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Professionalism, Professionality and the Development of Education

Professionals

Introduction

Professionalism, it is generally believed, is not what it was. Depending on one's perspective, it may be seen to have either taken a knock and emerged with the scars to prove it, or had a style make-over and image-change. Some would argue that it has undergone both, with the one necessitating the other. As a wholesale concept it is recognizable as having been renovated, and the 'new' epithet has been applied as much to educational professionalisms – those relating to, *inter alios*, teachers, FE college lecturers, academics, and educational leaders and managers across all sectors – as to other public sector professionalisms.

The common thread tying these 'new professionalisms' together – and which is the essential basis of their being categorised as 'new' – is generally perceived as a shift of power: whoever used to call the shots no longer does so (or, at least, does so to a lesser extent). Autonomy has evidently given way to accountability (Hoyle and Wallace, 2005, p. 100), prompting some analysts to argue that de-professionalisation, rather than altered professionalism, has been the outcome of marketisation.

But what purpose is served by renovation or redesign of professionalism, and how successful a process is it likely to be? This article addresses these questions by examining the effectiveness as a professional development mechanism of the imposition of changes to policy and/or practice that require modification or renovation of professionalism. This examination incorporates analysis of the concept and substance of professionalism and offers new perspectives on how it may be interpreted and utilised for the development of education professionals.

‘New’ professionalism as an instrument of change

In the interests of conciseness and space economy I avoid examining the reasons for or the circumstances that precipitated the ‘renovation’ of professionalisms. This has been skilfully and comprehensively undertaken by others (Evetts, 2003, 2006; Freidson, 2001; Pfadenhauer, 2006; Svensson, 2006; Whitty, 2001). Where I take up the story is post-‘renovation’. Accepting that professionalisms in most occupational contexts have, indeed, changed (a premise that I examine in the course of my discussion) I now consider the practical implications of these changes in an education context. Whether new professionalisms were consciously imposed upon education professionals or whether they evolved as a direct or indirect consequence of prevailing circumstances, they must, by definition, involve change to professional practice and hence professional development.

Or must they? To examine that line of reasoning more closely – and, within it, the reference to ‘by definition’ – we must first examine what we understand by ‘professionalism’.

The concept of professionalism

As Freidson (1994, p. 169) suggests, ‘much of the debate about professionalism is clouded by unstated assumptions and inconsistent and incomplete usages’. Indeed, Hargreaves and Goodson (1996, p. 4) refer to the lack of consensus relating to the meaning of professionalism, and Fox (1992, p. 2) makes the rather obvious point: ‘Professionalism means different things to different people. Without a language police, however, it is unlikely that the term professional(ism) will be used in only one

concrete way'. Englund (1996, p. 75) similarly refers to the lack of conceptual clarity and consensus relating to 'teaching as a profession'.

In 1975 Hoyle explained professionalism as 'those strategies and rhetorics employed by members of an occupation in seeking to improve status, salary and conditions' (p. 315). More recent interpretations of professionalism incorporate recognition of the transposition within the political arena of public sector professions. In relation to locus of control, Hoyle's interpretation, whilst it lies within the parameters of it, is distinct from that of Ozga, who analyses the concept of professionalism as a form of occupational control of teachers (1995, p.35). She contends (p.22): 'Professionalism is best understood in context, and particularly in policy context. Critical analyses of professionalism do not stress the qualities inherent in an occupation but explore the value of the service offered by the members of that occupation to those in power.' Troman (1996, p. 476) similarly perceives professionalism not as an absolute or an ideal, but as 'a socially constructed, contextually variable and contested concept ... defined by management and expressed in its expectations of workers and the stipulation of tasks they will perform'. Congruent with this are Gleeson *et al*'s (2005, pp. 445-6) highlighting of contextual relevance to conceptualization, and Holroyd's (2000, p. 39) interpretation: 'professionalism is not some social-scientific absolute, but a historically changing and socially constructed concept-in-use' – a point both illustrated by Evetts's examination of the changing nature of discourse of professionalism (2006, p. 523), and supported by Helsby (1999, p. 93) in relation to teacher professionalism: 'There is nothing simple or static about the concept of teacher professionalism in England: it is constantly changing and constantly being redefined in different ways and at different times to serve different interests'.

Hoyle's more recent (2001, p. 146) explanation of professionalism as a term used 'to describe enhancement of the quality of service' seems to align more closely with these interpretations than does the one he employed over thirty years ago. Sockett (1996, p. 23) follows the same 'quality' line: 'Professionalism is about the quality of practice', and adds, 'and the public status of the job', though Hoyle questions the inclusion of status as a dimension of *new* professionalism: 'Sometimes intentionally, but more often unintentionally, "professionalism" has the same connotation in the phrase "the new professionalism" as that adopted in this article, that is, improvement in the quality of service rather than the enhancement of status' (2001, p. 148).

Many interpretations – perhaps representing a broad consensus - seem to focus on professionalism's being an externally imposed, articulated perception of what lies within the parameters of a profession's collective remit and responsibilities. In setting the positions of these parameters – and, hence, in defining the boundaries of the profession's actual and potential authority, power and influence – external agencies appear to have the capacity for designing and delineating professions. In one sense, then, professionalism may be interpreted as what is effectively a representation of a service level agreement, imposed from above.

Yet some interpretations lie outside this broad consensual one. Boyt, Lusch and Naylor's (2001, p. 322) emphasis, for example, is on the influential capacity of the professional her/himself: 'Professionalism consists of the attitudes and behavior one possesses toward one's profession. It is an attitudinal and behavioral orientation that individuals possess toward their occupations.' Helsby (1995, p. 320) makes the same point about teacher professionalism: 'If the notion of "professionalism" is

socially constructed, then teachers are potentially key players in that construction, accepting or resisting external control and asserting or denying their autonomy.’

In the UK education professions across all sectors have been subject to increased control from outside the professions themselves – most notably from the government, and mostly during the 1980s and 90s. This, indeed, was the catalyst for the evolution or imposition of what have been presented as, variously, prescriptions (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1998) or descriptions (David Hargreaves, 1994) of new professionalisms, particularly in relation to the teaching profession.

A common feature of many conceptions of new professionalism in an education context is a focus on practitioner control and proactivity. Hargreaves and Goodson’s (1996) and, to a rather lesser extent, Sachs’ (1999) principles of teacher professionalism incorporate a focus on teachers’ taking greater responsibility for defining the nature and content of their work. This, in part, is consistent with Freidson’s (1994, p. 10) interpretation of professionalism:

I use the word ‘profession’ to refer to an occupation that controls its own work, organized by a special set of institutions sustained in part by a particular ideology of expertise and service. I use the word ‘professionalism’ to refer to that ideology and special set of institutions.

But this interpretation is of the ‘old school’. It is a traditional conception of a pre-renovated professionalism. Despite the bravado reflected in prescriptive conceptions of teacher professionalism that incorporate rally calls to preserve, or regain, professionals’ power over their own destiny, the advent of new professionalisms is often seen – as I discuss below – as a professional development initiative which has, to all intents and purposes, swept away such conceptions of

professionals' autonomy and control over their work-related remits and roles. In order to move towards this discussion of the potential nature and extent of changes that constitute professional development I first examine what I refer to as the 'substance' of professionalism.

The substance of professionalism

Freidson's interpretation of professionalism, above, incorporates references to features that might generally be equated with elements of professional culture. Implicit in the interpretation – with its focus on ideology and a special set of institutions – is homogeneity of values and viewpoints. It is this homogeneity amongst its membership that Johnson (1972) suggests as one of the features of a profession.

The relationship - and the distinction – between professional culture and professionalism are relevant to examination of the substance of professionalism. On the basis of examination of most of the interpretations and definitions presented so far, as well as those presented below, it may be argued that professional culture makes up a large proportion of what, in many cases, is considered to be professionalism. An interpretation of professionalism as 'something which defines and articulates the quality and character of people's actions within that group', (Hargreaves and Goodson's reference to some writers' interpretations, 1996, p.4) is indistinct from what may reasonably be presented as an interpretation of professional culture, and these authors' own 'principles of postmodern professionalism' (Hargreaves and Goodson, 1996, p.4) include several that equate to manifestations of professional culture. Sachs' (1999, pp. 83-85) five 'core principles' of teacher professionalism in the new millennium, and Freidson's (1994, p.10) and Johnson's (1972, p.53)

emphases on ideological consensus and shared outlook as constituent elements of professionalism could also just as easily be features of, or principles underpinning, professional culture.

Although, based on examination of many interpretations, it may be argued that professionalism is constituted largely of professional culture, it is evidently also something more. The consensus of interpretation suggests that professionalism goes beyond professional culture by delineating the content of the work carried out by the profession, as reflected in accepted roles and responsibilities, key functions and remits, range of requisite skills and knowledge, and the general nature of work-related tasks. Whilst professional culture may be interpreted as shared ideologies, values and general ways of and attitudes to working – ‘a configuration of beliefs, practices, relationships, language and symbols distinctive to a particular social unit’ (Hoyle and Wallace, 2005, p. 103) - professionalism seems generally to be seen as the identification and expression of what is required and expected of members of a profession. Day (1999, p.13) implies an interpretation of professionalism as a ‘consensus of the “norms” which may apply to being and behaving as a professional within personal, organizational and broader political conditions’.

If professional culture is incorporated within, and constitutes a large element of, professionalism it is likely to have evolved as such as an inevitable by-product of it, although, as I discuss below, I do not believe this is likely to be a unidirectional relationship. The distinction between professional culture and professionalism is, arguably, that the former is more attitudinal than behavioural in its focus and the latter more functional than attitudinal, though this may at times be a rather blurred distinction. The relationship between the two, I suggest, is that professional culture

may be interpreted as the collective, predominantly attitudinal, response of people towards the professionalism that predominantly defines how they function.

In the context in which it is examined in this paper, a key element of professionalism appears to be commonality. Though I accept that in everyday parlance it is acceptable to talk of an individual's professionalism, the majority of definitions presented above suggest a general conception of professionalism, like professional culture, as a collective notion: as a plurality, shared by many. Yet the basic components and constituent elements of professionalism are essentially singular since they reflect the individuality representing the individuals who are the constituency of the profession delineated. The 'singular' unit of professionalism – and one of its key constituent elements – is, I suggest, *professionalism*, as I interpret the term.

'Professionalism' is a term introduced by Hoyle (1975), who identifies two distinct aspects of teachers' professional lives: professionalism and professionalism. In 1975 Hoyle explained the distinction as being between status-related elements of teachers' work, which he categorised as professionalism, and those elements of the job that constitute the knowledge, skills and procedures that teachers use in their work, and which he categorised as professionalism. After extensive consideration and analysis, I have defined professionalism as: *an ideologically-, attitudinally-, intellectually-, and epistemologically-based stance on the part of an individual, in relation to the practice of the profession to which s/he belongs, and which influences her/his professional practice* (Evans, 2002b, pp. 6-7).

In the 1970s Hoyle formulated two models of teacher professionalism: 'For the sake of discussion we can hypothesize two models of professionalism: *restricted* and *extended*' (Hoyle, 1975, p. 318). The characteristics used to illustrate these two

hypothetical models created what may effectively be seen as a continuum with, at one end, a model of the 'restricted' professional, who is essentially reliant upon experience and intuition and is guided by a narrow, classroom-based perspective which values that which is related to the day-to-day practicalities of teaching. The characteristics of the model of 'extended' professionalism, at the other end of the continuum, reflect: a much wider vision of what education involves, valuing of the theory underpinning pedagogy, and the adoption of a generally intellectual and rationally-based approach to the job. I use the term, *professionalism orientation* to refer to individuals' location on the 'extended-restricted' continuum. Empirical evidence supports the existence of such a continuum within teacher culture (Evans, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2002; Nias, 1985, 1989), giving credence to Hoyle's heuristic models. Allowing for specific contextual differences it is a continuum that, I suggest, is applicable to all education professions. Indeed, my own research has revealed evidence of it amongst academics (Evans, 2000; Evans and Abbott, 1998), and others have implicitly identified it within the FE sector (Gleeson and Shain, 1999).

I perceive professionalism to be what may perhaps best be described as, in one sense, the 'plural' of individuals' professionalism orientation: the amalgam of multiple 'professionalities' – professionalism writ large. In this respect my interpretation of professionalism is consistent with that of Boyt, Lusch and Naylor (2001), presented above. One implication of this interpretation is that the delineation and shape of professionalism are evolved within the profession, rather than formulated and imposed on it by external agencies. However, this implication, in turn, is predicated upon acceptance that professionalism orientation is determined independently of professionalism and suggests a unidirectional, consequential relationship between professionalism and professionalism. In fact, it is more plausible that an iterative

developmental process operates: the amalgamation of individuals' professionalities influences and shapes the collective professionalism, which, in turn, stimulates or provokes responses in individuals that determine their professionalism orientations. Professionalism thus has as much chance of influencing professionalism as professionalism has of influencing professionalism, in the same way that a critical realist interpretation explains the interaction between structure and agency in defining culture (Archer, 1995). There can be little doubt that professional culture also enters into the equation, contributing to the iterative developmental process, for my current thinking leads me to perceive individual professionalism as the singular unit not only of professionalism but also as one of the singular units of professional culture. Professional culture represents – at least in part - the sum of individuals' professionalism and, since professionalism is potentially influenced by professionalism, so too, therefore, is its sum. As I have already suggested, professional culture represents an attitudinal response towards professionalism.

Yet professional culture, in turn, determines the nature of professionalism. This may be disputed by those who interpret professionalism as an externally formulated and applied design of the nature and scope of a profession - an interpretation which safeguards professionalism from being tampered with from within the profession and secures its function as an occupational control mechanism (Ozga, 1995, p.35). My contention, though, is that professionalism should not be a hypothetical or idealised concept, it should be perceived as a reality – a real entity. Yet it is only a real entity if it is operational. Professionalism's 'entiativity', to use Campbell's term¹ (1958, cited in Castano, Yzerbyt and Bourguignon, 2003), is crucial because if it is not enacted – if it is not functional – it is reduced to being meaningless; an unfulfilled vision; an ideal that fails to be realised. To be real, professionalism has

to be something that people – professionals - actually ‘do’, not simply something that the government or any other agency *wants* them to do, or mistakenly imagines they are doing. Above, I liken professionalism to a service level agreement, but it is only such when it is accepted and adopted by the professionals at whom it is directed. Until that happens it is merely a service level *requirement*. In enacting or reifying professionalism professionals inevitably shape it by allowing their professional culture to influence it, yet their professional culture is also shaped by the enactment of professionalism. If it is to achieve any measure of success, any attempt to impose a professionalism on an occupational group or community must, therefore, incorporate both consideration of the influence, and understanding of the nature, of that group’s professional culture(s), as represented by the professionalism range represented within the profession.

A second implication of my interpretation that professionalism is the amalgam of multiple ‘professionalities’ is that, if we accept that a range of professionalism orientations within any profession underpins an evident diversity of outlook, attitudes, values, ideologies and approaches to the job, then the homogeneity, commonality or consensus which are generally identified as essential to professionalism necessarily become elusive. This, in turn, calls into question the very notion of professionalism as it has generally come to be understood. If professionalism is essentially accepted as a collective commonality of approach to and execution of the key roles, responsibilities and activities that constitute the work undertaken by the profession then its existence is undermined by a diversity that negates its essential features. Whilst such commonality – indeed, uniformity – may feature within a conception of professionalism that is *required*, or even *demand*ed, of an occupational group, it is bound to dissipate into impracticable rhetoric at some stage during the translation

from what is required to what is enacted because a wide, diverse range of individuals' professionalities is entered into the equation.

Professionalism redefined

Having examined its substance, how, then, should we conceive of professionalism?

Does the term relate to what is *officially set down* as the accepted shared norms and behaviour code of the profession in relation to how it delivers its service and/or performs its designated function(s), or does it refer to the *real, enacted version* of this? The two will never completely match, as anyone who has ever complained of poor customer service will testify. Hoyle and Wallace (2007, p. 19) refer to one form of such mismatch as 'the irony of presentation', which 'manifests itself in the manner in which members of an organization present an image of the organization to the outside world that is not wholly congruent with the reality of its daily practices.' Mismatch is inevitable since 'official' versions of professionalism are predicated upon a commonality of professional-related behaviour that a study of professionalism reveals to be unviable, and hence such notions of professionalism, in representing something that is unviable, begins to veer towards nonsense, and one questions the existentialist status or 'entiativity' of a professionalism conceived as such.

One solution may be to distinguish between different reified states of professionalism (incorporating consideration of the question: real, according to whose perspective?) Thus one may, for example, distinguish between: professionalism that is *demande*d or *requeste*d (such as that reflecting specific professional service level demands or requests made of an occupational group or individual workforce), professionalism that is *prescribe*d (such as that reflecting envisaged or recommended professional service levels perceived by analysts), and professionalism that is *enacted*;

that is, professional practice as observed, perceived and interpreted (by any observer – from outside or within the relevant professional group, and including those doing the ‘enacting’). Yet since only the third of these may be considered to reflect reality – albeit a phenomenologically defined reality – it remains the only meaningful conception of professionalism; any others represent insubstantiality ranging from articulated ideology to wishful thinking. Drawing once again on Hoyle and Wallace’s (2007, p. 19) words, quoted above, a meaningful conception of professionalism must reflect the *reality* of daily practices. From this reasoning, and incorporating my interpretation of professionalism as, in a sense, the ‘plural’ of professionalism, my current thinking leads me to define professionalism as: *professionalism-influenced practice that is consistent with commonly-held consensual delineations of a specific profession and that both contributes to and reflects perceptions of the profession’s purpose and status and the specific nature, range and levels of service provided by, and expertise prevalent within, the profession, as well as the general ethical code underpinning this practice.*

From ‘demanded’ to ‘enacted’ professionalism: the capacity of reform for achieving professional development

The prevalence of perceived new professionalisms in the UK public sector during the last twenty years or more occurred as a result of the UK government’s reforms of the public sector. These focused on new ways of operating and new forms of organisation, with a view to improving efficiency and service provision. Their key feature was changes to ‘the daily practices’ (Hoyle and Wallace, 2007, p.19) of the work forces delivering the services, thus new professionalisms were required or demanded by the agency imposing the reforms – the government. In effect, therefore,

the reforms may be seen not only as mechanisms for improving public services but also, by extension, as mechanisms for achieving government-imposed professional development.

But a *required* or *demande*d new professionalism is not the same as an *enacted* new professionalism. A ‘new professionalism’ is not a new professionalism – nor, indeed, any other form of professionalism - unless it is enacted; until this occurs it remains merely an idea or conception of a professionalism. How effective, therefore, at achieving professional development among education professionals is imposed reform? In order to address this question we must first clarify what we mean by ‘professional development’.

The concept of professional development

Stipulative definitions both of teacher development and, more generally, of professional development, are difficult to find. Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) comment on ‘how little systematic attention has been devoted to understanding the topic’ (p.1). Definitions of teacher development are almost entirely absent from the literature; even those who are generally considered leading writers in the field do not define precisely what they mean by the term. Darling-Hammond (1994), Leithwood (1992), Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) and Hargreaves and Fullan (1992), for example, all fail to offer operational definitions of teacher development or of professional development.

One of the very few available stipulative definitions is Day’s (1999, p.4). ‘Professional development’, he writes, ‘is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the

knowledge, skills, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives.’

My own interpretation of professional development is much wider and less specific. It reflects my view that professional development may be conceived of as an enhancement to the status of the profession as a whole, exemplified by the evolution of an all-graduate profession, and it may also be conceived of as an improvement to knowledge, skills, and practice. I define it simply as: *the process whereby people’s professionalism and/or professionalism may be considered to be enhanced*. This interpretation incorporates consideration of professional development’s having a range of applicability that extends from an individual- to a profession-wide level. It may be applied to variously formed professional groups or units: individual professionals; the staff of an institution, or a department in an institution; staff who hold a common role; and a profession as a whole. My inclusion within my definition of the words ‘may be considered to be’ is deliberate, to incorporate consideration of subjectivity in relation to views about what actually constitutes development.

Professional development: substance, process and ‘imposability’

But how effectively may professional development, so defined, be achieved on demand from outside the profession by a more powerful agency that wants to impose change? How easy is it, in other words, to translate required or demanded professionalism into enacted professionalism, thereby initiating a new professionalism of substance?

Elsewhere (Evans, 2002a) I have identified two constituent elements of teacher development (which are equally applicable to the broader concept of professional development): functional development and attitudinal development. I

define attitudinal development as the process whereby people's attitudes to their work are modified, and functional development as the process whereby people's performance is considered to be improved. I currently perceive attitudinal development as incorporating two constituent change features, or foci of change: *intellectual* and *motivational* (referring respectively to individuals' development in relation to their thinking, thought processes and ideas, and their motivation) and I currently perceive functional development as incorporating two constituent change features, or foci of change: *procedural* and *productive* (referring respectively to development in relation to procedures utilised, and what and/or how much people 'produce' or 'do', at work).

The point is that the external introduction (deliberate or inadvertent) of new service level requirements to occupational groups is likely to target and focus much more on functional development than on attitudinal development. This has evidently been the case in relation to educational professionals in the UK. The introduction of the national curriculum, for example, carried implications for procedural changes to teachers' work, whilst the implementation of the numeracy and literacy strategies called for both procedural and, arguably, productive, change. Similarly, the end of the binary divide in the HE sector in 1992, and the consequent managerialist focus and the widening of participation and increase of student numbers heralded procedural changes to academics' work (Dearlove, 2002; Deem, 2000; Fisher, 1995), and the research activity exercise initiative had both procedural and productive change implications (Dearlove, 2002; Nixon, 2001). But since functional development alone represents only partial development any imposed change with so narrow a focus is destined for only partial success. Indeed, empirical evidence demonstrates such limited success. The introduction of the national curriculum in England and Wales,

intended to change teacher professionalism as a means of raising educational standards, was met with a range of implementation patterns reflecting diverse professionalism orientations on the part of key staff: the ‘head-in-the-sand’, ‘common sense’, ‘paying lip service’, and ‘by the book’ approaches (Evans, *et al.*, 1994) – only one of which reflected a perceived ‘enacted’ professionalism wholly consistent with the government’s requirements. Such deviations from prescribed practice, Hoyle and Wallace (2007, p. 18) suggest, represent widespread ‘*ironies of adaptation*’ and ‘*ironies of representation*’:

The former connotes the ways in which the practices of headteachers and teachers entail ‘working round’ prescriptions and expectations in order better to meet the perceived needs of pupils in the contingent circumstances of a particular school. The latter connotes the ways in which headteachers and teachers represent their work to the agencies of accountability in order to appear to be meeting the requirements of these agencies.

Certainly, more widespread commitment to reform-imposed change – what may be classed as attitudinal development – will often occur over time through a combined process of gradual erosion of resilient attitudes and the continual regenerative process of replacing established staff with newcomers who have never known anything other than the ‘new’ practice, until the ‘new’ eventually becomes the familiar norm that defines the comfort zone within which people are happy to work. This, though, being a slow and protracted process, represents evolution rather than implementation of change.

Attitudinal development, on the other hand, with its two key change foci of intellectual and motivational change, involves the transmission or fostering (depending on temporal factors) of changed attitudes. Attitudinal development on the part of practitioners in relation to imposed reform or policy change that requires changes to their professionalism will therefore yield changes to their attitudes towards issues relevant to what is demanded or required. Clearly, attitudinal *change* may involve change that may be perceived to be for the worse as well as change for the better. Within my own conceptual framework and interpretation, though, as I point out elsewhere (Evans, 2002a), both functional and attitudinal *development*, as constituent elements of professional development, lie within the parameters of my definition of professional development as: the process whereby people's professionalism and/or professionalism may be considered to be *enhanced*. Therefore, to constitute attitudinal *development* rather than the broader attitudinal *change*, changes of attitude must be considered to represent/reflect enhancement of professionalism and/or professionalism. I have already referred to the deliberate use of 'may be considered to' in order to incorporate both flexibility and subjectivity of interpretation, the latter being a sufficient condition for determining enhancement of professionalism and/or professionalism and, therefore, professional development. Change initiators will perceive a specific professionalism to be enhanced if it reflects the changes required of it in order to effect the policy changes that they initiated. From their perspective such a new, or even simply a modified, professionalism is a change for the better, though the assessments of other (interested) parties may conflict with this. Yet unless practitioners themselves – that is, they who are required to enact a new, or modified, professionalism – recognise some degree of enhancement to their professionalism and/or professionalism, attitudinal development will not have

occurred. Attitudinal development is dependent upon perceptions of enhancement on the part of the 'developed'. It need not be universal; as I have already pointed out, practitioner groups – professional groups – are no more homogenous than any other group of individuals, and where one individual perceives much enhancement another may perceive only a slight degree of it, while yet another may perceive nothing but deterioration. Attitudinal development thus occurs primarily on an individual basis. Yet as a factor influencing change it is much more potent than functional development since it reflects, to varying degrees, acceptance of and commitment to the change and, by my definition and within my interpretation, it is attainable only by the 'developed', and of their own volition; it is impossible to impose upon them against their will. Functional development, on the other hand, may be – though is not necessarily – attained by imposition. An ideally constituted professional development incorporates both attitudinal and functional development, since either without the other is unsatisfactory. Yet whilst it is not uncommon to attain functional development without attitudinal development it is improbable (though not impossible) that attitudinal development will fail to be followed by functional development.

I believe attitudinal development is dependent upon recognition (on the part of the 'developed' or 'developee') of a subjectively perceived imperfect or unsatisfactory practice- or policy-related situation over which s/he exercises some degree of control. The degree of perceived imperfection may range from being negligible to immense, but without it development would not occur; quite simply, complete satisfaction obviates the perceived need for change, and dissatisfaction – however slight – engenders receptivity to change. Yet it is important to emphasise that recognition of imperfection need not necessarily precede development; often it is retrospectively recognised. It may not be until we inadvertently stumble upon a new

idea or way of doing something that we then recognise it (either instantly, or later, upon further contemplation, trial or adoption) as superior to ideas or ways of working that preceded it – as a ‘better way’ - and these former ideas or ways of working are then, in comparison, recognised as imperfect or unsatisfactory. Indeed, it is by such a process that imposed functional development may lead to attitudinal development.

Sharing perceptions of a ‘better way’

To be effective, professional development initiatives or policy need to incorporate not only mechanisms for achieving functional development, but also recognition of the great significance of attitudinal development. Policy changes or reform are initiated in response to recognition on the part of the change initiators of perceived imperfections or unsatisfactory situations, in relation to which attitudinal development on the part of targeted professionals is dependent upon the latter’s sharing (to some extent at least) these perceptions of inadequacy or imperfection. Furthermore, for attitudinal development to correlate with the change initiators’ required changes to professionalism, the targeted professionals must also share (again, to some extent at least) a commitment to the specific required or imposed change: a belief in, or at least receptivity to acceptance of, its potential to offer a ‘better way’. In other words, there needs to be some degree of match in relation to recognition both of the imperfect situation and a specific proposed improvement strategy, since each of these will be incorporated into any conception of the professionalism that is needed to rectify matters, and of the professional development required to effect this professionalism. Mismatch of perceptions will result in the change initiators’ conception’s failing to be fully enacted in the required manner, yet it is the enacted professionalism – however

deficient it may be considered to be – that constitutes the ‘new’ or modified professionalism.

Without wishing to imply a support either for educational reform *per se* or for specific reform or change initiatives, I suggest, from an impartial perspective, that the best chance change initiators have of attaining what they perceive as attitudinal development amongst targeted professional groups is to recognise and incorporate into their required changes to a specific professionalism consideration of its individual-professionality-determined heterogeneity. This may involve flexibility and a degree of compromise, where expectations of uniformity and standardisation give way to acceptance that a broad working consensus may be the best that may realistically be hoped for. It may also involve new interpretations of professionalism, derived from changed perceptions of its nature. But enlightenment of this kind reflects a real understanding of the substance of professionalism.

Concluding remarks

In part, the rationale for studying professionalism is to increase understanding of and augment the knowledge base relating, *inter alia*, to the service that professionals provide to society and to how this service may be improved. The study of professions and professionalism has evolved over the years, shifting its focus from examination of the constituents of a profession and, by extension, of professionalism, to other issues within the field – issues such as trust, values, ethics, and control, including, specifically, changes to the nature of professionalism. Yet still the very substance of professionalism - what, precisely professionalism *is* and how it is constituted – remains under-examined in the broad sociological field, and particularly in the context of education. This is problematic because without understanding of its substance it is

difficult to appreciate how professionalism functions and, therefore, how it may be influenced. In particular, the individualistic elemental nature of professionalism - its basis of individuals' professionalism as a singular unit, and the inherent diversity that this imposes upon it – remains generally unrecognised. It is deficiencies such as this - 'neglect of the phenomenology of change – that is, how people actually experience change as distinct from how it might have been intended' - that lie at the heart of Michael Fullan's (2001, p. 8) explanation of the widespread failure of change initiatives, and that underpin Hoyle and Wallace's (2005, p. 7) identification of a 'discrepancy between intention and outcome in relation to policy', and their observation: 'there is strong evidence from a variety of sources that two decades of reform have not led to anticipated levels of educational improvement, and certainly not commensurate with levels of investment in education, but have led to widespread teacher and headteacher dissatisfaction' (2005, pp. 4-5).

Professional development is a key process within the wider agenda of raising standards and increasing societal growth capacity by improving policy and practice in all areas of public service provision, not least education. But professional development involves changes to professionalism. Knowing how to effect such change is dependent upon knowing precisely what one is dealing with and understanding both how it operates and how to handle it. The ideas presented in this article contribute to that knowledge base.

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¹ The term entiativity was first introduced by Campbell (1958) to refer to 'the degree of having the nature of an entity, of having real existence' (Campbell, 1958, p. 17, cited in Castano, Yzerbyt and Bourguignon, 2003, p. 735).