

Reforming Teachers' Work and Changing Roles for Unions

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Following pervasive restructuring in the educational sectors of many Western countries, the traditional role of teacher unions has been scrutinised. If teachers are to be in a position to exploit regulatory change in education, it has been argued that a shift in union outlook is required from a focus on protecting teachers' interests to promoting teaching as a profession. This article first describes American theorising about the relations between teachers' unions and educational reform and, in particular, the notion of professional unionism. It then examines Australian attempts in the 1980s and 1990s to restructure teachers' work that suggest Australian teachers' unions may have embraced some of the chief characteristics of professional unionism. Finally, the article draws from the Australian experience to highlight certain factors that could thwart the advancement of professional unionism.

Introduction

This paper was largely prompted by Martin Lawn's interesting assertion about the role of teachers' unions operating within an environment of endemic educational reform. On this matter, he has argued that:

The range and depth of the current restructuring of the education industry raises questions about the response of the unions. Indeed, it raises questions about the continuing existence of teacher unions.

(1996, p.122)

Although Lawn's observation is related in the main to recent occurrences in England and Wales, it could easily be transposed to an Australian setting. Major efforts have been made to reform teachers' work in Australia under the aegis of award restructuring involving the deregulation of the system of industrial relations

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in the quest for increased efficiency and productivity at the workplace. It may be argued that this policy initiative has contributed to a new vision of industrial and professional practices in which the role of the teachers' unions is not entirely clear, a vision that prompts a different set of beliefs about what unions should do and be. Indeed, Rimmer and Watts (1995) have suggested that in the broader context of micro-economic reform that has been occurring in Australia:

Institutional upheaval is anticipated if not yet wholly real. The issues in that upheaval are very much to do with the role of unions in a reorganised system. They seem too important to ignore. (p.80)

This comment assumes greater significance when it is considered that in Australia the number of teachers' unions has actually increased in recent years (Robertson, 1996, p.43). This growth in teacher unionism has been attributed (Robertson, 1996) to the realisation amongst teachers that they need to protect their working conditions, as well as an awareness that teachers could exploit the deregulation of the industrial relations system in order to increase control over their work situation. Indeed, it is likely that if teachers are to be in a position to exploit pervasive regulatory change in education, a shift in union outlook is required. This shift engenders a broadening of the unions' purview from a substantive focus on protecting teachers' interests to promoting teaching as a profession.

Following an explication of recent American theorising about the relations between teachers' unions and educational reform, this paper then examines the attempts that were made during the late 1980s and 1990s to restructure teachers' work in Australia. In doing so, it is hoped to demonstrate that Australian teachers' unions appear to have embraced many of the salient characteristics of professional unionism as defined by American scholars. An examination of the Australian experience has also highlighted certain factors that may undermine the successful pursuit of professional unionism. In this regard, the nature of the policy infrastructure from which the discourse of professional unionism emanates needs to be considered. A second factor that can influence the advancement of professional unionism is the role of the state, and a third factor is the importance of employing authorities in recognising teachers' unions as legitimate partners in the process of educational reform.

The Notion of Professional Unionism

The notion that teachers' unions need to change their traditional outlook when operating in a prevailing milieu of reform ties in closely with the ideas of Kerchner and Kaufman (1993). These authors have conceptualised unionism in terms of industrial unionism and professional unionism.

The traditional version of industrial unionism assumes that a division exists between labour and management. According to this model, the union pursues 'the economic and day-to-day work concerns of the employees', while 'management establishes policy and makes operational decisions' (Koppich and Kerchner 1996, p.17). It is this implicit separation of interests, so it is claimed, that provides the foundation of adversarial labour management relations and limits the scope of reform. It is argued that this industrial style of unionism has constrained teachers within a blue collar framework with its exclusive focus on wages and benefits rather than professional issues (Ayers, 1992). Consequently, it is deemed self-evident that this model cannot support the expansion of teachers' professional roles.

In contrast to industrial unionism is the concept of 'professional unionism' required 'to balance teachers' legitimate self-interests with the larger interests of teaching as an occupation and education as an institution' (Kerchner and Kaufman, 1993, p.19). The basic tenets of emerging professional unionism have been stipulated by Koppich (1993, p.194) as comprising joint custody of reform, union management collaboration, and concern for the public interest. Joint custody of reform entails an acceptance on the part of both management and union of shared responsibility for the change process. Union management collaboration refers to the main impetus propelling negotiations from the adversarial to the cooperative attempt to resolve mutually identified educational issues. Concern for the public interest involves recognition by the union of the impact of its actions in securing conditions for its members and its public responsibility for the welfare of education, or balancing public good with teacher self-interest.

Educational Trust Agreements

Kerchner and Kaufman (1993) claim that professional unionism provides a more promising basis for collaborative school reform. Moreover, the efficacy of professional unionism in facilitating joint union-management custody of reform has been demonstrated

by reference to the 'educational trust agreement' (Kerchner and Koppich, 1993; Streshley and DeMitchell, 1994; Koppich and Kerchner, 1996). Educational trust agreements evolved in a number of school districts throughout California and allowed for an expanded and more complex view of working conditions in education (Streshley and DeMitchell, 1994). Put simply, an educational trust agreement represented a legally binding bilateral accord existing outside the collectively bargained contract and negotiated between the union and management. Whereas collective bargaining continued to deal with the substantive issues of conditions of employment, the trust agreement revolved to a greater extent around such professional problems of schools as organisations as peer review, professional development, and school site collaborative management and decision-making (Koppich and Kerchner, 1996).

According to observations relating to the implementation of trust agreements in ten school districts in California, Kerchner and Cauffman (1993) identified three main effects. First, trust agreements involved new assumptions about who benefits from labour management interactions. The formulation of trust agreements was consequently characterised by an absence of self-interest on the part of teachers. Secondly, trust agreements involved different notions of bargaining from those traditionally prevailing. Rather than bargaining from positions, participants in negotiations for a trust agreement represented a principle or a problem and adopted a more open approach. This model was originally developed by the Harvard Negotiation Project (Fisher and Ury, 1981), the purpose being to reshape bargaining from a 'win-lose' proposition to a process of mutual advantage in which each side 'wins' by means of principled compromise (Kerchner and Koppich, 1993). Thirdly, negotiations in pursuit of trust agreements were not concerned about a 'win-lose' distribution of fixed resources, but attempted to use bargaining for mutual gain.

The claim is made that, at least in the United States, trust agreements could provide an alternative means to traditional bargaining practices for addressing the complex issues which make education a profession for teacher and administrator alike (Streshley and DeMitchell, 1994). Nevertheless, trust agreements have had little effect on the reform of education (Koppich and Kerchner, 1996). Although there is recognition that progress was made towards collaborative bargaining, the substance of the

negotiated agreement remained largely unchanged. Koppich and Kerchner (1996) attribute the limited impact of trust agreements on education reform to the fact that they remained centralised accords and were, therefore, unable to offer much in the way of school site flexibility. Indeed, as a device for enabling the complexities of improving education to be confronted, Koppich and Kerchner (1996) advocate the introduction of a slender version of the centralised contract containing a set of basic wage and working conditions. The centralised contract, it is recommended, should be supplemented by a more encompassing site-based educational compact dealing with the performance of the school.

Signposts to follow?

The ideas of American scholars about the changing role of teachers' unions in the United States may not necessarily apply to the entirely different context of Australian educational policy. Nevertheless, if American theorising on the subject has any credence, it will be increasingly necessary for Australian teachers' unions to adopt a new outlook within an environment of deregulation and workplace reform. This new outlook will acknowledge the discarding of beliefs about the separateness of labour and management. Instead, the emphasis for union involvement in pursuit of reform will be on collaboration with management to ensure the formulation of conditions in teachers' work, which are manifestly beneficial to the enterprise as well as to education. The new outlook entails recognition by unions of the limitations of adversarial approaches to the organisation of teachers' work. This recognition involves an acceptance that matters such as flexibility and commitment are equally important as the observance of rules and the implementation of pre-planned policies for the organisation of teachers' work (Kerchner, 1996).

In this regard, another element of the new outlook of teachers' unions is an acceptance that their responsibilities go beyond the rights of individual teachers to protecting the integrity of teaching. In other words, the agendas of teachers' unions evolve in such a way that 'professionalism, accountability, and school effectiveness share equal billing with bread and butter issues' (Wallace, 1996, p.99); meaning those issues that relate to the narrow concerns of wages, hours and conditions of employment.

Having presented some contemporary ideas about the appropriate relationship between teachers' unions and educational reform, this paper now examines the attempts that were made during the late 1980s and 1990s to restructure teachers' work in Australia. In doing so, it is hoped to demonstrate that Australian teachers' unions appear to have displayed the livery of professional unionism as defined by American scholars. Some possible impediments to the progress of professional unionism are also identified.

The Emergence of Award Restructuring

In Australia, major significance has been placed on the central role of teaching in the restructuring of education. This was given prominent attention in 1988 with the release of the policy document, *Strengthening Australia's Schools*, (Dawkins, 1988) by the then Commonwealth Minister of Employment, Education, and Training, John Dawkins. The document represented an invitation to the educational community to examine ways in which the initial and ongoing training of teachers could be improved in order to meet rapidly changing demands.

In this context, it is helpful to distinguish between what may be described as the 'professional front' and the 'industrial front' of the attempts to enhance teacher quality (Crowther and Gaffney, 1993). The professional front represented the discussion that was taking place at the time regarding the perceived problems of teaching as a profession. At this level, the National Board of Employment, Education, and Training documents such as, *Teacher Quality: An issues paper* (Schools Council, 1989), and *Australia's Teachers—an Agenda for the Next Decade* (Schools Council, 1990), articulated the concerns, which had surfaced during the 1980s about teaching as an occupation.

The reports commented on the widespread view that the morale and standing of the teaching profession were declining. This malaise was attributed to the quality of entrants, the lack of attractiveness of teaching as a career, the work life and practice of teachers, and the inadequacy of existing mechanisms for recognising and rewarding the quality of teaching in terms of career paths and status (Ingvarson, 1994). However, notwithstanding the professional complexion of many of these issues, it was the Federal government's quest to improve efficiency and productivity at the workplace or the 'industrial

front', that defined reform policy in connection with teachers and teaching. This has occurred, in particular, under the aegis of award restructuring.

Traditionally in Australia, teachers' terms and conditions have been set out according to an industrial award which is issued by an industrial tribunal and applies to all employees within a particular sector of the education system. An award is also binding on all employers and is legally enforceable. Negotiations dealing with award claims are conducted between the relevant union and the employer. If no agreement can be reached between the parties the case is put before the industrial tribunal for conciliation and arbitration. According to this arrangement teachers expected that salary increases would be linked to rises in the cost of living and that relativities with other occupations would be observed (Angus, 1991). This expectation meant that union leaders were committed to protecting and improving working conditions and salaries in terms considered acceptable by their members. In response, employer officials sought trade-offs considered acceptable to governments (Angus, 1996). This polarised culture of industrial relations, which prevailed, tended to confine union jurisdiction to industrial matters and impeded progress towards educational reform (Angus, 1996).

In keeping with the Federal Labor government's commitment to micro-economic change, the concept of award restructuring was introduced as a means of improving productivity by upgrading the skills of the Australian work force as a whole. Most notably, the broad framework of award restructuring developed in the context of the Accord. Put simply, this arrangement amounted to a partnership between the Federal Labor government and the trade union movement enabling the union movement to participate in all policy making. Thus, the award restructuring process presented an opportunity, at least at a national level, for teachers' unions to cooperate with Federal government and employers in the addressing of commonly identified professional issues. Indeed, the award restructuring process served to heighten union interest in education (Dudley and Vidovich, 1995).

Bluer and Carmichael (1991, p.24), identified the two central elements of award restructuring as 'an improvement in wages for the work force in the context of skills formation efforts which, in most cases, would require reorganisation of the workplace and the production process itself'. The basis for award restructuring

was articulated by the National Wage Case decision of 1988 when the Industrial Commission adopted the 'structural efficiency principle'. As Bluer and Carmichael (1991) asserted, the structural efficiency principle was, in itself, a demonstration of a new imperative which was driving education efforts in the country. In other words, education in Australia was predicated to an increasing extent on the need to develop a society with a highly competent work force responsive to the demands made by changing patterns of work, and the need for Australia to be economically competitive in the international market. In the case of schools, this involved improving the skills of their major resource, teachers, and providing them with a better work environment.

In summary, award restructuring represented a peculiarly Australian policy initiative through which the dynamics of economic development, industrial relations and education converged (Seddon, 1996). However it was the economic impetus behind award restructuring and its industrial infrastructure that engendered an ambivalent response from the educational community.

Attitudes Towards Teacher Award Restructuring

On the one hand, some observers were optimistic about the capacity of award restructuring to enhance the professionalism of teachers. For example, Ingvarson (1994), who was specifically concerned about improving professional standards in teaching, argued that award restructuring was potentially one of the most significant reforms in Australian education. By placing greater value on teachers' knowledge and skill, it went to the heart of what was needed to redress growing concern about the condition of teaching as an occupation (p.163). Similarly, Reid (1993) argued that award restructuring would have a profound impact on the 'labour process' of teaching and acknowledged that advantages such as more participatory schooling might accrue. Nevertheless, he also warned that the micro-economic driving force behind reforms could impose new kinds of control on teachers unless they responded with an awareness of the implications of such a reform agenda.

In fact, the education sector was slow to accept the new culture of award restructuring. Some teachers found the notion of improving productivity within an 'industry' difficult to grasp as it applied to education. Indeed, many considered the economic

objectives of workplace reform as an affront to their professionalism (Angus, 1991). In this regard, teachers were particularly suspicious of the instrumental notions of schooling which had been embraced by the changes introduced into the industrial relations forum, as well as the requirement that education should become more productive (Angus, 1991).

Thus, although the award restructuring process appeared to present a significant opportunity for teachers' unions to pursue a professional agenda, there were concerns raised by teachers themselves that the economic rationale defining improvements in education may, in effect, serve to de-professionalise teachers' work. It was within this culture of uncertainty and doubt that teacher award restructuring began to take shape.

The Main Developments of Teacher Award Restructuring in its First Phase

The potential of award restructuring to make an impact on the nature of teachers' work was strengthened when the education 'industry' was given priority in the award restructuring process (Ashenden, 1990). Indeed, on the premise that teachers were being under-utilised, the union movements peak body, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) was able to propose to the Federal jurisdiction, the Industrial Relations Commission, a number of changes to teachers' conditions of employment in the interests of furthering the structural efficiency principle. These changes consisted of improved salaries, a simplified salary and classification structure, more commitment by employers to professional development, and the introduction of the new category of Advanced Skills Teacher (Ashenden, 1990).

Durbridge (1991) has provided a succinct summary of how these proposals were addressed by means of award restructuring. First, in January 1989, a national benchmark rate was established asserting that teachers' work and qualifications were substantially the same throughout Australia and so, therefore, should be salaries. Secondly, in 1990, the Federal Industrial Relations Commission ratified the introduction of the Advanced Skills Teacher classification (AST). The award was silent on what exactly constituted an advanced skills teacher, but it was intended that the classification should be a recognition of exemplary teaching and provide a new classroom-based career structure that would progress from level one to level three. Hence, the concept was very much a product of the rationale

behind award restructuring as a whole. This rationale argued for a granting of improvements in wages in the context of skills' formation efforts, recognising that it would require reorganisation of the workplace and the production process itself (Bluer and Carmichael, 1991).

Early in 1991, the Federal government also initiated a National Project on the Quality of Teaching and Learning (NPQTL) in order to advance the cause of award restructuring. Its main purpose was to provide a forum for cooperative work involving government and private employers, education unions, the ACTU, and the Federal government. According to Durbridge (1991), the work programme devised included the transferability of entitlements from one state to another; a framework for qualifications, accreditation and possibly registration; the analysis of current and alternative work organisation with its related career and reward consequences; the management and support structures in schools with their accountability and appraisal mechanisms; the nature of teacher education, and the induction and professional development needed to sustain the various operations.

The professional tenor of the Project's programme may be construed as providing further evidence that teachers' unions were attempting to 'balance teachers' legitimate self-interests with the larger interests of teaching as an occupation and education as an institution' (Kerchner and Kaufman, 1993, p.19). Indeed, according to Preston (1996) the work of the NPQTL served to integrate the professional and industrial dimensions of the teachers unions leading to a heightened understanding of work issues in respective areas. Conversely, Preston also claims that the day-to-day demands of employer and employee relationships put pressure on unions to return to traditional patterns of demarcation between the industrial and professional.

From a union perspective, this regression to a familiar dichotomy can be partly demonstrated by the establishment of the Australian Teaching Council (ATC) arising from the work of the NPQTL. The teachers' unions in the public and independent sectors of education envisaged that the ATC should be a national body responsible for defining standards. It was also proposed that the Council should be briefed to determine qualifications and regulate entry into the teaching profession.

The ATC, therefore, may be interpreted as an endorsement by the teachers' unions of an organisation seeking to involve

teachers in determining the progress of their own profession. Nevertheless, in spite of this laudable aspiration, Barrow and Martin (1998) contend that the ATC was terminated because it was seen by the Federal government as being too independent and close to the unions. Notwithstanding this union perspective on the situation, the example of the ATC serves as a salutary reminder that the pursuit of professional unionism depends on government support. In this connection, Lawn (1996) has suggested that in any model of trade unionism it is important not to overlook the role of the State. He goes on to argue (1996) that a government's own version of ideology can control the idea of professionalism and service that prevails, regardless of union intentions on the issue.

Lawn's observation about the role of the State in determining the ambit of unionism concurs with Barrow and Martins' comments (1998) about the award restructuring process in Australia. Of particular significance is their suggestion that the process revealed a preparedness by teachers' unions to broaden the scope of their operations from dealing with narrowly defined industrial issues to considering teaching as a profession. Nevertheless, it is their contention that the Federal Coalition government elected in 1996 sought to confine teachers' unions to industrial matters, thus thwarting their attempts to enhance the professional status of teachers.

Second Phase: The emergence of enterprise bargaining

Another opening for teachers' unions to become involved in the advancement of teacher professionalism emerged with the next phase of restructuring in teachers' work represented by the introduction of negotiations at the enterprise level. In further pursuit of opportunities for flexibility, increased productivity, and work quality enhancement, the ACTU and the Federal Labor government agreed that the next logical step was towards enterprise-based bargaining. As a result, the early 1990s witnessed a dramatic change in the focus of industrial relations legislation (Shaw, 1995) which culminated in the Industrial Relations Reform Act of 1993. Previously, the focus of industrial relations had been exclusively on awards, but this legislation emphasised agreements. The rationale behind the new Act was expressed clearly by the then Federal Minister of Industrial Relations, Laurie Brereton (cited in Niland, 1994, p.17):

Under this system of enterprise bargaining, the parties involved will have a greater responsibility for determining the outcome of their agreements. The changes in industrial relations will open the way for Australian workplaces to meet the challenge of being more productive and internationally competitive.

This development, it was alleged, represented a further step in the continuing reforms that the Federal Labor government had introduced over the previous decade.

With the encouragement of the Federal Industrial Relations Commission, the principles of enterprise bargaining and enterprise agreements were also endorsed by state jurisdictions where provisions had been made to provide formal frameworks detailing the proper processes and structures required. In spite of the differences inherent in the legislation of each jurisdiction, particularly the provisions relating to the relationship between the award and the enterprise agreement, it was envisaged that opportunities would be presented for enterprises to break new ground in workplace practice including education systems and schools. In particular, there was widespread support for the view that enterprise bargaining offered opportunities for flexibility, increased productivity and work quality enhancement. It was also anticipated that there would be benefits such as greater consultation between management and employees, and a cooperative culture at the workplace, involving wider scope for employee participation in decision-making processes (Shaw, 1995). Hence, there was an opportunity to address issues connected with the nature of teachers' work, the defining of which was no longer restricted by the all-embracing terms of an award but could now be determined on a collaborative basis by the specific needs of the enterprise.

Although education systems throughout Australia have successfully established collective enterprise bargaining agreements, it is arguably the independent schools' sector that has been in a position to take fuller advantage of new arrangements in the industrial relations system. In situations where the individual school is the employer, the operational independence exists to enable the formulation of enterprise-based agreements containing greater scope than would be the case in the government sector of education where collective considerations impose more constraints on the issues and items that can be negotiated between parties.

Indeed, the single enterprise-based agreements that have been

established in a number of Australian independent schools exhibit certain similarities with the educational trust agreements advocated by Koppich and Kerchner (1996). It will be recalled that as a device for enabling the complexities of improving education to be confronted, Koppich and Kerchner (1996) recommended the introduction of a slender version of a centralised contract containing a set of basic wage and working conditions. This organised contract, it is asserted, should be supplemented by a more encompassing site-based educational compact dealing with the performance of the school. The similarities between this recommendation and a single enterprise agreement are three-fold. First, a school is permitted the discretion to conclude an agreement between employer and employee which is shaped by the specific needs of the enterprise. Secondly, the formulation of an enterprise agreement requires union involvement. Finally, an enterprise agreement is an adjunct to the pre-existing award or central agreement.

The level of cooperation between employer and employees envisaged in the formulation of enterprise-based agreements clearly has significant reverberations for the role of teachers' unions. In accordance with the major tenets of professional unionism, enterprise-based agreements have the potential to promote joint custody of reform, union management collaboration, and concern for the public interest. To this end, the most successful agreements appear to have eventuated when the union has trust in processes and people (Clarke, 1997). A union's trust in processes may be illustrated by the recognition that enterprise bargaining has the capacity to improve the quality of education provided by schools. Union trust in people may be illustrated by the perceived integrity of the employer in fostering union support for educational reform. In other words, it is necessary for the union to gain a perception that it is a genuine partner with the employer in the exercise (Wallace, 1996).

It is axiomatic that in an enterprise bargaining environment, the emergence of union trust for both processes and people will be contingent on the extent to which the employer reciprocates this trust. For example, union trust in the process will hinge, to a large degree, on the willingness of management to accept more open and collaborative relationships with unions than might have previously existed. If, however, an employing authority seeks to preserve its traditional management prerogative to manage affairs without interference, this attitude is likely to raise doubts

about the efficacy of the enterprise bargaining process to provide a mutually advantageous agreement

On the other hand, union trust in people may well be determined by the rationale that is adopted by employing authorities for seeking an agreement. This observation relates to whether bargaining for an enterprise agreement is motivated by a genuine desire to improve the quality of work life for teachers as a means of increasing the productivity of teaching and learning, or whether utilitarian and economic considerations take precedence.

In essence, these considerations relate to whether personnel in education systems and schools have the 'industrial maturity' (Niland, 1994) to negotiate agreements at the workplace. In contrast to the traditional tribunal process in which responsibility for determining work conditions rests with a third party, enterprise bargaining operates on the premise that both the employer and employee want to negotiate because there is a perception that this is the best route to follow. Both parties, therefore, have, at least in theory, the industrial maturity to communicate on a voluntary basis in order to negotiate the best conditions for each group so that a workable deal can be secured that is respected and adhered to by employer and employee.

Concluding Comments

The experience of award restructuring in Australia would indicate that the notion of teachers unions operating in accordance with outmoded principles of industrial unionism cannot be sustained. Rather, there is evidence to suggest that teachers' unions are beginning to embrace the major tenets of professional unionism to facilitate a proactive and productive relationship with the process of educational reform. In particular, professional unionism has engendered a willingness by teachers' unions to collaborate with governments and employing authorities in attempts to reform teachers' work. Another manifestation of professional unionism has been the unions' acknowledgement that their responsibilities extend beyond the rights of individual teachers to protecting the integrity of the teaching profession.

The shift that has been made by teachers unions towards collaboration may be demonstrated, *inter alia*, by their involvement in the National Project for the Quality of Teaching

and Learning. Notwithstanding the disappointing outcome of this project (Angus, 1996), it provided a forum in which the unions were committed to addressing some substantive professional issues on a cooperative basis.

This commitment to collaboration has also been evidenced by the unions' endorsement of enterprise bargaining principles enabling the nature of teachers' work to be determined by the specific needs of the education system or school. A corollary of this endorsement is an acceptance by teachers unions that collaborative strategies are likely to be more effective in achieving positive outcomes for reforming teachers' work than adversarial approaches.

Examples can also be cited of the unions' shift from protecting the rights of individual teachers to promoting the integrity of teaching as a whole. A significant development in this respect was the unions' support of the Australian Teaching Council as an organisation seeking to involve teachers in determining the progress of their own profession. Furthermore, it may be argued that implicit in the unions' acceptance of enterprise bargaining principles was an acknowledgement that local agreements may improve the overall quality of education that is provided.

Nevertheless, the advances that have been made towards professional unionism should not detract from some of the pitfalls that have been experienced *en route*. In this regard, the infrastructure of the award restructuring process was not necessarily amenable to facilitating professional unionism. It is evident that some teachers were particularly suspicious of the instrumental notions of schooling which had been embraced by changes introduced into the industrial relations forum, as well as the requirement that education should become more productive (Angus, 1991). Consequently, these teachers were reluctant to support their unions in pursuing professional matters because they were perceived to be shackled to corporatist and human capital assumptions about educational reform (Dudley and Vidovich, 1995).

According to union belief, a further constraint has been the ideological orientation of governments towards the role of unions. From this perspective, the emergence of conservative governments at both the federal and state levels has impeded progress towards the adoption of professional unionism. In this connection, Barrow and Martin (1998) argue that governments have attempted to restrict the activities of unions to industrial

issues as a means of separating teachers' unions from the profession they represent.

Another issue that has been raised in relation to the advancement of professional unionism is the role of the employers. Indeed, it is not sufficient to emphasise the need for teachers' unions to change their outlook without acknowledging the employers' responsibilities. This consideration is especially germane when it applies to enterprise bargaining because the efficacy of the process is predicated on cooperation between employer and employee. In order for professional unionism to be nurtured in this context, employers require sufficient industrial maturity to abandon traditional management prerogatives. They will also need to convey a genuine desire to improve the quality of work life for teachers as a means of increasing the productivity of teaching and learning rather than allowing utilitarian and economic considerations to take precedence.

Ultimately, of course, one can only speculate about the ways in which teachers' unions will continue to deal with the ever-changing landscape of educational reform. However, if the old certainties about the work and value of teachers' unions are being eroded, their past suggests that they will create a new role for themselves. (Lawn, 1996). In Australia, it would appear that the metamorphosis is already occurring.

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