved because practitioners possess a store of true beliefs that are relevant to practice. A view where the possession of ideas might improve practice regardless of whether they are true is possible. Let us call this a *content-dependent* view.

Suppose that a grasp of empirical research and of theory about teaching improves the judgment and reflective capacity of teachers about their practice in a way that is independent of whether this research and practice is true or known to be true. The concepts incorporated in educational theories, for example, may function as perceptual categories. People who possess them may as a consequence be able to see things that others will not. Likewise, familiarity with various theories may assist teachers to be more sophisticated in their judgments about practice. For example, a teacher who lacks the concept of socioeconomic class may not see many class-related phenomena. A teacher who is unfamiliar with the claims about the relations between class and learning may be impaired in thinking through some problems for that reason. Put generally, perhaps a grasp of the content of pedagogical research and theory can improve the perception and the judgment of teachers in ways that are independent of the truth of this body of content. If so, a profession might be grounded in this content even if little of it is known to be true. (For pertinent discussion see Fenstermacher, 1986.)

How would the possession of such content make a teacher a better teacher? Increased perceptivity and sophistication do not of themselves make any practitioner better at a task unless they shed some light on what to do. More sophisticated judgments are not inevitably better judgments. Lacking a knowledge base, how might possession of a content base improve teaching? One response is that possession of a content base might enable teachers to find ways to succeed in their own circumstances that they would not otherwise have been able to find. The teacher who is familiar with the literature on the relations between class and learning may be able to identify and conceptualize problems and possibilities and may be more likely to discover a solution to current problems that succeeds in the teacher's particular circumstances.

That the content of educational theories must be mapped onto specific circumstances by the particular teacher suggests that claims about teaching are not highly generalizable. Successful educational practices may be much influenced by the vicissitudes of culture, social climate, and individual characteristics of teachers

and students. The array of variables that influence what works may be so complex or so context-dependent that it is unlikely that research could ever provide a general set of claims about educational practice. Nevertheless, individual teachers might be quite knowledgeable about their particular practice.

This view suggests that much of what teachers learn about how to teach will be learned from experience. But it also suggests that a familiarity with educational scholarship can significantly enhance the capacity of teachers to learn from experience. Thus, the point of instructing students in educational scholarship is to provide them with the sophistication required to learn.

If this is reasonable, it may be part of a justification of a more extensive professional education of teachers. It is doubtful that current training provides the depth of understanding required. For similar reasons, the argument may justify a more extensive internship. However, this view provides little support for the contention that a content base will allow us to specify and enforce professional standards if we mean by this something beyond educational standards. Indeed, it suggests reasons to believe that no such standards are likely to be forthcoming. For example, it is unlikely that such a content base would be able to support judgments of malpractice. Such judgments require that we know that some practices are unacceptable. Research does not allow us to know this unless we also know that some teaching practices are to be preferred over others in ways that are generalizable to circumstances that are specificable. Efforts to formulate standards of competent practice will similarly require that we know something in a way that assumes the connection between ideas and practice is *truth-dependent*. Thus this argument, if its details can be worked out, suggests why it might be reasonable to believe that better trained teachers are better teachers, but it provides little hope that the knowledge base for teaching could yield enforceable standards of practice.

There are differences between a *content-dependent* view and a *truth-dependent* view for teacher evaluation. A *truth-dependent* view allows evaluation to focus on whether the teacher possesses a repertoire of practices that have been legitimated by research. A *content-dependent* view does not. Instead, such a view is likely to emphasize teacher knowledge and the capacity of the teacher to transform this knowledge into practices that are effective in the teacher's special circumstances. The characteristics and quality of teacher reasoning are thus made central to teacher evaluation.

To summarize, the claim that we currently possess a knowledge base that is adequate to ground a profession of teaching assumes that both epistemological and social conditions of knowledge are met. That widespread disagreement continues to exist suggests that these conditions are not met. At least two ways around this dilemma are possible. One might argue that the establishment of a guild must precede the development of a knowledge base, or one might argue that practice is *content-dependent*, not *truth-dependent*. The second of these alternatives (which I find most plausible) focuses standard setting and evaluation on teacher education and on teacher knowledge, but provides little reason to believe that standards that describe effective practice are likely.

The knowledge base must ground practice

To hold that practice is grounded in a knowledge base is to assert that the possession of this knowledge base significantly enables practice. Put more simply, if practice is grounded in a knowledge base, teachers should routinely perform better because they possess it, and should routinely not be able to perform adequately apart from it. It is important to emphasize that the knowledge base should ground teaching, because there are kinds of knowledge about teaching that, even if they are well researched and can be regarded as known, do not ground the activity. There are at least two nontrivial cases. The first concerns knowledge of characteristics that are indicators of good teaching, but may not ground it. The second concerns things that explain good teaching, but may not ground it.

In a recent article on teacher evaluation, Scriven (1987) argues that evaluation ought to emphasize criterion-related data and should not be based on what he calls indicators. (See also Scriven, 1988.) Criteria are understood by Scriven to be elements in the definition of a job. Indicators are signs of good or bad performance, but not part of the description of the job. Criteria designate duties such as being prepared, meeting one's classes or teaching ethically. Indicators are factors that correlate with performance and predict it. Scriven suggests eye contact as an example, but argues that many indicators have to do with teaching style.

Suppose that educational research has shown that there are a variety of indicators that correlate with successful teaching. Does such knowledge ground teaching? There are reasons for supposing that it need not. One is that such indicators might refer to factors that are not actionable. Suppose that one predictor of successful teaching was height. Unless teachers can add a cubit or two to their stature in virtue of knowing this, such knowledge is of no use in practice and thus cannot ground it. A second reason is that indicators of good teaching may not be causes of it. Insofar as this is true, indicators are not part of the knowledge in which teaching is grounded.

There may be other reasons for concern about knowledge dealing with indicators. Scriven suggests that its applicability may be subject to many unspecified context variables and individual characteristics. For any particular teacher the fact that there exists a statistically significant connection between an indicator and good teaching does not provide much reason for that teacher to suppose that exhibiting the indicator will improve teaching. Moreover, an emphasis on indicators "takes inservice attention away from plain duties and focuses it on stylistic flippery." If Scriven is right, it follows that there is valid knowledge about teaching that may not ground practice and may even be counter-productive for practice because it is unreliable and possibly distracting for the individual case. Thus, not everything that is part of a knowledge base about teaching is part of the grounding of the practice of teaching.

Scriven's distinction between criteria and indicators seems an application of Wittgenstein's (1953) distinction between criteria and symptoms. For Wittgenstein, criteria are features that define a concept. Symptoms are contingently associated

with it. For example, in basketball scoring a basket is defined by the ball going through the hoop under proper conditions. Going through the hoop is a criterion. But one might determine that a basket has been scored from outside of the arena by listening to crowd noise. This is a symptom. Now symptoms may or may not be causally related to that of which they are symptoms. But there is a more important point: even when symptoms are causally related to that of which they are symptoms, they are not conceptually essential to it. (This is true even if they are causally necessary for it.) This, I believe, has significant implications for how we think of a knowledge base for teaching. It means that to the degree that we emphasize causally relevant symptoms or indicators, we are focusing on something on which the success of the activity of teaching may, in part, depend, but which is not itself part of the activity. Consider basketball. Playing might be said to consist of such acts as dribbling, shooting, rebounding, and playing defense. Doing these things well might depend on size, quickness, age, physical conditioning, and practice. Here, shooting and rebounding are the criteria. Size and conditioning are the indicators.

What would a "knowledge base" for basketball be? Obviously the center of the knowledge base would be knowing how to shoot, rebound, and so forth. A less central part of the knowledge base would be understanding those indicators of success that are actionable and causally relevant. Now imagine a program of instruction or evaluation for basketball that emphasized the indicators, but not the criteria. It would look at size, conditioning, or practice time, but would ignore shooting and rebounding. Obviously this would be bizarre, and is hardly likely to be productive of good basketball. Criteria are essential to the activity; indicators, even when causally related, are not. There is an obvious implication about the knowledge base for a profession of teaching: the knowledge base must consist centrally in knowledge about the activity of teaching and only peripherally in knowledge about indicators of teaching. It is the former that could be said to ground teaching. Of the latter, only knowledge about indicators that are causally related to successful teaching and actionable could be reasonably regarded as part of the periphery of a knowledge base for teaching.

Another case where knowledge about teaching does not ground its practice is knowledge that explains teaching, but is unhelpful for practice. Imagine a theory of teaching that stood in relation to practice roughly as physics stands to riding a bicycle. Presumably the laws of physics can be used to explain how a bicycle is ridden. But knowledge of these principles is not needed in order to learn to ride. Thus physics may explain the skills required for competent practice, but it does not ground them.

No one need hold that possession of the knowledge base is sufficient for competent teaching. Experience and practice may be necessary to acquire the judgment necessary to successfully transform the knowledge base into practice. It is more interesting to ask whether possession of the knowledge base is necessary for competence. Here the response is fraught with potential paradox.²

Suppose that possession of the knowledge base is required for competent practice. What are we to say of current practitioners? We must either hold that they are not

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competent, or that they already possess the knowledge base. Neither response is especially palatable. Much of the case in favor of professionalization has been made by arguing that teacher education requires substantial upgrading. Moreover, it would be surprising if current teachers were found to be well versed in the kinds of things that are often held to constitute the knowledge base. Finally, if the knowledge base is defined by what current practitioners know, that is likely to degrade its character considerably. It is doubtful, for example, that many teachers are current in educational research. Shall we conclude that such research is not part of the knowledge base? Such a claim would make the suggestion that teaching is grounded in an *esoteric* knowledge base laughable.

Shall we conclude that current teachers are incompetent? Such a claim is not likely to justify transferring power over the work of teaching to its current practitioners. Moreover, en masse, current teachers are not incompetent. Is their competence to be explained by their possession of a knowledge base? Is their relative degree of competence to be explained by their relative possession of a knowledge base? Is the difference between the majority of competent teachers and those who are incompetent to be explained by the relative possession of some knowledge base?

Those who claim that teaching is a profession must answer this list of rhetorical questions in the affirmative. Otherwise, they must find a way to reconcile the claim that teaching is grounded in an esoteric knowledge base with the fact that people routinely practice competently without possessing it. Yet to answer such questions affirmatively immediately generates others. What is this knowledge base? How did teachers come by it? (This is especially interesting if one assumes that it was not explicitly taught during a period of professional training.) How does it function to inform teacher behavior? Answers to such questions seem required if there is a body of pedagogical knowledge the possession of which substantially enhances competence.

One way out of this dilemma is to claim that it is possible to acquire the skills of teaching by imitation or rote in a way that enables many teachers who lack the knowledge base nevertheless to get by. Such teachers might be supposed to perform competently in routine situations, but would be presumed to lack the judgment required to react to nonroutine cases. It might further be held that the competence of these teachers was indirectly grounded in the knowledge base in that those whose practice they were imitating behaved as they did because they possessed the knowledge base.

Such a response has some plausibility. Certainly cases can be found in other professions where the grounding in an esoteric knowledge base can be taken for granted where people have learned to practice quite well by imitation. The response, however, has a cost. It is an invitation to a stratified profession. It suggests a profession where licensed teachers are relatively few. They would have supervisory responsibility over others who perform routine tasks in a rote manner, but lack the training to manage hard cases and to be fully responsible for the process. It would be ironic that a reform movement whose nobler impulses are to liberate teachers from degrading authority relations should produce such results.

To summarize, if teaching is a profession, then practice must be grounded in a

knowledge base that enables practice. Some kinds of knowledge about teaching may, nevertheless, not ground it. Moreover, the grounding requirement raises questions about the status of current practitioners and the structure of a profession of teaching that need to be addressed.

The knowledge base must be esoteric

I know of no reasons to suppose that useful knowledge must be esoteric. It is possible that there is much known about teaching that is common sense, or, if not, is sufficiently straightforward that little or no theoretical training is required to master it.

The requirement that the knowledge base for teaching be esoteric is a political requirement for a profession of teaching. Granting autonomy requires that the judgments necessary for competent teaching and evaluation be beyond the ken of the uninitiated. This is the principal reason that other forms of accountability are held to be inefficient. Judgments so grounded are the product of extensive training, training that the uninitiated are unlikely to have. Thus, only those who have devoted substantial time to mastering the knowledge base can make competent decisions about practice.

What kinds of characteristics might a knowledge base have that would make it the product of extensive training? Consider three possibilities. One is that it might be extensive. It might consist of assertions, none of which are overly esoteric in themselves, that are sufficiently numerous that only those who are willing to devote years to their acquisition might master them. A second possibility is that the knowledge base might consist largely of theory whose assertions are sufficiently complex and difficult that long study is required for their comprehension. A final possibility is that the knowledge base might consist of skills that are acquired by practice under the eye of a trained practitioner (Tom, 1984). Various combinations are possible.

Professions are characterized by a mix of knowledge types in which the second is dominant. Occupations that are characterized by long lists of nonesoteric claims are susceptible to "manualization." That is, it is possible to provide the uninitiated with a "cookbook" that would allow the novice to practice and judge practice with only a modest investment of time. Much computer work, data entry or word processing is of this sort.

Teaching is "manualized" if teaching skills can be reduced to numerous teaching behaviors that can be captured on an evaluation form where such behaviors can be noted and checked off by the nonexpert. Thus a knowledge base that is extensive, but is not sophisticated, will not liberate teachers from administrative scrutiny. Indeed, it is likely to be an instrument of increased monitoring.

The acquisition of some skills requires a long period of training even though the theoretical knowledge associated with them is minimal. Many crafts are of this character. It may take long practice under the instruction of a practiced eye to become a capable craftsperson. Such crafts have much in common with professions.

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They require extensive training. Moreover, it is difficult for the uninitiated to exercise competent judgment about the excellencies exhibited in a craft. Such crafts differ from paradigm cases of professions in that they do not require the extensive theoretical training that professions require. As a consequence, they may lack as intimate an association with higher education.

Thus the kind of knowledge that seems most central to professions is cognitive knowledge that is esoteric in the sense that extensive training and instruction is required for its comprehension and for the development of the judgment that is grounded in this knowledge. It is not the numerosity of the claims of the knowledge base that is crucial. It is the sophistication.

To summarize, a knowledge base consisting of complex sophisticated theory is required to justify the view that only initiates are in a position to make the kinds of judgments on which competent practice and evaluation depend and to associate the acquisition of this knowledge base with extensive university-based education.

The knowledge base must be the basis of evaluation of practice

One assumption required to justify the autonomy of professionals is that performance cannot be fully appraised except by another professional. If practice is grounded in an esoteric knowledge base, only a person who possessed this knowledge base could judge the adequacy of the practice of another practitioner. Consequently, if teaching is a profession, evaluation must be rooted in the knowledge base.

Conversely, if teaching can be evaluated adequately by those who do not possess the knowledge base, that provides reason to suppose that teaching is not a profession. Those who hold that teaching is a profession thus should also hold that teaching cannot adequately be evaluated merely by looking at student achievement or by the use of rating forms that can be completed by nonexperts.

Consider how outcomes are connected to practice in a profession. Competence does not guarantee good outcomes. Competent lawyers lose cases, and competent physicians lose patients. The question of whether practice is competent is not a matter of the outcomes produced, but whether the practice in question is consistent with professional standards. Since one point of competent practice is to make certain outcomes more likely, the conception of competence cannot be divorced from outcomes. Moreover, while the connection between competence and practice is not so direct as to legitimate evaluative judgments made solely on the basis of outcomes, patterns of outcomes are relevant. If two physicians engaged in similar practices produce dramatically and inexplicably different outcomes, that is at least reason for concern. At the same time, it is unlikely to be grounds for a judgment that one physician is incompetent or less competent than another apart from some peer judgment of practice. If peers cannot provide an account of the failings of the practice that appeal to professional standards justified by appeal to the knowledge base, a judgment of incompetence is not likely to be supported.

If practice is rooted in an esoteric knowledge base, lay persons are deeply

disadvantaged in judging practice. It is not just that they may not know that a given practice is justified. They may even be unaware of what the practice is. Even the description of a practice requires some grasp of the knowledge base. But, more important, the evaluation of a practice often turns on whether the professional has reasonable grounds for the practice. For teacher evaluation this means that an inspection of teacher's reasoning about practice is a central part of judging practice. Of course, only experts can judge the reasoning of other professionals.

It follows that peer evaluation is central in a profession. This means not only that professionals should be central in the appraisal of other professionals but that professionals must be central in setting standards and in professional socialization. Presumably only professionals are in a position to decide appropriate standards. Moreover, the socialization of professionals normally requires considerable modeling of competent practice and feedback on the extent to which the novice's attempts comport with professional standards.

Therefore, if teaching is a profession, evaluation must be grounded in an esoteric knowledge base. It follows that the knowledge base must be capable of supporting evaluation.

There are several tests that might be applied to see if indeed this relationship obtains. First, noninitiates should be found to be severely handicapped in the evaluation of teachers. Their judgments should be routinely unreliable. Second, professional teachers should exhibit a reasonable degree of agreement concerning the competence of other teachers. They should agree not only on whether some practice is competent, but on the reasons for it. Widespread and systematic disagreement suggests the lack of an agreed-upon knowledge base.

To summarize, if teaching is a profession a certain relation between the knowledge base and evaluation should obtain such that only professionals can adequately judge the practice of other professionals. The knowledge base should be of such a character as to support this relationship.

The knowledge base must ground a profession of teaching

Insofar as there is a profession of teaching instead of a variety of professions where teaching is a part of the practice of those professions, then the knowledge base must be of a character to support a unified profession.

Suppose that all there was to professional knowledge was the knowledge of subject matter. Then the knowledge base for a profession of teaching would be nothing more than such things as physics, English, or mathematics. If this were the case, then teachers would be professionals in virtue of their being physicists and mathematicians. The consequence of this scenario would be to dissolve teaching into separate professions with only that degree of professional unity resulting from the cognitive intersection of the various subject matters. It seems likely then that there would be a variety of professions that had teaching as a part of their practice, but no profession of teaching. Moreover, it might be argued that those teachers who are

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not teachers of some academic discipline are not professionals at all. One supposes that this might be claimed about elementary teachers or physical education teachers.

Thus, if teaching is one profession, there must be one knowledge base. I do not mean that all teachers need to know precisely the same thing regardless of what or whom they teach. But a knowledge base for a profession of teaching should have some form of conceptual unity. Perhaps there might be some forms of basic theoretical knowledge that support a variety of specializations. If not, then teaching will dissolve into as many professions as there are discreet knowledge bases.

The knowledge base must support loyalty to professional standards and client welfare

Professionals are supposed to conform their practice to professional standards and to be guided by client welfare without need of constant external monitoring. This is supposed to result from initiation into the knowledge base. Thus there must be something about this knowledge base that promotes loyalty to professional standards and to client welfare. What might this be?

A simple answer is that instruction in the knowledge base includes explicit instruction in professional ethics, perhaps emphasizing a code of ethics. While I do believe that instruction in professional ethics is appropriate and useful (see Strike, 1986; Soltis, 1986), I do not believe that direct classroom instruction in professional ethics is the central thing. Instead, the first thing about the ethics of any profession is that the values that guide practice should be internal to the concepts that regulate practice and should be acquired via the acquisition of these concepts. For example, justice is internal to law. One does not understand law unless one understands how its concepts and its practices are linked to justice. Likewise, one does not understand medicine apart from a concept of health. Students should be expected to acquire an appreciation of these concepts via mastery of the knowledge base of their profession, not in a course in professional ethics. Explicit instruction in professional ethics may be useful in increasing awareness of the moral commitments that inhere in other parts of the curriculum and in increasing sophistication in dealing with hard cases, but it should not be the mainstay of the ethical component of professional socialization.

Thus, the ethical concepts and values that regulate the practice of teaching should be internal to the knowledge base of teaching. Students should acquire them as they acquire the knowledge base. If so, then the knowledge base should have a connection to a set of good and ethical standards that are internal to the practice of teaching, and one should be able to analyze the various parts of the curriculum in a way that displays what these goods and moral principles are.

This view suggests that the knowledge base for a profession cannot be merely "technical" if by that one means instrumental. If pedagogical knowledge is merely technical, then all of the goals of education and all of the ethical standards that regulate the practice of teaching are external to the technology of instruction. If so,

then the ethics of teaching will be external to the knowledge base and will need to be taught as a special and distinct subject. Conversely, if the ethics of teaching is internal to the practice and the knowledge base of teaching, then it will not be possible to rigorously distinguish between those goals that teaching attempts to promote, the ethical principles that govern practice, and the techniques of teaching.

The knowledge base must help specify what the work of teachers is and be the basis of a division of labor between the authority of the guild and democratic/bureaucratic authority

The framing of the argument about professionalization in public agencies indicates that one problem to be solved in conceiving a profession of teaching is to work out a division of labor about who gets to decide what. As noted, in our society it is a given of policy that public schools are ultimately going to be under democratic control. Yet if teaching is to be a profession, some kinds of decisions must be ceded to a profession of teaching. How, then, shall we understand the division of labor between teachers, democratic authority, and administrators?

The response is that teachers as professionals should control their own work. But this is not satisfactory. What exactly is teachers' work? Is it only teaching? Is it that which teachers currently do? Is it what goes on in classrooms? These cannot be satisfactory responses since they do not allow us to decide what part of that which teachers do constitutes teaching. How are we to separate that which teachers currently do as part of their employment from that which constitutes their professional work? Is controlling the work of teachers part of teachers' work? When teachers ask to control their own work, they ask to perform roles that are now administrative or policy-making roles. Does controlling the work of teachers require that teachers have a say about the nature and scope of resources available to accomplish their work? Such an argument could be pursued in a way that allowed teachers to set tax rates. What kinds of educational policies are there that do not affect teachers' work? Thus holding that a profession of teaching should be able to control the work of teachers is highly ambiguous and open ended. It does not make clear either what counts as teachers' work or what counts as controlling it. Such a claim is therefore not especially helpful in working out a division of labor.

A different way to proceed is to ask what it is that the knowledge base of teaching makes teachers experts about. Recall that the primary justification for a profession of teaching was that decisions about teaching require the kinds of expertise that only those initiated into the knowledge base possess. Presumably it follows that the authority of teachers should be as extensive as the scope of the knowledge base. The scope of expertise would not sufficiently define teachers' work. Presumably teachers might continue to perform functions that require no special expertise (tying shoes, for example) because it is convenient for them to do so. But it would define both professional work and the scope of teachers' professional authority.

A reasonable view of the division of labor between teachers and democratic and

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administrative authority must also balance considerations of professionalism against the claims of democratic authority. Let us suppose that teachers were routinely trained in school finance and taxation. Assume that they are now experts about such matters. Does it follow that the scope of teachers' professional responsibilities should now be considered to include setting tax rates? The reasons why "no" is a sensible response are instructive.

First, the expansion of teacher's expertise into school finance seems arbitrary. The kind of knowledge involved in becoming expert about such matters is discontinuous with the knowledge that currently informs teachers' work. The boundaries between what teachers are expert about as teachers and what they are not have not shifted because of some theoretical development in the research on teaching. They have changed solely as a consequence of adding an unrelated body of knowledge to the corpus of the knowledge base. The only likely reason for such an addition would be to expand teacher authority.

Contrast this with a case of how the borders between what is and is not teachers' professional work might legitimately change. Intuitively one would not regard collecting lunch money as a part of teachers' professional work. Suppose, however, that developments in research on classroom management suggested that how such details of classroom existence were conducted turned out to be important to the accomplishment of the overall responsibilities of teaching. Such a research development might be regarded as a reason to treat aspects of classroom management as falling within the domain of teachers' professional responsibility. The task has migrated across the border between what is and is not a teacher's professional work because of a change in the knowledge base. Such changes that occur as a consequence of development of a knowledge base are not arbitrary and constitute good reasons for reconceiving teachers' work.

A second reason why one needs to be cautious about treating the scope of the knowledge base as sufficient to determine the scope of professional authority of teachers is that one must balance teacher control against the democratic interest involved. Suppose that somehow teacher expert knowledge had been legitimately extended to cover taxation and teachers had become experts about tax rates. Would that be sufficient grounds to cede the authority over tax rates to teachers? The crucial objection is that, in claiming a right to control over tax rates, teachers would confront a citadel of democratic authority. Few political principles are as central to the tradition of American democracy as "No taxation without representation." It is hard to imagine that any development in the knowledge base would be forceful enough to substitute professionalism for democracy concerning matters of taxation. Obviously claims about teacher authority over educational matters must attend to more than what teachers are expert about. It must also attend to the character of the interest involved and to the political principles that govern what is an appropriate form of decision making with respect to that interest.

The taxation example is not serious. To my knowledge no advocate of teacher professionalization has suggested that teachers have the authority to set tax rates. There are more interesting cases. How are the ends of education to be determined?

Our political system gives considerable weight to the principle that people are entitled to their own conception of their own good. It is not within the power of the state to decide what people shall live their lives for so long as they pursue their ends in ways that respect the rights of others (Ackermann, 1980; Dworkin, 1984). Moreover, when collective decisions about ends seem appropriate, our society has held that such decisions should be made democratically. The alternative is that our lives should be governed by philosopher kings, people whose wisdom about what is good for us entitles them to rule our lives. The question of whether teachers have expertise about and pursuantly some right to make decisions about the ends of education thus becomes a matter of great interest. If teachers claim expert knowledge about the goods people should realize in their lives, teacher professionalization is brought into conflict with a central principle of democratic polity. Teachers may claim some right to compel students to learn certain things because teachers know that these things are good. Such arguments make teachers candidates for the role of philosopher king. They should be regarded with great suspicion in a free society.

Suppose the knowledge teachers possess is merely technical. It consists solely in conceptions of how information and skills could be effectively transmitted, but involves no claims about the worth of what was transmitted. It is purely instrumental knowledge. Would the problem be solved? The general features of the solution suggested are that there be a division of labor between democratic authority and teacher authority such that educational policy (now conceived as the determination of what ends should be pursued in education) is to be made democratically, whereas the implementation of policy should rest with teachers. Is such a view tenable?

There are reasons to suppose that it is not. Consider what it would mean for curriculum decisions. Teachers would not be entitled to an independently achieved conception of the worth of what they teach. This they must discover in the judgment of the school board. However, once they had discovered the ends to be served they could make professional decisions about the curriculum that best served these ends. This picture does not come to terms with the extent to which the goods promoted by the practice of many disciplines and other intellectual practices are internal to those practices. They are connected to the practice in such a way that to disassociate the practice from these goods is to distort it. (This point is more fully developed later.)

This example suggests that the division of labor between democratic and professional authority that links it to a distinction between the determination of ends and the determination of means is too simple. If teachers are experts about subject matter as well as pedagogy, they will be experts about certain kinds of goods. Attempting to "contain" teacher expertise to the purely instrumental will require either that the knowledge base of teaching be construed as entirely pedagogical (and even here there will be difficulties) or that a knowledge of content be construed so as to exclude a grasp of the goods that are internal to the practice of disciplines. This, I shall shortly argue, is to require teachers to distort their subjects and to teach without integrity.

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In summary, if teaching is a profession, the task of working out a division of labor between the professional authority of teachers over their own work and democratic authority requires both a view of the nature of the knowledge base and of the political interests involved. This in turn requires a knowledge base that will support a coherent division of labor.

The knowledge base of teaching must suggest how the kinds of teaching done by professionals differs from other forms of teaching in our society

Teaching occurs in places other than public schools. Let us suppose that there were no differences between various sorts of teaching. Thus all forms of teaching would involve the kinds of risks that licensure is intended to protect the public against. If so, then the potential demands for licensure might become quite broad, and we would find ourselves faced with demands, perhaps, to license parents, clergy, salespeople, and numerous other groups or individuals whose activities or jobs involve teaching.

Of course, no one is proposing that we license parents. The difficulty is not to avoid bad policy; it is to be consistent. Advocates of the professionalization of teaching must tell a story about the knowledge base that does not naturally lead to such absurdity. How, then, is school teaching different from other forms of teaching? There are several possibilities.

One is to hold that the social relations between teachers and schools and children are what is different. Children must go to school. Since they are there under compulsion, the society that compels them to attend has a higher duty to protect them from the risks of incompetent practice than would be the case if the relationship were voluntary.

Second, perhaps the type of teaching involved in schooling is an order of magnitude of difficulty higher than required for other forms of teaching. It is analogous to the difference between putting on a bandaid and removing an appendix.

Third, perhaps school teaching is more potentially harmful to children than other forms of teaching. Thus school teaching should be subjected to more demanding standards.

Finally, we might hold that teaching in out-of-school situations differs from other forms of teaching primarily because the contexts in which it occurs raise more central issues of liberty than does school teaching. We are willing to license school teachers, but not parents and clergy because in the latter cases a serious threat to liberty results.

I do not find most of these responses very plausible. Many nonschooling forms of teaching occur in involuntary contexts. Children do not choose their parents. Nor is schooling badly done obviously more hazardous to children than parenting badly done.

Nor can I see any reason to suppose that the kinds of teaching involved in nonschool contexts are routinely less complex than those that occur in school.

Obviously there is great diversity in each case, and it will be easy to provide examples of nonschool teaching that are less complex than cases of school teaching. Showing this to be generally the case is a more formidable task.

The most reasonable grounds for not wishing to license parenting and other forms of nonschool teaching are unrelated to any comparisons between the complexity of the activity or the characteristics of the knowledge base. They have to do with the fact that some very basic rights would be threatened by attempting to erect competence requirements for such endeavors. We could not begin to apply the arguments that are now used to legitimate a profession of teaching to nonschool teaching without beginning to regulate child rearing or violating the separation of church and state.

If this is correct, then perhaps advocates of a profession of teaching need not really explain why their views do not require us to limit all forms of teaching to licensed practitioners. It does, however, require them to note that demands for the professionalization of teaching must be balanced against other political principles. It has been the point of this discussion and indeed most of this article to note that there may well be a variety of such issues raised by the professionalization of school teaching. Professionalization seeks to vest teachers with power that they have not formerly had. This is competitive with democratic authority. Wrongly conceived, it can exclude parents, community members, or their elected representatives from their reasonable and proper roles in educational decision making. Wrongly conceived, it can vest teachers with the role of philosopher kings. Wrongly conceived, it can result in an epistemological coup d'état in which a knowledge base and standards of professional competence are produced by political power rather than by research. None of these outcomes is inevitable. But their avoidance requires a careful articulation of the characteristics of the putative knowledge base of teaching, not mere lists of courses and subjects to be studied, and careful reflection on the kinds of authority that are genuinely legitimated by what is known about teaching. Here one must not only describe the knowledge base and the forms of expertise that flow from it, but one must balance claims about expertise against a variety of considerations about what constitutes legitimate authority in the public schools of a liberal democratic society. Such an agenda requires a bit more open reflection and a bit less partisan rhetoric than has so far characterized the discussion.

Final thoughts: An alternative vision of teachers as professionals

I conclude with an alternative vision of professionalism, one that takes subject matter seriously as central to the knowledge base. This vision depends on the notion that what teachers do most centrally is to represent the learned disciplines and other similar activities³ to their students. They teach disciplines such as mathematics, literature, and science. They teach music, art, and sports. Even at the most elementary levels they transmit fundamental skills and values that are prerequisite to this task. Of course they do more than this. Nevertheless, I want to suggest that we can best express reasons for granting teachers the status of professionals and

reasons for certain kinds of professional autonomy by seeing teachers as representatives of those activities which in their fullest development constitute the practice of learned disciplines.

The practice of disciplines requires several forms of independence. By independence, I mean independence from political authority even when it is democratic. Properly understood, this kind of independence can be seen as the basis of a form of professional autonomy. Truth is not democratic. Consequently, disciplines require forms of independence that protect the process of inquiry from external political interference. What is believed to be true in a discipline should be believed because the belief has met appropriate standards of evidence. Therefore, it is inappropriate to subject a discipline's judgments about what is true to democratic decision. Nor should the goods and excellences internal to the practice of disciplines be subject to political control. To do so is to violate the integrity of the discipline. Suppose that a given school board was to decide that poetry should be taught primarily as a form of vocational education. They reasoned that students who mastered the skills of producing sentimental rhymes might find lucrative employment writing greeting cards or song jingles. Teachers should emphasize the potential of poetic careers to their students and devalue such goods as the beauty of the language, its capacity to express emotion, or its potential to illuminate human experience. Why is this offensive? Consider that those goods that are internal to disciplines are so because they are essential to the character of that discipline. Consequently, to teach them in a way that is not true to these internal goods is to misrepresent the discipline, to distort it, and to deny something essential to its character. Teachers who do so undermine the integrity of their discipline. In effect, they lie to their students. If disciplinary practice is to have integrity, the goods internal to such practices and the excellences required to realize these goods cannot be subject to political control.

To connect these forms of independence to teaching, it is essential that teaching be seen as a way of practicing a discipline. Epistemology adequacy and a respect for the integrity of the goods internal to the practice of a discipline are central to appropriate forms of pedagogy. Consequently the kinds of independence required to practice a discipline are also required to teach it. The epistemology of a discipline is central to teaching it with integrity. Such teaching attempts above all to teach the process of inquiry, to represent the forms that valid arguments take in the discipline, and to help students grasp the discipline not just as a batch of conclusions, but as a human activity, a "form of life" (Wittgenstein, 1953). This means that good teaching deals with arguments, explanations, dialogue, and debate (Green, 1971). The form of these activities is at heart a question of epistemology.

Similarly, it is central to good pedagogy that the teaching of a discipline expresses its internal goods and excellences in such a way that students can identify them and begin to participate in them. A teacher of poetry needs to show poetry as a medium of aesthetic experience. A good science teacher demonstrates that science is the pursuit of understanding of a certain sort. Often, these are not things said; they are things shown.

Thus it is essential to good pedagogy that teaching conform to a discipline's

argument forms and express its values. The force of this argument is to see teaching as a special way of engaging in the practice of an intellectual discipline.⁴ These comments are not primarily comments about what makes instruction effective although they do have something to do with effectiveness. They are comments about what gives teaching integrity. Teaching is a form of truth telling and of expression, not just a way to promote learning. The twin virtues of integrity and effectiveness have dual vices. The first of these is lack of integrity in representing disciplines. The second is pedagogical ineptness. It is primarily the first of these, integrity in representing the discipline to others, that is the basis of the independence teachers must have from democratic authority. Teachers must have the freedom to follow the argument where it leads, to consider and weigh evidence, and to express the goods internal to the practice they represent. If they lack this freedom, we compel them to subject their disciplines to inappropriate political authority. If we think that such independence is a trivial matter, we have a mistaken view of teaching.

On this view teachers are professionals because they are ambassadors to children from the intellectual disciplines. Their primary professional associations (as a matter of logic, not description) are communities of scholars (not unions!) organized around the practice of such disciplines where "practice" is understood to include teaching. If they are to have the status of professionals it will be because scholarship and inquiry, including their representation to the young, are held in high esteem. If they are to have autonomy it is because pedagogical forms are rooted in the practice of the discipline, and disciplines require independence if they are to play their social roles properly.⁵

This is, of course, not the common view. Indeed, it is a vision of education that I believe we have in large measure lost. I suspect there are at least two notable reasons. First, we increasingly see education primarily as human capital formation. To the extent that we see it solely in this way, we will not attend to either its epistemological forms or to these goods that make learning of intrinsic worth. Such matters are only accidentally required for human capital formation when they are required at all. Second, we see teaching as a kind of technology instead of a representation of the life of the mind to the young. Moreover, we seem often to understand the development of this technology in a way that divorces it from the character of disciplinary activity and links it instead to the psychology of learning. The technology of teaching thereby becomes disassociated from the epistemology of disciplines and from representing their internal goods. And it becomes disassociated from those concepts required to understand what teaching with integrity means.

Such views have their costs for teachers. Their status cannot be grounded in the status of the practice of learned disciplines, and their independence cannot be rooted in the kinds of independence required by the practice of disciplines. Scholarship is valued only as a means to external goods. Teachers are not ambassadors of a way of life of profundity and intrinsic worth. They are shopkeepers of instrumental cognitive wares. If they are to be respected as professionals, they must, therefore, represent their shopkeeping as an esoteric technology, one grounded not primarily in the worth of what they teach and their mastery of it, but in the esoteric character

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of the technology of instruction. Having uprooted teachers from their role of emissaries of the life of the mind, we seek to make them into engineers of a technology of learning.

The strategy is unlikely to succeed. I suspect this not primarily because I am suspicious about the existence of this technology (although I am certainly suspicious), but because I do not believe that a society that attaches only instrumental value to learning is very likely to value its teachers. Where the life of the mind is valued, teachers who see themselves as its emissaries will be valued for that reason. If teachers buy into a strategy to enhance their status that does not attempt to enhance the status of the kinds of practices they represent, their successes are likely to be fleeting. If they pursue strategies that implicitly denigrate the life of the mind and represent all knowledge, including their own, as merely instrumental, their strategy will reinforce attitudes which will ultimately diminish their status further. Perhaps the most successful path toward teacher professionalization, teacher freedom, and teacher status is for teachers to work to enhance the status of those human activities that they represent and to view their teaching as a special way of practicing those activities themselves.

This conception of teaching as a profession has several implications for teacher evaluation. First, it makes subject matter competence (or competence in the practice) a central concern of evaluation, but with an emphasis on that special way of understanding subject matter required to communicate it to novices or the young. Second, it focuses particular attention on teachers' ability to understand the "epistemological position" of the learner, since understanding how the learner will understand and appraise an idea is crucial to representing it adequately. Third, since teachers qua experts in representing a given practice to the young are likely to be the repository of the expertise required to judge whether a practice is being represented with integrity, this view requires a central role for teachers in evaluation. Finally, in Scriven's (1988) sense, this view is duty-based in that it emphasizes an appraisal of those activities that are conceptually essential to teaching instead focusing on identifying indicators of good teaching.

This view of a profession of teaching has two assets and four liabilities. The first asset is that this view has a conception of a knowledge base that is likely to be able to meet the eight standards described above. Lest the reader's courage fail, I do not plan to argue this point. Instead I invite the reader to perform a thought experiment. Suppose that a teacher of physics is a physicist whose practice of physics is its teaching. The teaching of physics is grounded in the knowledge base of physics. If this is granted, then it is reasonably clear that physics teaching is grounded in an esoteric knowledge base. I would submit that this knowledge base will meet most of the eight conditions sketched above. (I discuss the weak links below.)

The second asset of this view is that it lessens the tension between professionalism and democratic authority. It does this by linking professional autonomy and professional control to a view of liberty that is already widely accepted and understood in our society. Here professional autonomy is closely associated with academic freedom. I understand academic freedom to hold that the intellectual

professions are to be free from political interference with respect to the conduct of their intellectual pursuits. Governments may not decide what is deemed to be true or what counts as a valid argument. Governments may not assert what goods are internal to these practices. If a profession of teaching is to be understood as I have suggested, the autonomy of teachers will turn out to be justified on much the same grounds. If so, we have come to understand the professional autonomy of teachers in a way that links it to a tradition of accommodation to the judgment of professionals that is already well established in our society.

The liabilities are four. First, this view suggests that there is not a profession of teaching *per se*. Instead teachers are members of as many professions as there are intellectual practices. While this is true, I do not suppose that it is particularly disastrous. Teachers will find themselves bound together across specializations by numerous ties. Most important will be those ties rooted in commonalities across practices. Science teachers will find some unity in the interconnections between sciences. The same can be said of other groups of teachers. There will be some things that teachers share in common because our intellectual life has some features in common. But there will also be professionally relevant divisions rooted in differences in the characteristics of intellectual practices. Math teachers are likely to find that they have more in common with one another than with physical education or art teachers. Organizationally, it follows that the crucial professional associations for most teachers will be those of the like-minded associations of science teachers and English teachers, rather than generic teachers' associations.

The second liability is that this view of a profession of teaching will tend to "deprofessionalize" teachers to the extent that they are not grounded in some intellectual practice. What are we to say, for example, of the professional status of the kindergarten teacher or of elementary teachers generally? One thing to be said is that we must not lose sight of how important such teachers are in establishing the prerequisites for initiating students into the intellectual practices. Thus, one should not disassociate elementary teachers from the intellectual practices too quickly.

The third liability of this view is that it is not child-centered or student-centered. Its standards are those of the practices applied to instruction. It requires of teachers that they care about their disciplines. It does not clearly require of teachers that they care for children (Noddings, 1984, p. 188). Similarly, it does not have much to say about the need for teachers to be able to understand students with special needs, characteristics, or problems. If my conception of teachers as professionals excludes such concerns, that would be a notable liability.

The fourth liability is that this view may seem to have the philosopher king problem. Teachers are supposed to have autonomy over those goods that are internal to their various intellectual practices. Does this not mean that teachers have professional authority over the aims of education? I think that it does not. The authority over ends that this view gives teachers is that authority required to practice their disciplines with integrity. It does not involve the authority to insist that their discipline be taught or taken. That a given discipline be taught continues to be a political decision. That it be taken by anyone in particular is to be determined either

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by consideration of the public interest or by individual choice. The teacher's right is to say, "If my discipline is to be taught, this is what constitutes teaching it with integrity."

These "liabilities" should be put in proper context. It should be carefully noted that describing a conception of teachers as professionals is not the same thing as fully characterizing the role of teacher. For example, that teachers are not care givers qua professionals does not mean that care giving is not a central and valuable part of their role. Also we must recall that here I have been concerned to explicate a conception of teachers as professionals that is intended to allow us to understand the forms of professional autonomy and self-governance that are appropriate to teaching. Other conceptions of what it means to be a professional are possible and, in different contexts, desirable. They may well include the care giver role or other aspects of the role more centrally. Thus in a more robust view of teachers as professionals it may be perfectly reasonable to see care giving as central to the professional responsibilities of teachers. But this article deals with those aspects of the role that entitle teachers to autonomy and self-governance in virtue of possessing an esoteric knowledge base. That teachers ought to be care givers and ought to be highly valued as such is simply true. That care giving is grounded in esoteric knowledge is less obvious. Finally, we may need to resist the temptation to treat teachers' professional standing as the basis of their status or social worth. Why not value teachers for what they do? Should we not esteem teachers because they faithfully care for our children and represent valued activities to them with integrity? Perhaps the need to contest the term "professional" speaks most clearly to the failure to value people in our society for morally appropriate reasons.

A final concern: Perhaps the reader is alarmed that my view disassociates the practice of teaching from the efficiency of teaching. Is not the point of teaching to promote learning? Now, I surely do not want to be represented as unconcerned about the effectiveness of teaching, and my suggestion that the teacher's primary concern should be the integrity of teaching should not be understood to license a cavalier disregard for outcomes. How then is teaching with integrity linked to effective teaching? I have two suggestions. First, part of what counts as effective teaching is internal to teaching with integrity. Insofar as competent teaching is linked to providing comprehensible reasons or to exhibiting the goods internal to a practice, teaching with integrity will be teaching effectively. But, no doubt, effective teaching will depend on much else as well. Nothing I have said suggests that teachers may not be concerned for this "much else" whatever it turns out to be. However, insofar as this much else is conceived as a technology of teaching that is independent of the content of teaching, I have must doubt as to whether it can be the basis of a profession.⁶ Second, I wonder if emphasizing effectiveness in one's teaching is a bit like aiming at happiness. It is a good way to miss. Happiness is often a byproduct of commitment to achieving something else. Those who aim at happiness find that its direct pursuit breeds attitudes, character traits, and habits that undermine happiness. Perhaps, too, those who emphasize teaching with integrity will show their students what is important about learning in a way that those who emphasize

effectiveness will not. Perhaps effective teaching, like happiness, is a consequence of being concerned with something of intrinsic worth and with one's integrity in pursuing something of worth.

Notes

1. The unionization of teaching has resulted in a view about the relations between democratic sovereignty and union power. The assumption that has guided the debate is that there is a tension between democratic authority and collective bargaining in the public sector. Democratic sovereignty is eroded when legislative bodies make policy via negotiation with special interest groups. The compromise that has been worked out in many jurisdictions (see *Norwalk v. Connecticut*) is that public sector unions will be limited to bargaining about wages, fringe benefits, and working conditions, but may not otherwise make policy a subject of collective bargaining. One might approach the question of the political meaning of teacher professionalization by asking about how professionalization would alter this division of labor. Two possibilities seem likely. First, insofar as professionalization requires negotiation of power sharing at the district level this division of labor must be modified. (See Hobart & Mortola, 1988, pp. 10-13.) Where this division of labor is required by state law or judicial decisions, legislative enablement is required. Second, teachers unions will need to deal with a difficult role conflict. As unions, their first duty is to look to the interests of their members. As professional societies, unions must first be concerned for professional standards and client welfare. Whether unions could manage this role conflict is an open question.

2. The issue in what follows is not whether such knowledge as individual teachers may possess accounts in part for their ability to teach. I see no reason to deny that some teachers know things that make them better teachers. The issue is whether there is public knowledge, knowledge that meets the social standards for a professional knowledge base, that accounts for differences in teacher competence.

3. The choice of "disciplines" instead of "subject matter" is deliberate. Its point is to emphasize that what is being taught is a human activity, not just a product. I also wish the notion understood broadly so as to include any human activity sustained by a developed cognitive tradition. The arts and sports are included. The concept that is central to my argument is Alisdair McIntyre's (1981) notion of a practice. MacIntyre defines a practice as "any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended" (p. 175).

4. The concept required to understand how teaching a discipline is a way of practicing it is epistemological relativism. Epistemological relativism (see Stout, 1989) is the view that the evidence for a particular claim is relative to the concepts the learner brings to the appraisal of that claim. When two experts discuss some disciplinary issue, they practice their discipline in a way that assumes a set of shared disciplinary concepts that is relevant to appraising the issue. When an expert addresses a disciplinary matter with a novice, the expert must explain or argue in ways that appeal to, extend, and modify the novice's current concepts. Shared disciplinary concepts cannot be assumed. In both cases, the discipline is being practiced because the activities being engaged in are the characteristic activities of the discipline such as explaining, arguing, seeking to understand, or investigating. These activities are dominated by the substance of the discipline and by its epistemology. At the same time, the way of engaging in these activities will be very different, depending on whether the expert is dealing with another expert or with a novice or a child. Given this, my view of a profession might be thought to be quite congenial to the view argued by Lee Shulman (1986). I believe that this is, in large measure, the case.

5. It may be worth noting that many of those whom we revere as great teachers are not so revered because they were especially effective pedagogues. Socrates may serve as an example. Why do we regard him as a great teacher? Possibly because he had something worth teaching, but I suspect that this misses the point. I would suppose that his greatness as a teacher consists in the fact that Socratic method exhibits

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the excellences of reasoned inquiry and because its process is determined by the nature of reasoned inquiry (see Plato, 1949). To see Socratic method as a kind of technology of efficient teaching is to dramatically misunderstand it. My preference for Aristotle as my preferred teacher expresses my preference for his views of the method of inquiry, not for his pedagogical technique.

6. Professor William Carlsen has suggested that "Putting aside subject matter to focus on teaching is like putting aside medicine to focus on bedside manner." I think this is an apt illustration of the role of "technical" pedagogical knowledge in a profession of teaching. Professor Carlsen has been of sufficient help in this article that, were it not unprofessional, I would blame some of it on him. It will be sufficient, however, to note his assistance and to thank him for it. The responsibility for my views, sadly, cannot be shared.

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