

An integrated professionalism in further education: a time for phronesis?

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to examine the role taken by the Institute for Learning (IfL) in England to promote the nature of professionalism in the lifelong learning sector. It raises the possibility that the decisions taken by the IfL, since its inception in 2002, are leading to the de-professionalisation of teachers. It is argued that what is now needed is a new professionalism that is driven by the practice of *phronesis*: wise practical reasoning, based on judgement and wisdom, and that accords with the centrality of context and the reflective nature of the activity of teaching. It will be informed by values that enable practitioners to mediate the confrontational forces of managerialism which might otherwise threaten to undermine their professionalism.

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Introduction

The Institute for Learning (IfL) was formed in 2002 with the aim of acting as the professional body for teachers, trainers and assessors in the lifelong learning sector in England (IfL [2009a](#)). This article examines the role taken by the IfL, since its inception, in promoting and determining the nature of teacher professionalism in the sector. The article argues that the decisions and actions of the IfL will, paradoxically, result in the *de*-professionalisation of the teaching workforce.

There are two major issues associated with the IfL's role in the promotion of professionalism in the lifelong learning sector. The first concerns what appears to be the IfL's failure to introduce a genuine code of professional ethics. In its place, it promotes a 'code of professional practice' aimed at ensuring conformance of the workforce to the needs of employers and government. The second issue is the IfL's promotion of the concept of 'dual professionalism'. This is an attempt to address the tensions at the heart of teaching in FE. These tensions arise, on the one hand, from teachers' vocational experience and, on the other, from the very different experience of being a professional teacher.

There is some evidence, however, that a continuing dual professionalism will reinforce the tensions in the 'fractured environment of the FE workplace', with teachers showing increasing compliance with a market liberal reform that is committed to privatisation and deregulation in highly managerial and competitive contexts. In addition, there is the concern that a code of professional practice will result in the deprofessionalisation of the workforce.

This article argues that a *new* conception of professionalism is needed – one that unites the sector, rather than exacerbating the fractures within it. It would be based on a different concept of knowledge, that of *phronesis*, which is wise, practical reasoning based on judgement and wisdom. In addition, it would be allied to a values-based professional code of ethics. This new professionalism could best be described as an 'integrated professionalism'.

Professions and professionalism

Historically, a distinction has been made between two important approaches to conceptualising the study of professionalism. First, 'trait models' allow the identification of what are and are not professions, by reference to a set of defining characteristics, or 'list of attributes' (Johnson [1972](#), 23). Leicht and Fennell ([2001](#)) provide a useful list of characteristics for identifying a profession, which includes knowledge, training, value to society, autonomy, client welfare, commitment, community and a code of ethics.

A second approach focuses on power and control; it views professions as composed of members of an occupation who have managed to secure for themselves a degree of power and prestige in the workplace, giving them special privileges (Leicht and Fennell [2001](#)). Macdonald ([1995](#)) portrays this approach as having many proponents. Two worthy of mention here are Larson ([1977](#)), who takes a historical view of the field to show how professions sought to increase their standing and power, and Foucault ([1994](#)), who views professions as part of the whole system of state power, expressed as 'governmentality'.

Johnson (1972, 45) observes: 'A profession, then, is not an occupation, but a means of controlling an occupation.'

Freidson (2001), however, argues that transcendent values play an integral role in the development and eventual identity of a profession. He discusses the importance of market forces and bureaucracy in an attempt to describe ideal types, or models, of professionalism. This led him to identifying a 'Third Logic', where the key features of a profession are the ability of members to control their own qualifications for membership, along with the existence of a specialist body of knowledge (Freidson 2001). A similar and more recent approach, focusing on the knowledge claims of a profession, is taken by both Winch (2004) and Wilkinson (2005), who argue that a prerequisite for creating a profession for teachers is the identification of an organised body of knowledge (Winch 2004). This is contrasted with both a 'Market' situation and a 'Bureaucracy' where, first, consumers, and second, employers make all-important decisions controlling appropriate qualifications for the profession (Freidson 2001). In a bureaucracy, Freidson (2001) argues, the underpinning ideology is that of managerialism. There is no claim to specialised knowledge here, but a claim to 'elite generalism', which, he argues 'denies authority to expertise by claiming a form of general knowledge that is superior to specialization because it can organise it rationally and efficiently' (Freidson 2001, 117).

This claim to a superior generalised knowledge is identifiable across organisations. DiMaggio and Powell (1983, 5) point to 'institutional isomorphism', whereby organisations become increasingly the same in structures and practices. This results from the combined forces of coercive pressure from the state, normative pressure from powerful professions, and mimetic pressure to copy success from other organisations. Exworthy and Halford (2002) note how professions are changing in the light of these pressures:

... the status and power of professionals may come increasingly to depend upon their ability to cast their goals and objectives in appropriate terms [and] managerial assets are becoming of increasing importance for career enhancement within the professions. (Exworthy and Halford 2002, 100–101)

Those working in the sector will no doubt be aware that further education (FE) institutions have indeed become more alike, applying common managerial practices, a result of both coercive and mimetic pressure. This has been the consequence, partly, of policy direction and control from central government, as well as of the expectation of policy implementation at the periphery (Bottery 1998). College leadership has been directed by various reports (e.g. Foster 2005; Leitch 2006) and by ministerial statements (Blunkett 1988) resulting in the adoption of post-Fordist approaches which '... decentralize responsibility for implementation but keep a tight rein on policy boundaries' (Bottery 2000, 151).

The processes of managerialism run deeper than organisational practices, however. A culture which prioritises marketisation and managerialism has spread to the education sector and has become the dominant meta-narrative of government since the Thatcher years (Spenceley 2006), overwhelming all other possible considerations. Indeed, any boundary between the professional and the manager has become blurred, with managerialism dominating the vocabularies and thinking within the sector. This reflects Randle and Brady's (1997, 232) 'managerial paradigm' of, for example, the primacy of student throughput and income generation against a 'professional paradigm' of student learning and the teaching process. The changing discourse within colleges has now made it increasingly difficult for lecturers to

put pedagogy first, over the demands of the market, so ideas based on moral principles or educational aims appear to be futile, since senior managers are only interested in ‘the bottom line’ (Elliott [1996](#), 20).

To return to Freidson’s ([2001](#)) classification, it is bureaucracy’s ideology of managerialism which now appears to be the dominant model of professional activity in the learning and skills sector of education in England. However, this is not an unchallenged position. Gleeson and Shain’s ([1999](#), 486) study of managers and other staff in FE discovered ‘forms of professional resistance and response which challenge the hegemony of managerialism from within’, suggesting that there is an opportunity to see an alternative response:

If at one level, market and managerial reform in FE is seen to have undermined professionalism and collegiality, at another it has paradoxically exposed anomalies and myths surrounding the very existence of such values. (Gleeson and Shain [1999](#), 486)

In contrast to the new managerialism now prevalent in the sector, the key to the development of a professional identity for learning and skills teachers may be found in Freidson’s ‘Third Logic’ (2001, 220). There are three aspects to this:

1. Autonomy
2. A body of specialised knowledge and skill
3. Transcendent values

1. The autonomous profession

The first of these, autonomy, is the expectation that ‘[t]he professional... make[s] decisions according to the needs of clients... without interference from other professionals or stakeholders’ (Freidson [2001](#), 177). However, based on such an expectation, it would not be easy to identify those professions within the United Kingdom that could claim to be truly autonomous. Even the General Medical Council, which might be held up as the model of professional independence, is subservient to Parliament, its powers arising from Orders in Council (General Medical Council [Constitution] Order [2008](#)).

However, the issue of a profession controlling itself should be placed into the cultural, political and policy-making context in which that occupational activity takes place. This point is well illustrated by the debate about the relative professional standing of school teachers in England and Scotland. According to Wilkinson ([2005](#)), because school teaching does not control its own training and qualifications, it is not a profession. However, it is interesting to note that school teachers in Scotland control their country’s General Teaching Council, GTC(S), thus meeting Wilkinson’s requirement. This is not the case in England, where the professional body for teachers, the General Teaching Council for England, GTC(E), makes the following point clear: ‘We register teachers, maintain professional standards and give advice to government’ (GTC[E] 2008). The words used in this description and in the subsequent terms associated with the functions of registration, discipline and advice show that the responsibility for the professional body does not lie with teachers. Indeed, teachers in England are treated as ‘objects of policy’ (Menter, Mahony, and Hextall [2004](#), 210), leading Bell to contrast them with their Scottish counterparts: ‘Trusted in Scotland, scorned in England’ (Bell [1999](#)).

It is worth bearing in mind that both teaching councils are products of the policy-making processes in their respective situations. They might face similar challenges, but these challenges are the products of 'quite particular historical, cultural, political, and institutional sieves' (Menter, Mahony, and Hextall [2004](#), 210).

In the lifelong learning sector, the political and policy-making environments at global and national levels are subject to rapid change (Leitch [2006](#)). The sector is responding by seeking a degree of independence from government regulation, and colleges are bidding for financial and regulatory self-control (FE Self Regulation [2008](#)). An important corollary of this is that colleges will, therefore, need to be able to assure the government that the workforce is capable of being monitored and regulated, according to appropriate professional standards. The responsibility for this regulation will increasingly lie with the Institute for Learning (IfL), which will eventually operate as the equivalent of a General Teaching Council.

However, there are contradictions in the present developments. Employers are pursuing *self-control* through autonomy from *government* control (FE Self Regulation [2008](#)), which could have important consequences for the independence of the teaching profession in the sector. Paradoxically, it could either be seen to weaken or to strengthen the post-Fordist process of increased managerialism. It is possible that college managements freed from government control could encourage the development of an equally independent profession for FE teachers. Alternatively, employers may resist the development of a profession in pursuit of its own goals. As Bottery identified, there is a final stage of post-Fordist development in which '[d]eviance is not only unacceptable – it cannot even be thought' (Bottery [2000](#), 54).

Much will depend on the impact of the Institute for Learning. In its public pronouncements, the IfL appears to be independent of both government and employers. Its ambition is to create an autonomous professional body:

IfL is governed by its Council, and the majority of Council members are elected from the membership – teachers and trainers in FE and skills. (IfL [2009a](#))

It is possible, however, to view the creation of the Institute for Learning as an attempt to impose a controlling body on the teaching workforce, as happened in 1998 with the launch of the General Teaching Council for England for school teachers. In order for FE teaching to become an autonomous profession, an important condition is that the development and monitoring of standards should lie with the teachers and not with the employers.

A set of standards

The creation of the Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) standards in 1999 established a qualifications framework for the sector (FENTO [1999](#)). It specified knowledge and understanding, skills and attributes, key areas of teaching and a set of values. Such an initiative did not escape criticism, being called by one commentator the 'FENTO Fandango' (Lucas [2004](#)).

The standards were rewritten in 2007 by the newly badged Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK [2007](#)), and outlined increasingly prescriptive demands on teachers in the sector. These were couched in terms of six 'domains': professional values and practice; learning and teaching; specialist learning and teaching; planning for learning; assessment for learning; and finally,

access and progression. The standards provided benchmarks for the performance of teachers, drawing on highly specific learning outcomes and assessment criteria, and appeared to offer only limited opportunities for professional mediation determined by individual and local need.

A further requirement added to the imposition of such a high degree of prescription. From September 2007 teachers were required to be professionally registered with the Institute for Learning. Without registration, teachers are not eligible for employment in the sector, since registration confers a 'licence to practise', and a commitment to undertaking continuous professional development (DfES [2006](#), 52).

The issue remains as to the extent to which these moves towards the establishment of a profession conform to the criteria of being autonomous and independent of the employer. Significantly, the creation of a register of qualified teachers in the sector is one that was imposed by the then DfES, through the FE White Paper 'Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances' (DfES [2006](#)), and, as such, is not the result of a decision by an independent profession. The professional standards have been established by Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK), which is one of the 25 Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) in the UK.

SSCs are employer-led organisations which are responsible for developing workforce training and qualifications in their particular sectors. They were originally licensed by the then Secretary of State for Education and Skills. One of their roles is to:

support the economic development strategies and priorities of the nations and regions of the UK. ... [and] to demonstrate a close linkage to the economic development and skills and qualifications policies of the UK Government and the devolved administrations and the institutional arrangements in the four nations within the UK. (UKCES [2008](#), 12–13)

It appears, then, that the sector will only be allowed to function if it is evident that government economic priorities are met. Simmons and Thompson ([2007](#), 176) argue that 'the effect of the regulatory and curriculum reforms since 2001 will be to further underpin the government's increasing intention to direct, monitor and control provision in this area'. The autonomy and independence from government can therefore be questioned. Indeed, the IfL recognises that its function will be controlled by statutory instrument and that the regulations make continuing professional development (CPD) mandatory (IfL [2009b](#)). This might suggest that the IfL sees its role as one of implementing state policy. If, however, the IfL eventually resists a high level of centralised control, this may lead to confrontations between the profession, represented by the IfL, and the state, represented by the current UK government. As Freidson ([2001](#)) points out, the very struggle for power marks out the distinction between the professions and the state. This seems to be returning to earlier times, since Elliott noted in 1996:

The political context of further education is indeed one of hegemonic influence and control, where debate is constrained within a technocratic market discourse, to the point where many lecturers are experiencing the fundamental contradiction of educational practice: 'the experience of holding educational values, and the experience of their negation'. (Elliott [1996](#), 21)

However, to return to Freidson's model, it is not only the issue of autonomy that determines the legitimacy of the claim for a profession of teaching in the learning and skills sector in England, but also the nature of the knowledge possessed and deployed by its members.

2. A body of specialised knowledge

The second feature of Freidson's 'Third Logic' is that a profession requires a specialised body of knowledge, a point that Wilkinson (2005) uses to show that teaching cannot currently claim to be a profession. Wilkinson suggests that claims for teaching to be an acknowledged profession are limited by a lack of agreement from all relevant parties as to the knowledge base of teaching; the question of whether or not 'teaching rests on any body of theoretical knowledge'; and finally, the inability to agree on 'what knowledge is necessary for successful and effective teaching' (Wilkinson 2005, 421). Teachers in the schools sector achieve QTS (qualified teacher status) through 'compliance with a series of state defined competences for qualification which can be achieved through non-university based training routes' which therefore lack 'the abstract and theoretical knowledge... which... ought to be a prerequisite for entry into the profession' (Wilkinson 2005, 430–431).

The issues of competences versus professional skills and the abstract nature of knowledge are particularly problematic. To consider the issue of abstract knowledge, surgeons, for example, deploy skill as a result of having a body of such knowledge to guide their judgements and activities. Abstract knowledge is knowledge removed from the particular, allowing the formation of concepts which can then be used in the solution of problems in other situations. Whilst it cannot be denied that teachers require the ability to deal with abstractions and concepts and to create opportunities for learning in different contexts, it can be questioned whether these abilities can only be obtained through university education, or indeed whether they are the unique preserve of the teacher.

The need to have a body of specialised knowledge would seem to be of paramount importance for the claim to be a profession. Without such knowledge, its members would not be able to make any claim that the profession was unique. It would not be able to protect itself from other organisations that might encroach on its membership and activities, or that set up as a rival organisation claiming to represent the profession. Equally, the simple possession of an organised body of knowledge does not necessarily create a profession.

The IfL, however, suggests that FE teachers have claim to two bodies of knowledge through their 'dual professionalism' (IfL 2009c). The Quality Improvement Agency (QIA), now superseded by the LSIS (Learning and Skills Improvement Service), also adopted unquestioningly the notion of dual professionalism when considering CPD. It cited it as a solution to a need recognised by both the IfL and the then Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). Addressing teachers, it points to this need to 'extend the skills and knowledge relating to your subject or professional area as well as those relating to your teaching and learning practice' (QIA 2008, 11). It proposed to develop networks where teachers can discuss teaching, training and learning to 'unlock the potential of the learning context' (QIA 2008, 11). Such a context does, indeed, need to be recognised and valued by all of those involved in delivering and managing education in the learning and skills sector and by those who wish to create a profession for teachers in the sector. What is also needed, however, is an examination of the theoretical foundations of this position, to determine whether it stands on firm ground.

Dual professionalism: specialist and theoretical knowledge

A dual professional in the learning and skills sector is one who, on the one hand, is qualified in a vocational or academic specialism, and on the other, is teacher trained and committed to developing skills and knowledge in teaching and supporting learning. This distinction relates to Shulman's (1986, 9) views about the kind of knowledge and abilities teachers need, where the former is described as 'pedagogical content knowledge'. This is specific knowledge, in a particular curricular subject, which teachers teach to learners. 'Pedagogical knowledge of teaching' is also important, and includes 'knowledge of generic principles of classroom organization and management and the like' (Shulman 1986, 14). A successful teacher requires both types of knowledge.

The distinction, raised in the notion of dual professionalism, between subject knowledge and professional or practical knowledge, is also tackled by Winch (2004) in relation to primary, secondary and university teachers. He points to the more advanced nature of the subject knowledge of secondary and university teachers which could therefore advance their claim to having the requisite body of specialised knowledge, thus qualifying as professionals. However, he suggests that this is insufficient, as there is no 'applied theoretical pedagogical knowledge' (Winch 2004, 186). Developing the argument, he suggests that 'the complicated nature of learning and class management with young children makes the practical pedagogic task at that age much more demanding to acquire' (Winch 2004, 186). The teachers of younger children, he suggests, are in a different position, with fewer claims to subject specialist knowledge but significantly more claims to pedagogical knowledge. Winch's distinction between knowledge and pedagogy is starkly exposed. He sees them as separate, rather than being interlinked.

The question here is whether or not there is anything unique about the skills of facilitating learning with their underpinning philosophies and research base, which together make up the body of specialised knowledge. Experts in an area of knowledge may or may not be effective at teaching it to others. The skills of teaching might simply be a series of techniques, but this does not mean that these effective skills cannot be identified and defined, in order to help others become proficient.

There are two issues to be considered, therefore: on one hand, the specialist knowledge of the teacher; and on the other, the pedagogic, or applied theoretical knowledge. The search is for an activity that combines both. It is an activity that is divorced from the context, but which gives the activity meaning. Eisner (2002) characterises such a search as a contrast between episteme and phronesis, where the former was regarded by the Greek philosophers as true and certain knowledge, and phronesis as wise practical reasoning that was deliberative, drawing on judgement and wisdom and focused on the particular, rather than the general.

To consider the analogous position of the legal profession: trainee lawyers are taught *within* the framework of a body of knowledge, not *divorced* from it. Those who undertake its teaching will need to be familiar with the subject knowledge of education in order to be effective teachers. Therefore, a pedagogically educated 'teacher' would not be employed to teach law to lawyers. Nor would they be able to move on to, say, training medical practitioners in the way that managers move from area to area as a result of holding generalist management skills.

The root of the problem is a view of pedagogy which seeks to divorce teaching from context. It is a view that seeks an 'essence' of teaching which is to be found in the 'organised body of knowledge' that would make teaching a profession. This is the search for what Schön described as the 'high ground' of technical rationality which is seen as the only alternative to the 'swampy lowlands' of 'indeterminate practice' (Schön [1987](#), 3). What Schön proposes is to approach the issue from the opposite direction, arguing that the realm of the professional is 'practical knowledge' (Schön [1983](#), 62). This knowledge is based on personal activity, which professionals develop through reflection-on-action after the event and by being creative whilst applying their knowledge during the activity through reflection-in-action. He argues that reflection enables practitioners to articulate and criticise tacit understandings about professional practice, which can then lead to new understandings of uncertain or unique situations. The professional, by this account, cannot stand upon a body of knowledge, claiming expertise. Such an attempt to attain a status of unchallenged expertise is epistemologically unjustified, resulting in professionals denying themselves their best defence against an unthinking managerialism (Bottery [1996](#)).

Again, the search for a body of knowledge, an essence of teaching, encounters difficulties. This is especially so when the breadth of teaching is taken into account. Within FE colleges the range is vast, from special educational needs to competence-based NVQ teaching, academic A levels, vocational studies, foundation degrees, honours degrees and even master's degrees. In addition, another important characteristic of FE is its diversity, since the sector draws on several different traditions and cultures from a variety of industries and occupations from which its teachers are drawn (Nasta [2007](#)).

The chances of finding an 'essence' of teaching in such variety are not only unlikely, but become irrelevant, as Bottery makes clear:

An educator...cannot act as the disseminator of unchallengeable information, and this for two main reasons. The first is because in most situations which the professional encounters, the solution is not readily apparent, but must be constructed. The second and equally important reason in the re-definition of professional practice is that the professional cannot be certain, even now, what is fact and what is still opinion in their spheres of expertise. (Bottery [1996](#), 191)

The context is vital and might include, for example, who the learners are, their geographical location, and even what day it is. Such a view of context also refers to the inextricable links between subject matter and the way in which it is taught. It is the interaction between the teacher and the learner which allows the issues to be identified and for these to be placed within the context of previous learning and students' prior experience and understanding. The professionalism of the FE teacher, therefore, is rooted in the fusion of the subject and its teaching, and *not* in the IfL's 'dual professionalism' of tandem allegiances (IfL [2009c](#)). However, if there is any element unifying the whole process, it is to be found in the values which are common to the activity and to the subject matter – values which transcend the specific.

3. Transcendent value

A third and central feature of a profession is ‘its attachment to a transcendent value that gives it meaning and justifies its independence’ (Freidson [2001](#), 221). In addition, a central feature of being a professional can be seen as ‘adhering to a set of principles and norms defined by a professional body (as opposed to an employer or auditing agency)’ (Banks [2004](#), 149). In exploring the unifying principle of the transcendent value that leads to what can be referred to as an integrative professionalism, therefore, it is possible to identify key features of phronesis which make it an appropriate foundation for a profession of teaching for lifelong learning in England. Phronesis itself requires a set of values, as Halverson and Gomez note:

Without adherence to a transcendent set of moral values, phronesis is mere cunning, and ability to devise appropriate means to achieve current ends. (Halverson and Gomez 2001, 5)

As was pointed out earlier, Eisner ([2002](#), 375) describes phronesis as ‘wise practical reasoning’, but it is his development of this notion that holds significance for the argument in this article. Eisner develops the notion of phronesis in two directions. First, he points to teaching, not as a matter of the transmission of a commodity that is knowledge, but rather as one of reflection and deliberation linked to educational research. Second, he suggests that the activity of teaching is not applied social science but *artistry*, arguing that ‘[a]rtistry requires sensibility, imagination, technique and the ability to make judgements about the feel and significance of the particular’ (Eisner [2002](#), 382). Both of these points are also seen in Schön’s work: the critical reflection of the practitioner on action and in action, and the role of artistry in teaching. As Eisner points out, it is through the debate between teachers that phronesis proceeds, ‘by creating a context where multiple interpretations and analyses are likely’ (Eisner [2002](#), 382). The openness of such a debate places the professional worker firmly in the society in which he or she operates. Schön recognised this in his 1983 work, where he argued that through the process of public debate, professionals construct ideas about the crises and problems of society and their policy solutions, which can lead to action that changes social reality (Schön [1983](#)).

Conclusions

What then is the nature of the professional activity emerging from these ideas? An answer to this question will draw on the redefinition sought by Bottery ([1996](#)), based on the principles from Eisner ([2002](#)) and, to a lesser extent, from Schön ([1983](#)). It can be observed as something more participatory between the parties involved and something based on epistemological uncertainty and an underlying or transcendent value base.

Crucially, phronesis encourages open debate and challenges societal assumptions. It allows the practitioner, as a teacher in the learning and skills sector, to mediate the confrontational forces of managerialism which might otherwise threaten to undermine their professionalism. Just as important is the integration of both subject knowledge and the ability to teach that knowledge. Context is also central. As Halverston and Gomez argue:

Phronesis...is more of a capacity to act than a body of knowledge. Phronesis must take account of the particular, that is, it must be concerned with how knowledge and experience are brought to bear in particular situations. (Halverston and Gomez 2001, 3)

Each teaching situation and interaction between teacher and student is both unique and complex. The sophisticated and often indefinable judgement of the teacher in managing such

complexities in a sensitive and supportive manner is surely an expression of true professionalism. Logically, such professionalism will be based on a code of ethics which, in turn, is based on values embedded inextricably within a culture of personal and corporate integrity.

But where does the newly formed IfL stand ethically? There is evidence of a change of approach within the IfL. Prior to its full launch in September 2007, there was a commitment to a detailed code of ethics, which could be found on the organisation's website. However, details of the code were removed for the IfL launch in 2007, and now even a search of the website for the word 'ethics' draws a blank. In its place is the IfL *Code of Professional Practice*. This is a very different document. Although the code is based on the principles of integrity, respect, care, practice, disclosure and responsibility, they are applied as a code of behaviour. The IfL points out:

The Code of Professional Practice defines the professional behaviour which, in the public interest, the Institute expects of its members throughout their membership and professional career. (IfL [2009d](#))

It appears to be aimed at ensuring compliance by teachers in FE, in thought and action, to the priorities of government and the employer. Autonomy is espoused in the above quotation, but in reality is proscribed in the detailed 'Behaviours' of the code itself. For example:

Behaviour 2. RESPECT. Members shall at all times: 1. respect the rights of learners and colleagues in accordance with relevant legislation and organisation requirements. (IfL [2009d](#), 4)

There is no consideration here of rights that are independent of the managerial concerns of the FE institution, or of the economic concerns of government as framed in legislation. Behaviours 6 and 7 identify responsibility, but only 'Responsibility during Institute Investigations' and the demand that 'members shall at all times act in accordance with the Institute's conditions of membership' (IfL [2009d](#), 3). There is certainly no Kantian categorical imperative to underpin responsibility – that is, there is no imperative to '[a]ct only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law' (Kant [1993](#) [1785], 30). Those supporting the notion of dual professionalism not only fail to follow through with a consideration of the issues of the kinds of knowledge involved, but also fail to see the difficulties in its practical application. They offer no solution to the dilemma of resolving potential conflicts between, on the one hand, workplace knowledge and its practices and, on the other, the knowledge and practices associated with being a teacher. To leave it as an invocation to be a dual professional leaves the tensions unresolved.

To seek and support an integrated professionalism, based on phronesis, is to begin to help tackle such dilemmas. A code of ethics is essential in this process, one which transcends the immediate need of the employers and government evidenced in the IfL code. As Carr pointed out in 2000:

...any profession worthy of the name ought to be governed by a code of professional ethics which clearly identifies professional *obligations* and responsibilities by reference to the *rights* of clients or patients. (Carr [2000](#), 25)

If the IfL is to create an effective profession for teachers in the learning and skills sector, it might be argued that it should introduce two changes to its approach. First, it may need to change its code of professional practice to one of a code of ethics; and second, it may need to abandon its notion of dual professionalism.

In addition, further persisting with the notion of dual professionalism will only perpetuate fractured environment that exists within FE. Healing the fractures requires recognition that it is phronesis, wise practical reasoning, rather than episteme, true and certain knowledge, which describes the professional body of knowledge. It is phronesis which is in accordance with the centrality of context and the reflective nature of the activity of teaching. A professionalism which heals and unites would be an 'integrated professionalism' based on a different concept of knowledge allied to a code of ethics.

Those seeking to educate and register teachers in the learning and skills sector in England might then find that the reflective practitioners that they have sanctioned, undertaking continuous professional development, move beyond the managerial agenda of the framework created for them and seek to become professionals in a new and powerfully redefined sense.

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