ED347153 1992-07-00 Professionalizing Teaching: Is There a Role for Professional Development Schools? ERIC Digest.

ERIC Development Team

www.eric.ed.gov

Table of Contents

If you're viewing this document online, you can click any of the topics below to link directly to that section.

ERIC Identifier: ED347153
Publication Date: 1992-07-00
Author: Abdal-Haqq, Ismat
Source: ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education Washington DC.

Professionalizing Teaching: Is There a Role for Professional Development Schools? ERIC Digest.

THIS DIGEST WAS CREATED BY ERIC, THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

INFORMATION CENTER. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ERIC, CONTACT ACCESS ERIC 1-800-LET-ERIC

Since at least the mid-1970s, a number of proposals for improving American public education have included a call for professionalizing teaching, elevating teaching to the status of a "true" profession (Burbules & Densmore, 1991; Howsam, Corrigan, & Denemark, 1985; Soder, 1991). In 1976 the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education bicentennial report predicted that teaching "can and will self-actualize into a profession" and urged "professional and organizational effort" in that direction (Howsam, et al., 1985, 39). Indeed, in TOMORROW'S TEACHERS the Holmes Group identified its goal as "nothing less than the transformation of teaching from an occupation into a genuine profession" (1986, ix). Such language implies two things: first, that teaching is not a profession; and second, that there is something desirable, both for teachers and for the public welfare, in making teaching a profession.

This digest focuses on three aspects of the issue of professionalizing teaching. First, what defines a profession? Second, how does teaching fall short of being a true profession? Finally, what contribution can professional development schools make to teacher professionalization?

WHAT IS A PROFESSION?

Pratte & Rury (1991) succinctly list four criteria that shape the traditional view of a profession: remuneration, social status, autonomous or authoritative power, and service. Burbules and Densmore (1991) label the typical reform approach to teacher professionalization the "taxonomic approach," which focuses on a list of characteristics which are typical of occupations that have been traditionally regarded as professions, especially law and medicine. These characteristics include: professional autonomy; a clearly defined, highly developed, specialized, and theoretical knowledge base; control of training, certification, and licensing of new entrants; self-governing and self-policing authority, especially with regard to professional ethics; and a commitment to public service (Burbules & Densmore, 1991; Case, Lanier, & Miskel, 1986; Haberman, 1991; Pratte & Rury, 1991). Case et al. (1986) include the presence of a collegium among the essential characteristics of a modern profession. Sockett (1990) makes a distinction between professionalization, which focuses on the process by which an occupation becomes a profession, and professionalism, which describes the quality of practice.

IS TEACHING A PROFESSION?

When teaching is examined through the lens of traditional perceptions of what constitutes a profession, certain critical criteria are missing. First, teaching is generally considered to lack a clearly defined, codified, accessible knowledge base. Goodlad (1990b) maintains that while there is a "potentially relevant and powerful" knowledge base for teaching, it has not been codified and rendered useful, and it is generally inaccessible to practitioners.

Case et al. (1986) contend that the major characteristic of a profession that is missing

from teaching is the presence of a collegium. A sufficient degree of autonomy and self-governance are also missing (Goodlad, 1990; Levine, 1988). Levine argues that for teaching to become a self-governing profession it must have a "structured induction experience conducted under the supervision of outstanding practitioners who can and will attest to the competence of new inductees to practice" (1988, 2). Both Levine (1988) and Darling-Hammond (1987) view as a critical element in teacher professionalism the existence of agreed upon standards of professional practice shaped by practitioners. Ruth Danis (personal communication, May 19, 1992), project director of the Rochester (NY) City School District's PDS program, notes that, "Schools are both public and professional institutions and that the larger values of society and the community come into play more consistently in education than in other professions. Teaching is not strictly a technical/rational, skill-driven task. The context of teaching is closer in texture to parenting than to debating in a courtroom or overseeing surgery in an operating room."

The nature of teaching, the context in which it is performed, and the process by which occupations traditionally have become professions make it impractical and undesirable to use traditional models of professionalization for teaching (Burbles & Densmore, 1991; Fenstermacher, 1991; Pratte & Rury, 1991; Soder, 1990; Tom, 1986). In summary, regardless of whether one agrees that professionalization is the best path to take to improve the condition of teachers and teaching, it is evident that several of the key features associated with professions are missing from teaching.

DO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOLS HAVE A ROLE IN

PROFESSIONALIZING TEACHING?A professional development school (PDS) is a functioning, exemplary, public school (Holmes, 1986) which has three major functions: student achievement, teacher induction, and improvement of practice. Schools which share this mission are also known as professional practice schools (Levine, 1988) and clinical schools (Meade, 1991). These schools are collaborations between school districts, colleges, and often, teachers unions; sites where practitioners, researchers, and clinical faculty work together to expand the knowledge base of the profession and prepare future practitioners (THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL, 1991).

Many of those who believe that PDSs are a potentially significant element in professionalizing teaching generally support, at least in part, the medical model of professionalization and professionalism. Wise maintains that PDSs can provide an "organized introductory period of supervised teaching" (1989, 31) which would provide practical experience for beginning teachers in much the same way as teaching hospitals provide it for beginning physicians.

PDSs can help to promote teacher professionalism and teacher professionalization by

providing a setting in which many of the features associated with traditional professions, but missing from teaching, can be developed, tested, and refined, and from which they can eventually be disseminated. Ultimately, the major contribution of PDSs to the professionalization of teaching may come from public confidence that the interns who leave PDSs have been rigorously prepared and confidence that the practices that have been validated by the PDSs have been rigorously tested. This confidence provides the foundation for public respect and recognition which, as Goodlad (1990a) states, are necessary conditions for establishing a profession.

REFERENCES

References identified with an EJ or ED number have been abstracted and are in the ERIC database. Journal articles (EJ) should be available at most research libraries; documents (ED) are available in ERIC microfiche collections at more than 700 locations. Documents can also be ordered through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service: (800) 433-ERIC. References followed by an SP number were being processed for the ERIC database at the time of publication. For more information contact the ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education, One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 610, Washington, DC 20036-1186; (202) 293-2450.

Burbules, N., & Densmore, K. (1991). The limits of making teaching a profession. Educational Policy, 5(1), 44-63. EJ 422 827

Case, C. W., Lanier, J. E., & Miskel, C. G. (1986). The Holmes Group report: Impetus for gaining professional status for teachers. Journal of Teacher Education, 37(4), 36-43. EJ 340 673

Darling-Hammond, L. (1987). Schools for tomorrow's teachers, Teachers College Record, 88, 356-358. EJ 350 137

Fenstermacher, G. D. (1990). Some moral considerations on teaching as a profession. In J. I. Goodlad, R. Soder, & K. A. Sirotnik (Eds.), The moral dimension of teaching, (pp.130-151). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. ED 337 443

Goodlad, J. I. (1990a). The occupation of teaching in schools. In J. I. Goodlad, R. Soder, & K. A. Sirotnik (Eds.), The moral dimension of teaching, (pp. 3-34). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. ED 337 443

Goodlad, J. I. (1990b). Teachers for our nation's schools. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. ED 330 655

Haberman, M. (1986). Licensing teachers: Lessons from other professions. Phi Delta Kappan, 67, 719-722. EJ 345 225

Holmes Group. (1986). Tomorrow's teachers: A report of the Holmes Group. East

Lansing, MI: Author. ED 270 454

Howsam, R. B., Corrigan, D. C., & Denemark, G. W. (1985). Educating a profession. Reprint with postscript 1985. Washington, DC: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. ED 270 430

Levine, M. (1988). Introduction. In M. Levine (Ed.), Professional practice schools: Building a model (pp. 1-25). Washington, DC: American Federation of Teachers. ED 313 344

Meade, E. J., Jr. (1991). Reshaping the clinical phase of teacher preparation. Phi Delta Kappan, 72, 666-669. EJ 425 517

Pratte, R., & Rury, J. L. (1991). Teachers, professionalism, and craft. Teachers College Record, 93, 59-72. EJ 438 554

The professional development school: A common sense approach to improving education. [Draft]. (1991). Fort Worth, TX: Sid Richardson Foundation.

Sockett, H. (1990). Accountability, trust, and ethical codes of practice. In J. I. Goodlad, R. Soder, & K. A. Sirotnik (Eds.), The moral dimension of teaching, (pp. 224-250). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. ED 337 443

Soder, R. (1990). The rhetoric of teacher professionalization. In J. I. Goodlad, R. Soder, & K. A. Sirotnik (Eds.), The moral dimension of teaching, (pp. 35-86). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. ED 337 443

Tom, A. R. (1986). The Holmes report: Sophisticated analysis, simplistic solutions. Journal of Teacher Education, 37(4), 44-46. EJ 340 674

Wise, A. E. (1989). If we are ever to "professionalize" school teaching, universities must redesign education programs. The Teacher Educator, 24(4), 29-32. EJ 395 990

This publication was prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract number RI88062015. The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI or the Department.

Title: Professionalizing Teaching: Is There a Role for Professional Development Schools? ERIC Digest.
Document Type: Information Analyses---ERIC Information Analysis Products (IAPs) (071); Information Analyses---ERIC Digests (Selected) in Full Text (073);

Available From: ERIC CLearinghouse on Teacher Education, One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 610, Washington, DC 20036-1186.
Descriptors: Educational Principles, Elementary Secondary Education, Higher Education, Preservice Teacher Education, Professional Recognition, School Role, Teaching (Occupation)
Identifiers: ERIC Digests, Professional Development Schools, Professionalization of Teaching
###

—

[Return to ERIC Digest Search Page]