

Restructuring Teachers' Work and Trade Union Responses in England: Bargaining for Change?

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A key feature of current school-sector reform in England is the restructuring of teachers' work and the increased use of support staff to undertake a range of activities previously undertaken by teachers. Supporters speak of a new teacher professionalism focused on the "core task" of teaching. Critics fear deprofessionalization through a process of de-skilling, work intensification, and labor substitution. This article uses labor process theory and empirical data to analyze recent developments in teachers' work and links these to the different ways in which teacher trade unions have bargained over reform. The article argues that workforce reform cannot be analyzed separately from the trade union strategies that seek to influence policy and that the emergence of a type of "reform unionism" in England represents the integration of product and process in policy.

KEYWORDS: labor process, labor relations, teachers' unions, workforce reform

It's a job where you never actually do enough because you could always be doing more.

—Secondary school teacher

A common feature of education policy in recent years in both developed and developing countries has been a process of substantial, rapid, and apparently relentless reform. Pressures to secure competitive advantage in an increasingly globalized and integrated new economic world order have compelled nation-states to embark on a permanent wave of education restructuring. The central aims have been to simultaneously develop human capital and increase educational "output" while at the same time containing

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costs and, in particular, public expenditure (Bell & Stevenson, 2006). Caught in the middle of this relentless drive to raise productivity, teachers have often found themselves the victims of unwelcome change in which they have had their professional judgment curtailed, witnessed the increasing managerialization of the educational process, and been subjected to ever more forensic scrutiny of their work by external agencies (Ball, 2003; Kerr, 2006). These developments have inevitably affected the work pressures on teachers and resulted in an intensification of the labor process of teaching (Helsby, 1999; Smyth, Dow, Hattam, Reid, & Shacklock, 2000). Teachers' sense of frustration that they never seem able to meet either their own expectations or the expectations of others is encapsulated in the teacher's comments at the opening of this article. Meanwhile, the trade unions that teachers might have looked to for protection from such developments have often appeared powerless and marginalized, apparently unable to exert any significant influence on policy.

More recently in England,¹ a new wave of educational restructuring can be identified, often associated with the term *workforce remodeling* (Department for Education and Skills [DfES], 2003). Remodeling refers to a number of related policies rather than a single initiative, but the common objective is to reconfigure teachers' work and remuneration to create a new division of labor within the pedagogical process and thereby focus teachers' efforts on the "core task of teaching and learning" (Rewards and Incentive Group [RIG], 2005). The central element within remodeling is the increased use of staff who are not qualified teachers to work in a range of teaching, and teaching support, roles. This is then buttressed by a raft of associated reforms, including pay restructuring and the increased use of information technology, to support both administration and teaching (Selwood & Pilkington, 2005).

An explicit objective of the reforms is to reduce teachers' workload while aiming to simultaneously drive up educational quality through the more effective deployment of labor and specifically by using both teaching and support staff in new roles and combinations (DfES, 2002b). However, the reforms have proven to be highly contentious and have divided the teaching profession. Advocates argue that the remodeling proposals begin to address long-held teacher grievances relating to workload pressures and usher in the prospect of a "new professionalism" (RIG, 2005). Critics counter that teacher professionalism is compromised by the use of cheaper, substitute labor to carry out tasks previously performed by qualified teachers (M. Thompson, 2006). These divisions are played out in the different policy positions of the major trade unions representing teachers in England and point to the significance of conflict and compromise in the development of remodeling policy. Trade unions supporting the remodeling agenda have actively engaged with central government and the local government employers (equivalent to school districts in the United States) to bargain for the reforms. In a process that has some parallels with the development of "reform unionism" in the United States (Koppich, 2006), a "social partnership" has evolved

in which employers and unions have forged an alliance based on the promotion of a “common-interest” agenda. This is a new and significant development in English school-sector labor relations. However, the National Union of Teachers (NUT), one of the largest teachers’ unions in England, is opposed to key elements of the remodeling agenda and stands outside the social partnership (NUT, 2003). Moreover, the National Association of Headteachers (NAHT), the largest principals’ union, has also had a more ambivalent attitude toward the reforms and has occupied positions both inside and outside of the partnership (Milne, 2006a).

This article has two specific, but interdependent, aims. First, it seeks to analyze the development of the workforce-remodeling agenda in England and to identify its implications for the future direction of teachers’ work and the teaching profession. It does this by identifying ways in which workforce reform is being experienced in schools and linking these developments to arguments in support of, and opposition to, remodeling. Second, it seeks to locate these issues within an approach to policy development that is dynamic and that views policy as the product of a continual process of negotiation, conflict, and compromise. These processes are in turn shaped by specific historical and sociopolitical circumstances. Within the context of workforce remodeling, these circumstances must specifically reflect two factors often neglected in mainstream studies of education policy and change: first, the reality that the teaching profession in England, as in many developed countries, is highly unionized; and second, that English school-sector labor relations are characterized by multiunionism² and a high degree of interunion rivalry. The second aim of this article is therefore to explore the strategies developed by teacher trade unions in relation to workforce remodeling and specifically the bifurcation that arises from being “in” or “out” of the social partnership. A key feature of this analysis is to seek to connect the consequences of policy with the means by which these are achieved—what S. Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, and Henry (1997) refer to as the “product and process” of policy.

Union strategies are not simply different ways of seeking to influence policy, but within the context of workforce remodeling, union strategy *is* policy. The emergence and development of a social partnership model of labor relations is at the core of the remodeling agenda and one of its defining features. The overarching objective of this article, therefore, is to avoid an artificial separation in much policy analysis between formulation and implementation (Bowe & Ball, 1992) by explicitly seeking to synthesize an analysis of both workforce remodeling and trade union strategy. In doing so, the article seeks to highlight the complex relationship between policy as both product and process, to explore how union strategy seeks to influence policy, and crucially, to analyze the implications of policy for the future direction of union strategy.

The desire to capture the dynamics of the policy process, and to convey policy development as the outcome of ongoing conflict and compromise, in part derives from the theoretical approach that underpins this article and that seeks to draw on labor process analysis to help understand and

explain developments in teachers' work. Labor process analysis is rooted in the work of Braverman (1974), whose book *Labor and Monopoly Capital* presaged a growing interest in the nature of work and the factors that shape its content and forms of control. At the core of Braverman's analysis is the assertion that capitalism's inexorable drive to increase labor's productivity requires greater managerial control of the labor process, achieved through the separation of conception (management) from execution (labor). It is argued (Nichols, 1980) that this has been reflected in the application of the principles of scientific management (F. Taylor, 1911) to contemporary work, the consequences of which are a tendency toward the fragmentation of the work process, the emergence of a new hierarchical division of labor, the removal of craft skills from work, and an increasing emphasis on the quantification and measurement of performance. Since the publication of Braverman's work, there has been much interest in the application of his work generally (P. Thompson, 1983; Wood, 1989) and, in particular, its relevance and applicability in specific contexts such as teaching (Carlson, 1987, 1992; Ozga & Lawn, 1981; Reid, 2003; Robertson, 2000). For the purpose of this article, the attraction of labor process analysis derives from a number of emphases within that theoretical approach that are seen as crucial to any analysis of contemporary developments in teachers' work. Perhaps most important is the need to analyze work in terms of both content and control. The emphasis on work content focuses on what teachers do: What are the activities that teachers undertake in their daily lives as they work in their classrooms and their schools? Furthermore, what are the skills, professional knowledge and capacities required to undertake these activities? However, the distinctive contribution of labor process analysis is to link content and control (Ingersoll, 2003) and to pose the questions, Why do teachers do what they do, and who decides? Work is not treated as an "abstract, ahistorical process" (Smyth, 2001, p. 10) but, rather, one that is shaped by historical, ideological, and sociopolitical factors that underpin the power relationships within which teachers' work is framed.

Teachers may have considerable autonomy to determine their classroom practices, but they function in a context nested within the power structures of their school, their local authority, and the state. Such an approach reaffirms the need to analyze policy as a dynamic link between both product and process. Teachers do not experience workforce reform as passive recipients of policy determined "up there," but they shape it and reshape it "down here." Crucially, as workers, they are organized and represented collectively through their trade unions as they seek to assert agency over the process of policy implementation. Using labor process analysis to understand the development of workforce remodeling ensures that teachers' work is not treated as static and uncontested but as the outcome of an ebb-and-flow struggle shaped by both individual and collective responses. These processes are located in a specific sociopolitical context that frames the power relations within which these interactions take place.

Research Design and Methodology

This study draws on data derived from two linked studies. The first is an initial scoping project conducted in three local authorities in the English Midlands in 2004-2005, and the second (in 2006) is part of a larger study drawing on three further authorities and including data from national policy makers and union officials. The initial study was used to identify the relevant issues as they were being experienced in schools, with the larger study exploring the same issues but extending the analysis to the national level of policy development. The purpose of the data collection is, first, to capture the diversity of experience of workforce reform as it is being encountered by teachers working in schools. Smyth (2001) asserts that “work, organization and change ought to be considered from the vantage point of those who live and experience it” (p. 10), and this research design explicitly seeks to give voice to teachers and principals “on the shopfloor” (Stevenson, 2003).

The purpose of the second study has been to identify the different ways in which teachers’ collective organizations, their trade unions, seek to influence the policies that frame their working environment and to explore the relationship between union strategy and policy and union strategy *as* policy. These linked objectives required a research design that captured insights from multiple perspectives (Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley, & Beresford, 2000) and therefore collected data from a range of different sources. In particular, there was a need to collect data at all levels of the policy environment (school, local authority, and national level), from both employer and employee perspectives and, given the nature of multiunionism in English school-sector labor relations, from across the range of teachers’ unions within and outside the social partnership.

The data collected were qualitative, gathered primarily through semi-structured interviews, supplemented by the extensive collection of documentary evidence. Local authorities were deliberately selected using a form of purposive sampling in which the aim was to ensure maximum variation. The local authorities were small and large, urban and rural, and contained a wide range of different school types. Local authorities were also chosen to reflect a range of union profiles, including authorities where particular unions were dominant and others where union membership and activity were more balanced across unions.

Data in this article are drawn from interviews with 13 principals and teachers, 5 employers’ representatives (working at local-authority and national levels), and 14 trade union officers. Principal and teacher interviewees were from a range of school types in the case study—local authorities reflecting both the elementary and secondary school sectors. In most cases, interviews were with individuals, but in two cases, teacher interviews were conducted as focus groups to facilitate a dialogical approach to the issues; in these cases, the different voices of interviewees are represented as Teachers 1, 2, and 3 within the text of this article. In some cases, teacher interviewees were also union representatives in their schools. Employer

interviewees were selected on the basis of their involvement and participation in the formulation and implementation of the workforce-reform policy. The range of interviewees was from those involved in policy formulation at the highest national level to those at local-authority level with a specific responsibility to negotiate with unions in relation to local implementation. Teachers' union interviewees also represented a broad span of unions and roles. Interviewees included both full-time officials and lay officers and were drawn from both the national and local level (within the case study). This coverage ensured responses from the full gamut of union positions, ranging from school union representative to general secretary level.

Interviews were semistructured and typically between 1 hour and 2 hours' duration. Interviews were recorded digitally when permission was provided, and full transcripts were produced. Transcripts were anonymized and archived to ensure ethical commitments were maintained and to provide a transparent audit of work undertaken (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Interview data were supported by documentary evidence that supported processes of triangulation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). Documents were primarily gathered from open-access sources, with government agency and union Web sites being used to locate policy documents, research papers, and guidance notes relating to policy implementation. However, these data were supplemented by material provided by project informants, and this provided access to a range of texts, including policy papers, meeting minutes, and internal memoranda, that are not in the public domain.

Interview and document data were then analyzed using a common process of data analysis. Data collection and analysis were not treated as disconnected processes (Tesch, 1990), but analysis was undertaken as soon as data were collected. The integration of these processes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) ensured that interview schedules in particular could be adjusted to explore issues revealed at earlier stages of data collection. Interview transcripts and documentary texts were analyzed through a process of coding and the use of analytical memos (Miles & Huberman, 1994), from which the key themes within the data were identified and developed.

Underpinning the research approach in this article is the desire to develop a deeper understanding of the processes of policy development. The aim is not to evaluate the impact, for better or for worse, of workforce reform in terms of the hours worked by teachers, for example. This work is undertaken comprehensively elsewhere (see, for example, the teacher workload studies undertaken by the Office of Manpower Economics [OME, 2006] on behalf of the School Teachers' Review Body). Rather, the purpose is to identify the range of ways in which workforce reform is being experienced by teachers and the complex ways in which teachers' collective organizations seek to influence policy. The article makes no claims to generalizability but, rather, seeks to contribute to an understanding of policy (Gordon, Lewis, & Young, 1997) by recognizing the significance of voices that are often unheard in policy analysis—the voices of teachers as workers and of the trade unions that represent their collective interests.

Workforce Remodeling: The Emergence of a Policy

At the start of the millennium, there was clear evidence that the English state school system was creaking unsustainably under the pressure of inexorably rising expectations and insufficient resources. Shortages in the supply of both teachers (Smithers & Robinson, 2001) and principals (Howson, 2003), coupled with industrial action by union members in response to workload pressure, testified to the tensions within the system. Part of the problem was highlighted in a report by private sector consultants PricewaterhouseCoopers (2001), which argued that further system improvement was not possible without structural reform within schools. The government's response was to promote radical and innovative solutions to tackling workload problems in 32 pilot "Pathfinder" schools (Butt & Gunter, 2005) and to engage in discussions with teachers' unions to address teachers' workload grievances. The coincidence of interests between these two agendas serves to highlight the links between new approaches to school-sector labor relations (Collarbone, 2005) and the government's wider commitment to "modernization" (Ozga, 2002).

The outcome of the negotiations with teachers' unions was a collective agreement between the government, the local authority employers, and most of the unions representing both teaching and support staff, significantly titled "Raising Standards and Tackling Workload" (DfES, 2003), the first substantial collective agreement involving employers and the teacher trade unions since teachers' national negotiating rights were removed following the 1984-to-1986 strikes. The alliance of teaching and support staff unions and employers that formulated this agreement has since become known as the social partnership.³ The national workload agreement (DfES, 2003) set out the objective of achieving a "progressive reductions in teachers' overall [working] hours" (p. 2) and presented a number of initiatives to secure this. Key changes included the following:

- Teachers cease to undertake 24 specified administrative tasks including bulk photocopying and data processing (from September 2003).
- A ceiling of 38 hours placed on the amount of time teachers might have to cover for absent colleagues (from September 2004).
- Teachers receive a statutory entitlement to 10% noncontact time for the purposes of planning, preparation, and assessment, referred to as "PPA time" (from September 2005).

A central feature of the agreement, therefore, was the proposal that support staff would assume increasing importance in schools, undertaking enhanced roles in four key areas: administration, student support, management, and teaching and learning (Miliband, 2003). Pivotal to the agreement was a change in the statutory regulations governing teachers' employment that allowed support staff to undertake a range of teaching duties, including whole class teaching (Her Majesty's Stationery Office [HMSO], 2003). The expectation is that this would take place only in specified circumstances,

would be performed by a suitably qualified member of the support staff (facilitated by the creation of the new role of higher level teaching assistant, or HLTA), and would take place under the supervision of a qualified teacher.

Following the signing of the workload agreement, the social partnership has extended its mission and embraced wider issues of teachers' pay and performance management. The resulting restructuring of teachers' pay is complex, but it is integral to wider remodeling reforms and is a central component of the remodeling and new professionalism agenda. The RIG proposals required all schools to replace existing "management allowances" (additional payments to reward a wide range of additional responsibilities undertaken by teachers) with new "teaching and learning responsibility points" (TLRs). TLRs reinforce the emphasis on teachers' "core task" by being much more sharply focused on rewarding work that directly affects student learning and performance or overseeing the work of colleagues that directly affects student performance.

Workforce Remodeling: Making a Case for Reform

In a speech in 2001, then Secretary of State Estelle Morris argued that "we must make real changes to ensure that teachers can devote themselves to what they do best—teaching. And that they can make the most of their talents and skills and are not diverted from this by non-essential tasks" (Morris, 2001, p. 5). The speech was given a high media profile and is widely regarded as having set the agenda for the development of the remodeling reforms and the emergence of what has subsequently become known as the "new professionalism." Advocates of the remodeling reforms highlight a number of potential benefits that derive from the raft of policies that are associated with remodeling; these might be summarized as reduced workload for teachers, raised standards for students, improved prospects for pay and professional development, and a framework for managing change that is inclusive and participatory. Each of these issues needs some further elaboration.

A central aim of the workload agreement has been to seek a progressive reduction in the hours worked by teachers, and it is clear to see how key features of the workload agreement have the potential to affect the time teachers are required to work and have available to work. The removal of "nonessential tasks" was seen as an attack on the inefficient use of teacher time that prevented teachers from undertaking more productive work. Early academic research indicated some positive outcomes in this respect (Bach, Kessler, & Heron, 2006), and interview evidence from both teachers and union officials in the study presented in this article suggests that schools have made considerable progress with regard to the 24 administrative tasks. This was illustrated by comments from the following secondary school teacher:

At this school, when you look at the 24 administration tasks, we're very good. At my last school there was no clerical support, there was nobody you could take your work to, to have typed. You did everything yourself.

Similarly, limits on the need to cover for absent colleagues, often facilitated by the use of designated support staff (“cover supervisors”) were cited by interviewees as reducing the amount of cover undertaken and allowing time to be planned more effectively. These points were again illustrated in interview evidence:

The impact for me personally so far of the remodeling agenda has been 100% positive—for example, planning, preparation, and assessment time is fantastic, because you know for sure that you have the time to do things like lesson observations, paperwork, et cetera, rather than finding out at the last minute that you have to do cover . . . also as a new head of faculty, I have a higher level teaching assistant, which makes a massive difference as she can do a lot of the time-consuming, but necessary, work such as money collection, displays, detentions, to name a few things.

The comments of the teacher above encapsulate the essence of what the remodeling agenda seeks to achieve—the more effective use of teacher time, with a potentially concomitant impact on student outcomes, facilitated by the increased use of support staff in ancillary roles. The increased use of staff who are not qualified teachers is the key, therefore, to addressing teacher workload issues. Bach, Kessler, and Heron’s (2004) research, which is largely positive about the impact of support staff, argues that “the classroom based teaching assistant (TA) is pivotal to attempts to reform the school workforce” (p. 1), and these views were echoed by several interviewees within the research project. A local authority officer responsible for negotiating remodeling implementation with teachers’ unions made the following point:

To do it [reduce teacher workload] you have to either bring in supply [occasional] staff, or to use support staff—the ideal that you’re trying to do all along is bring along the profession of the higher level teaching assistant.

Union supporters within the social partnership assert that the use of support staff in new roles and the contractual gains they make possible (statutory noncontact time and limits on cover, for example) “free teachers and heads (principals) from tasks that did not require their professional skills and expertise” (National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers [NASUWT], n.d.).

The more effective deployment of staff is central to the argument that remodeling reforms are capable of both reducing teacher workload and improving student outcomes. The squaring of this circle is achieved by allowing teachers to focus on the core activity of teaching and learning and to deploy their efforts in ways that are capable of making the most impact. It also requires a willingness to rethink traditional roles in the classroom whereby support staff do not simply undertake nonessential tasks but increasingly venture into territory previously considered the preserve of the

professional teacher. The implications of this approach are well made by a local authority officer responsible for union negotiations when interviewed about the changing nature of teacher and support staff roles: "Radical options must involve the redistribution of work between teachers and nonteachers. Marking and teaching do not need to be done by teachers."

The remodeling agenda has also opened up for debate wider issues of pay and professional development. With regard to pay, members of the social partnership claim they have secured significant real-terms increases for teachers, greater pay transparency, and in particular, improved rewards for teachers who wish to remain in the classroom (rather than seeking promotion by taking on managerial responsibilities; NASUWT, 2006). The importance of continuing professional development (CPD) also appears to be more widely recognized. This was in part supported by the observations of these secondary school teachers in a focus group interview:

Teacher 1: For my first 4 years here at least, I didn't get any professional development at all. I got no training, I wasn't allowed to—didn't go out on courses or anything, so that no wonder my teaching methods hadn't particularly changed much.

Teacher 2: There's a great entitlement to it now in the school, there's the intervention of unions and stuff like that.

Teacher 3: I think people want it more. They don't just want to be in a classroom and left to their own devices.

Although it is difficult to establish significant and tangible gains in relation to CPD, the interview evidence does suggest that higher teacher expectations in relation to CPD, and the provision of statutory noncontact (PPA) time, may create the conditions in which teachers can more easily access CPD. There was also evidence of the remodeling agenda's providing a vehicle for ongoing discussion of CPD issues at both a national and local level. For example, in one local authority, the ad hoc union and employer group established to oversee remodeling implementation had metamorphosed into a standing committee focusing on CPD issues. This was described by the local authority officer responsible for workforce reform in interview:

I decided roundabout December of last year [2005] that we probably needed to carry on meeting [as a remodeling implementation group] until the summer. And we set up meetings until July [2006]. And I said after that date I didn't really feel that we needed to carry on meeting in this way. But I actually thought that there was a need to have a CPD group who would focus on CPD. And we have appointed a new head of CPD and so she's going to lead on that group and the workforce unions are on that group.

The role of such committees exemplifies what may yet prove to be the most significant development to emerge from the workforce-remodeling agenda—a new relationship between unions and employers. Those within the social partnership highlight a new and "mature" relationship with government

in which it is possible to identify a common agenda based on positive-sum, “win-win” opportunities. This is best illustrated in the content of the workload agreement (DfES, 2003) and the employer- and union-endorsed recommendations for restructuring teachers’ pay (RIG, 2005). The scale of these changes was described by a government interviewee involved in the social partnership discussions as representing a fundamental “culture change” involving “a participant and participative way of dealing with issues around workforce reform.” Discussions were often difficult (“There was blood on the carpet sometimes”), but the emphasis was on seeking agreement rather than confrontation. This worked at many levels with social partner unions having to seek agreement with each other as well as with the employers. Individual unions clearly had their own policy positions, and sophisticated forms of intraorganizational bargaining (Walton & McKersie, 1965) were required to knit together the alliances that underpinned the partnership. From an employer perspective, the process was described by the government official as follows:

It can only happen through give and take at the end of the day, and a lot is done around the table in terms of trust and working through what needs to be done and understanding of each others’ agendas. So what people started to do was to put themselves in each others’ shoes and think, “I might win this one, but I’ll lose that one,” and you know, it’s all about how do you get there at the end of the day, so everybody benefits. And that’s what partnership has meant.

Social partner unions point to the important contractual gains that have been achieved from this process and also to the perceived benefits of having a voice in the development of policy. This is contrasted with what is presented as high-stakes/low-return traditional collective bargaining. The social partner trade unions reject the view that they are compromising to a government-set agenda but instead argue that the partnership allows government and unions to develop a joint and shared agenda. Underpinning the whole approach from both an employer and union perspective is the conviction that negotiating these reforms is entirely consistent with raising standards and improving quality. To this end, the strategy endorses the research of Steelman, Powell, and Carini (2000) in the United States that has argued for a positive link between union involvement in labor relations and student outcomes and rejects the views of critics (Lieberman, 1997, and Moe, 2006, in the United States and Lawton, Bedard, MacLellan, & Li, 1999, in Canada) who claim that collective bargaining in its traditional form acts as a block on system performance.

The extent to which the outcomes of negotiations between the social partners have developed into national policy illustrates the significance of this agenda in which workforce remodeling and the language of new professionalism (Association of Teachers and Lecturers [ATL], 2005) have assumed the status of a new orthodoxy. However, the development of teachers’ work in this way, and the involvement of teacher trade unions in the process, is neither straightforward nor uncontested, and these critical perspectives require more detailed consideration.

Workforce Remodeling: Challenging the New Orthodoxy

Much of the rationale underpinning critiques of the remodeling reforms can be traced back to historical commitments to particular conceptions of teacher professionalism (Ozga & Lawn, 1981; Tropp, 1957) and are also informed by strong elements of labor process analysis. In drawing on labor process theory to develop a critique of the remodeling reforms, it can be helpful to use an analysis first presented by Carlson (1987), in which he suggested that teachers were simultaneously experiencing processes of de-skilling, labor intensification, and a continuing trend toward the "cheapening and increased substitutability of teachers' labor" (p. 290). Each of these dimensions can provide a useful framework to analyze the impact of remodeling reforms on teachers' work, but it is also important to see each dimension as organically linked to the others. These are complex processes whereby experiences of de-skilling, intensification, and substitutability have the potential to become powerfully reinforcing of each other.

De-skilling the Labor Process of Teaching

The central focus in relation to claims of de-skilling hinges on the definition of *nonessential tasks*. It has been argued that the use of nonteaching staff to complete nonessential tasks will allow teachers to focus on the "core task of teaching and learning" (RIG, 2005) and to concentrate their attention on higher order pedagogical skills. However, in this context, the precise nature of teachers' work, including, for example, what is considered nonessential, is presented as largely unproblematic. In some areas, such as those relating to bureaucracy and administration, there is little dispute about what is nonessential. However, what is also envisaged is that *nonessential tasks* will embrace many aspects of teachers' work that are considered central to the core task of teaching, including planning, delivering, and evaluating lessons to whole classes of students. Here the emergence of a centralized pedagogy (the "one best way" approach to lesson delivery, described by one teacher interviewee as the emergence of "across-the-board uniformity"), coupled with the increased use of information and computer technology to support lesson planning, potentially diminishes the space within which teachers can, or need to, exercise professional judgment. One elementary school principal interviewee identified a growing culture of dependency in which teachers increasingly expected lessons plans to be sourced for them from elsewhere:

I have teachers who can't plan lessons anymore. They download everything off the DfES Web site. They don't know how to plan a really good lesson because they expect it all to be done for them.

A further illustration of these processes is in relation to the pastoral dimension of teachers' work whereby important and complex features of a teacher's job role are sometimes being removed from teachers, apparently on the grounds of reducing workload pressures (DfES, 2002b). Such

developments raise fundamental questions about the nature and purpose of teaching. Within the English state school system, a premium has generally been placed on a pedagogy that seeks to integrate academic and pastoral approaches to teaching. Consequently, teachers have seen their pastoral role (as tutors and sometimes as year heads⁴) as a central element of their work, role, and responsibility. Within the context of remodeling reforms, it is clear that the focus on the “core task” envisages that pastoral roles can be annexed from teachers’ work and increasingly managed by support staff. One secondary school principal interviewed could see the financial attractions of making use of support staff in pastoral roles but accepted that this was potentially further impoverishing the teacher’s role:

Is it a teachers’ role to be head of year? In some ways we are being challenged to have quite a stimulating debate—but the danger is it will make the job of being a teacher more arid because it will be a case of saying “You! Teach! And you must get your students through their maths exam!” Combined with everything else that is going on, there are some real dangers.

What appears to be the case is that a complex, and professionally rewarding, feature of teaching is in some cases being eclipsed from the role as teachers are compelled to focus on a much more narrow conception of teaching—one in which pedagogical processes are not conceived in terms of teaching the whole child but rather in relation to the technical delivery of subject content and the achievement of prespecified learning outcomes. This shift in focus in teachers’ role, with increased emphasis on narrower academic outcomes, facilitated by the increased use of support staff to address pastoral issues, was described by one secondary school teacher in his school as follows:

That role [student welfare and behavior support] has been taken away and what would have been the year head’s role—I don’t know what they call it now because it has got a new fancy name which relates to the fact that they’re much more to do with targeting pupil achievement and setting targets. The sorts of roles to do with behavior have been taken on and given to, well, people who aren’t qualified to teach—mentors and people like that.

This shift in focus in teachers’ roles accords with the wider objectives of government policy and reinforces the emphasis on raising productivity through meeting higher performance targets in a narrow range of “core” subjects.

Labor Intensification

Remodeling reforms, especially those associated with the national agreement, have a specific objective of reducing teachers’ working hours. To date, evidence of any significant impact on workload is inconclusive (School

Teachers' Review Body, 2006), and in other respects, remodeling reforms arguably open up new possibilities to increase the labor intensification of teachers. This is likely to arise from increased pressure on teachers to focus on "high value-added" activities. The potential for fragmentation and Taylorisation (F. Taylor, 1911) of the role of the teacher is illustrated in the analysis presented in the following government publication (DfES, 2002a):

The current work of teaching can be disaggregated in principle into the challenging and high value added teaching and direction of which only a qualified teacher is capable; teaching activities that could be undertaken by staff without QTS [qualified teacher status], subject to an appropriate degree of supervision by a qualified teacher; and activities that do not necessarily require any professional involvement from a qualified teacher. (p. 18)

The rationale underpinning this approach is to maximize the efficient use of resources by focusing teacher effort where it adds most "value," however defined. In such circumstances, teachers do not find themselves doing less work but, rather, different and more demanding work. Stripped of elements of the job that provide "breathing space" (often the "nonessential" tasks), teachers' work is increasingly accounted for by the high-pressure, high-intensity elements. For example, one elementary school principal described how nonessential teacher tasks such as photocopying provided a respite from what another interviewee described as the "pin-down" elements of teachers' work.

Actually my staff really enjoyed doing it [photocopying]. It was a low-level task, it was calm and warm [laughs]. I refused to tell my staff they couldn't photocopy [one of the 24 tasks]. Meeting at the photocopier was a kind of social event.

The type of developments described above also opens up opportunities for a new division of labor between those who plan and those who execute. This was illustrated in the comments of a local authority officer charged with conducting union negotiations relating to remodeling:

What we're saying is that support staff are not qualified teachers—there are certain things they can do, and they can perhaps do more than we think they can do, but they cannot take responsibility for *coordinating, developing, monitoring, and evaluating* [italics added] the curriculum—that is a teacher's job. The teacher's role is even more important now. The money that can be saved from using more support staff can be put into paying teachers higher salaries.

What this view illustrates is the potential for a new division of labor to emerge between those who "coordinate" and "evaluate" and those who "deliver." The former group may be significantly fewer in number but will enjoy high rewards, job status, and security (roles are already established and emerging with titles such as *advanced skills teacher* and *excellent teacher*⁵).

The latter group, focusing on delivery, will consist of a much larger group of both teachers and support staff, with a diminishing demarcation between the two (M. Thompson, 2006). Overall salaries among those involved in delivery are then potentially depressed by the expanded pool of labor available. The potential consequence of these developments will be the creation of a multitier labor market in teaching with a well-paid, secure core and a heterogeneous, low-paid, and insecure periphery comprising teachers and support staff performing teaching and teaching-related duties. Existing inequalities based, for example, on race and gender are likely to be exacerbated as low-status workers in the system (such as occasional or substitute teachers) are further disadvantaged and marginalized (Pollock, 2006).

The increasing disconnection between conception and execution (Braverman, 1974) therefore opens up the possibility of raising sector productivity by driving up the output of those who plan, monitor, and evaluate while driving down the costs of those who deliver. Intensification pressures are then compounded by the introduction of new teaching and learning reviews to assess individual teacher performance and the linking of pay ever more closely to productivity (DfES 2006b; RIG, 2005). The issues raised by this process also highlight the prospect of labor substitution and illustrate the interdependence of these factors, as each is inextricably linked to the other.

Labor Substitution

Labor substitution refers to the process whereby work previously undertaken by qualified staff is undertaken by less qualified staff at a correspondingly lower salary. As has been illustrated, there are a number of instances where this is promoted by the remodeling reforms and where the outcomes are uncontested. Where the definition of nonessential tasks is widely accepted, the use of support staff is welcomed. Where it is more controversial is where support staff are used to undertake core elements of the teachers' role. Common examples of substitution are illustrated by the use of cover supervisors to cover teacher absence (promoted by the workload agreement) and the use of higher level teaching assistants to cover classes to provide for teachers' new statutory entitlement to 10% noncontact (PPA) time. In elementary schools, teachers' 10% noncontact time was sometimes created by using outside instructors to offer "enrichment activities" in arts, crafts, and sport—referred to by one interviewee as a curriculum model using "an army of jugglers and clowns." In such cases, the use of support staff and outside agencies to provide these activities was seen as contributing to a more explicit hierarchy of subjects within the curriculum (with "less important" subjects apparently not requiring qualified teachers). This latter point highlights the way in which hierarchies in the workforce and hierarchies within the curriculum become mutually reinforcing. This was identified as potentially affecting standards and quality, but one union officer acknowledged it was hard to resist:

If it was a visiting theater company and your kids were going to the hall all afternoon and you were told that you could get on with

preparing, you know, would you find that a problem? No, not at all, it would be fantastic. Would you worry that they'd lost an afternoon's education? No, not really.

These examples illustrate some of the ways in which concerns about labor substitution are manifesting themselves in schools. In interviews, teachers recognized a potential to make economies within the system and linked this to potentially diminished opportunities for their own career progression and job satisfaction. The point was made by the following secondary school teacher:

Teacher: What I'm concerned about is that we seem to be constantly saying, "Oh we haven't got time to do this, time to do that," what they'll say is, "Well you're a teacher, your profession is teaching, we'll take the management job away from you and give it to someone who's not teaching," therefore we won't have the opportunity to have these jobs, therefore our pay would decrease.

Facilitator: When you say take it away from you . . .

Teacher: I mean that it will be given to nonprofessional teachers. They'll give it to people that are support staff that are managing things, coordinating roles, rather than a teacher.

It is possible to conclude this critique of workforce remodeling by arguing that individual elements cannot be seen as discrete and disconnected developments but should rather be viewed as combining to form a new and decisive phase in the restructuring of teachers' work. In some respects, they accelerate processes already well established (with regard to performance pay, for example), whereas in other respects, most notably with regard to the wider use of support staff, genuinely new developments are being witnessed in English schools. The processes described above highlight the way in which the work of teachers is being recast, centered on a fragmented labor process and a new division of labor. Teachers' work is being fractured both horizontally (with the removal of "lower order" teaching activities) and vertically (as academic and pastoral roles are artificially divided and the latter are annexed from teachers' work at all levels of responsibility). Moreover, as the focus of teachers' work is concentrated ever more narrowly on the task of subject delivery, the pressure to demonstrate performance through student achievement in standardized tests increases correspondingly (DFES 2006b; RIG 2005). The danger is that teachers increasingly experience their work as a detached and alienating process, described by one teacher interviewee in the following terms:

It's the sausage-making factory type of thing. You've got these kids and you just cram information into them and that's what you need to do. It's not looking at them as human beings but if you're a teacher you don't think about anything else apart from what facts have to be crammed into that brain.

Rather than a concern for educating the whole child, a teacher's priority is his or her individual contribution to a process in which he or she has

become a small and disconnected part. His or her performance in relation to this contribution is then scrutinized forensically, with rewards and sanctions allocated accordingly. In this scenario, the teacher becomes increasingly detached from the notion of a holistic educational process. He or she is likely to become less concerned with the development of the whole child and more concerned with his or her own contribution to meeting narrow performance targets, on which pay issues will increasingly depend (DfES 2006b; RIG, 2005). In such a context, professional judgments are not driven by the educational interests of individual children but instead are skewed by the expediencies necessary to maximize performance against targets imposed and evaluated from elsewhere. The outcome is an impoverished educational experience in which both teachers and students encounter an increasingly mechanistic process. At this point, a potential reduction in workload and enhanced space for professionalism come into conflict with an increased need to raise productivity and demonstrate accountability. The way in which performance pressures are experienced by both teachers and students is well made in the discussion within a focus group interview:

Teacher 1: I think going back to the pressure now on achieving results, you focus a lot more now really on dealing with kids and what they need to achieve certain grades. It's a more restrictive form of education I find as opposed to when I was at university when I wasn't that concerned about resource, it was—the experience for me was just finding out as much as I possibly could about certain things. Now, of course, everything is targeted towards getting a particular grade . . .

Teacher 2: Students are at the end of the line as well, so pressure comes from really the government down to local authorities, local authorities down to schools, from senior management to middle management, middle management to classroom teachers, the classroom teachers put it all down on to the student.

Teacher 3: The poor student doesn't have anybody else to put the pressure on!

Teacher 2: They take it all and it's coming from all angles for them so I do feel sorry for them sometimes.

Teacher 3: It's not nice to be a kid these days.

The contentious nature of these reforms has generated division within the teaching profession, and these differences have in turn been reflected in the strategies and policies of the teachers' unions. These strategies, and their links to remodeling reforms, now require further analysis.

Workforce Remodeling: Identifying Trade Union Responses to Reform

Differences in relation to workforce-remodeling reforms have divided the teaching profession and have split the teacher trade union movement in England, illustrated by the divisions not only between unions inside and outside the social partnership but also the divisions within unions (Milne, 2006a). These divisions are reflected in attitudes not only to government policy but also to union strategies that shape unions' engagement with policy. As this article argues, social partnership is not simply the means by which remodeling

and new professionalism policies are negotiated—it is integral to new professionalism itself. It can be tempting to present this division between teachers' unions as a conflict between “old” and “new” unionism or as a new twist in the well-established debate between industrial unionism and professional unionism (Streshley & DeMitchell, 1994). However, there are clear deficiencies with adopting such a dichotomous view, and it is apparent a more nuanced analysis is required when assessing and evaluating the union strategies currently being adopted by teachers' unions in England.

The basis of the social partnership is a willingness to participate in a constructive engagement with government in which the aim is to secure win-win (Keane, 1996) outcomes. Such an initiative has parallels with more established developments in U.S. teacher trades unionism (Kerchner & Koppich, 1993; Rosow & Zager, 1989) and also with some more recent experiences in Canada (Litzcke, 2001; Naylor, 2006). However, it is important to identify where there are points of contact and departure and also to recognize the specificities within national teachers' union traditions, thereby avoiding the oversimplification of what are often complex and uneven developments (Poole, 2001).

A clear similarity with features of U.S. “new unionism” has been the desire to identify a common-interest agenda with government and to pursue forms of integrative bargaining (Walton & McKersie, 1965) in which both sides seek to identify the scope for mutual advantage. In some senses, therefore, there is a case for arguing that social partnership in England represents a shift away from traditional industrial unionism toward a form of “professional unionism” (Kerchner & Mitchell, 1988). However, there are limits to making such comparisons. Kerchner and Mitchell's (1988) vision of professional unionism envisaged that teachers' unions bargain much more actively on issues of instruction, school effectiveness, and productivity. In later work, Kerchner, Koppich, and Weeres (1997, 1998) argue that teachers' unions must not restrict themselves to bargaining for economic, or “industrial,” issues but must extend their concerns to the “other half of teaching” (Kerchner et al., 1998, p. 11), that is, pedagogical, or “professional,” issues. Union concern for professional issues may be wide ranging and take many forms, including involvement in ensuring teaching quality (American Federation of Teachers/National Education Association, 1998; Gallagher, Lanier, & Kerchner, 1993; Johnson & Donaldson, 2006), the creation of professional learning communities (Bascia, 1994, 1997), and support for organizational reforms such as site-based management, designed ostensibly to improve quality and standards (Kerchner et al., 1997).

Although the development of the social partnership in England makes play of an emphasis on standards, suggesting a concern for professional issues, there is to date little evidence of the unions in the social partnership seriously seeking to engage in bargaining for the “other half of teaching.” The social partnership in England arguably represents a much more limited conception of the professional unionism discussed in U.S. academic literature. The bargaining agenda has thus far focused on seeking contractual improvements in conditions of service in some areas in return for deregulation and

increased managerial flexibility in others, specifically those relating to the deployment of labor. Moreover, although the social partnership has not shown signs to date of engaging in bargaining on the basis of school performance and productivity (including teacher quality, for example), it has accepted increased accountability mechanisms and the principle of linking pay ever more closely to performance (DfES, 2006b; RIG, 2005). It has not, however, engaged in discussions concerning teacher quality of the type sometimes found in the United States (Kerchner et al., 1998).

Given the specific way in which English teacher unionism is developing, it may be that rather than professional unionism (with its connotations of a concern for instructional and pedagogical issues), the label of *reform unionism* may provide a better descriptor of the phenomena under consideration, highlighting as it does union willingness to bargain constructively for change in relation to government policy and teachers' conditions of service. Such a willingness to engage with the reform agenda may bring benefits to some union members and may succeed in providing a "union voice" in the future development of policy. However, it is not without its attendant risks. Teachers' unions within the social partnership have allied themselves with policies that can be deeply unpopular with teachers, including in some cases the pay and pension cuts that followed from union-endorsed pay restructuring (Milne, 2006b). Furthermore, it remains to be seen if partnership involves muting union opposition to wider issues of government policy, although to date there is no evidence to suggest this is the case, with partner unions retaining an oppositional stance to the government on issues such as privatization. The danger, however, is that social partnership develops as a new form of "company unionism" (Ironside & Seifert, 1995). Although the concept of social partnership has been promoted more widely in the mainstream trade union movement (Trades Union Congress, 1998), experiences have been uneven and the benefits for members are far from certain (Danford, Richardson, Stewart, Tailby, & Upchurch, 2004). The dilemmas and risks involved are partly illustrated by the decision of the National Union of Teachers to refuse to sign the national workload agreement and thereby to assert their members' interests from outside the social partnership.

The NUT's campaign in opposition to elements of the remodeling agenda exposes the inadequacy of an analysis that polarizes "old" industrial unionism against "new" professional unionism. The NUT refused to sign the workload agreement because of its concerns about labor substitution and since then has been prepared to challenge elements of the new professionalism agenda, sometimes by taking industrial action. However, these are not the actions of a union concerned only with traditional bread-and-butter issues. The NUT has always historically had a commitment to campaign on educational issues and "the other half of teaching." The difficulty for the NUT is based not on its unwillingness to campaign on professional issues but rather on a recognition that the union's educational policy agenda (NUT, 2004) is substantially out of alignment with that of the government (Mortimore, 2006). These differences are not restricted to remodeling issues but extend to the

core principles of current policy and, in particular, the drive toward the further marketization and fragmentation of the school system (paralleled in the United States through the establishment of charter schools and many features of the No Child Left Behind legislation (Weiner, 2005). The argument that advocates of professional unionism constantly duck, therefore, is not whether teachers' unions should campaign on professional issues but rather the nature of the professional issues on which they campaign—as Lawn (1996) asserts, “Reform is not neutral or fixed in its meaning” (p. 100). Professional issues are political and seeking to magic away the social consequences of policy by ignoring them is no solution. Given this approach, it may well be that the concept of social-justice unionism (National Coalition of Education Activists [NCEA], 1994) is better able to explain the strategy of the NUT. This analysis of teacher trade unionism eschews unhelpful oversimplifications (trade union or professional association?) and recognizes that trade unions have multiple identities (Naylor, 2002) in which they constantly juggle industrial, professional, and political issues (Poole, 2000). Most important, social-justice unionism recognizes the interdependence of these issues and that industrial and professional issues cannot be divorced from their social justice consequences:

Social justice unionism retains the best of traditional unionism, borrows from what has been called “professional unionism,” and is informed by a broader concept of our members’ self-interests and by a deeper social vision. (NCEA, 1994)

The NUT’s location outside of the social partnership is a high-risk strategy, as its position presents opportunities but also significant threats. Opportunities lie in its ability to capitalize on the disaffection of teachers across all unions who are opposed to the significant reorganizing of their work and who see new professionalism as deprofessionalism. Those on the left of the union see such conditions reinvigorating grassroots unionism (Allen, 2006) as a growth in school-based disputes increases the interest and anger of rank-and-file union members. Although there is no doubt that pay restructuring in particular generated significant levels of localized militancy, this was by no means universally the case in relation to wider remodeling issues, even when teachers’ views might be considered oppositional (Stewart, 2004). Yarker (2005) has argued that in terms of reform, teachers are often accepting of what they consider to be unacceptable, and despite their antipathy toward elements of policy, they are reluctant to translate anger into action. This was evidenced in this study when several NUT interviewees indicated that union members were often opposed in principle to the use of support staff to cover lessons, but their pragmatic response was to subjugate concerns about service quality to the more immediate benefit of not having to cover classes themselves. It is far from clear, therefore, that the prospects for grassroots-based “union renewal” (Fairbrother, 1996, 2000a, 2000b) on a significant and long-term basis are optimistic. Certainly, previous

research in relation to school-based bargaining and the NUT counsel caution when making such claims (Carter, 2004; Stevenson, 2003; Stevenson & Carter, 2004).

The NUT must also assess to what extent its decision to sit outside the social partnership results in a potential loss of power and influence, as the union risks increasing marginalization in terms of defending the pay and conditions of its members. The point was illustrated by one NUT negotiating officer in her observations about the local authority negotiating committee:

Having not signed up to the agreement gives me the freedom to moan and groan about it, and criticize and complain. *But I don't have any influence either* (italics added).

A similar point was made more assertively by a local NUT officer who questioned the efficacy of the union's strategy:

My view is that unless the NUT gets involved at some point . . . You see, you can get short-term membership advantage from playing games—fine, but over time, but if it's always the others that are delivering, and if the NUT's always excluded, . . . people must start asking at some point, "Well if this is a union and it's excluded from negotiations, why are we in it? Wouldn't we be better off somewhere else?"

This exclusion of the NUT, however inflicted, is in many ways a situation that suits both employers and unions within the social partnership. The government can seek to isolate one of its most strident critics; at the same time, unions within the partnership can claim influence while pointing to the apparent isolation of their largest competitor. What is becoming increasingly clear is that the NUT's traditional reliance on united, nationally focused organization is no longer adequate. The union's centralized machinery reflects its historical commitment to national collective bargaining. This is now clearly out of kilter with a much more diverse and fragmented school system. The challenge for the NUT must be to adapt its organizational form to better reflect the realities of the new workplace (Stevenson, 2005) to be able to better mobilize and support its own members. Failure to do so risks the prospect of further isolation and a potential long-term diminution of influence.

Conclusion

Current educational reforms in England mark a new phase in the restructuring of state education. The labor process of teaching that in the past has been shaped and reshaped by reform policies focused on school organization and the curriculum has now itself become the direct focus of change. Remodeling policies seek to substantially reconfigure the work of school teachers and to make increasing use of those in ancillary roles by their undertaking of a number of important teacher functions. The labor process of teaching is being fragmented both horizontally and vertically as "lower order"

teaching roles are increasingly undertaken by classroom assistants and responsibility for the pastoral supervision of students is annexed by the emergence of new support roles in schools. These reforms are cast in terms of a "new professionalism" in which teachers are freed to focus on the "core task" of teaching and learning. Teachers can focus on "higher order" teaching skills and leave "nonessential" tasks to others. The development of a social partnership between teachers' unions and the state to promote this agenda represents a new feature in English school-sector labor relations and a significant strategic decision by the teachers' unions involved. Several teachers' unions in England have decided to "step out of the cold" and bargain for change on behalf of their members through a constructive engagement with government in which advances in conditions of service are traded for increases in managerial flexibility. In this English version of reform unionism, the strategies of the partnership unions not only have sought to influence policy but have become an integral feature of policy itself. The emergence of the social partnership therefore highlights the need to see policy as both product and process, with the achievement of a new settlement between the state and elements of organized labor representing the integration of policy means and ends. Policy analysis that artificially separates process and outcomes will fail to adequately capture the dynamics of policy development and the complex ways in which the two elements are inextricably linked.

However, the integration of product and process in policy does not necessarily imply a synchronous and harmonious alignment between the two, but rather, policy processes are best seen as an elaborate weave of conflict and compromise in which the relative power of key players has the decisive impact on outcomes. The vision of a new professionalism articulated by the social partnership, for example, is not being met without challenge and resistance, and this will inevitably shape the form and development of this discourse. Many teachers resent the reorganization of their work in a way that removes some of its central elements and reallocates it to less qualified, and cheaper, labor. Teachers see the potential to have a long-campaigned-for aspiration, an all-graduate and professionally qualified teaching force, undermined by a deregulation of professional standards. The fragmentation of work provides an immediate challenge to the traditional way in which teachers have perceived their own job and a potential longer term threat to the status and standing of the teaching profession itself. The clearest voice of dissonance is expressed in the policies and practice of the NUT, which as a consequence of its opposition has found itself on the outside of the social partnership. There is no doubt that the NUT's policy position provides an opportunity to capitalize on the resentment of teachers opposed to key elements of the workforce-remodeling agenda. Its own particular form of social-justice unionism also allows it to connect its members' concerns to wider questions about service quality and the future direction of public education. However, if the union is to avoid being reduced to a largely irrelevant outlet for short bursts of teacher disaffection, it must confront important and difficult strategic choices. Whether it chooses to remain outside of the social

partnership, the union needs to confront the realities of a school system that is becoming increasingly diverse and fragmented. In such circumstances, the union will need to give renewed consideration to how it supports its members in individual schools as well as build the alliances necessary to promote its wider prospectus for change (NUT, 2004).

It is clear, therefore, that school-sector labor relations in England are at a decisive point. The fragile unity that has tended to prevail in the past between the two largest teachers' unions (NUT and NASUWT) has largely collapsed, and the prospect of any formal union merger is now more remote than ever. Whether inside or outside of the new social partnership, teachers' unions are making difficult decisions and having to calculate substantial risks. Sharply divergent strategies are evident in the policies and practices of teachers' unions as they seek to shape and influence policy in their members' interests. What is at stake is partly the future direction of teaching as work and the significance of teachers as a professional group. However, it is also about the ability of teachers to organize independently and through collective organization to influence, shape, and sometimes challenge policy.

Notes

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¹Education policy in the United Kingdom is the responsibility of the individual nations within it. Workforce remodeling is a policy located in England and Wales. As there are some differences between the English and Welsh experiences, and as this article draws on data collected solely in England, the arguments within this analysis are confined to the English context.

²Teacher unionism in England is dominated by six unions. Two unions, the National Association of Headteachers (2005 membership was 39,521) and the Association of School and College Leaders (12,341 members), restrict their membership to school leaders (predominantly principals and vice principals), whereas the other four unions recruit both classroom teachers and school leaders. All of the "big three" classroom unions—Association of Teachers and Lecturers (203,241 members), National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (289,930 members), and the National Union of Teachers (361,987 members)—are members of the national labor federation, the Trades Union Congress (TUC). The Professional Association of Teachers (33,645 members) is not affiliated with the TUC and claims a "cardinal rule" that prevents its members from undertaking industrial action. Direct comparisons of membership are difficult, as some unions recruit support staff whereas others do not; moreover, unions also recruit in different sectors and, in some cases, in different countries within the United Kingdom (membership figures are from the 2005 Certification Officer report; <http://www.certoffice.org/>).

³The social partnership includes central government (Department for Education and Skills [DfES]), the local government employers' representatives, and the teaching and support staff unions that are signatories to the workload agreement (DfES, 2003). The work of the social partnership is largely conducted through two institutions that have emerged from the workload agreement negotiations: the Workload Agreement Monitoring Group and the Rewards and Incentive Group.

⁴In English secondary schools, most teachers are tutors and have a pastoral responsibility for a class of students. Some teachers have managerial roles in relation to student welfare and pastoral work; these posts are generally referred to as *year heads*.

⁵Changes in English teachers' pay and conditions have introduced new role titles, such as *advanced skills teacher* (AST) and *excellent teacher*. The AST grade is designed to strengthen teaching and learning through better leadership, better rewards, better training, and better support. ASTs spend 80% of their time teaching their own classes and 20%

sharing good practice in other schools (DfES, 2006a). Excellent teachers are similar but have no requirement to work with other schools. In both cases, teachers must meet agreed national standards and achieve sustained levels of performance.

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