

# **RADICAL COLLEGIALITY: AFFIRMING TEACHING AS AN INCLUSIVE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE**

---

MICHAEL FIELDING

University of Sussex

## **Introduction**

In trying to get to grips with the notion of collegiality in the context of the teaching profession four things are likely to strike the inquirer. Firstly, collegiality is invariably partnered with collaboration and the two terms are more often than not used interchangeably. Secondly, both are seen as hugely important. Thirdly, despite the fervour with which collegiality and collaboration are advocated, ironically, though perhaps unsurprisingly, it turns out that the abundance of their virtues is matched by the scarcity of their realisation: we do not often manage to actually work in these desirable ways. This is not altogether surprising since, fourthly, there is little commonality or clarity about what it is we are all invited to understand and emulate: we do not agree on what collaboration and collegiality actually are. Even more worrying, our disagreements are more often than not the consequence of intellectual laziness. It is not that collaboration and collegiality are essentially contested concepts: rather, they are essentially confused concepts more likely to produce indifferent assent or evangelical agreement, depending on the values and dispositions of those involved. Judith Warren Little puts the matter well when she argues that: 'The term collegiality has remained conceptually amorphous and ideologically sanguine' (Little 1990b, p. 509).

The still current fervour for collegiality is difficult to overplay. Prior to embarking on a searching critique of some of its more dubious manifestations, Andy Hargreaves observes that:

Collegiality is rapidly becoming one of the new orthodoxies of educational change and school improvement. ... (It) forms a significant plank of policies to restructure schools from without and reform them from within. ... (W)hile collegiality is not itself the subject of any

national, state, or provincial mandates, its successful development is viewed as essential to the effective delivery of reforms that are mandated at national or local levels. Among many reformers and administrators, collegiality has become the key to change (Hargreaves 1991, p. 48).

and in her revision and development of her earlier pioneering work in the area Little remarks on 'The present enthusiasm for teacher collaboration (that) has spawned a wide array of practical experiments' (Little 1990b, p. 509)<sup>1</sup>.

Both authors report a complementary scepticism about the robustness of the concept and the putative reality which is heralded with such enthusiasm. With regard to the latter, Little suggests that 'A lot of what passes for collegiality does not add up to much ... Serious collaboration ... turns out to be rare' (Little 1990a, pp. 180 & 187) and in Hargreaves's judgement 'Advocates of collegiality have shown little modesty in proclaiming its virtue', with the result that 'Much of the burden of educational reform has been placed on its fragile shoulders'. (Hargreaves 1991, pp. 46 & 48). With regard to the former Little and McLaughlin (1993) 'believe that a large measure of the apparent disagreement over the limitations of privacy and the value of collegiality can be attributed to the theoretical flaccidity of the central concepts' (Little & McLaughlin 1993, p. 3), confirming Little's earlier judgement that over-ambitious claims for collegiality were due in part to the fact that it persisted in being 'conceptually amorphous'.

Picking up on both the practical and theoretical importance of the notions of collegiality and collaboration, this paper explores in a very preliminary way the amorphousness of collegiality and collaboration about which Judith Little quite rightly complains, and tries to clarify and probe in ways which are illuminative and challenging. My exploration focuses largely on the work of Judith Warren Little and Andy Hargreaves. Both have made seminal contributions to the study of school cultures and in their very different ways offer important insights into the nature of collegiality and collaboration. However, both are, in my view, importantly wrong on a number of counts. Although in many respects pioneering, Judith Little's early work suffers from some of the very defects about which she so ardently complains, and whilst her later writing makes important strides it remains conceptually unstable and insufficiently probing of the dispositions, motives and intentions that help us to understand human action, not just describe its surface patterns and characteristics. Coming from the very different perspective of micropolitics, Andy Hargreaves's strikingly original, bold intervention in the debate on school cultures has a conceptual energy and clarity which has done much to change the way we look at this area of study. However, the firmness with which he counters a content-based approach to understanding

different school cultures leads him in turn to overlook the substantive values which inform his own typology; too much lies hidden that needs open articulation and debate.

Having examined the work of these two leading theorists in the area, I then go on to argue for a retrieval of the 'collegium' and the importance of teaching as a MacIntyrean practice (MacIntyre 1981) which locates collegiality within a communal, rather than an individualist, framework and provides a rich and varied basis from which to critique the narrow instrumentalism of much contemporary schooling.

The final two sections of the paper move more firmly in the direction of reconstruction. Rejecting the conflation of collaboration and collegiality, it begins to explore ways in which collegiality might be re-articulated within an emancipatory intellectual project. Finding only limited use for a generic theory of collegiality, I argue not just for a model specific to the aspirations and challenges of education, but also for a radical collegiality commensurate with an inclusive professionalism and the development of a more authentic, more dialogic form of democracy as we move into the 21st century.

## **Norms of collegiality and experimentation: The work of Judith Warren Little**

Judith Warren Little's groundbreaking *Norms of Collegiality and Experimentation: Workplace Conditions of School Success* (Little 1982) is perhaps best known for her suggestion that there are four kinds of interaction 'that could somehow be called 'collegial' in character' (Little 1982, p. 331) which appeared crucial in contributing to the workplace conditions of school success. These are (a) frequent, continuous, and increasingly concrete and precise talk about teaching practice, (b) frequent observations of classroom practice, (c) planning, designing and evaluating teaching materials together, and, lastly, (d) teaching each other the practice of teaching. Seventeen years after its publication the study continues to influence thinking on the development of collaborative cultures within schools and it does, undoubtedly, have much to contribute that is thought-provoking and insightful.

### **Conceptual conflation or discrimination?**

However, it also has a number of weaknesses which seem to me to hinder rather than help our understanding of collegiality. The most serious, which to some degree Little acknowledges in her later research, concerns the lack of conceptual discrimination. In this, and in subsequent work, she uses the terms 'collaboration' and 'collegiality' almost synonymously and not infrequently the word 'collegial'

is placed inside inverted commas. Whilst this typographical indicator is not, of itself, sufficient to give rise to concern, it does, however, accrue greater significance when put alongside what seems to be a pervasive lack of discrimination about matters which are centrally important in helping us to be clear about what kinds of social interaction are professionally powerful and why this might be so.

One pertinent example from the study concerns Little's classification of what she calls 'dimensions of interaction' (Little 1982, p. 336). These include 'range, focus, inclusivity (actors and locations), reciprocity, relevance, concreteness, and frequency' (Little 1982) My concern here is that these dimensions cover a wide range of professional encounters, none of which are linked, by Little or anyone else, to collegiality in anything other than the loosest of ways. To claim that 'These seven dimensions can be viewed conceptually as a way of mapping prevailing interactions in a school' (Little 1982) is, no doubt, to claim something about 'prevailing interactions', but it is much less clear that it tells us anything about *collegial* interactions, as distinct from, say, collaborative interactions. It is also unclear, in the acknowledged (Little 1982) absence of judgements about the relative salience of the seven dimensions of interaction, how what Little provides is a map, let alone a conceptual map. A map is not, after all, a list of variables, however rich and complex that list may be. In sum, whilst in many respects Little's 1982 paper broke important new ground, in other respects, notably in connection with our understanding of collegiality as opposed to other kinds of workplace interaction, it has less to say than its title leads us to hope for.

Some of my concerns also gain a foothold in her short *Teachers as Teacher Advisors: The Delicacy of Collegial Leadership* (Little 1985), but begin to be addressed in her substantial *Teachers as Colleagues* (Little 1990b), originally published two years later in 1987. Here the interchangeability of 'collaboration' and 'collegiality' remain as frustrating as ever, as do the inverted commas. The study does, however, contain some very rich material which is directly pertinent to an understanding of collegiality; the problem is that it requires the reader to do most of the conceptual work. Despite outstanding passages on reciprocity, the link with the central collegial principle of professional equality remains elusive or understated. Similarly, the fact that 'A record of classroom success earns teachers in collegial schools the right (or even the obligation) to teach others' (Little 1990b, p. 179) which points so strongly to the notion of teaching as a MacIntyrean practice (MacIntyre 1981) is merely described, thus effectively underplaying the willing acceptance of obligations to contribute to the advancement of the professional learning community that many argue is a central feature of collegiality. Similarly, there is reference to 'core ideas, principles and practices' (Little 1990b, p. 176) as partly constitutive of teacher collegiality, but

the synergy of their copresence remains unrealised. Insofar as the study actually turns out to be a study of collegiality, it does so spasmodically and in ways which are too often independent of the author's intellectual guidance.

### **Towards a phenomenology of professional interaction**

Little's most substantial piece on collegiality—*The Persistence of Privacy: Autonomy and Initiative in Teachers' Professional Relationships* (Little 1990a), makes opening reference to its 'conceptually amorphous' state, but goes on to affirm the stated intention to 'take a harder look ... at what might be meant by collaboration, at the circumstances that foster or inhibit it, at the individual and institutional consequences that follow from it' (Little 1990a, p. 510). The commitment to 'attempt an analysis of the accumulated literature on collegial relations with the intent of formulating a more robust conception' (Little 1990a) again uses collaboration and collegiality interchangeably, but makes substantial strides in developing a grounded intellectual typology which sheds real light on both its theory and practice. Little's central point is that it is possible to distinguish between 'weak' and 'strong' ties among colleagues and 'examine the degree to which colleagues constitute a relatively weak or strong source of influence on teachers' practice or commitments' (Little 1990a, p. 511). Particularly interesting is her now much more substantial capacity to get beneath the surface of behaviour so that she is able to suggest that 'the most common configurations of teacher-to-teacher interaction may do more to bolster isolation than to diminish it' (Little 1990a). Her resulting four-fold typology—story-telling and scanning for ideas, aid and assistance, sharing, and joint work—are 'phenomenologically discrete forms that vary from one another in the degree to which they induce mutual obligation, expose the work of each to the scrutiny of others, and call for, tolerate, or reward initiatives in matters of curriculum and instruction' (Little 1990a, p. 512). The quantum leap here is to the notion of 'joint work' because it breaks out of the fetters of individualistic, present-oriented, conservative practice: 'Collegiality as collaboration or as joint work anticipates truly collective action' (Little 1990a, p. 519).

It seems to me that this 1990 paper is a very important contribution to our understanding of teachers' professional relationships: it raises some crucial issues and is much more attentive to the analytic demands of the inquiry. However, although there are undoubtedly passages in the text—e.g. those which refer to 'teachers as members of an occupational community exert(ing) reciprocal influence on one another and on the school as an organisation in the interests of student clientele for whom they accept joint responsibility' (Little 1990a, p. 523)—which could legitimately fit in to a collegial framework, the bulk of the paper is, in fact, about collaboration. Whilst the section on 'Joint Work' is

outstanding, and its advocacy of the notion of ‘collective autonomy’ imaginative and suggestive, its substantial demonstration of the intellectual and practical differences between collaboration and collegiality, and the superiority of the latter over the former, are less fully developed than they might have been. Crucial distinctions about technical and value rationality are there in the text, but in a form which is either implicit or understated. From the standpoint of taking forward our understanding of collegiality, the limitation of Little’s paper lies in its tendency to privilege the *strength* of ties between teachers over the *reasons* for their power. In my view, despite its collective surface, collaboration remains a form of individualism because it is, or could be, rooted in self-interest: collaboration is, in effect, a plural form of individualism. In contrast, collegiality is both communal in its ontology and other-regarding in its centre of interpersonal attention: collegiality’s conceptual preferences valorise individuality over individualism and community over contract.

Finally, Little’s short, jointly authored piece with McLaughlin continues the regret about ‘theoretical flaccidity’ and challenges us to consider ‘the norm of privacy (as) a form of collegial relation, with its own forms of mutual obligation and its own criteria for assigning respect (or contempt)’ (Little & McLaughlin 1993, p. 3). This, and a number of other examples, provide interesting deconstructions of the notion of collegiality. Among the most important is the challenge to ‘Recent policy initiatives and the studies of collaborative cultures by which they are sometimes justified ... (that) have tended to assume that collegiality constitutes a public good and that more of it is better’ (Little & McLaughlin 1993, p. 5). The main strength of the paper is its capacity to force us to distinguish between collegiality as an occupational carapace and collegiality as a professional disposition linked to interactive, interdependent action.

## **The overriding importance of cultural forms: Andy Hargreaves**

Before making out his own distinctive case for a new understanding of teacher cultures, Andy Hargreaves reminds us that collegiality is often used to cover a very wide range of meaning whose only common element seems to be ‘teachers working together’ (Hargreaves 1991). This is clearly unsatisfactory since ‘beyond that simple commonality, these activities are quite different (with) quite different implications for teacher autonomy and teacher empowerment’ (Hargreaves 1991, p. 49). However, for Hargreaves the main issue is not that there is a huge range of human activities that are often referred to as collegiality; rather what matters is that ‘the characteristics and virtues of some kinds of collegiality are often falsely attributed to other kinds as well, or perhaps to collegiality in general’ (Hargreaves

1991). The key point is that ‘There is no such thing as ‘real’ or ‘true’ collaboration or collegiality. There are only different forms of collegiality that have different consequences and serve different purposes’ (Hargreaves 1991, p. 49).

### **Forms of teacher culture**

The main case that Hargreaves seeks to make about teacher cultures, and collegiality as one of the forms they typically take, is that we have for too long concentrated on their *content* i.e. ‘the substantive attitude, values, beliefs, habits, assumptions and ways of doing things that are shared within a teacher group (e.g. teachers of English), or among the wider teacher community’ (Hargreaves 1992, p. 219). His argument is that we should also attend to the *form* of teacher cultures, by which he means ‘the characteristic *patterns of relationship* and *forms of association* between members of those cultures. The *form* of teacher culture is to be found in the particular relations between teachers and their colleagues’ (Hargreaves 1992, p. 219) [emphasis in the original].

Hargreaves posits five basic forms of teacher culture; individualism, Balkanisation, collaboration, contrived collegiality, and moving mosaic. Their importance lies in the fact that:

it is through them that the contents of teacher cultures—the norms, values beliefs and practices of teachers—are reproduced or redefined. It is through working with their colleagues in particular ways, or working apart from them altogether, that teachers either persist in doing what they do or seek and develop ways to change their practice. Understanding the major forms of teacher culture can therefore help us understand much about the dynamics of educational change’ (Hargreaves 1992, pp. 231-232).

Broadly speaking, individualistic cultures are ones in which teachers are isolated from one another and are usually linked to pedagogic conservatism. Teachers working in Balkanised cultures belong to strongly identified groups competing for power, status and resources. Their practice is sometimes more collaborative, but the arena of that collaboration is circumscribed by the loyalties and locality of their daily work within particular departments or teams. Collaborative cultures are utterly different from both their individualised and Balkanised counterparts. Hargreaves’s compelling summary description of them suggests:

They foster and build on qualities of openness, trust and support between teachers and their colleagues. They capitalise on the collective expertise and endeavours of the teaching community. They acknowledge the wider

dimensions of teachers' lives outside the classroom and the school, blurring the boundaries between in-school and out-of-school, public and private, professional and personal—grounding projects for development and change in a realistic and respectful appreciation of teachers' broader worlds. Teachers' work is deeply embedded in teachers' lives, in their pasts, in their biographies, in the cultures or traditions of teaching to which they have become committed' (Hargreaves 1992, p. 233).

Contrived collegiality, whilst janus-faced in its capacity to stimulate or control teacher development, is more usually seen as an agent of managerialism. The spontaneous, voluntary character of collaborative cultures is co-opted by administrative regulation and compulsion. Instead of the orientation towards development there is an emphasis on implementation. 'Contrived collegiality reconstitutes teacher relations in the administrators' own image—regulating and reconstructing teachers' lives so that they support the predictable implementation of administrative plans and purposes, rather than creating the unpredictable development of teachers' own' (Hargreaves 1992, p. 234). Finally, Hargreaves's notion of the moving mosaic attempts to grasp the elusive, shifting patterns of organisational culture in the throes of postmodernity. For him 'The challenge for secondary school teachers of the postmodern age is how to construct a coherent sense of purpose that neither rests on the fruitless pursuit of whole school vision or identity, nor reverts to the traditionally Balkanised patterns of departmental conflict or indifference' (Hargreaves 1994, p. 236).

## **Form, content and values: Puzzles about assumptions and interconnections**

### **(i) Misreading Essentialism**

Hargreaves' work is in many respects compelling and is hugely influential. However, there are at least four issues which invite further reflection, particularly in connection with the furtherance of our understanding of collegiality and collaboration. Firstly, there is his claim that there is no such thing as 'real' or 'true' collaboration or collegiality and his suggestion that we would be much better off acknowledging varied forms of collegiality in which disparate interests and locations of power shape the reality of professional interaction in very different ways. Whilst it may well be that to talk of 'true' or 'real' collaboration or collegiality often blurs more issues than it illuminates, this is by no means always the case and it is certainly not nonsensical to do so. In at least some instances where people want to keep collaboration and collegiality apart, what people are advocating is the very conceptual ground clearing that I have argued Little ignores in her early work and only partially achieves in her more recent



investigations. Indeed, one could argue that Hargreaves's dismissal of 'real' collegiality is ill-considered, since it betrays an uncharacteristic reluctance to listen attentively to the susurrus of meaning flowing beneath the surface of apparently essentialist advocacy. Maybe, what proponents of 'real' collegiality are advocating is, not so much a paradigmatic exemplar of certain kinds of professional relations and dispositions, (though, again, it is perfectly possible to make out a strong case that this should be done), but rather a plea that distinctions are made between, say, collegiality and collaboration, and that a more demanding set of criteria be applied to practices which claim to be one or the other. In other words, distinctions between collegiality and collaboration are far from trivial. It could plausibly be argued that typologies, such as those offered by Little and by Hargreaves, are poorer and less powerful than they might otherwise have been, precisely because they are too easily dismissive of these distinctions. Certainly, I would wish to argue that collaboration and collegiality, both on Hargreaves's definitions and on other more widely held accounts, are importantly different. What is more, we are not talking about shades of meaning here, but a category mistake which confuses and mixes together two approaches to human association which have different ontological roots, different frames of reference, and quite different aspirations.

**(ii) A puzzle about intellectual origins**

Secondly, there is a puzzlement as to the origins of his fivefold categories. Whilst Hargreaves quite rightly expresses dissatisfaction with accounts of collegiality which amount to little more than teachers working together (Hargreaves 1991, p. 49), it is not altogether clear what provides the intellectual basis of his proposed alternatives. Certainly, his discussion of the difference between cultural and micropolitical perspectives is insightful and genuinely illuminating and the distinction between the consensus-based 'cultural' version of collegiality and the contested, 'micropolitical' version involving 'direct administrative constraint or the indirect management of consent' is well taken (Hargreaves 1991, p. 51). However, aside from the centrally important issues of purposes, power and control, it is not clear what other guiding variables Hargreaves employs which help us to make sense of and bring coherence to his 'individualism', 'Balkanisation', 'collaboration', 'contrived collegiality', and, more recently, 'moving mosaic' typology. What are the building blocks of such a typology? Would it make any difference if his third and fourth categories were to be called 'Collegial Culture' and 'Contrived Collaboration'? I don't get any clear sense of what the answer might be other than to assume that it doesn't really matter, whereas, in fact, it does matter a great deal. It is perfectly possible to produce a robust argument that making the switch in terminology brings an added

coherence to Hargreaves's typology. It is also possible to argue that his under-theorised account of collegiality is not only a serious mistake, but a missed opportunity. I would certainly wish to suggest that, potentially at any rate, to talk about collegiality is to talk about teaching as a practice in a MacIntyrean sense of 'a coherent and complex form of socially established co-operative human activity' (MacIntyre 1981, p. 146) with its own set of internal goods that reflect the rules, values, goals and standards of excellence that are constitutive of it; whereas to talk about collaboration is to remain within the boundaries of a narrowly situational and prudential instrumentality.

### **(iii) Form as an articulation of values**

Thirdly, whilst the clarity of Hargreaves's separation of form and content of teacher cultures is bold and innovative, it brings with it the danger that the starkness with which distinctions are made obscures a complexity which is at least as important as the degree to which it is under-represented. In arguing that 'it is through the *forms* of teacher culture that the *contents* of those different culture are realised, reproduced and redefined' or 'To put it another way, changes in beliefs, values and attitudes in the teaching force may be contingent upon prior and parallel changes in their characteristic patterns of association' (Hargreaves 1992, p. 219). Hargreaves overlooks the axiological nature of the associational groupings he invites us to consider. His unremitting focus on the importance of separating form from content not only becomes too insistent, it blinds him to the moral and political texture of the forms themselves.

In sum, whilst it is clear that there is an instrumental connection between the form and the content of teacher culture, the former being seen as an agent of change in the latter, it is less clear whether the forms themselves are merely descriptive or to some degree normative. The point can be illustrated in a preliminary way by looking at Hargreaves's choice of terminology to describe the different kinds of association. Terms like 'individualism' and 'Balkanisation' are not merely descriptive; not only do they carry substantial historical ballast which accounts, in part, for the ease with which they sit in the water of contemporary debate, they also entail particular views of human flourishing. 'Individualism' is not just a predilection for closing rather than opening one's classroom door, metaphorically or otherwise; it is, or can also be, both a psychological orientation and, more importantly, an ontological current which gives character and direction to the political navigation of our personal and professional journeys. Thus, echoing long-standing debates within sociological theory and political philosophy, on a number of occasions Hargreaves, quite rightly, points out that individualism and individuality are not the same thing. The point I am making here is that the *reason* they are not the same thing cannot be understood

separately from incommensurable accounts of the good life, that is to say, separate from inevitably contested understandings about the nature of human being and becoming. Furthermore, it is clear from Hargreaves's writing in this area over a number of years that his typology cannot be entirely separated from his own views about the kind of arrangements that ought to prevail<sup>2</sup>. His disparagement, despite qualifications, of individualism; his different, but equally strong, concerns about Balkanisation, contrived collegiality, and collaboration; and his support of the moving mosaic all express a strong set of commitments which form a hierarchy of cultural health which is not, in the end, about form alone. It is about his view of human flourishing which implicitly has a very substantial content that has to do with the nature of the self.

#### **(iv) The indivisibility of form and content**

My fourth and final concern about Hargreaves' account is that even if one were to become clearer about whether the form / content distinction Hargreaves pushes so hard is normative, descriptive or both, it still remains a matter of importance that we understand in a more explicit way what the nature of the *interconnection* is between form and content. To say that 'changes in beliefs, values and attitudes in the teaching force may be contingent upon prior or parallel changes in the ways teachers relate to their colleagues in their patterns of association' may be true, but it is not sufficiently clear *why* this is, or may be, so (Hargreaves 1992, p. 219).

Whilst she does not provide the kind of explanation I am suggesting is required, nonetheless the issue of the interrelation between form and content is taken up vigorously by Jennifer Nias in a spirited review of Hargreaves's *Changing Teachers, Changing Times* (Hargreaves 1994). Whilst both admiring and acknowledging of its strengths, Nias nevertheless regards the book as importantly flawed. Indeed, she opens with the observation that 'Despite all that there is to praise in the book, it has conceptual weaknesses which may stem from the research on which it is based' (Nias 1995, p. 307). For Nias, the location of that conceptual weakness lies mainly in the final part of the book dealing specifically with teachers' professional cultures. Here the writing seemed to 'offer weight without a great deal of intellectual sustenance' (Nias 1995, p. 308) and despite being the longest section of the book it turned out to be 'the least intellectually satisfying' (Nias 1995, p. 310). The heart of the difficulty lies in the fact that for Nias:

it is impossible to separate the substance of a culture of collaboration from its form: the substance (the interrelationship of group and individual) takes form through interactions, structures, ceremonies, personal

behaviours, distributions of power and authority which in turn facilitate and reinforce the substance. The working relationships (form) which exist among staff in schools (and other organisations) with a culture of collaboration are both the product and the cause of their shared social and moral beliefs (substance) (Nias 1995, p. 311)<sup>3</sup>.

## Critique of Little and Hargreaves

In taking stock of the research of Judith Little and Andy Hargreaves on workplace cultures it is important to preface any concerns one might have with an acknowledgment of the huge importance of the work of both writers. Little's groundbreaking early research and the range of challenging subsequent studies that have helped us to understand the nature and importance of teacher collaboration in ways which are more sophisticated and more attentive to the complexities and contradictions of those interactions than the work of many other writers in the area. Hargreaves's work on the forms of teacher culture has also had an enormous impact on our way of thinking about and understanding how teachers work together and to what effect. The originality of his schema, the suggestiveness of his empirical data, and the intellectual elegance of his engagement are difficult to overestimate. Nonetheless, it seems to me that, despite their very considerable contributions to our understanding of the nature and importance of teacher cultures, their accounts are in some important respects misleading, undertheorised, and, in some other respects, just plain wrong.

There are three main grounds for my concerns. Firstly, even though her later work makes considerable strides in this direction, Little does not provide us with a sufficiently clear account of what collegiality actually is. Her lack of analytic rigour is a constant source of intellectual frustration; her own complaint that collegiality is 'conceptually amorphous and ideologically sanguine' (Little 1990b, p. 509) applies as much to her own research as to that of those she berates. Her early work in particular is conceptually weak; lists, however interesting and complex, cannot get us very far. Even her later study, *The Persistence of Privacy*, which implicitly acknowledges this and develops the important and interesting notion of joint work, fails to build on some of the insights it undoubtedly contains to provide us with adequate explanations. It is often equally difficult to pin down Hargreaves on collegiality. Like Little, he frequently uses the terms interchangeably and makes no concerted effort to develop a conceptually robust story about either notion. Consequently, it is difficult to detect a well-argued rationale for the *basis* of either collegiality or collaboration as central intellectual constructs in any adequate account of teacher culture.

A second, connected concern, which applies primarily to Little, is that, not only is collegiality conceptually and empirically elusive, its companion notions, like collaboration, also run free of any attempt to locate and describe their interconnection. Hargreaves does, of course, interweave his description of contrived collegiality with his account of collaboration; indeed the former is largely described in contrast with the latter. However, whilst his cameos of collaborative cultures are undeniably compelling, they lack a sufficiently discriminating principle of inclusion. Whilst the generic point about the lack of a properly articulated interconnection between fundamental notions or categories does not apply in full measure to Hargreaves's work on culture, it does apply to his articulation of the form/content debate.

Thirdly, overzealous championing of particular insights and distinctions leads, as in the case of Hargreaves, to a serious incapacity to interrogate facets of those very distinctions which lie outside the main thrust of their remit. In arguing insistently for the importance of form as well as content, Hargreaves fails to recognise that the forms themselves have an inevitable content, which, whilst different in kind to the subject centred examples from which he wishes to distance himself, are nonetheless real and substantial. Just as it is not possible to have a culture that has no form, so it is not helpful to conceive of culture as not having a defining content in an equivalently deep sense. There is a more profound and revealing 'content' that helps us to understand culture, a content has to do with the interplay of ontological beliefs and the nature of social and political life.

## **Retrieving the collegium: The importance of teaching as a practice**

Thus far, my threefold critique of the work of Little and Hargreaves argues that their account of collegiality has serious limitations at a generic level; both writers fail to provide an adequate account of collegiality and thus also fail to articulate the nature of the relationship between the two; and Hargreaves fails to distinguish carefully enough between the normative and the descriptive dimensions of his research. However, I also have a number of reservations at a more substantive level. Whilst many of the interactions and understandings which both Little and Hargreaves describe in their research are interesting and informative, it is often difficult to locate them either internally or externally to a developing argument about the nature and importance of collegiality. There are a whole series of questions about the substantive nature of collegiality which are either ignored or touched on only in passing.

## Collegiality as a professional virtue

Many such questions are addressed eloquently and cogently in the work of Craig Ihara (Ihara 1988). Interestingly enough, like Little and Hargreaves, he also prefaces his paper, *Collegiality as a Professional Virtue*, by regretting the fact that ‘the notion of collegiality has become nebulous and ghostlike, being little understood and consequently having little impact. Even worse, ‘collegiality’ is often associated with protection of group self interest’ (Ihara 1988, p. 56). In a carefully crafted, clearly written paper he argues that collegiality is partly a set of obligations to colleagues and that it can also be understood as a kind of virtue. It also entails a kind of connectedness based upon respect for professional expertise and a ‘commitment to the goals and values of the profession, and that, as such, collegiality includes a disposition to support and co-operate with one’s colleagues’ (Ihara 1988, p. 60).

He begins the substance of his argument by reminding us that collegiality has to do with ‘a body or society of people, invested with special powers and rights, performing duties, or engaged in some common employment or pursuit’ (Ihara 1988, p. 56). Membership of this body implies certain obligations to colleagues in their pursuit of their duties, but it is very much more than carrying out a set of responsibilities. It also entails going beneath the surface of behaviour and understanding the basis of it. It is about appropriate professional attitudes which, he argues, amount to ‘a kind of professional virtue, a trait or characteristic that is meritorious from a professional point of view’ (Ihara 1988, p. 57). Collegiality also involves a mutually positive attitude between fellow professionals; it is necessarily reciprocal and as such cannot be sustained by only one of the parties involved. This is not to say that all colleagues are always collegial; it is a normative standard, not an associational necessity. There is, however, a sense in which reciprocal respect based on a shared acknowledgment of professional expertise and a commitment to a professional set of values is required. In addition Ihara argues for a sense of connectedness ‘in the sense of an awareness of sharing with someone the bond of both being parts of a larger, interdependent whole. ... It is essentially to do with having common values and collective goals. These common values and objectives provides the basis of mutual support and co-operation with colleagues because, given those commitments, supporting and co-operating with colleagues is one way of furthering the aims to which one is committed’ (Ihara 1988, pp. 58-59).

There is one final point I should like to draw from Ihara’s account that is pertinent to this paper. He talks at one point about the MacIntyrean notion of internal and external goods and the importance of some notion of an ideal practitioner. His description of such an ideal professional is interesting. Such a

person would be technically skilled, committed to the public good and possess virtues associated with their professional life. He also suggests that:

Part of the role of such a professional must be the maintenance and support of the professional community. Given the value of community, someone committed to a professional's goals and values must also be someone who contributes to strengthening, rather than diminishing, that community of which he or she is a part. Saying this entails attributing the characteristic of collegiality to the ideal professional, for it is through collegiality that one upholds the professional community (Ihara 1988, p. 62).

I find much of Ihara's account attractive, not only because it is attentive to the complexities and subtleties of collegiality in ways which help us to understand some of the key issues more clearly, but also because, in times of increasing managerialism and narrow instrumentalism, it has the potential to provide rich and powerful grounds for a principled critique of current practices from a base which is substantial, concerted and collective.

### **Professional equality, value rationality and the limitations of bureaucracy**

Whilst applauding much that Ihara has to say, it is also important to add that in a number of respects his account misses key features of collegiality which, potentially at any rate, would lend further weight to the radical critique of the present from the standpoint of a principled tradition or practice. I particularly have in mind the commitment to professional equality which is central to most sociological accounts of collegiality. A good source is the recent debate between Malcolm Waters (1989, 1990, 1993) and David Sciulli (1990) in the *American Journal of Sociology* which not only underscores the centrality of professional equality in collegial institutions, but also points to two further brakes on the rush to managerialism. Firstly, and most importantly, value rationality, that is to say, rationality 'oriented to the realisation of an ethical, aesthetic or religious principle for its own sake' (Waters 1989, p. 949), finds a much more congenial home within collegial organisations than it does within bureaucratic counterparts, where the dominant mode of rationality is instrumental, that is to say rationality 'oriented towards the individual actor's own rationally pursued and calculated ends' (Waters 1989). Secondly, there is an inherent contradiction between bureaucracy and collegiality as forms of decision making, precisely because the latter is integrally committed to equality, whereas the former is not. I realise, of course, that schools are not predominantly collegial organisations, nor are they

likely to be. However, it is particularly important in current times that they remain what Waters calls ‘intermediate collegial organisations’ (Waters 1993, p. 67).

Whilst both Little and Hargreaves include many references to the reciprocity and mutuality of practice in their research it seems to me that the underlying values, principles, and dispositions which support and enhance those forms of association need to be more heavily underscored and a rearticulated an emancipatory account of collegiality provides one important means of doing so. It was to this that I was referring when, earlier, I suggested that Little and Hargreaves missed important opportunities. What we need is an account of collegiality that opens up debate in a manner which openly acknowledges that it is (a) saturated with values, (b) external to, or at least not bounded by, the particularities of specific schools, (c) committed to education, not just teaching, (d) transgressive of the present by drawing in the past and future, (e) cognisant of the contexts of postmodernity, and (f) part of a participatory democratic project in which the voices of students, parents and community have an increasing resonance and legitimacy. To talk about collegiality is to talk about teaching as a practice in a MacIntyrean sense; to talk about collaboration is to remain within the boundaries of a narrowly situational instrumentality sustained by the hyper-commodification of education and the self-absorption of the self-managing school.

## **Towards a radical collegiality**

Thus far I have criticised a number of different accounts of collegiality and my suggestion has been that there are a number of useful and important lines of enquiry within philosophy and sociology that, together, help us to advance our understanding of collegiality in current thinking and practice within the field of education. Running through my critique has been the view that collaboration and collegiality pick out very different kinds of human association. Despite the fact that major theorists in educational research use the terms interchangeably as if nothing turns on the distinctions between the two, I wish to argue that the distinction is of substantial importance, both to our practical and intellectual endeavours.

### **On the differences between collaboration and collegiality**

Collaboration is an overridingly instrumental form of activity and is, I suggest, a plural form of individualism. Its ontological and political home is within an atomistic account of human affairs. Typically collaboration is driven by a prudential set of concerns and dispositions. Other teachers are regarded as



possible sources of information and resources, but not as deserving of attention or sustained interest once the task has been completed and the driving force of the unity dissipates, disappears or becomes tenuous. Furthermore, since the driving motive of collaboration is fundamentally instrumental and focused strongly on intended gains, those operating in this mode are typically intolerant of time spent on anything other than the task in hand or the core purposes of the business.

In contrast to the individualistic nature of collaboration, collegiality is overridingly communal in form and in substance. Its intentions and practices makes no sense outside a way of life and a tradition which is expressive of collective aspiration. As has become clear from the writing of Ihara, Sciulli and Waters, collaboration within the context of a collegial relationship is transformed from a narrowly functional activity circumscribed by instrumental rationality into a joint undertaking informed by the ideals and aspirations of a collective practice infused by value rationality and the commitment to valued social ends. When teachers relate to each other as colleagues they do so in ways which are bound integrally to shared professional ideals. The collegium which provides the binding force and shared aspiration of their daily work transcends the particularities and idiosyncrasies of specific schools in specific circumstances. This is not, of course, to deny the importance of specificity and uniqueness; rather it is to say that those compelling qualities find their educational significance and enduring validity within the context of a wider collegium whose nature is dialogic and whose intentions are inclusive. As Nixon *et al* (1997) argue, the critical distance between practitioner and institution constitutes a necessary requirement of contemporary claims to professionalism. For them:

Teacher professionalism might be defined in terms of a commitment to the internal goals of learning and the maintenance of a critical distance between that practice and the external goods of schooling. Indeed, teachers might be seen as having a *professional* duty to adopt an explicitly oppositional stance to policies that prioritise the external goods of the institution or militate against the internal goods of learning; for example, policies that are aimed at increasing competition, generating acquisitiveness or reproducing inequality (Nixon *et al* 1997, p. 13).

What I now wish to do in the two final sections of the paper is develop an understanding of collegiality that goes beyond the generic literature in philosophy and sociology and attend more specifically to collegiality within a particular practice of education, namely an educational practice intentionally and demonstrably linked to the furtherance of democracy. My task is thus at once specific and radical and my hope is that I will begin to make a case for a radical

collegiality saturated both with the enthusiasms and aspirations of education as a communal practice and with democracy as an essentially educative engagement with each other and the world around us.

### **The limitations of a generic model of collegiality**

I want to begin by suggesting that generic accounts of collegiality can only take us so far. This is not to say that the distance travelled is of no importance; clearly it is. It is rather to say that an understanding of collegiality in this more general sense can only bring us to the point where discussion becomes both interesting and contentious. Basically, I want to take a similar line to the one Raymond Plant pursued in his seminal paper 'Community: Concept, Conception & Ideology' (Plant 1978) where he suggests that interminable arguments about the characteristic components of community cannot not be settled by painstaking meta-analyses or essentialist longings. Even if, to take a key source cited in Plant's paper, David Clark (1973) is correct in saying that the residual core of community is the twin commitment to a sense of belonging and a sense of significance, that doesn't really get us very far. And the main reason it does not is that our interpretation of what is meant by belonging and significance and, just as importantly, what practical arrangements we think best nurture those aspirations, will diverge sharply on the basis of quite different philosophical anthropologies, which, in turn, give rise to quite different accounts of social and political disposition and organisation. Thus, whilst a conservative, a neo-liberal, and a neo-Marxist might agree that belonging and significance are centrally important to human flourishing, the forms and practices each is likely to advance to realise such desiderata are going to be hugely and irreconcilably different. At the heart of these disagreements lie different accounts of what it is to be and become human, different ideals which give substance to wide-ranging and incommensurable practices.

If we apply this line of argument to accounts of collegiality the generic story might be much as the one described by Ihara, i.e. that collegiality is essentially a communal practice in which colleagues' commitment to support one another is informed by their respect for professional expertise articulated and exemplified within the shared goals, values and practices of the profession. If we add to this the emphasis on professional equality underscored by writers like Sciulli and Waters we have a picture of collegiality in which the ideal practitioner is technically skilled, respectful and supportive of others as professional equals, and committed to the virtues associated with a professional life committed to the public good.

On the basis of criteria of this sort, whilst collegiality is not unduly problematic, it is of limited practical use, and for two reasons. Firstly, its generic

formulation gives us little purchase on the specific nature of the profession to which to it is applied and, secondly, even if we were to agree its constitutive parts, it gives us no help in forming a view about their relative importance. With regard to the first of these concerns, a number of writers have begun to articulate a particular view of professionalism and collegiality within education which draws important distinctions about education qua education which separate it from other professions. Recent examples<sup>4</sup> include Mike Bottery (1995), Bottery and Wright (1996) and Jon Nixon *et al* (1997) in the UK and Thomas Sergiovanni (1994b) in the USA.

In Sergiovanni's case the argument is that whilst education shares much with, say, the medical profession and much of the writing on the professionalism or otherwise of teachers has used medicine as a touchstone, there are, nonetheless, significant differences between the two (see also Fenstermacher 1990). Whilst both have in common an emphasis on a developing knowledge base, professional training, continuing professional development, and problem solving approaches to daily work, they differ markedly in others. If teachers were to pursue the medical model too closely this would lead to a number of dangers. For Sergiovanni these are, firstly, that a medical model which sees itself as delivering expert services tends to lead to teaching as instruction. In other words, the emphasis on particular kinds of expertise narrows both the practice and the aspiration of teachers in undesirable ways. Secondly, the emphasis on expertise tends to create a passive or dependent role for the learner. Lastly, underscoring the distance between professional expertise and the person to whom it is administered leads not only to an impersonal relation<sup>5</sup>, but, more seriously, to an underemphasis on professional values and virtues; technical expertise usurps the pre-eminent place which should be accorded to the framework of values and aspirations that give that expertise its professional and social validity.

Whether one agrees with the particular points Sergiovanni wants to make about education as opposed to medicine is not the main issue here. The important point is that he is arguing for education as a distinctive practice and consequently for a form of professionalism which is expressive of that practice. This argument not only marks out some things as being true for professionals within education that are less true for those within medicine, it also makes the second substantive point that even if one were to agree constitutive components of particular professionalisms there remain crucial questions, both about relative emphases placed upon the components and about interconnections between them. Thus, aside from the putative differences between components of an educational and a medical model, there remains the emphasis given to the professional virtues and professional expertise. For Sergiovanni the former are pre-eminently important

precisely because the distinctive nature of education requires it to be so in ways which are substantially less true for colleagues in medicine.

Bottery and Wright's argument adds a further distinction. Following the work of Grace (1988) and Ranson and Stewart (1989), they argue for the particular commitments of public sector professionals as significantly different from professionals operating within the private sector. For public sector professionals the social context of their work is, or should be, central to their understanding of what it is they are about: 'Teaching in this respect is part of what might be called a wider occupational ecology' (Bottery & Wright 1996, p. 87).

In sum then: generic models of the professions are only of limited value since what is unique to or distinctive of particular professions contributes towards a professional ideal which, in turn, shapes the kinds of collegiality that profession encourages. Furthermore, in painting a substantive picture of a professional ideal not only will the specific nature of a particular profession provide the colours and shades of professional engagement, major disputes about, for example, the relative emphasis given to professional expertise and professional virtue will condition the kind of collegiality one is invited to develop and the kinds of interaction with non-professionals which make up our daily work. Finally, the wider context within which professionals work and the specific nature and strength of the links between professional activity and the public good will lead to very different accounts of both professional and collegial norms and practices.

### **Constructing an inclusive collegiality**

Having made a case for the specificity of professionalism and, as a consequence, for the specificity of collegiality I now want to explore the possibility of a radical or inclusive collegiality in education. It will be a collegiality specific to education and specific to a particular view of education and is not, therefore, likely to give rise to general agreement. The important point is not, however, about agreement. Rather it is whether the considerations raised in exploring the possibility of a radical collegiality help us to engage with issues that connect to internal and external debates, both about the nature of teaching in changing times and about the nature of education within a democracy striving to move more authentically and more imaginatively towards an increasingly inclusive human community.

I realise, of course, that to many this will seem a hopelessly foolish task, since they would argue that by their very nature professions are designed to be exclusive. I am resolved nonetheless and the basis of my resolution lies in a particular view of education and in a desire to explore new ways of thinking about how the professions might reflect or even anticipate changes in the structures and cultures of societies aspiring to become more rather than less dialogic in their journey towards a fuller democratic way of life. What, in effect, I

am arguing for is a redefined professionalism which, as Nixon et al suggest, constitutes itself by 'reaching beyond itself and by dissolving the traditional distinction between professional and non-professional' (Nixon *et al* 1997, p. 25).

There are three strands which contribute to my advocacy. First, and least contentiously of the three, there is the view that at the centre of a contemporary account of collegiality in education there lie dispositions and sought opportunities for teachers to learn with and from each other. Secondly, and more contentiously, there is the view that teaching is primarily a personal and not a technical activity and that at the heart of an educative encounter there is a mutuality of learning between the teacher and the student. On this view, students enter the collegium, not as objects of professional endeavour, but as partners in the learning process, and, on occasions, as teachers of teachers, not solely, or merely as perpetual learners. Collegiality on this account is radical and inclusive not just because boundaries become less securely drawn, but also because the agents of the reconfiguration turn out to be those traditionally regarded as the least able and least powerful members of the educational community. Thirdly, and finally, there is a view that education in a democracy is necessarily characterised by a radical and universal inclusiveness which embraces, not just other teachers and not just one's students, but also parents and other members of the community in whose name the practice of education is both funded and intended. On this view, the collegium is further enlarged to include more fully and more energetically those who have for so long merited little more than contempt, indifference (cf Burbules & Densmore 1991) or the lip service of an unreal and unresolved partnership.

#### **(a) Energising equality: The power of peer learning**

What, then, of the first of my inclusive strategies? What of the suggestion that teachers should not merely co-exist with one another, but, as Judith Warren Little has so convincingly articulated (Little 1982), work and learn together as both teachers and learners of the art of teaching? Whilst this is the least radical of my suggestions it is nonetheless worth emphasising for reasons to do with intellectual challenge and practical realisation.

The intellectual challenge resides in the re-affirmation of the differences between collegiality and collaboration and my valorisation of the former over the latter. The collegial imperative is more inclusive than its collaborative counterpart because it transcends the instrumentalism and short-termism of activities and undertakings which bring teachers together within the rubric of an invasive managerialism or a merely prudential impulse. Not only is collegiality predicated on a collective commitment to collective purposes, it draws strength from a growing knowledge base and the virtues of teaching as a public practice that

extend far beyond the boundaries of particular schools in particular settings (Nixon *et al* 1997, Sachs 1997).

Furthermore, its belief in professional equality and in the capacity and necessity of teachers forming intelligent, discriminating judgements, often through reciprocal learning partnerships, is both an intellectual and a practical rebuttal of the deprofessionalisation of teaching which remains endemic in, for example, current UK education policy and practice. The multiple forms and sites of the debilitation of teachers as professionals are well known. Those that spring to mind as still among the most prevalent, even to the point of becoming incorporated into the new realities of teaching, include the lobotomised discourse of delivery that has so effectively colonised teachers' daily work, and the fundamental dishonesty of an empowerment which requires us to 'own' what we do not want and deny what we really need (see Fielding 1994, 1996). In affirming the power of teachers as teachers of and learners from each others' practice I am both demonstrating and celebrating the necessity of professional equality as a central dynamic in an authentic, inclusive collegiality.

**(b) Students as teachers: Teachers as learners**

Perhaps the most challenging and most difficult of my three dynamics of radical collegiality is the second which places students firmly within the collegium, not merely as objects of teachers' professional gaze, but as agents in the process of transformative learning.

The basis of my position lies in the view that education is ultimately and immediately about an encounter between persons. As John MacMurray reminds us so elegantly:

We, the teachers are persons. Those whom we would teach are persons. We must meet them face to face, in a personal intercourse. This is the primary fact about education. It is one of personal relationship ... We may ignore this fact; we may imagine our task is of a different order, but this will make no difference to what is actually taking place. We may act as though we were teaching arithmetic or history. In fact, we are teaching people. The arithmetic or the history is merely a medium through which a personal intercourse is established and maintained (MacMurray 1949).

The consequences of holding such a view point to a number of unfashionable truths. Firstly, it suggests that teaching requires a reciprocity and an openness between teachers and students without which authentic learning seems less likely to take place. Unless the teacher is attentive to the detailed needs of her students she will not be in a position to be a good teacher. Unless the student is attentive

to the wisdom as well as the words of the teacher she will be less likely to be a good learner. As Dennis Thiessen points out in his important reconfiguring of teacher-student engagement in primary schools, the 'norm of perspective sharing', the establishment of a 'forum for mutual influence and support' enables a circumstance in which 'teachers and pupils can both learn to work with each other's perspectives and in the process, discover how to interrelate the taught and the experienced curriculum' (Thiessen 1997, p. 193).

Secondly, once this reciprocity begins to grow it reaches a point where the learning, not just the understanding, becomes mutual. Teaching conceived of and practised as a pedagogy of care has within it a dialogic imperative which binds both student and teacher in ways which, on occasions and in particular circumstances, begin to radically disrupt the settled roles and forms of teacher-student interaction. Learning and teaching are often at their most exhilarating and most demanding when there is a shared awareness that both parties can be both teachers and learners. On these occasions the collegiality consists in an acknowledged awareness of the possibility of mutual learning, a recognition that the quality of that learning depends upon the reciprocity of the engagement and a delight in the prospect of it. It further consists in a shared commitment to its importance, a recognition of common intellectual and interpersonal values, and joint aspirations with regard to the processes and the substance of that learning.

It is interesting to note that researchers like John MacBeath (1998), Jean Rudduck (*et al* 1996) and Dennis Thiessen (1997) who are at the forefront of marking out new practical and intellectual territories of professional practice through exploration of the perspectives of students in the process of school improvement point to the kind of rethinking of teacher-student roles for which I am arguing<sup>6</sup>. Thus John MacBeath actually uses the term 'collegiality' to apply to the relationship between students and teachers in the development of new practices of out of school learning, learning contexts in which 'The easier relationship with teachers helped not just on an academic level but filled out a more human, sometimes collegial relationship' (MacBeath 1998).

Thirdly, the collegiality for which I am arguing expresses itself in and is nurtured through certain kinds of practices and certain kinds of disposition which require us to rupture the mechanics and the discourse of teaching as delivery. Talk of delivering the curriculum is disgusting and dishonest: disgusting because it replaces the ethically and experientially nuanced language of learning with the monologic, the mechanistic, and the myopic; dishonest because learning cannot be sensibly conceived of in this way and therefore cannot be accomplished in this way either. The kinds of practice which nurture the collegiality of student-as-teacher are typically dialogic; practices which require us to be open and attentive to each other and the world; exploratory, unpredictable practices in which

students are given real rather than pseudo-responsibility for enquires, often including those that they have suggested and shaped collectively (see Fielding 1998, Steinberg & Kincheloe 1998). The dispositions underlying such practices require virtues that stand in marked contrast to the duty of delivery and the unremitting anxiety born of endless audit. Instead of dispositions born of the fear of a crude and careless accountability, more often than not inimical to learning and corrosive of education, the dispositions of an inclusive student/teacher collegiality are expressive of a faith and delight in the probability of responsible agency in young people, an impulse to think the best rather than the worst of their intentions and capacities, dispositions which, if not utopian, are certainly infused with a restless, persistent hope and a commensurate courage to see it through bad times.

Lastly, the collegiality between students and teachers for which I am arguing includes not only a radical, manifest equality in which teachers are also learners and learners also teachers, but also an equality which embraces difference as an important source of practical energy and intellectual creativity. The most exciting research and development work in which I am currently engaged is the 'Students as Researchers' project in a large English comprehensive school (Fielding 1998, Weatherill 1998). Here mixed age, mixed gender mini teams of students research aspects of their experience in school which they feel concerned about or wish to develop in some way. Their research is conducted on behalf of the student body and supported and facilitated by teaching staff.

What is both remarkable and exhilarating about this work is not only the fact that their enquires often explore aspects of pedagogic practice within the school, but also the fact that the dialogic encounters that both inform and follow from the research demonstrate beyond doubt the mutually educative potential of the positive differences in perspective between students and staff. Equally important are the values and practices of partnership that place those differences in the public realm of the school: public spaces in which students discuss research findings with each other and present their findings in staff forums and governing body meetings; public spaces in which the culture of enquiry is shared, celebrated and enacted.

Here, in this school, now, the radical collegiality of students and teachers is expressed in the vibrancy of joint work, rooted as much in delight in difference as in delight in what is shared. That delight and that transformative energy is itself an articulation of the living reality of inclusive community. The dialogic encounters now transforming the structures as well as the culture of that school are an instantiation of the centrality and richness of difference, which is, in turn, transformed into a complex, more demanding unity. The dispositions, structures and processes of this radical collegiality rest in a still hesitant, but still growing



understanding that the very differences that inform the realities of particular standpoints are the basis of a transformative equality. In acknowledging the legitimacy and the special insight of different experiences of our daily life in school, in according them the respect they deserve, in feeling the realities to which they point, we come to learn from each other in ways which transform the routine expectations of teacher and learner and, at different times in different circumstances, apply them reciprocally to each other. In working in this way we come to see and experience each other differently and, through the lived reciprocity of that learning, enhance the reality and extend the possibility of radical collegiality.

**(c) Taking democracy seriously: reconstructing education as a democratic project**

The third dynamic of radical collegiality draws on arguments from democratic theory which set out the basis on which schools are both expressive of and contributors to the furtherance of a democratic way of life.

What I want to do initially is pick up on arguments recently advanced by Ken Strike (1993) in an important paper exploring relations between increasingly insistent calls (from some quarters) for an enhanced teacher professionalism, the school restructuring movement and democratic theory. There are two points I particularly want to draw on. Firstly, he reminds us of different traditions within democratic theory and urges us to consider the relevance and resonance of Habermasian discourse ethics in which the heart of the democratic project lies in dialogic encounter. Secondly, he underscores the contingent, provisional basis of teachers' claims to decide the form, content and culture of schools within a society that espouses democratic aspirations. Both these points, the dialogic nature of democracy and the proper locus of educational aspiration residing in large measure in the public domain, shape the kind of professional ideals and collegial aspirations that are not only compatible with, but productive of, a democratic way of life.

In Strike's view, as in mine, teachers may on particular and appropriate occasions be 'first amongst equals' when discussing certain aspects of education, but they are so 'not so much because they are experts, but because they are the principal responsible parties for the education provided and because their experience and training may have given them superior wisdom about some matters' (Strike 1993, p. 268). Furthermore, even on those occasions where professional experience and insight is pertinent, it does not relieve those teachers of the burden of having to persuade the community of the sentience of that wisdom.

What I want to emphasise and extend in Strike's argument is the egalitarian basis of this tradition of democratic theory and argue strongly for the nurturing of dialogic dispositions, structures and cultures which shape and transform the way we think and act together as partners in a democratic educational project. The radical collegiality which I advocated in connection with student involvement seems to me to apply in equal measure to the interrelationship between a school and its communities to the extent that we have to seriously rethink the nature of school and the nature of community. What this means in practice is that schools are likely to become smaller and more flexible, their boundaries more porous and more fluid, their view of community members more optimistic, more imaginative and more generous, their structures and cultures more dynamic and more dialogic, and their intentions unremittingly inclusive. It also means, of course, that, as John Covalesskie and Aimee Howley remind us, the public, or as they would have it, 'the commons' also has to reimagine and rearticulate its intentions and practices in the light of a dialogic imperative. 'Without a commons that consciously accepts its role in regulating the purposes of education, public schooling either loses its credibility or opens itself to the opportunities of elites' (Covalesskie & Howley 1994, p. 64).

My advocacy of a radical collegiality offers one response to that danger and extends the negotiation of purposes into active dialogic encounter in which teachers, parents and public are themselves transformed. Whilst each may have a particular contribution to make at different times and in different places, the nature of those differences become constitutive of the dialogic practice which education as and for democracy strives to articulate<sup>7</sup>. The implications for teachers are not only that there should be a much more explicit and committed embrace of the 'public' nature of their activities and the societal 'ecology' of their work (Bottery & Wright 1996), but also that the conditions and capacities of that kind of engagement need to be explicitly nurtured at both an intellectual and practical level (Nixon *et al* 1997).

## **Radical collegiality and the dialogic school**

### **Radical collegiality and occupational heteronomy**

A substantial part of this paper has sought to engage with the work of outstanding writers in the field who have alerted us to the importance of collaboration and collegiality in the making or breaking of schools as places in which adults as well as students learn with and from each other. My intention has been to understand and honour their work as a basis for critiquing and transcending it and my hope is that the dialectic of our differences within the context of a shared transformative aspiration is itself an instantiation of the radical collegiality for which I am

arguing. I end as I began, by both acknowledging the importance of their recent work and by arguing that it does not take us far enough.

In a thoughtful and thought-provoking paper Andy Hargreaves and Ivor Goodson (1996) begin to explore how we might reconceive teacher professionalism within the context of postmodernity. One of their suggested reconfigurations concerns what they call 'occupational heteronomy' in which teachers reject 'self-protective autonomy' and instead 'work authoritatively yet openly and collaboratively with other partners in the wider community (especially parents and students themselves)' (Hargreaves & Goodson 1996, p. 21). My reaction to this important insight is much the same as my reaction to Hargreaves' earlier work on cultural forms. It is innovative and insightful, but it is blind to its own normative preferences and it is merely suggestive where it could and should be making more explicit demands of an intellectual and a practical kind. Just as Andy Hargreaves fails to acknowledge the way in which his forms of teacher culture are themselves expressions of a particular set of values, so he and Ivor Goodson fail to acknowledge that their joint advocacy of occupational heteronomy as a form of collaborative engagement with the community is itself an expression of weakly articulated and underargued preferences, however imaginative and interesting they may be.

Whilst the general drift of their thinking seems both attractive and plausible, a closer look at the language of their advocacy begins to open up doubts which the brevity and looseness of their argument does nothing to dispel. Talk of 'collaboration' and 'heteronomy' coalesce to suggest an instrumental set of arrangements in which power is brokered through a series of checks and balances guaranteed by external mechanisms. Whilst this is infinitely preferable to the exclusiveness and self-serving capacities of professional practices increasingly shaped by the mentality and mendacity of the market, it nonetheless remains unsatisfactory, and it does so primarily through its failure to work on a sufficiently broad conceptual canvas. Occupational heteronomy is conceived of and articulated within the discourse of purely functional activity, rather than the more complex and contested discourse of democratic aspiration. Instead of a reconfigured instrumentalism we need an informed, emancipatory agency; instead of power brokered through external checks and balances we need the internal rigour of an authentic reciprocity; instead of the guarantor of external mechanisms, pre-eminently and overridingly we need the collective demand of democratic dispositions. Such dispositions are ultimately and immediately the arbiter of whether mechanisms, new or old, turn out to be the servant or the master of a lived and living democracy. What we need, I suggest, is radical collegiality, not, or, at any rate, not only occupational heteronomy. Such an

aspiration builds on and extends the line of thinking Shirley Grundy invited us to pursue when she suggested we go 'beyond professionalism' to include a:

critical community (that) will expand to encompass all those affected by the practice (of education). This will include the clients as well as an ever increasing number of practitioners. Through the process of making practice problematical, it will no longer be possible to regard clients merely as the *recipients* of practice. They will become joint participants in the quest to realise 'the Good' in relation to their lives. Thus the critical educator will see him/herself as a co-worker with students in pursuit of education rather than a provider of knowledge for passive recipients (Grundy 1989, p. 96).

### **The voice of the teacher and the emergence of radical collegiality**

Whilst I have suggested that Hargreaves and Goodson do not take us far enough along the road of a redefined professionalism responsive to democratic society in postmodernity, an issue pertinent to both their occupational heteronomy and my radical collegiality concerns the place of teacher voice within a changing pattern of professional relationships.

It is important to emphasise that neither occupational heteronomy nor radical collegiality entail a betrayal of teachers' experience, training or pedagogic expertise. My suggestion is not that students, parents, or members of the community become the new arbiters of what should be done and how it might best be achieved, any more than Judith Warren Little and others are suggesting that individual teachers become the victims of a collaborative culture that suppresses difference and denies judgement. What I am suggesting is that the reciprocity and energy of dialogue supersede the monologic exercise of power and that it does so in three ways. These are, firstly, that there are occasions within our current practices as professionals in which we learn, not only from our peers, but also from our students, parents and members of the community. Secondly, these occasions can and ought to transcend the coincidental, can and ought to be intended and nurtured in such a way that the agency of all those involved is underscored and understood. Thirdly, I am further suggesting that the reciprocity of the learning form a central part of a radical collegial ideal which animates a responsive and responsible professionalism appropriate to and supportive of an increasingly authentic democracy.

Of course, none of these things are likely to happen quickly or evenly. At the heart of radical collegiality lie dispositions, cultures and structures of dialogic encounter in which we make meaning and intend action, reflect on what we have

done and fashion the future together. Such arrangements inevitably make considerable demands on our time, our patience, our courage and our hope, and even for those who find such a scenario attractive, it does not mean that we do these things all the time anymore than we are actually collegial with our fellow teachers all the time. Collegiality within education is primarily about the possibility of reciprocal learning within the context of shared ideals. Thus, in any school there will be those whose dispositions and engagement with students, staff and community are a denial of collegiality, those with whom we may have to collaborate, but with whom a more meaningful, communal engagement is not currently possible. There will also be those whose intentions and practices hold the possibility of mutual learning within a shared set of aspirations<sup>8</sup>.

Finally, there will also be those who are actually our colleagues in its fullest sense, those with whom we can learn and teach the practice of education in and for democracy. Within a radical collegiality, as within a traditional collegiality, the framework and culture of communal work provide a transformative ideal within which a grounded practice becomes, on different occasions and to different degrees, a living reality.

### **Radical collegiality and the dialogic school**

In advocating the development of an increasingly radical collegiality I am mindful of the necessity of future work articulating more clearly and more thoroughly the basis of an intended inclusion and indicating more extensively how the reality of that inclusion might be both recognised and experienced. What this paper has suggested is that membership of an increasingly inclusive collegium should have at its heart a preparedness and a capacity to be both teachers of, and learners from, each other within the context of a shared set of ideals. It has also suggested that the realisation of that membership would be experienced on those occasions in which we do actually learn with and from each other in community. Radical collegiality, thus, becomes the dynamic of the dialogic school, a school whose boundaries and practices are not the prisoner of place and time, but rather the agent of an increasingly inclusive community. Just as for Ihara (1988, p. 62) it is ‘through collegiality that one upholds professional community’, so for me ‘It is through *radical* collegiality that one upholds *democratic* community.’<sup>9</sup>

## **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Of course, evidence of both the extent and the eagerness with which we are invited to embrace collaboration / collegiality comes as much from its critics as from its advocates. John Smyth’s stinging attack on collegiality as ‘a managerial tool in the guise of a professional development

- process to coerce teachers in to doing the bland work of economic reconstruction' (Smyth 1990, p. 342) is a case in point. See also his recent, spirited return to the fray in his delightfully titled and cogently argued paper 'Evaluation of teacher performance: move over hierarchy, here comes collegiality!' (Smyth 1996).
- 2 At the very end of the book Hargreaves does acknowledge his 'own value standpoint' as including 'the principles of equity, excellence, justice, partnership, care for others and global awareness' (Hargreaves 1994, p. 259).
  - 3 It seems to me that Nias merely asserts that the form of teacher culture is 'both the product and the cause' of its content; she does not really provide us with an explanation or any suggestions as to how we might get beyond the generally accepted understanding that (a) you cannot have a contentless form or a formless content and (b) the interaction between the two is hugely significant for the well-being and effectiveness of those involved. Whilst her remarks are more helpful than Hargreaves's overschematic dislocation, they still leave us conceptually and practically adrift.
  - 4 These arguments are not, of course, new. A succinct paper foreshadowing many of the points, for example, Sergioanni makes is Gary Fenstermacher's excellent 'Some Moral Considerations on Teaching as a Profession' (Fenstermacher 1990).
  - 5 Fenstermacher's argument for the uniqueness of teaching as a profession rests upon 'the demand that the best practitioners remain closest to the learners. ' For him, 'The need for teachers who are enlightened moral agents and moral educators calls for close, caring, connected association between teachers and students' (Fenstermacher 1990, pp. 146-147).
  - 6 I have argued elsewhere (Fielding 1997, 1998, 1999, Fielding *et al* 1999) that we now need to go beyond students as compelling and necessary sources of data in school improvement and adopt a more explicitly emancipatory approach in which students become co-agents of change (see also Thiessen 1997), not in the rather limited undertaking of school improvement, but in an expansive commitment to transformative education.
  - 7 cf Nixon *et al*'s suggestion that in a postmodern world the old professionalism no longer has any validity or credibility. Their argument is for 'an emergent teacher professionalism' that centres round 'the values and practices Of 'agreement' and 'agreement making' which requires teachers to become adept at achieving new agreements regarding the purposes and processes of learning.' (Nixon *et al* 1997, p. 25).
  - 8 It is interesting to note that the main thrust of Nixon *et al*'s account of collegiality within their 'emergent professionalism' is on 'shared values and purposes' (Nixon *et al* 1997, p. 22).
  - 9 Two earlier versions of this paper were presented at conferences in Scotland and Australia. Firstly, my thanks to David Carr for giving me the opportunity to explore some of the issues at a meeting of the Edinburgh Branch of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain on 14 November, 1998. Secondly, I am hugely indebted to John Smyth for inviting me to Australia and for his intellectual comradeship and personal kindness. My thanks to participants at the Australian Association for Research in Education Annual Conference in Adelaide, 29 November—3 December, 1998 for making my visit so stimulating and enjoyable. Special thanks

to Jill Blackmore, Marie Brennan, Judy Gill, Susan Groundwater-Smith, Jane Hunter, and Judyth Sachs for their time, their wisdom and their company.

Thanks, too, to my UK colleagues for criticism and encouragement, in particular to David Hargreaves (for both the delight of continuing disagreement and the necessary succour of support), to Mary James, and to Geoff Southworth. Finally, my special thanks to Jane McGregor whose insights and detailed engagement with many of these issues over a number of years has contributed so much to my understanding and to my capacity to keep going in those invasive, debilitating moments of doubt that threaten more often than I would wish or readily admit to.

## References

- Bottery, M. (1995) Professional values, citizenship education, and the reflective teacher, *Curriculum*, vol. 16, no. 1, Spring, pp. 21-35.
- Bottery, M. and Wright, N. (1996) Co-operating in their own deprofessionalisation? On the need to recognise the 'public' and 'ecological' roles of the teaching profession, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, vol. 44, no. 1, pp. 82-98.
- Burbules, N. C. and Densmore, K. (1991) The persistence of professionalism: breakin' up is hard to do, *Education Policy*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp 150-157.
- Clark, D. B. (1973) The concept of community: A re-examination, *Sociological Review*, vol. 21, pp. 397-416.
- Covaleskie, J. and Howley, A. (1994) Education and the commons: Issues of 'professionalisation', *Educational Foundations*, vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 59-73.
- Fielding, M. (1994) Delivery, packages and the denial of learning: Reversing the language and practice of contemporary INSET, in H. Bradley, C. Conner and G. Southworth eds, *Developing Teachers, Developing Schools*, Fulton, London, pp. 18-33.
- Fielding, M. (1996) Empowerment: Emancipation or enervation? *Journal of Education Policy*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 399-417.
- Fielding, M. (1997) Beyond school effectiveness and school improvement: Lighting the slow fuse of possibility, *Curriculum Journal*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 7-27.
- Fielding, M. (1998) Students as researchers: From data source to significant voice. Paper presented at the International Congress for School Effectiveness & Improvement, University of Manchester, January.
- Fielding, M. (1999) Are schools communities? in B. O'Hagan ed, *Modern Educational Myths*, Kogan Page, London, pp. 64-84.
- Fielding, M., Fuller, A. and Loose, T. (1999 forthcoming) Taking pupil perspectives seriously: The central place of pupil voice in primary school improvement, in G. Southworth and P. Lincoln eds, *Understanding Improving Primary Schools*, Falmer Press, London.

- Fenstermacher, G. D. (1990) Some moral considerations on teaching as a profession, in J. Goodlad, R. Soder and K. Sirotnik eds, *The Moral Dimensions of Teaching*, Jossey Bass, San Francisco, pp. 130-151.
- Grace, G. (1988) Education: Commodity or public good? *British Journal of Educational Studies*, vol. 37, no. 3, pp. 207-221.
- Grundy, S. (1989) Beyond professionalism, in W. Carr ed, *Quality in Teaching: Arguments for a Reflective Profession*, Falmer Press, Lewis, pp. 79-99.
- Hargreaves, A. (1991) Contrived collegiality: the micropolitics of teacher collaboration, in J. Blasé ed, *The Politics of Life in Schools*, Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, Calif., pp. 46-72. Also in N. Bennett, M. Crawford and C. Riches eds, (1992) *Managing Change in Education*, Paul Chapman, London, pp. 80-94.
- Hargreaves, A. (1992) Cultures of teaching: A focus for change, in A. Hargreaves and M. Fullan eds, *Understanding Teacher Development*, Cassell, London, pp. 216-240.
- Hargreaves, A. (1994) *Changing Teachers, Changing Times*, Cassell, London.
- Hargreaves, A. and Goodson, I. (1996) Teachers' professional lives: Aspirations and actualities, in I. Goodson and A. Hargreaves eds, *Teachers' Professional Lives*, Falmer Press, London, pp. 1-27.
- Hargreaves, D. (1995) School culture, school effectiveness and school improvement, *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 23-46.
- Ihara, C. K. (1988) Collegiality as a professional virtue, in A. Flores ed, *Professional Ideals*, Wadsworth, Belmont, Calif., pp. 56-65.
- Little, J. W. (1982) Norms of collegiality and experimentation: Workplace conditions of school success, *American Educational Research Journal*, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 325-340.
- Little, J. W. (1985) Teachers as teacher advisers: The delicacy of collegial leadership, *Educational Leadership*, vol. 43, no. 3, pp. 43-36.
- Little, J. W. (1990a) The persistence of privacy: Autonomy and initiative in teachers' professional relations, *Teachers College Record*, vol. 91, no. 4, pp. 509-536.
- Little, J. W. (1990b) Teachers as colleagues, in A. Lieberman ed, *Building a Professional Culture in Schools*, Teachers College Press, New York, pp. 165-193.
- Little, J. W. and McLaughlin, M. W. (1993a) Perspectives on cultures and contexts of teaching, in J. W. Little and M. W. McLaughlin eds, *Teachers' Work: Individuals, Colleagues and Contexts*, Teachers College Press, New York, pp. 1-8.



- MacBeath, J. (1998) Understanding learning. Paper presented at the International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement, University of Manchester, January.
- MacIntyre, A. (1981) *After Virtue*, Duckworth, London.
- MacMurray, J. (1949) Principles of personal culture: (1) The integrity of the personal the first 1949 Joseph Payne Memorial Lecture, College of Preceptors, November, Unpublished.
- Nias, J. (1995) Postmodernity and teachers' work and culture *Teaching & Teacher Education*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 307-312.
- Nixon, J., Martin, J., McKeown, P. and Ranson, S. (1997) Towards a learning profession: Changing codes of occupational practice within the new management of education, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 5-28.
- Plant, R. (1978) Community: Concept, conception and ideology, *Politics & Society*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 79-107.
- Ranson, S. and Stewart, J. (1989) Citizenship and government: The challenge for the management in the Public Domain, *Political Studies*, vol. 3, pp. 5-24.
- Rudduck, J., Chaplain, R. and Wallace, G. (eds) (1996) *School Improvement: What Can Pupils Tell Us?* Fulton, London.
- Sachs, J. (1997) Reclaiming the agenda of teacher professionalism: An Australian experience, *Journal of Education for Teaching*, vol. 23, no. 3, pp. 263-275.
- Sachs, J. (1998) Towards an activist view of teacher professionalism. Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Annual Conference, Adelaide.
- Sciulli, D. (1986) Voluntaristic Action as a distinct concept: Theoretical foundations of societal constitutionalism, *American Sociological Review*, vol. 51, pp. 743-766.
- Sciulli, D. (1990) Challenges to Weberian's treatments of collegiality: comments on waters, *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 96, no. 1, pp. 186-192.
- Sciulli, D. (1991) *Theory of Societal Constitutionalism: Foundations of a Non-Marxist Critical Theory*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (1992) *Moral Leadership*, Jossey Bass, San Francisco.
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (1994a) Organisations or communities? Changing the metaphor changes the theory, *Educational Administration Quarterly*, vol. 30, no. 2, pp. 214-226.
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (1994b) *Building Community in Schools*, Jossey Bass, San Francisco.
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (1996) *Leadership for the Schoolhouse*, Jossey Bass, San Francisco.

- Smyth, J. (1991) International perspectives on teacher collegiality: A labour process discussion based on the concept of teachers' work, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 323-346.
- Smyth, J. (1996) Evaluation of teacher performance: Move over hierarchy, here comes collegiality! *Journal of Education Policy*, vol. 11, no. 2 pp. 185-196.
- Steinberg, S. R. and Kincheloe, J. (eds) (1998) *Students as Researchers*, Falmer Press, London.
- Strike, K. (1993) Professionalism, Democracy, and discursive communities: Normative reflections on restructuring, *American Educational Research Journal*, vol. 30, no. 2, pp. 255-275.
- Thiessen, D. (1997) Knowing about, acting on behalf of, and working with primary pupils' perspectives: Three levels of engagement with research, in A. Pollard, D. Thiessen and A. Filer eds, *Children and Their Curriculum*, Falmer Press, London, pp. 184-196.
- Waters, M. (1989) Collegiality, bureaucratisation, and professionalism: A Weberian analysis, *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 94, no. 5, pp. 945-972.
- Waters, M. (1990) Interests and procedural norms in the analysis of collegiality: Reply to Sciulli, *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 96, no. 1, pp. 192-200.
- Waters, M. (1993) Alternative organisational formations: A neo-Weberian typology of polycratic administrative systems, *Sociological Review*, vol. 41, no. 1, pp. 55-81.
- Weatherill, L. (1998) 'The Students as Researchers Project' at Sharnbrook Upper School and Community College, *Improving Schools*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 52-53.