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International patterns of teacher discontent

Catherine Scott

University of Wollongong, cscott@uow.edu.au

Barbara Stone

The Imagination Group

Stephen Dinham

University of Western Sydney, sdinham@uow.edu.au

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"I love teaching but...." International Patterns of Teacher Discontent

Catherine Scott
University of Western Sydney
Australia

Barbara Stone
The Imagination Group

Steve Dinham
University of Western Sydney
Australia

This paper is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Barbara Stone, a fine teacher and talented scholar, whose greatest gift to us was her friendship.

Abstract

This article reports the results of research into the career motivation and satisfaction of a sample of over 3,000 teachers and school administrators in four countries: Australia, New Zealand, England, and the USA. Using the participants' own words, we explore the effects on educators of recent international educational change, understood here as a subcategory of more general social trends. Bourdieu's concepts of the Right and Left Hands of the state are used to interpret the experience of teaching in a climate where, while more is expected and demanded of schools, and schools and teachers are scrutinised as never before, educational resources have become scarcer, and the status and image of teaching as a profession has declined.

Educational Change as Political Change: Consequences for Teachers and Administrators

Belief that schools could and should address the challenges for nation states of globalisation and other trends, real and imagined, have become the motivation for radical changes to the management of education. The school reform movement itself is part of a larger political trend characterised by attempts to make nations, industries, companies and even individuals more competitive. Strategies adopted are well known but included various types of deregulation, and the restructuring of industries, with down sizing, rationalisation and cost cutting the order of the day. The social consequences of these changes have been profound and have included increases in unemployment and underemployment, combined with a switch to "flexible" modes of employment, such as short-term contracts or casual work.

At the same time as these changes were being made, states increasingly have withdrawn from a number of sectors in which they traditionally had been involved and had supported, including public housing, social security, and education. The result has been to leave the newly under- or unemployed without a safety net and consequently even more unsupported and vulnerable. Social security has been replaced by widespread individual insecurity and an increase in social disruption and distress, and individual suffering has been the result.

The Right and Left Hands of the State

Bourdieu (1998) has written on these large and significant changes to the nature of the state. He refers to the institutions that have largely shaped and driven the reforms, that is cabinets, finance ministries and treasuries, and banks, as the Right Hand of the state. Those concerned with the public interest and welfare such as education, social services, public broadcasting, he calls the Left Hand.

The Left Hand, including "family counsellors, youth workers, rank and file magistrates, and increasingly primary and secondary school teachers" (p.2), finds itself confronted with the human consequences of economic restructuring. Members of the caring professions increasingly experience themselves as "sent into the front line to perform so called social work to compensate for the inadequacies of the market" (p. 3). Bourdieu contends that the Right Hand does not know and does not want to know what the Left Hand is doing, and certainly does not want to pay for its activities. Social

service agencies of all sorts are thus faced with the demand to do more with less.

The antipathy of the Right Hand to the Left is also graphically illustrated in the decline of the status of those professions that perform the work of the Left. Included in this trend has been a decline in relative salaries for the Left. Bourdieu argues that “the salary granted is an unequivocal index of the value placed on the work and the corresponding workers” (p. 3). This decline has been paralleled by an increase in the prestige and remuneration awarded the Right Hand professions, all those who work with money rather than people.

The Contradictions of High Modernity: Deregulation and Low Trust

Another important aspect of economic and social restructuring also had its impact on teaching and teachers, and indeed education may be seen as the most extreme case of this trend, the trend to employ an auditing model of "quality control."

Popkewitz (2000) noted that educational reform, as with other contemporary efforts at restructuring, is characterised by both centralising and decentralising tendencies. Decentralising/deregulation leads inevitably to potential loss of centralised control and subsequent anxiety about maintenance of authority relations and maintenance of quality. The phenomenon of the audit has emerged as one attempt to deal with the contradictions and uncertainty unleashed by these recent social and economic changes.

Power (1994) in his book on the audit explosion discusses the expansion of this phenomenon. Originally a financial activity, auditing now takes a somewhat different form as it pervades other fields such as the environment, medical practice, and education. Paraphrasing one might add that in a climate where the bottom line is the ultimate arbiter, the choice of a financial model of quality assurance is not surprising.

According to Power, audits are designed to provide assurance and the abatement of risk, along with transparency of action, quality, value for money, best practice, and freedom from harm. He contends that the “fad” for auditing arose out of the contradiction that “on the one hand [there is] the need to extend a traditional hierarchical command in order to maintain existing structures of authority; on the other the need to cope with the failure of this style of control, as it generates risks which are increasingly hard to specify and control”. (p. 6).

The currently favoured model of auditing, Style A – Power maintains there are other available models – applies across disparate arenas. Central features of the model include long distance control, usually by external agencies, quantitative measures, low trust, and *ex post* control. These important features are linked. For instance, the involvement of outside bodies of experts in the oversight of activities has facilitated a shift in trust from operatives, the performers of activities, to auditors, those who police performance. Operatives are no longer to be trusted to do their jobs correctly, efficiently, effectively, and indeed ethically, but auditors are trusted to ensure that this all occurs.

The audit as it is currently conceived comes to shape the activities it is meant merely to oversee. If, for instance, counting is in favour, quantity over quality will prevail. If evidence of regulatory activity is required, regulation will increase and with it the associated paper work which is its evidence. Popkewitz (2000, p. 18) discussed how auditing in education systems performs that shaping function: "In this sense we can think of auditing as a way to 'reason' that has practical consequences. It shapes the conduct of professionals and organisations by asking that the standards of performance function as a technology to evaluate individuals. This is evident in systems of teacher education that focus on performance outcomes, as well as certain ways of thinking about students' learning. Auditing, then, is a knowledge that functions as an active intervention into

organisational life, reshaping activities according to the norms of a fundamentally 'opaque expertise.'" (Popkewitz, 2000, p. 18)

In the field of education, the audit is epitomised by the British Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) system of school inspections, but each national or state educational system has its own versions. One of OFSTED's main tasks has been to set up a system of school inspections, which occur every four years. Results of OFSTED inspections and national tests of student achievement are used to construct schools "leagues tables". These tables are published in the "interests" of keeping "consumers' informed". They also form the basis of decisions to intervene in schools or change their status, including the most radical intervention—closing the school down.

Similarly, in the United States, the audit currently takes the form of state-designed testing programs. Currently most states mandate tests in some academic subjects and 21 states have plans to rate schools based on results of these tests. In addition, several districts are looking at the possibility of linking teachers' promotion and salaries to the performance of their students on these tests. The National Reading Panel authorized by the Reading Excellence Act of 1997, recently issued its findings and has called for the adoption of one particular approach to teaching beginning reading. (National Reading Panel Report: <http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/Documents/default.htm>)

Consequences for Teachers of Social and Political Change

The International Teacher 2000 Project was launched to investigate the consequences for teachers and administrators of the changes to education systems described above. Increasingly, it has become obvious that the factors that influence teachers' occupational satisfaction are no longer confined to the microcosm of the school (Sergiovanni, 1967, following Herzberg, et. al., 1959). Instead the "Third Domain" (Dinham and Scott, 2000) has a major influence in determining how teachers feel about their work.

Whereas older models of occupational satisfaction posited two spheres for discussing satisfaction and dissatisfaction, the actual work of teaching and the conditions under which work must be performed, the new theory proposes a three- factor model. The Third Domain, encompasses factors at the system level, as well as wider social forces. As Bourdieu would argue, these include the increase in social disruption and suffering attendant upon economic rationalisation, and the decrease in respect, recognition and reward given to professions forming the Left Hand of the state (1998).

The researchers of the Teacher 2000 team sought to cast their net wider than an investigation of "teacher stress" and instead set out to investigate what motivates teachers, and what satisfies and dissatisfies them about their work. To date over, 3000 teachers in four countries (Australia, England, New Zealand and the USA) have been surveyed using parallel forms of a self-report instrument. Results have been remarkably consistent and have been reported in detail elsewhere (see Dinham and Scott, 1996; Scott, 1999; Harker et al., 1998, for completed reports of national phases of the research).

Teachers in all four countries were found to be motivated by a desire to work with and for people, and to "make a difference" (Dinham and Scott, 2000) by assisting children and young people to reach their potential, experience success, and grow into responsible adults. Teachers everywhere found high satisfaction in this aspect of their work. In all four countries satisfaction remained high on a small focused set of "core business" aspects of teaching. This satisfaction occurred at the personal levels of working directly with children: experiencing success with pupils/students, working

cooperatively with other members of the education community, and professional competence/development (Dinham and Scott, 1996; Scott, 1999; Harker et al., 1998). However, they rated their overall occupational satisfaction as low, and many find themselves more dissatisfied later in their careers than when they began teaching. Levels of dissatisfaction were not uniform across all aspects of the work, however.

Aspects of teaching associated with school level factors—school climate, leadership, resources, and reputation—were rated more ambivalently. Considerable variation was based, not surprisingly, on the school in which the individual teacher was currently employed. Aspects of the work that caused teachers dissatisfaction were more numerous and varied somewhat from country to country and according to current local issues and problems. As an example, when the Australian survey was in progress, a long-standing pay dispute, and previous, unpopular changes to promotion procedures, conflict over which was still occurring, led to considerable discontent and industrial unrest, reflected in both the numeric ratings on relevant questionnaire items and the comments made by teachers (Dinham and Scott, 1996). For English teachers, the National Curriculum and OFSTED inspections were major issues, again registered in responses to the survey (Scott, 1999).

Despite national variations, there was also a core of Third Domain issues that concerned all teachers regardless of residence. They included decrease in status and recognition of the profession, outside interference in and de-professionalisation of teaching, pace and nature of educational change, and increase in workload. Mean ratings on items concerned with these issues were universally low, and observations about enforced change, increased outside interference in education, increased “non-core” workload, and low pay and status formed the majority of comments on open-ended sections of the questionnaire.

Previous publications have explored the quantitative measures of discontent including the development of the scales used to assess satisfaction and dissatisfaction with facets of teaching and its context (Scott, Dinham and Brooks, 1999). This paper will focus on the participants' own words used to describe their experience of teaching in an era of profound and enforced social and educational change.

In Teachers' Own Words

In this section we use the teachers' own words to illustrate and support the points we have made, above. We have left the teachers' choice of words and modes of expression in the forms we received them.

The satisfactions of teaching

The main satisfiers of teaching are well known and have been documented by many researchers. As we note above these are the satisfaction of working with children and seeing them achieve, working collaboratively with other members of the education community, and achieving personal professional growth. Teachers in this study have continued to confirm these areas as satisfiers.

Working with and assisting others. A major and universal satisfier is the opportunity to work with children and with other members of the educational community. Teachers from all countries listed this aspect as a main source of satisfaction.

I enjoy children and being with children. I find being a team member satisfying, working towards achieving goals together. NZ classroom teacher, 53.

I enjoy working with children I enjoy helping people. I enjoy working with Teachers College students. NZ classroom teacher, 48.

Joy of seeing children progress. Relationships with parents. Teamwork as a result of collaborative planning. UK head teacher, 46.

Contact with children. UK, head of dept, 39.

Team work of the staff. Working with other head teachers. UK, head teacher, 51.

I have a dynamic coordinator of special ed (my dept). A lot of good things are being done for our department and our spec. ed students. She is definitely a child advocate. The morale is high and we feel like a family (we were very close and communicated a lot) everyone knows what is going on and issues that come up can be discussed freely. USA, specialist teacher. 25.

Professional efficacy and making a difference. A supreme satisfaction of teaching was the opportunity to “make a difference”, contribute to a young person's development, and to see the results of that contribution. This for many or most teachers IS teaching and the externally imposed demands for assessment, record keeping, and accountability are in comparison “nonsense”. They interfere with teaching, or to quote an NZ teacher, change it to “being an accountant and not an educator”.

I enjoy making a difference to people's lives. UK, head teacher, 46.

Teaching was a career path that I chose so that I would be able to help people and hopefully enable them to achieve the best that they can for themselves. Working in what is considered a "disadvantaged" school, doesn't bother me at all, in fact the challenge is more rewarding. Aust classroom teacher, 22.

Evidence of learning and creativity. Pupils growing up and turning out all right after all. UK, head of dept, 49.

Satisfaction comes...when you can sit down at a break and say you've taught a lesson well (emphasis in original). NZ classroom teacher, 37.

Knowing my class is happy to be at school. Giving a boost of confidence or highlighting a child's achievement who does not normally do well. NZ classroom teacher, 36.

I love to watch the growth in my students as they experience success throughout their educational endeavours. It pleases me to my very soul that I am able to help a child become an independent learner. It's like being a

parent a multitude of times each year . . .I love it! USA classroom teacher.

I teach because I love to work with students and experience the 'high' that comes from watching them achieve success with my help. It is the one driving force that keeps me in the profession. USA, classroom teacher, 43.

I love feeling I have really helped and inspired someone. I enjoy planning my lessons and seeing kids succeed. USA, classroom teacher. 53

Professional challenge and growth. Teachers from all countries commented on aspects of teaching work that allowed for both the utilisation of personal qualities such as flexibility, creativity and the ability to respond well to challenge and the opportunity to continue to grow and develop as an individual.

The scope for being creative, improvising and exploring different ways to teach/meet students' needs. That every day is different- bringing new surprises/challenges. The classroom is a very vibrant place to be. NZ classroom teacher, 30.

I like teaching because it allows me to continue to learn and grow in many ways. USA classroom teacher, 58.

The adventure of learning—both pupils and teacher. UK, specialist, 52.

Creativity of producing teaching materials. UK, classroom teacher, 29.

The joy of overcoming difficulties. UK classroom teacher, 48.

I think to be a good and successful teacher you need to be able to make your own decisions, devise your own philosophy and keep yourself motivated and buoyant. Aust classroom teacher, 50.

Dissatisfiers: Dealing with the social consequences of change

To those on the inside, the teachers and administrators themselves, the pressures to which teaching has been subject as a profession may feel unique. An exploration of the nature of current social change, however, makes it clear that these demands are manifestations of tendencies in the larger society. Teaching may thus be seen as a case study of the effects of these tendencies on professions of the Left Hand. The Teacher 2000 Project marks the first time the pressures from the education system and societal levels have been documented and fully recognized.

The effects of social disruption. As discussed above, Bourdieu has noted that the many consequences of the international waves of change and restructuring are frequently characterised by an increase in unemployment, material inequality, and a variety of ills that flow from them. Professionals who form the Left Hand of the state deal with the consequences of these ills for individuals, families, and communities. There are at least two major aspects of how this expansion of responsibilities has negatively affected teachers' occupational satisfaction:

1. Dealing with social disruption has widened the scope of teachers' work to make teachers, in the words of one NZ practitioner “counsellors, social workers, nurses”, and in an Australian teacher's “bouncer, child counsellor, animal trainer, army sergeant, school nurse, megaphone (not the operator the actual machine)“. The increase in work has both an indirect - “kids are so needy these days”, to use one US teacher's words- and a direct cause as schools have become increasingly seen as the appropriate agencies to deal with a large and proliferating array of social problems.
2. Seeing the harm done to individuals is in itself an affront to many members of a profession dedicated to nurturing individuals and seeing them do well.

Teachers from all countries commented on both aspects, the increase to their own responsibilities, and the pain and frustration of seeing children's life chances compromised by social circumstances.

I am interested and always have been in teaching my subjects, but I find it almost always a struggle battling with students' lack of real interest and maturation as well as general and severe behaviour problems associated with the above reasons or due to welfare problems. Teachers cannot do all things: teach, counsel, and to perform administrative duties (which are always on the increase) and counselling or reprimanding. Severely influence teacher satisfaction. Aust classroom teacher, 55.

Poor family backgrounds—lack of experiences, language, attendance at school, physical/emotional abuse, all factors which severely affects children's progress. NZ, specialist reading teachers, 41.

We are now expected to deal with barriers to learning by contacting health and social services, getting more involved in what goes on in the child's life outside school. NZ classroom teacher, 30.

What the survey does not bring up is the type of students we must face (unlike the classrooms of yesteryear). Terms like BD, LD, ADD, ADHD, IEP, etc, make me feel I deserve a psychologist's salary instead. USA classroom teacher, 48.

Lack of sufficient number of counselors – kids are very "needy" today. Social workers are scarce in the city, county and usually ineffective. USA classroom teacher, 55.

Teachers are always addressing student and parent welfare. Very little is ever done for teacher welfare. Teachers are holding society together but if in-servicing money etc is not forthcoming for teacher welfare, there will be a breakdown in the education system. Aust classroom teacher, 30.

The tendency of the Right Hand of the state to cut back on funding in areas of social need (while demanding more) has resulted in growing teacher dissatisfaction due to the compromises it forces in education, as well as the damage wrought elsewhere in society which it expects schools and teachers to rectify.

Lack of funds to help all children. NZ classroom teacher, 44.

Lack of up-to-date resources, particularly for special needs children. NZ, specialist, 44.

No money appears to be available for children who desperately need help. UK classroom teacher, 42.

Student welfare is another big problem area. There is not enough support for students with severe psychological and behavioural difficulties. Before one can contemplate special placement (as scarce as hens' eggs) the fellow students and staff often are put under enormous stress. Children should not have to put up with these students in great need to the detriment of their health and education. Conversely we must provide for the students who are reacting to other impossible home situations. Aust classroom teacher, 49.

Erosion of professionalism. Erosion of professionalism also has at least two aspects:

1. Lowering of the status of and respect for the profession, symbolised for many teachers by the relatively low pay the work is awarded.
2. Erosion of the scope for exercising professional judgement, independence, and competence and of the time to do “real teaching”.

The lack of trust in the professionalism of teachers and anxiety about national educational standards have led to a policing mentality among administrators, a tendency noted across many domains in the widespread move towards the adopting of Style-A auditing. The consequence has been an anxiousness to standardise and document all aspects of the work, lest quality be compromised by leaving too much to the judgement of practitioners. The introduction of many more reporting and documenting requirements, as well as the standardisation of many aspects of teaching, contributes both to the much noted increase in overall work load and to the erosion of the sorts of pleasures of the job described above, i.e., flexibility, challenge, creativity, working with and for people. These two facets of the erosion of professionalism, increased work and decreased respect, were summed up by one NZ teacher as “constant demands and negative comments”.

Status, criticism, recognition and salary.

Teachers need to be respected by other teachers, parents, students and the whole wide world. Respect and money! USA classroom teacher, 48

Teaching isn't like it used to be and the money isn't worth the abuse we cop day in day out. Aust classroom teacher, 32.

The status of teachers must be raised in regard to their place and respect in society. In order to effectively educate and care for children we must be respected, have status and held in HIGH esteem. Raise salaries – it's a start. USA classroom teacher, 49.

Lack of recognition for experience and skills, constant denigration of skilled staff. UK, classroom teacher, 40.

I also feel considerably underpaid. There are few perks to the job, if any. When I compare myself and people in industry I feel particularly cross, especially since I am better qualified than many of them. I feel that unless people are really committed then they should not enter the teaching profession these days. UK classroom teacher, 39.

The press always seems to be hammering teachers. UK classroom teacher, 49.

Total lack of respect for teachers. NZ, classroom teacher, 52.

Lack of pay parity, poor salary. NZ, specialist, 44.

Issue of teacher status/parent—community relations and media perceptions seem to me to be key inter-related issues. Balance of good community relations seems to be slipping away - schools subsequently have been under a lot of parent criticism. Aust classroom teacher, 49.

Over the last 6 years I have become less satisfied with my chosen career due to the ever-increasing workload, never ending changes huge responsibilities, and constant media bashing. I paid my way through 8 years of study, bought many excellent resources, and have given up my health and quality of life to receive very little recognition or thanks. Aust classroom teacher, 28.

Erosion of professionalism/professional practice, increased paperwork. The flip side of the erosion of professionalism for many or most teachers is the increasing intrusion and interference by those education administrators, politicians, the press, school governors who know “naff all” about teaching, to quote an English head teacher.

Teachers gain little respect...I feel more like a slave than an educator. Aust, classroom teacher, 27.

Erosion of professionalism—we are completely emasculated by the national Curriculum/OFSTED/targets. UK head of dept.

Schools become the "meat in the sandwich" during elections. Politicians use Education as a political football. Those in power beat their chests about "reforms" they have achieved and those wanting power assault us with what they will do to make teachers work more efficiently and produce improved student outcomes. To listen to their drivel on the TV and radio an ordinary person would think that teachers totally lack intelligence and the professional will to direct their own activities towards improved outcomes for the students. Aust, classroom teacher, 36.

Teachers feel disillusioned with teaching because the DSE [Department of School Education, now the Department of Education and Training] shows

lack of leadership. They are only interested in cost cutting measures. They bring in changes without any consultation with the people that matter - the teachers. They are out of touch with reality. Aust classroom teacher, 42.

Rubrics must be made for every assignment, teacher judgement not valid. [leaving teaching] I will really miss the children and TEACHING (which I believe I am not being allowed to do with all this NONSENSE- "show a rubric for everything you display" ... "show how this lesson teaches a MAP skill" [state mandated test]. USA classroom teacher, 50.

I found over the years the amount of preparation and documentation and accountability and paper work has increased until I find I must consciously say that is all I'm going to do tonight/this weekend - as I must spend time with my family and friends. Aust classroom teacher, 41.

Unrealistic expectations of top administration. Increased load of meaningless paper work. I feel that education in general and my district in particular is responsive to "trends" in education. Whatever is the latest issue becomes our focus. I feel that our top-level administrators are very out of touch with what goes on in the classroom on a daily basis. I don't think my principal or superintendent could survive a week in my job. But they are constantly pushing for what they perceive as improvement, while only making my job harder. Classroom teachers are bombarded with paper work. We spend so much time on useless paperwork that planning, evaluating, and teaching time are seriously impacted. USA classroom teacher, 49.

Spending time on things that have no benefit to the children I teach and are not important to me apart from keeping my job. NZ classroom teacher, 27

Shocking admin work, copious assessment etc details. NZ classroom teacher, 50.

Paperwork—the endless evaluation/appraisal that no one else is interested in reading but which must be filed. NZ, classroom teacher.

A parent of a child I taught 9 years ago has just told me that her child has just been accepted for King's College, Cambridge to study medicine, and thanked me for my ability to develop and encourage his interest in science and maths. This was just pre National Curriculum, and pre all the 1001 "new" initiatives. A moral here, I think. I no longer have the time to do the same. UK Dept Head, 50

I can't help but feeling as a person who is prepared to give/care (and I generally think most teachers are like this) that I am being "used" by the system employing me, because each year I seem to be giving a little more (at the expense of my family and personal hobbies, etc). Aust, classroom teacher, 28.

I am convinced that the 60/70 hours per week required to do "my job"- in the holidays too, has been a significant factor in my illnesses. Over the last

few years I have also suffered 2 serious episodes in which a key factor is the overbearing and never easing demands of the Principal's role. Aust principal, 54.

Quotes from UK teachers summed up well the ways that these various pressures are eroding some of the core satisfiers of teaching (viz., facilitating student achievement, helping others, and one's professional growth) with professional autonomy and judgement being replaced by machine-like routines:

I am very concerned at the increased stress levels being experienced by teachers. I joined this profession 24 years ago and felt I contributed more to children's education because I had time to relate to the children I taught. Now I am under so much pressure to reach standards I have little time to really talk to the pupils. I feel more like a machine as the years go by with little time for reflection. UK classroom teacher, 46.

Teachers feel like puppets; other people pull our strings. There is little vision left in the teaching profession - it's been weeded out over the last 10 years (and is still being weeded out). UK classroom teacher.

In addition to the emphasis on external assessment and standardised testing compromising the opportunity for professional practice, teachers also feared that it would distort the entire educational enterprise

I greatly fear that the net effect of this standards movement is an increase in the gap between the learned and unlearned, and the subsequent "lowering of the bar," which is the last thing we said we would ever consider, and the first thing that my district thought about (but, did NOT do), when they received back the latest round of writing scores. USA classroom teacher,

There is too much teaching of programs rather than teaching of children in our district. The goal of education should not be to look good but to do whatever it takes to reach all students. If we did that, looking good would take care of itself. USA classroom teacher.

Erosion of Professional Relationships. Attempts to change the way schools are managed has had unfortunate consequences for collegial relations, and more so in those countries, notably Britain, where these have been the most far-reaching. Emphasis on a more managerial style for head teachers (principals) and the devolving to them of more discretion—and responsibility—over matters such as pay and promotion has frequently disrupted within-school relations. The requirement that principals implement changes that neither they nor their staff support has also had deleterious effects.

As a bit of idealistic "old timer" very disappointed in new ethos of self-promotion, point-scoring, impressing others. Not as much openness, collegiality, sharing as when I began. Some new principals seem to see themselves as CEOs managers, etc. Replaced at higher levels of D.S.E., senior officers flit from position to position. Where is the accumulated body of knowledge and experience? Dissipated in managerialism?? Aust,

classroom teacher, 49.

Heads of schools playing one staff member off against the other. NZ classroom teacher, 39.

Today's schools allow more room for personality clashes—you only get on by the word of others and not your ability, or potential. NZ, classroom teacher, 41.

Head Teachers have no incentive to listen to staff. Greater Head Teacher powers make it impossible for teaching staff to have a professional voice. UK classroom teacher, 30.

The philosophy and practices of teaching have changed markedly from being collegiate and cooperative to be divisive and competitive. The principal has created a culture of distrust and rivalry between teachers and faculties. Many teachers are now perceiving undermining of their colleagues, plagiarizing programs, stealing resources as a means to get on with their careers. Aust classroom teacher, 35.

Being required to implement changes in which I don't believe with a staff who also disagree with them is not motivating. Knowing that the doubts I and many of my colleagues have will be dismissed as cynical, progressive (which I am not) or a pathetic justification of failure, undermines my professionalism and educational experience. UK head teacher, 48.

Decision-making is limited to executive staff in the school. Opportunities are limited to executive staff. Aust classroom teacher, 32.

Conclusions

A consideration of teaching and its discontents may be seen as a case study of the effects of the current dominance of the Right Hand on professions of the Left. That is, a study of teachers' views of their occupation clearly shows the consequences for professions that deal with persons and their welfare in a climate where the bottom line has come to dictate the shape and nature of institutions and the relations of individuals to these and to each other.

Teachers everywhere enter the profession to serve children. While they are, in general, pleased with their choice of career as it relates to working directly with children who are willing to participate and learn, outside forces have intervened to prevent teachers from performing their jobs as they perceive them. The result has been a major decline in professional satisfaction. The increasing economic and social problems that teachers confront, combined with the efforts to have educational systems provide solutions for those problems, has led to an increase in the everyday work of teachers and its complexity.

Students who are extremely emotionally and socially needy and who have serious self-discipline problems increase the pastoral demands of teaching. In addition, the expansion of external assessment requires the production of more written documents in

greater detail, causing the increase in paperwork of which teachers complain. As Bourdieu predicts would be the case, teaching has also suffered a decline in respect and status, combined with reduced salary and resources available with which to do its work.

We would therefore contend that the profound dissatisfaction expressed by teachers in all four countries is caused by the concurrent juxtaposition of and antithetical nature of two major factors:

1. *Motivation to enter teaching.* Teachers are motivated by altruism and activism in the sense of a desire to make a difference by aiding individual children. Teaching is an activity of the Left Hand, the welfare arm, of the state, and as such deals with the consequences of social change/disruption wrought by the Right Hand. It also attracts the antipathy of the Right Hand as reflected in its decline in pay, status, and recognition.
2. *The issue of control.* Growing attempts to control the process of teaching in order to control its output supposedly to benefit the nation economically have increasingly taken the form of attacks on teacher professionalism. This has led to a decline in the opportunity to experience satisfaction with one's own professional activity and ensuing erosion of overall satisfaction.

The melancholy conclusion to be drawn from this argument is that teaching is not and cannot be quarantined from the social context in which it is embedded. No amount of positive thinking or number of ringing admonitions can alter the effects on the profession of the general, profound decline in respect for and trust of those do people work. Similarly, working smarter or any number of other fashionable solutions cannot ameliorate the “intensification” (Hargreaves, 1994) of the work of teaching attendant upon these changes. What is required is a wider perspective on the nature and the enormity of the social changes that manifest at the “chalk face” in the patterns of discontent the voices of our participants reveal.

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About the Authors

Dr. Catherine Scott, Coordinator of Research Development, University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury, Richmond NSW 2753 Phone: +61 2 4570 1574, Fax + 61 4570 1686, Email: c.scott@uws.edu.au

Dr. Barbara Stone, Educational Consultant, The Imagination Group, St Louis, MO.

Dr. Steve Dinham, Associate Professor, School Teaching and Educational Studies, University of Western Sydney, Nepean. PO Box 10, Kingswood NSW 2747, Phone: +61 2 4736 0294, Fax: +61 2 4736 0400. Email: s.dinham@uws.edu.au

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humberto@servidor.unam.mx

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Universidad de Cádiz
felix.angulo@uca.es

Alejandro Canales (México)
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de
México
canalesa@servidor.unam.mx

José Contreras Domingo
Universitat de Barcelona
Jose.Contreras@doe.d5.ub.es

Josué González (U.S.A.)
Arizona State University
josue@asu.edu

María Beatriz Luce (Brazil)
Universidad Federal de Rio Grande do
Sul-UFRGS
lucemb@orion.ufrgs.br

Marcela Mollis (Argentina)
Universidad de Buenos Aires
mmollis@filo.uba.ar

Angel Ignacio Pérez Gómez (Spain)
Universidad de Málaga
aiperez@uma.es

Daniel Schugurensky
(Argentina-Canadá)
OISE/UT, Canada
dschugurensky@oise.utoronto.ca

Jurjo Torres Santomé (Spain)
Universidad de A Coruña
jurjo@udc.es

Simon Schwartzman (Brazil)
Fundação Instituto Brasileiro e Geografia
e Estatística
simon@openlink.com.br

Carlos Alberto Torres (U.S.A.)
University of California, Los Angeles
torres@gseis UCLA.edu
