

Professional educators are increasingly the subject of criticism from citizens. Citizens are concerned that graduates seem unable to perform in work roles. Although this problem significantly reflects changes in the content of work, citizens hold teachers responsible because education has implicitly promised vocational success. The attack on professional educators is intensified by a general citizen attack on commoditized social services. The extent of service delivery structures has led citizens to force service policy into the public political arena. Professional educators have difficulty responding to these problems or challenges because in claiming professional status they disavowed any political interests or skills. The politicization of services suggests that professions will take a new form in the future.

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Legitimation Crisis in Education

Introduction

Professional educators are losing support from major sectors of the population, and members of the public are once again questioning whether teaching should be granted professional status. The roots of this crisis lie in two areas. First, as the content of work diverges from the content of traditional schooling, educators seem to be less effective in preparing students for work. Second, the claims which teachers have made in presenting themselves as professionals, as well as changes in the social context of human services, have led citizens to focus discontent about work on educators.

THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF TEACHING

Early Professionalization

Professions are empirically distinguished from other occupations by a single characteristic: "autonomy — a position of legitimate control over work," including conditions under which work will be performed and who will be permitted to perform the work. Thus, the defining characteristic of a profession refers to its social status, rather than, necessarily, any particular characteristic of the work performed.¹ As such, professional status is something which workers in any occupation would desire, for monopoly control over work has rewards in both conditions of work and financial remuneration for work. What may vary from one society or period to another is how workers in an occupation should most persuasively portray themselves in order to receive professional autonomy from citizens.

Industrialization fostered increasing specialization of labor. Taking the machine as a model, people assumed that work could be accomplished best by dividing tasks up among specialized components. This view led people to grant professional status and autonomy to members of occupations who could cogently lay claim to exercise specialized skills based on "training in theory or abstract knowledge

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which is generic to their field.”² Hence it is natural that teachers seeking professional recognition should have made extensive public claims about the specialized nature of the skills which a teacher’s education provided. Continually, teachers sought to respond to the tacit question, in what way they might be more skilled in the tutelage of young persons than parents or others whom the teachers meant to distinguish as lay persons.

The development of nineteenth century normal schools was a first step in the strategy to acquire professional status. Through discussion of the philosophy and methods of conducting classroom, “theory and normal schools became allies of the teachers in their drive for status. They provided the mystery that would set teachers apart from the rest of mankind.”³ Katz argues that this strategy by teachers was aided by popular desires for mobility in an industrializing society: if people were to acquire the specialized competence necessary to fill technical positions, they needed the benefits of specialized teaching.⁴

From the beginning, teachers activated by professional interests made two related claims. First, they have asserted that “there exists a specific body of principles that can be taught, and that such teaching does, in fact, make an individual a better teacher,” even though, as Conant notes, teachers have never agreed on what precisely these principles are.⁵ Second, teachers have balanced their claim to effect pedagogical techniques with attribution of responsibility for any children’s failure to learn in the home.⁶ Although it is a delicate matter to attribute only the cause of failure to the home while reserving the cause of success for pedagogues, teachers have reasserted this position most recently with the support of social scientific evidence. Both Coleman’s data⁷ and its re-working by Jencks, et al.⁸ have been used to absolve teachers of responsibility for the low achievement of certain students by highlighting the influence of the social environment.

Although both professional educators and outsiders to the profession have criticized the practice and training of teachers, consistent with the position presented by the profession, debate has focused on matters of pedagogical technique. Such problems as the divorce of teacher training from liberal education, the absence of training in classroom group processes, and the conservative nature of most practice teaching are easy to identify.⁹ Most discussions of teacher education examine alternative ways to prepare teachers to manage a classroom and teach. Some include still greater specialization of teacher training among their recommendations.¹⁰ These discussions do not hold teachers responsible for influencing the social environment, for teachers have rejected any such responsibility, even though they allow that the social environment influences students’ education.

The Progressive Education Movement

This has been the mainstream view of teachers staking out a profession. The progressive education movement has offered a divergent view, a view most articulately expressed in the first decades of the twentieth century. Progressive educators dissented from the mainstream in a number of ways. Much of their writing concerned pedagogical method: the child should be enabled in various ways to participate actively in his or her own education. This difference from the mainstream concerned the appropriate method within an agreed upon field. Where the progressives most significantly disagreed with mainstream professional teachers was in the progressives’ insistence that the teachers’ concern be enlarged to include the social environment.

Dewey wanted to bring the social environment into the classroom. He believed that daily life experiences should provide the basic material for children's learning. But, importantly, Dewey also wanted to be certain that material from the classroom was transferred out into the social environment. He envisioned creating a model of the good society within the school and stimulating students to move out of the school and, drawing on the model, work for social reform. Cremin summarizes Dewey's pragmatism and progressivism this way:

[He believed] that the main test of learning is the ability of individuals to meet new social situations with habits of considered action; and that schooling committed to cooperative effort on the one hand and scientific methods on the other can be a beneficial influence on the course of social progress.¹¹

Cremin identifies Teachers College under James Earl Russell as the most concerted effort to merge progressivism with professionalism.

The progressives had some limited influence on pedagogical methods and school curriculum.¹² A number of reasons why progressivism did not have greater or more lasting impact are organizational and political. Cremin and Tyack¹³ both observe that Dewey and others like him concentrated more on setting up isolated experiments than on attempting to refashion an entire municipal school system. Further, the progressives had difficulty sustaining the movement over many decades. Often, even where teachers might have been interested in adopting some of the progressives' practices, either the cost of teaching resources or bureaucratic system constraints stood in the way. Frequently, then, Dewey's views were incorporated into conventional teaching practices in a vulgarized form, such as watery "life adjustment" courses or loosely structured "play".

More importantly, the progressives had virtually no impact in a second area: tying educational reform to social reform. In part, this reflected the limitations of many of the progressives: they were most competent themselves as educational reformers, and not social reformers. Their preference for small experimental schools was one manifestation of this orientation. One other, important factor was the recalcitrance of mainstream professional teachers. If they wanted to consolidate their professional status, then they had no incentive to concern themselves with social reform, or even with the influence of the social environment on education. Not only would they begin to look more like generalists than specialists, but also they would have little chance of demonstrable success in working on the social environment. On either count they would stand to diminish their professional status.

Administrative Progressives

It is helpful to distinguish one other group of actors in order to understand the direction in which the professionalization of teaching moved. Tyack takes care to identify Dewey and those like him as "pedagogical progressives" and to contrast them with the "administrative progressives." The former were primarily concerned about education and focused their energies on single experiments in curriculum. The latter were concerned with applying the principles of scientific management to urban administrations and to city school systems. In contrast with the pedagogical progressives, the managers were primarily concerned about bringing order to the activities of both teachers and students, had relatively little interest in the personal development of students, and did not want to see students become agents of basic social change.

The administrative progressives were part of a rationalizing managerial movement which accompanied industrialization.¹⁴ They wanted to make the school system an efficient bureaucracy like the industrial plant. They wanted to bring to each unit within the school bureaucracy the kind of discipline which characterized industrial enterprise. For them the affective content of the curriculum — such things as self-discipline, dominance of the ego over emotions, and deferral of gratification — were at least as important as the cognitive content of the curriculum.¹⁵ As part of this movement teachers became scientific managers of their classrooms, enforcing procedures which produced industrial discipline.

The bureaucratic emphasis of the administrative progressives encouraged the professionalization of teaching in several ways. First, the scientific management movement demanded of and could offer teachers new specialized classroom skills, skills which teachers could claim were an integral part of pedagogical technique and which they could, consequently, cite in support of their professional status. More generally, but crucially, bureaucratization supported professionalization by defining hierarchical career lines. Finally, bureaucratic sanctions could exact the discipline within teachers' ranks necessary for maintaining professional lines.¹⁶

The schools of the pedagogical progressives were intended to produce socially students who would affect the larger society through reform-oriented collective action. In contrast, the program of the administrative progressives, molding a school system which would support an industrial order, would affect the larger society by annually producing thousands of individualistic students, each ready to compete and, hopefully, to advance society. The impact on society would be worked through whatever these students, acting individually, did.¹⁷

It is important to observe that one other reason why the mainstream professional teachers and the administrative progressives triumphed is that their positions were congruent with citizens' expectations in an industrial society. The bureaucratic discipline enforced by the administrative progressives was seen as a necessary skill for young persons to acquire if they were to ascend the industrial structure. But basic to this expectation was the belief that citizens would succeed in the industrial society only as individuals. This liberal tenet continues to undergrid the industrial order. People believe that a person's position in society (whether high or low) is solely a product of that person's ability and initiative. The traditional liberal view of society holds no picture of class or other structural constraints which might limit an individual's (downward or upward) social movement. Rather, it is assumed, the social rewards which someone receives are directly related to the effort which that person expends.¹⁸

Consequently, school, which prepares the young individual, is considered an extremely important link to future status. Citizens place considerable reliance on teachers, who, in claiming exclusive expertise in the training of the young, hold out the promise of at least middle-class status for any child. Parents from the lower classes in particular want to believe with the teachers that their pedagogical skill is the most important determinant of children's future status.

QUESTIONING THE TEACHERS

One Example: Ocean Hill-Brownsville

In recent years increasing numbers of citizens have attacked the work of teachers and questioned their accustomed professional status. The well-known

community control experiments in Ocean Hill-Brownsville raised in a particularly intense way many of the concerns which citizens have about the education profession.¹⁹ Although racial differences dominated that conflict, it is important to recognize that the Ocean Hill-Brownsville community was like many others, including some white communities, in being poor and feeling powerless.

The community was not homogeneous, but it is possible to identify dominant issues raised by community members. The basic concern of parents was that teachers were not succeeding at those tasks on which they based their claims for professional status: namely, educating the children of Ocean Hill-Brownsville. The community response was to seek to wrest from the certified and unionized teachers their exclusive control over pedagogical tasks. Either by retaining some of the old teachers and dictating to them how they would teach or by substituting new teachers who would follow community directions, Ocean Hill-Brownsville leaders wanted to put ultimate control over teaching in lay hands.²⁰

Although community leaders tended to be vague about what an alternative, effective pedagogy would look like, they were clear about how a new curriculum should differ from the traditional curriculum. First, it should incorporate material from the social life of black students into the curriculum. Further, the curriculum should include not only basic cognitive skills but also positive self-concepts and instrumental social skills. This curriculum would provide black youth with the personal skills necessary for them to advance in the larger society. Some community members added that the curriculum should equip their children to reform the social system which made blacks poor. The hiring of black teachers would support this curriculum by introducing persons who were familiar with the facts of everyday black life and who could stand as models of blacks moving out of poverty.

Community views varied, but they differed from the dominant views of professional teachers in several ways. First, with regard to the traditional professional boundary between specialized cognitive teaching and social issues, all community members insisted that teaching be widened from a narrow pedagogical focus to incorporate social content from community life. Some said that it was insufficient to rely on individual mobility by newly educated black youths and that educational reform should be more directly tied into a collective strategy for social reform. Second, with regard to the issue of professionalism, many endorsed the principle of professional status for teaching but wanted to give more blacks that status. Others, the strongest advocates of lay board control of education, challenged the right of any group of educators to professional status.

Not only in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, but many other communities as well, two points dominate the concerns of citizens who are challenging professional educators. The first is, simply, that children do not seem to be acquiring the skills necessary for occupations which bear middle-class status. The Coleman data highlighted racial differences in achievement test scores, and re-interpretations of those data by Jencks and his associates have added that test scores are positively correlated with parents' income. Daily newspapers recurrently publicize new student test scores, disparities among different student groups, and evident declines in test scores. The second point stems from the first: if teachers cannot provide children with crucial personal skills, then the teachers do not merit professional status.

The Educational Context

Undoubtedly many citizens who criticize professional teachers have the performance of their own children in mind as the measure of teachers' success. Some concerned citizens may be employers who are disappointed in the performance of new workers. For these people aggregate pictures of student achievement are relatively unimportant. Nevertheless, criticism of teachers is sufficiently widespread to justify an examination of some aggregate measures of achievement as an indication of the degree to which criticism may be directly related to students' learning.

Aggregate measures offer contradictory evidence. The Adult Performance Level research examined functional literacy among the adult population, which includes many people besides recent school graduates. Recent findings have indicated that approximately 20 per cent of the adult population cannot perform basic tasks essential to cope in contemporary society.²¹ The National Assessment of Educational Progress focuses on the performance of students in selected subjects. Scores in reading, for example, have risen for American nine-year-old students as a whole and for black nine-year-olds faster than for whites over the past four years. Scores from 13- and 17-year-olds have remained about the same over this period.²² However, in reading as in many other subjects black students of all ages have scores lower than whites, and children's scores are positively correlated with their parents' education.²³ High school seniors' scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test have declined for thirteen consecutive years.²⁴ However, one universal assessment of students, course grades, have been rising since the late 1960's for both college and high school students.²⁵

A number of scientific questions may be raised about the validity and other aspects of these studies. Yet most citizens are not scientists and do not evaluate teachers in that way. Even where studies offer indicators of absolute improvement, individual citizens seem concerned less about the level of student performance than about an assessment of the adequacy of that performance for social success. For example, those studies which look at the race or socio-economic status of students find significant differences which would support the belief of black and lower-class parents that their children leave school less well equipped than other students.²⁶ Many adults and students believe that rising grade-point averages reflect lower standards rather than higher achievement. They believe, as the Adult Performance Level data would suggest, that many graduates, whatever their records, leave school unable to perform adequately at work and other socially vital tasks. For most citizens the real test of effectiveness of teachers would seem to be the adult performance of school graduates, in particular their performance at work. In other words, most citizens appear to be judging the claims of teachers to professional status on their ability to help young persons move into acceptable occupations. Accordingly, it is necessary to look at the occupational status of young graduates.

The Occupational Context

Employment is a condition in which the skills of specific individuals are matched with the requirements of particular jobs. Most people hold professional educators responsible for enabling individuals to match themselves with some respectable job requirements. Currently public confidence in the ability of teachers to equip students for appropriate occupational matches has diminished. Yet evidence regarding the skills which graduates derive from their schooling is, even in its

worst interpretation, mixed, and certainly not monolithically negative. Therefore, it is important to examine the requirements of jobs, to see whether they have changed significantly.

Quantitative changes in the occupational structure are most evident in recent cyclical changes in the unemployment rate. The official jobless rate in the United States has continued a seven-year rise to a high of 7.8 per cent as of December, 1976. Accounting methods understate the number of non-recently-employed and never-employed, including many youths, who want and cannot find work. This measure, however, even with its imperfections, points to a growing aggregate mismatch between the proportion of the population seeking work and the availability of work.

Further, as the ratio of jobs to job-seekers declines, the relatively scarcer jobs tend to be distributed among groups which have traditionally fared better in the labor market. The underside of the rising unemployment rate is more rapidly increasing unemployment among such groups as youths and blacks. The ratio of youth (under 19) unemployment to adult (20 and over) unemployment has increased from approximately 2.7:1 in the late 1940's to approximately 3.0:1 in the 1950's to approximately 4.4:1 in the 1960's and approximately 4.2:1 in the early 1970's. The ratio of black unemployment to white unemployment has increased from approximately 1.6:1 in the late 1940's to approximately 2.0:1 in the 1950's to approximately 2.1:1 in the 1960's and approximately 1.9:1 in the early 1970's.²⁷ These figures suggest that, at least in the short term, youths and blacks are becoming increasingly marginal to the labor market. The figures show that in recent years an increasing proportion of the general population and particularly of groups like youths cannot satisfy their expectations of finding work.

These figures do not reveal increasingly rigid restrictions on upward mobility within the labor market. Berg notes that, more and more, employers are using school credentials as the basis for allocating relatively scarce jobs among relatively abundant job-seekers. Further, Berg observes, these credentials are often not even good indicators of individual's ability to perform on the job. Rather, they are simple to use in hiring. Moreover, access to the higher credentials, which lead to higher-paying employment, are normally most likely open to children of wealthier parents.²⁸ For example, the likelihood of a youth's attending college is directly related to family income.²⁹ Cicourel and Kitsuse observe that high school counselors consider students' class background in guiding them toward college in general or toward a higher status college in particular.³⁰ Thus, graduates from the lower classes who expect not only to find a job, but also to experience upward mobility in their work, are likely to be frustrated. For many persons the liberal view of upward mobility based on individual ability does not apply.³¹ Much of the mythological glue which holds together the labor market and, with it, the social order, is weakened.

These quantitative measures describe cyclical variations in the number of jobs available to different population groups. But the figures do not describe secular qualitative changes in the content of work which both the successful and the unsuccessful confront. Since the beginning of the twentieth century the occupational structure has undergone several significant changes. Generally, the number of low-level jobs is declining at the same time that the skill level of remaining jobs is rising. Specifically, the proportion of managerial and professional and clerical white-collar work has grown from one-fifth to almost half the labor force, while the proportion of agricultural workers has declined from 30 per cent to five per

cent of the labour force. While the proportion of blue-collar workers has held steady between 35 and 40 per cent, the number of unskilled workers within that group has fallen drastically (Reich 1972).

The significance of these changes rests in the changing skills requirements of jobs. Not only has low-level manual labor diminished, but the proportion of jobs requiring some amount of less or more sophisticated intellectual work has risen markedly. Further, the increasing number of workers employed in large group settings and the increasing number of workers who are engaged in delivering human services both call for a new skill: skill in interpersonal relations. This skill of personal influence, sympathy, and empathy is radically different from the skills called for in manufacturing goods. Not only is it not a manual skill, but, insofar as it might be considered a mental skill, it differs from other mental skills in involving personal interaction. As Hirschhorn argues, it is this evolution in the nature of personal skills demanded by jobs which has unmoored work from its links with traditional education.

The movement from tangible productive skills to intangible interpersonal skills has led to a demoralization of the traditional work structure. Hirschhorn captures the problem:

Thus, the new crisis in education. . .rests precisely in this decay of the industrial job structure, in the quantitative relative decline of jobs at the semi-skilled level, and the self-conscious but growing resistance to the qualitative structure of jobs at both the lower and upper ends of the occupational structure. And behind this dissolution there lies. . .the collapse of an overall developmental center that might provide cohesive images of future social development.³²

The breakdown of the traditional structure of work offers a vital clue to the source of citizen discontent with teachers. Even if, for example, rising grade-point averages did represent increasing student skills, graduating students might still be unable to perform in the ways which jobs require. Jobs calling for traditional skills taught by professional teachers in traditional schools are declining in number. A growing proportion of jobs calls for new skills. Professional educators may be teaching at least as well as in the past, and yet what they do no longer seems sufficient to enable students to perform adequately in employment. This mismatch between the skills which professional educators impart to students and the skills which graduates bring to employers seems to underlie much public discontent with the teaching profession.

The new skills, which are essential for higher status work, are accessible to some students in colleges and universities. For financial reasons these skills in these institutions are available primarily to students from the upper class. Thus, young persons from the lower class, who may look for work after high school graduation, are particularly handicapped in their quest for employment and for individual advancement within the labor market. Not only is the traditional work structure demoralized, but the liberal myth of individual mobility is profaned. Even though many citizens may not be conscious of the ways in which the content of work is changing, they are sensitive to new frustrations in the labor market. When they criticize professional educators, they are responding to their sense that the education offered by these teachers does not adequately prepare youths for performing on the job. For these people teachers have lost their legitimacy as professional educators.

LEGITIMATION CRISIS IN EDUCATION

The demoralization of the structure of work and the growing disjunction between the content of work and the content of schooling represent a serious economic crisis. Yet what is noteworthy is the degree to which citizens hold professional educators culpable for these problems. In order to understand this focused attack on educators it is important to look at the way in which professional educators have presented themselves to citizens. It is also essential to examine the changing economic context in which citizens receive services such as education.

The Professionalization of Education

Citizens cannot reasonably hold professional educators responsible for the changes in the nature of work, though, ironically, the growth of teaching as an occupation is part of the rise of interpersonal skills in work. Further, despite the hardship and dislocation caused by the change in the composition of work, many citizens would concede that much of the change, particularly the growth of human services, has been beneficial to society. However, it is reasonable for citizens to ask why the activities of the members of the profession have not changed in some correspondence to changes in the content of work. This question is particularly pertinent because early school reformers considered vocational preparation a major component of and justification for schooling.

Reasons for the relative lack of responsiveness of professional educators to changes in work can be found in the conditions under which teaching became professionalized. In an industrial society, as noted earlier, members of an occupation stand in the best position to receive professional status when they can lay claim to the effective exercise of specialized skills underpinned by rigorous intellectual training. When teachers have presented themselves to the public, they have emphasized their special ability to teach cognitive knowledge to young persons.

Part of the explanation for unresponsiveness lies in the conservatism of professions, regardless of their specific work. They have elevated their status and self-esteem by persuasively displaying particular skills. Continuing to practice these skills reassures them and, presumably, others that they are still professionals, deserving high status. Changing their repertoire in any way holds out the risk of casting them down into the rank of non-professional dilettantes. For this reason teachers would be reluctant to make basic changes in curriculum or teaching methods.

In addition, however, the particular way in which educators have circumscribed their claims to professional status has not only restrained their will to change but has reduced their sensitivity to any needs for change. First, they argued, even though teachers were highly trained pedagogues, even a good educator might not be able to overcome the detrimental effects of a child's social environment. Concomitantly with making this disclaimer, teachers kept their attention away from the social environments of children. Second, teachers, like social workers, in asserting that they exercised intensely specialized skills, explicitly disavowed any pretensions to being movers of society or social reformers. That was a broad concern, best left to politicians and other non-professionals.

This is the self-perception of professional teachers, and it is the message which they have made explicit to the citizenry. However, the professionalization of teaching has been supported by another message, often left tacit, but always

important to citizens. Early school reformers promoted the professionalization of teaching by emphasizing teachers' special ability to give young persons cognitive skills. The reformers said quite clearly that these skills were important because they were vocationally useful in the industrial order. It was this vocational component of the curriculum which enabled teachers to enforce discipline. For this curriculum reinforced and was bolstered by the liberal myth that individual mobility is a product of individual effort, which in turn is a product of the skills which the individual acquires in school. The emotional undertones of this myth led citizens to have very high, vocationally related expectations of professional teachers.

Professional educators have sent citizens a double message. On the one hand, teachers have claimed special skills in teaching cognitive knowledge, and they have made clear that they do not consider themselves social actors. On the other hand, this cognitive knowledge was originally promoted because of its vocational value. Whatever the teachers said, it was certainly socially useful knowledge, and teachers were irredeemably social actors. Their denial of social responsibility could be overlooked so long as the curriculum they offered students seemed to lead to employment. When the content of work diverged from the content of the curriculum, then the disclaimers of social responsibility became conspicuous. Citizens could not help feeling betrayed.

Crucially, it was the very way in which teachers claimed professional status which led them into this predicament. *Qua* educators, they believed, they could not be concerned with societal events. Even if they were equipped to change their curriculum or methods, they were not attuned to events which should lead them to consider such changes. Rejecting any stance of anticipating useful changes in practice, they adorned professional blinders which left them in the position of reacting defensively to public discontent.

The Commoditization of Services

The apparently mixed message in the professional claims of teachers is one source of discontent with teachers. Citizens who expected vocational preparation from schooling and then confront unemployment upon graduation may justifiably be angry. Yet there is an intensity to citizen dissatisfaction with professional educators which does not seem explicable simply on the basis of discrepancies between explicit and implicit curriculum content, on the one hand, and work content, on the other. After all, the vast majority of young persons still find jobs. What is noteworthy is that criticism comes from even citizens who have found places in the labor market. In order to understand the intensity and breadth of the attack on professional educators it is necessary to look beyond the behaviour of educators to the changing context in which all services, including education, are provided.

In the past three-quarters of a century the proportion of service work in the labor market has increased steadily, such that approximately two-thirds of the labor force today in some way provide a service.³³ This change may mean that an increasing number of persons are providing services to other persons. At the least, it indicates that a growing number of persons needing services must now pay others for these services where they were rendered free in the past. The entry of millions into the industrial labor force in the late nineteenth century affected the delivery of services in two ways. First, industrial working conditions created needs for new services, which would prepare people for industrial work and repair them from its hazards. Second, as people entered the industrial labor market, families and community organizations could no longer provide new or traditional personal services,

and people were forced to turn increasingly to specialized social service agencies. As the number of persons needing services grew, philanthropic service institutions were supplemented by both the state and larger, more formally organized private institutions. Increasingly workers were paid to provide the human services which communities earlier had been able to provide their members free. The relationship between provider and recipient of services has become commoditized.³⁴ Either directly or through the mediation of the state, people purchase services in much the same way that they purchase cosmetics, tools, or other goods.

Consumers become concerned about commodity prices in relation to the size of their claim on personal income. The current recession and inflation have raised concerns about prices generally. However, citizens have become increasingly sensitive to the prices of human services in particular. In part, this interest reflects the soaring claims of human services on personal income. In 1975, for example, health care cost 8.3 per cent of GNP, and education cost 7.8 per cent. Both figures represented rapid growth rates.³⁵ The practices of the medical profession, because health care is still predominantly produced and purchased on the private market, have probably been most significant in sensitizing citizens to the commoditization of human services.³⁶ This attitude toward the cost of services extends from health care to other services, such as education, even though it is almost entirely publicly produced and purchased.

Consequently, producers of services, such as professional educators, are watched with the same growing skepticism with which consumers view producers of automobiles, petroleum products, or coffee. Consumers of both goods and services are more wary about the price which they must pay for a unit of a product. In goods-producing industries this consumer revolt may be expressed in anger about the cost of a gallon of gasoline or a pound of coffee. Consumers have carried over this logic into analogous moves to make service providers accountable to consumers. The intangibility of services such as education raises questions about the transferability of traditional cost-accounting methods into the service sector.³⁷ However, consumers concerned about service costs have pushed their legislators and members of the teaching profession to identify and quantify educational inputs and outputs. Many consumers focus simply on reducing the costs of inputs into education. They regard the output of education as the teaching of all school-age children, and they push to reduce the annual cost of this schooling. Other consumers are willing to pay the costs of education if they can see signs of valuable outputs. They insist that teachers specify yearly teaching objectives in terms of student outcomes and that teachers be held responsible for reaching those outcomes.³⁸

However, the difficulty of identifying any clear production function for education has the effect of leading consumers to wage a wide-ranging attack on the teaching profession. There is no consensus on a counterpart to regulating the cost of natural gas or gasoline. Some focus on reducing the annual cost per student, but these people disagree widely on which inputs are most significant in student education and how to eliminate the inputs considered less significant. Some focus on holding teachers accountable for specified student outcomes, but these people disagree about which outcomes are most important. Hence, consumers launch a barrage against the teaching profession. Each attack is intended to hold down the costs of education while maintaining quality. The intensity of the attacks seems related less to any confidence in a particular measure of cost-effectiveness than to a general concern about rising costs.

In summary, while the rhetoric of professional educators has focused the wrath of the economically unsuccessful on the teachers, the general commoditization of human services has made many of the economically successful also wary and critical.

The Politicization of Services

Still, it is not possible to explain all the criticism of teachers in these terms. Moves for community control of schools, for example, are more than simply angry efforts at drastic cost-accounting.

The history of social services indicates that prior to industrialization private families and communities provided their members with a range of personal services, including education. As individuals left their families and communities for the industrial labor market, the social economy which provided these services collapsed. As the close helping bonds of communities were severed, individuals became dependent on persons increasingly distant for many services. Large formal helping systems replaced informal community networks. In order to acquire education, health care, protection, or child-rearing assistance, an individual became enmeshed in an ever-widening system of relationships. If a citizen was concerned about the amount or quality of some particular service, he could no longer turn to intimate friends for relief. Whether services were provided by private organizations or the state, the individual could influence the services only by entering into a complex decision-making process involving thousands or millions of others. Service relations became "communalized."³⁹ Decisions about services necessarily became part of the public political arena.

Professional service providers, including educators, have urged on service recipients one model of provider-recipient relations. The commoditization of services has encouraged a second, commercial, model of these relations. The politicization of services has supported a third model. In order to understand how strong a challenge the politicization of services represents to the professionals, it is necessary to examine these three models together.

The kernel of the claim of aspirants to professional status is that they alone are knowledgeable about the techniques of providing a particular service, about who needs the service, and about the conditions under which the service should be administered. Rationally, in this view, the professional should and can be accountable only to other professionals for the manner in which the service is delivered. Because the professional is an expert, the relationship between the provider of the service and the recipient is paternalistic (in the best sense) and amicable.

In the commercial model authority in this relationship is reversed. The provider of services is considered accountable directly to the recipient. Each recipient has the right as an individual to tender commercially relevant demands to providers. The recipient expects to get his "money's worth" from the provider and considers himself to have a good idea what his money is worth in terms of services rendered. Unlike the professional model, here the provider-recipient relationship is an adversary relationship, in which the recipient is always watching the provider and is prepared to hold him accountable for the service given.

The political model of provider-recipient relations subsumes the commercial model but adds broad new conditions. As in the commercial model, the provider of services is considered accountable directly to the recipient. However, in the political model the recipient is not restricted to tendering "rational," calculable, quan-

tifiable economic demands to the provider. Here the recipient may issue any directions to the provider, so long as the directions do not violate any ethical tenets. There is no requirement that the recipient be expert in the techniques of providing the service or that demands on the provider be restricted to the quantity or quality of the service. The political model differs from the commercial model not only in the scope of issues which it encompasses but also in the manner in which recipient demands are tendered. In the commercial model each recipient makes an individual demand on the provider. In the political model recipients as a group must be able to reach some collective decision — whatever their individual reasoning — regarding demands or providers. Like the commercial model, the political model portrays an adversary relationship between recipients and providers. This is the professional model stood on its head.

The development of the political model of provider-recipient relations should be seen as a citizen response to the growth of formal and extensive organizations for the delivery of services. It is an effort to regain some of the real or imagined control and security of community life. Widespread public conflict over education should be seen as an expression of this politicization of human services. The dominant role of the state in providing education focuses citizen attention on the political process as an opportunity for intervening in educational policy.

It is important to observe that many current school conflicts, such as that at Ocean Hill-Brownsville, are at least as much concerned with gaining political control of the schools themselves as they are with changing pedagogy in classrooms.⁴⁰ A major element in controversy over busing and neighborhood schools is an overriding concern about who will control where children go to school. In this debate it is implied that community control or consumer control (vouchers) will improve the education of children, as a by-product of new school management.⁴¹ It is relatively difficult to find in either public or scholarly discussion the unambiguous or even stated conviction that community schools will increase children's cognitive learning or other growth.⁴² Citizens have a growing feeling that control of schools has value as an outcome in itself. Increasingly, schools are seen as a reward to be fought over in the political arena, just like the rewarding of defense contracts and the location of dam sites. As more and more services have come to be provided by extensive private or state bureaucracies, education, along with other services, has come to be regarded as an appropriate object for public political conflict.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONS

Political debate over education is a far cry from professional decision-making about curriculum and pedagogy. Despite the efforts of teachers to insist that education is anything but a political matter, education has become a central issue in the political arena. If anything, it has become a vehicle for waging other economic and political battles. It is not clear that professional educators could maintain their position about pedagogy in an explicitly political battle over education. But every action which teachers have taken to claim professional status has led them to play down and to reject the concerns and skills which are increasingly important as services become politicized.

It is important to repeat that teachers have followed the commonly accepted pattern for claiming professional status in an industrial society. They have asserted that they have specialized expertise in some area of practice, and they have disavowed claims to work in the political arena. Social work is no different, nor is medicine or, for that matter, law. This position was expected as a condition for

bestowal of professional status in the late nineteenth century. It was congruent with an industrial ethos in which society operated efficiently as a consequence of the intermeshed specialized labor of many different workers.

However, the problem with this position is that society has changed. The increasing complexity of society has given rise to new social problems and problems in governance itself. Suffering these problems, citizens have become reluctant to grant professional status to workers who can neither solve problems nor govern society. Citizens have questioned professional claimants about their ability to do well what they claim to do. Education is one of several services where citizens have drawn issues into the political arena. They have asserted their right — and, implicitly, their expertise — to make basic decisions about the provision of services.

In essence, citizens are re-evaluating their grants of professional status. A vocal minority, at least, are no longer convinced, for example, that there is a group of practitioners who stand out from any others in their ability to educate. This questioning takes place in other professional areas. The politicization of services challenges the claims of practitioners to professional status. More to the point, it challenges the principle of professional status itself. More if a majority of citizens believe that policy decisions in particular services should be subjected to decisions of an electorate, then there is no place for autonomous professions. The politicization of services represents citizens' statement that they are reconsidering whether to grant professional status to anyone.

The experience of the education profession suggests two possible scenarios for professions generally. First, if members of certain occupations believe they have a legitimate right to the exclusive practice of particular skills, they will be able to defend that right only if they are willing to leave behind the apolitical stance which professions donned in the late nineteenth century. The politicization of services is part of a larger effort to develop new societal governance mechanisms. Services have irreversibly become political commodities for the near future. Policies for services will be molded not only by presentations from educated persons but also by organization of people with shared values. An increasing number of teachers have recognized these developments and have moved into the political arena through unionization and lobbying.⁴³ Members of other service occupations have been doing similarly. It is possible to foresee an increasingly articulate political dialogue drawn between providers and recipients of human services.

The education experience suggests a second, perhaps longer-range scenario. The problem which service providers have not been able to solve is, beneath other difficulties, how to govern society and care for its members. Many citizens have found the expertise of service providers, whatever its effectiveness in narrow areas, too specialized to make important connections between problems and persons. A major reason why education, for example, has become politicized is that citizens do believe that educational policy and economic policy should be made together. Political conflicts over service policy reflect the need for procedures and roles which can connect different areas of life. Unlike the traditional professional role, this role is not that of a specialist but that of a generalist.

In other words, citizens increasingly seem to value and seem willing to give the raised status which they once conferred on specialized workers to a new kind of actor. This person is a political actor who can persuasively lay claim to generalist skills in bridging disparate social groups. The test of the claims of this actor will be,

as always, the actor's ability to rise in the political process. This line of development may branch in either of two directions. Either citizens may continue to confer professional status on certain kinds of practitioners, but they may be ready to reward generalists rather than specialists. Or — and this seems like a longer-range possibility still — this generalist skill may become sufficiently common that the traditional status distinction between “professionals” and “lay persons” may atrophy.

Neither of these latter branches of development seems likely to deprive children of access to effective educators, for citizens will continue to choose and in some way reward those who can do what they need. Rather, the conditions of access or the conditions of remuneration may change. Some have seen this as a threat to expertise. On the other hand, citizens insist that they have due respect for expertise. They say that they just want to participate in decisions about how the expertise will be used to benefit

Notes

¹ Eliot Freidson, *Profession of Medicine* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1973), p. 82. Freidson provides a sophisticated presentation of this position and discussion of other definitions of a profession.

² Freidson carefully makes clear his view that the content of work bears no necessary empirical relationship to the political process of granting autonomy to particular occupations. Nevertheless, he indicates that claims to exercising specialized skills have proved most persuasive in the political process. P. 79. Wilensky and Lebeaux, in their examination of efforts of social workers to acquire professional status, argue that members of an industrial society are likely to be persuaded by claims to exercise specialized skills. *Industrial Society and Social Welfare* (2nd ed.; New York: Free Press, 1965).

³ Michael B. Katz, *The Irony of Early School Reform* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), p. 156.

⁴ *Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools* (2nd ed.; New York: Praeger, 1975).

⁵ James B. Conant, *The Education of American Teachers* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 27.

⁶ Katz, in describing mid-nineteenth century school reform in Massachusetts, reports that “articles in *Massachusetts Teacher* reminded readers of the power of parents to increase the teacher’s influence or, on the other hand, to undermine his efforts.” *Irony of Early School Reform*, p. 154.

⁷ James Coleman, *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (Washington: USGPO, 1966).

⁸ Christopher Jencks, et al., *Inequality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

⁹ Seymour B. Sarason, Kenneth S. Davidson, and Burton Blatt, *The Preparation of Teachers* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1962); Conant, *The Education of American Teachers*; James D. Koerner, *The Miseducation of American Teachers* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1965); Charles E. Silberman, *Crisis in the Classroom* (New York: Random House, 1970); and *Teacher Education*, in *Seventy-Fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, pt. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).

¹⁰ Conant.

¹¹ Laurence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), p. 136.

¹² For a general assessment of the impact of progressivism on mainstream teaching, see Cremin.

¹³ David B. Tyack, *The One Best System* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974).

¹⁴ Raymond E. Callaban, *Education and the Cult of Efficiency* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962); and Katz, *Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools*.

¹⁵ Herbert M. Gintis found in interviews with present-day teachers that most still tend to associate with good classroom citizenship and to reward traits related to ego control, such as dominance of the ego over the emotions, an unemotional cognitive orientation, and sociability (the ability to “get along” with others). Teachers tend not to associate with good citizenship and not to reward traits related to independence, creativity, and cognitive influence. Gintis argues that these teachers value the affective learning of their students at least as much as their cognitive learning. He suggests that the behavior most highly rewarded by teachers is that which most closely resembles the discipline necessary for productive work in an industrial order. “Alienation and Power” (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1969).

¹⁶ Katz, *Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools*.

¹⁷ This is Larry Hirschhorn's conclusion. Actually, both the small numbers of the graduates of the schools of the pedagogical progressives, as well as the limitations of their faculties in connecting curriculum and social consciousness muted the differences between these graduates and those of conventional schools. *The Social Crisis — The Crisis of Work and Social Services*. Part II: *Work, Social Services, and the Crisis of Modern Development*, Working Paper, no. 252 (Berkeley: Institute of Urban and Regional Development, University of California, 1975).

¹⁸ Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972).

¹⁹ Maurice R. Berube and Marilyn, eds., *Confrontation at Ocean Hill-Brownsville* (New York: Praeger, 1969); Marilyn Gittell and Alan G. Hevesi, eds., *The Politics of Urban Education* (New York: Praeger, 1969); Henry M. Levin, ed., *Community Control of Schools* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1970); and Mario D. Fantini, Marilyn Gittell, and Richard Hagat, *Community Control and the Urban School* (New York: Praeger, 1970).

²⁰ Leonard J. Fein offers a sophisticated discussion of different actors' motives for supporting community control of schools and indicates that only some community control advocates have coupled their position with an outright rejection of professionalism as a principle. "Community Schools and Social Theory: The Limits of Universalism," *Community Control of Schools*, ed. H.M. Levin.

²¹ "20% of Adults found unable to cope with life," *Washington Post*, 30 October 1975; and "Study shows one of every five adults in U.S. is functionally illiterate," *Baltimore Sun* 30 October 1975.

²² "U.S. study shows 9-year old pupils read better in '75 than those in '71," *Baltimore Sun* 22 September 1976.

²³ U.S. National Center for Education Statistics, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, *Digest of Education 1975 Edition* (Washington: USGPO, 1976), Tables 183-186.

²⁴ "Aptitude test scores continuing to decline," *New York Times*, 12 September 1976.

²⁵ "Survey of students shows drop in grading standards," *Baltimore Sun*, 10 January 1977.

²⁶ Coleman, Jencks, et al.; and U.S. National Center for Education Statistics 1976.

²⁷ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor, *Handbook of Labor Statistics 1975 - Reference Edition* (Washington: USGPO, 1975), Table 59.

²⁸ Ivar Berg, *Education and Jobs: The Great Training Robbery* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973),

²⁹ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce, *Current Population Report*, Series p. 20, no. 185 (Washington: USGPO, 1969), p. 6.

³⁰ Aaron V. Cicourel and John J. Kitsuse, *The Educational Decision-Makers* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963).

³¹ Sennett and Cobb.

³² p. 119.

³³ Definitions of "service" work are elusive, but trends seem clear. An occupationally based definition would focus on workers whose occupations consist of providing services rather than producing goods, regardless of the overall purposes of the organizations for which they work. Such a definition would indicate a growth in the proportion of the labor force in service occupations from 30.9 per cent in 1910 to 58.6 per cent in 1967. A sectorally based definition would focus on workers whose employers provide services rather than producing goods, regardless of the specific occupations of the workers. Such a definition would indicate a growth in the proportion of the labor force in service-producing industries from 31.1 per cent of the total in 1900 to 64.1 per cent in 1968. The magnitude of the change suggested is similar, but the workers counted are not altogether the same. For discussion of the significance of these figures and development of a service sector generally see Victor R. Fuchs, "The First Service Economy," *Public Interest* 2 (1966): 7-17, and *The Service Economy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968); and Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

³⁴ Wilensky and Lebeaux; and Jurgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973).

³⁵ In the school year 1974-1975 Americans spent \$108.7 billion on education. This represents 7.8 per cent of GNP and a 10.6 per cent increase over the previous year. Comparisons with selected years illustrate the rate of growth:

School Year	Educational Expenditure	% of GNP
1974-1975	\$108.7 billion	7.8
1963-1964	36.0 billion	6.1

1953-1954	13.9 billion	3.8
1943-1944	3.5 billion	1.8
1933-1934	2.3 billion	4.1
1929-1930	3.2 billion	3.1

Source: *United States National Center for Education Statistics 1976*, Table 24.

³⁶ In fiscal year 1974, when Americans spent \$104.2 billion on health care, 87.5 per cent of health services were privately produced, and 60.4 per cent of the financing came from private sources. Nancy L. Worthington, "National Health Expenditures, 1929-74," *Social Security Bulletin* (1975): 3-20.

³⁷ Michael B. Tertz offers a particularly clear discussion of the difficulties in taking quantitative measures of the effectiveness of human services. "Cost Effectiveness: A Systems Approach to Analysis of Urban Services," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 34 (1968): 303-311.

³⁸ Some econometricians go still further. They believe that by running regression analyses on school costs and student outcomes they can identify the marginal costs of alternative student outcomes. Martin T. Katzman, for example, states that a minimum cost of Boston's 1970 school services would have been \$180 per student (compared to the city average of \$342 per student in the city's most deprived district). He calculates that bringing deprived students up to a standard reading level would cost \$18 per student additional, that reaching a standard mathematics would run another \$40, and so forth. *The Political Economy of Urban Schools* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 101.

³⁹ Daniel Bell notes that social relations generally involve increasing layers of interconnectedness: "the social unit is the community rather than the individual, and one has to achieve a 'social decision' as against, simply, the sum total of individual decisions." "Labor in the Post-Industrial Society," *Dissent* (1972): 167.

⁴⁰ Berube and Gittell; Gittell and Hevesi; David Rogers, *110 Livingston Street* (New York: Vintage Books, 1969); Levin; and Fantini, Gittell, and Magat.

⁴¹ Center for the Study of Public Policy, *Education Vouchers* (Cambridge: The Center, 1970).

⁴² Meyer Weinberg, "The Relationship Between School Desegregation and Academic Achievement: A Review of the Research," *Law and Contemporary Problem* 39 (1975): 240-270; Elizabeth G. Cohen, "The Effects of Desegregation on Race Relations," *ibid.*, 39 (1975): 271-299; and Edgar C. Epps, "Impact of School Desegregation on Aspirations, Self-Concepts and Other Aspects of Personality," *ibid.* 39 (1975): 300-313.

⁴³ Ronald G. Corwin, *A Sociology of Education* (Columbus: Meredith, 1965), and "The New Teaching Profession," *Teacher Education*, in *Seventy-fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, pt. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975); Harmon Zeigler, *The Political Life of American Teachers* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1967); Silberman; Robert J. Braun, *Teachers and Power* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972); and Mario D. Fantini, *What's Best for the Children?* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1974).