

Bold, Rude and Risky: Rethinking Educational Professionalism ¹

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Educational professionalism is the focal point of the Scottish Standard for Chartered Teacher (CT). Published by the Scottish Government in 2002 and revised in 2009, the Chartered Teacher Standard sets forth specific national objectives for advanced teacher accomplishment beyond initial teacher certification (known in Scotland as the Standard for Full Registration), and guarantees professional recognition and enhanced salary for those teachers who attain the Standard. The ‘Charter’ designation is titulary unique, although its process and rationale are comparable to teacher advancement initiatives elsewhere (DfES 2006, NBTS 2007, TA 2009). The CT initiative has become an important avenue for continuing professional development, mostly delivered through university-based programmes designed to help teachers achieve the CT Standard. It embeds the potential to strengthen not only teaching practice, but also education systems more generally through the teacher leadership exercised by CT teachers, and through the informal emergence of networks of CT teacher leaders. Many CT principles such as systematic professional enquiry, collaboration, social justice and teacher leadership reflect major directions of effective teaching being promoted in recent literature on teacher education (Cochran-Smith et al. 2008; Darling-Hammond 2007; O’Donoghue and Whitehead 2008). However while there may be enormous potential for the CT initiative, it is argued in this paper that there remain certain silences, gaps, and even some timidity in its existing form. To encourage the professionalism among teachers that can lead education creatively into the complexities of the coming decades, this discussion suggests a system-wide effort to support the CT movement to become more bold, rude, and risky.

Scotland’s particular standards specifying the Chartered Teacher are very much aligned with the new possibilities for progressive education promoted by the national Curriculum for Excellence. The language of these documents is pervaded with optimistic ebullience, positioning education and increased educational professionalism as an important response to the demands of a changing, even global, society. ‘Responsible citizens’ is what the new Scottish Curriculum for Excellence aims to produce, with ‘commitment to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life’ and to develop ‘informed, ethical views of complex issues’ (Scottish Government 2004, p.15). Further, *Learning and Teaching Scotland* stresses the importance of ‘global citizenship’, instructing that ‘all curriculum areas can contribute to developing the skills, attributes and knowledge that will create active global citizens’ (LTS 2010). Global complexity is perhaps an important dimension upon which to pause when considering educational and teaching for the future. Global citizenship can mean anything from an internationalised globe-trotting Twittering elite to a sense of personal implication and responsibility for the negative effects of global capitalism. Interconnected societies are increasingly mobile and knowledge-oriented on the one hand, and fraught with collisions over territory, authority and rights on the other (Sassen 2007). Societies globally are suffering the detrimental health and welfare outcomes of inequality: the problem in the UK and elsewhere is not deprivation itself, argue Wilkinson and Pickett (2009), but the

dramatically widening economic gaps between the haves and the have-nots. The UK, like other OECD countries in these harsh times of recession and dramatic financial cuts, struggles to balance its citizens' sense of economic entitlement with financial disappointment. Meanwhile living in global complexity means negotiating the fluidities of blurred boundaries, uncertain knowledge, massive mobilities and hyper-networking along with the constrictions and fanaticisms of xenophobia, work, consumption, and audit. Amidst the new pressures, education systems have been reviewing their practices in all aspects of curriculum, teaching, evaluation, pedagogy and administration to create educational reforms that can better educate children to engage as critically thoughtful, active citizens in this global complexity.

Among these reforms, improving teacher performance continues to be a favourite pursuit. Standards for 'advanced' or 'accomplished teaching' have been developed in various countries to encourage exemplary practice that is distinct from the merely competent, and to offer financial recognition for its attainment. In England, the 'Advanced Skills Teacher' designation (DfES 2006) emphasises excellence in results as student outcomes, excellence in subject knowledge, excellence in planning, excellence in assessing and so forth. In the US, a rather different emphasis is evident in the standards for National Board Certification. These are framed as affirmative rather than aspirational propositions, such as that 'Teachers are committed to students and their learning' and 'Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students' (NBTS 2007). In Australia, some states have offered teachers 'advanced skills' recognition schemes, although as Ingvarson (2010 shows in a critical review of such initiatives over four decades, these varied in quality and failed to attract many teachers given the relatively small salary increases for increased workload and responsibility. Australian schemes have been critically analysed for their reductionism and overly technical assessments of practice, and their lack of engagement with the multiple standards enacted by classroom teachers and with the socio-material complexities of teaching practice (e.g. Mulcahy 2010). The teachers' professional associations of Australia argue that such schemes must be developed collectively with the profession, and recommend an opening-out of the purposes of accomplished teaching standards to focus on making public the profession's values and knowledge, articulating distinctions of specialised practice, and guiding members of the profession in reflecting on their practice (TA 2009). In considering how a national framework for professional standards might best promote accomplished teaching, Ingvarson (2010) recommends innovative assessment methods; focusing on specialist fields rather than universalised generic standards; actively involving teachers; and ensuring that the accomplished teacher career path is fully supported throughout the system.

Like the Charter Teacher, most of these schemes emphasise recognition of the teacher through a designated post and enhanced remuneration, and requirements for teaching practices that are more 'advanced' or more exemplary but perhaps not qualitatively different to those employed by most other teachers. Except in one respect, and it is an important one. The advanced teacher in most of these initiatives is expected to assume a teacher leadership role, such as promoting collaborative peer learning or outreach to neighbouring schools. Importantly, unlike the Scottish Charter Teacher which at present is linked with a postgraduate programme of study and development, most other advanced teacher schemes are focused on assessing teacher practice to approve

attainment of the advanced standard. However, most of these models are careful to define advanced teaching in broader terms than student outcomes. Further, all designations share a commitment to enable a teaching career path that is distinct from leadership, for those who have little interest in educational administration. And of course, the schemes are similar in their focus on the individual teacher rather than the teaching collective or teachers-in-systems. The view of educational professionalism tends towards preoccupation with teaching skills and subject knowledge, rather than to orientations of, for example, education for justice-oriented citizenship (Biesta 2008:48-50).

In Scotland on the other hand, key principles embedded in the Standard for Chartered Teacher include professional enquiry, collaboration, social justice, and especially teacher leadership: CT teachers are 'expected to be at the forefront of implementing changes in education practices within a school and take a leading role in working with colleagues throughout the school' (Scottish Government 2009). Each of these ideals could mean almost anything depending on one's perspective, and require considerable explication and discussion. But even at their simplest level, they open rather exciting possibilities that could foster children's wise engagement in their worlds, and that could help lead Scottish education into creative new futures. This is precisely the lofty hope expressed in the Scottish Government's press release for the 2009 revision of the CT Standard: that CT teachers will provide 'innovative and exciting learning, which prepares our young people for the challenges of the 21st century' (Scottish Government 2009).

But there remain troubling issues that need attention if the CT movement is to achieve this sort of impact. First, there are some problematic silences in the CT discourse and focus. If these omissions are not addressed in the programmes intended to develop Chartered teachers, Scottish teaching could tilt more to the parochial than the expansive. Second, there are important gaps in the systemic supports for Chartered teachers, and even structures that could oppose the energies of effective teaching that Chartered teachers are meant to enact. Indeed, the continuing focus on developing the individual 'teacher' suggests an assumption that teachers are in deficit, and that we just need to fix the teacher to launch a new age in education. But until all the webs comprising Scottish educational practice, problems and wisdom are addressed systemically, and until these webs become better coordinated and articulated, the CT movement is in danger of becoming unsustainable. At the worst case, it could potentially decline into cynicism, confusion and distrust of education policy and its motives. Finally, there is a certain overall timidity in the standard for Chartered teachers, with perhaps too much inward focus on the most elementary facets of teaching and too little outward focus on the issues most compelling for public education and teaching.

In the following sections, these three issues of silences, structural gaps, and timidity will be discussed briefly, ending with suggestions for a way forward. Essentially, this discussion suggests that we consider ways of encouraging – or actively compelling – teaching to be more bold, rude and risky. The intent here is to provoke useful questions about how we all might better support educational professionalism for global complexity.

Silences in Chartered Teacher Discourse and Focus

Continuing professional development (CPD) presumably builds upon and *extends* what should be a rich base of professional knowledge, capabilities, identity and relationships. Initial teacher education is about developing teachers' abilities to examine teaching from the perspective of learners who bring diverse experiences and frames of reference to the classroom, according to well-recognised teacher education scholar Darling-Hammond (2000). But in CPD, we are dealing with practitioners who should have mastered these basic challenges of pupil engagement and pedagogical competence. While these practitioners may heretofore have focused on teaching mostly within the four walls containing their own pupils, when engaged in good CPD they should be expected to consider their practice in the context of society, bringing forward deeper questions about complex dilemmas and contradictions of teaching.

This is critical thinking, and it is the hallmark of postgraduate education. Professionals who are immersed in the immediacy and flurry of front-line problem-solving often find it difficult – or undiscussable in their organisations - to question the taken-for granted structures and barriers of their worlds. They may lack the distance and the support to ask *why* things are as they are, and how things might be different. This is why postgraduate education, and most decent CPD per se, focuses on developing professionals' resources to think critically. After all, good education needs educators who are able to critically examine teaching resources and themes, to truly see the stereotypes, the agendas at play, and the omissions. We hope that professional educators, when they encounter a text whether it's an internet posting, a policy, a newspaper photo, or a new textbook, will ask: Who made this? What are the interests here? Who benefits from this? Who and what is excluded from this? What can be done with this to promote deeper learning – or, what is a better choice than this?

Social justice is mentioned in the Chartered Teacher Standard, but it is unclear what this means and how it can be supported. Terms like 'diversity' are used in Scottish curriculum documents, which tend to treat all students as individuals with choice as though they spring from a level playing field. Social justice, on the other hand, is at least partly about recognising the universalist norms that are used to construct others' problems and needs, and then doing something to reconfigure the practices that perpetuate the resulting structural oppressions. Professional educators don't blindly accept conventional practices reinforcing existing social structures, but think critically about ways to interrupt them. Whether it's the way pupils are graded, or how creative thinking is scheduled for 30 minutes on Friday afternoons, or the silent consensus that permits homophobic practices in school and community, or the lack of vegetables available in their neighbourhood shops, good educators are among the first to raise critical questions about problematic practice and oppressive structures. Why do we do things this way, how did it come to be this way, and how are we each complicit in sustaining it? And then ask: How can we engage all educational participants – pupils, parents, colleagues, the public - in this kind of critical questioning? Professional educators come to learn both the confidence and the strategies to figure out when, what, with whom, and how to challenge. But even more important, good education is not only where critical questions are raised, but where more generative possibilities are envisioned, where alternative approaches and perspectives can be planned and acted. For this to come about, we hope that professional educators aren't afraid to be rude when they need to be.

Global citizenship is encouraged not only in Scotland's curriculum, but also in the CT initiative: the Chartered Teacher ... 'has detailed knowledge of the principles of education for citizenship and encourage pupils to be active, critical and responsible citizens within a local, national, international and global context' (GTCS 2009, item 2.2). But again, there is silence about what exactly global citizenship can mean for education, and about how teaching can promote it. Where is the democratic project? Where is the opportunity to even think deeply about what democracy can mean in global complexity, and about where education might act to foster greater democracy? How are Scottish teachers to truly come to understand themselves as part of a global society, to appreciate their interconnection with the most pressing social, economic and environmental problems of human rights, poverty, food security, migration and climate change? How are they – or indeed many of us in Scotland – to think beyond our relatively well-fed life in a country often characterised in terms of its strong majority of white Scottish-born residents (GROS 2006)? One of our students expressed some bewilderment about how to promote a genuine sense of global participation among his pupils when their community had just adopted the vision: 'My future's in Falkirk'.

I don't believe this teacher was rehearsing a problematic belief that global mobility provides superior education to local settlement. Nor is there any intended implication here that Scotland does not comprise significant social, cultural, religious, economic and ethnic diversity throughout its communities. Tired local/global binaries fail to serve our understandings of global citizenship: 'new tools are needed to understand policy processes in a world that is increasingly networked and shaped by a range of transnational forces and connections, demanding a new global imagination' (Rizvi and Lingard 2010: 3). Most 'local' areas, even small isolated communities, will invariably be infused with discourses, products and values circulating throughout the globe. Some scholarship eschews notions of separate local/global scalar levels altogether to show that the often exalted 'global' consists of particular, situated enactments and network assemblages that unroll continuously out from and in to networks of the 'local' (Law and Hetherington 2003). What results are not clashes of culture, but what Tsing (2005) calls 'heterogeneous encounters of friction', unpredictable messy interactions among difference that are critical in catalysing movement and action. The point here is that students – and teachers – need such opportunities to engage with difference: not to socialize it, or to be absorbed by it, or to try to know it through particular ways of framing, but to engage critically and fully in heterogeneous encounters of friction. Biesta (2007) writes that to take difference seriously means that we have to give up the idea that we can know otherness before we can adequately engage with it. We differ in the moment where we encounter and experience difference – which more often than not means: as it confronts us (Biesta 2007).

But our CT programmes tend to circumscribe critical questioning to focus on teachers' own self-evaluation. We should be asking teachers to engage with other educational actors to critically analyse educational policy and politics. We should be inspiring them to interrogate the social and economic forces affecting education and teaching at this moment, and to confront the historical forces that continue to entrench schooling in repressive practices that perpetuate inequities. Instead, we encourage teachers to confine their critical reflections to their own individual actions in particular classrooms. This kind of approach fragments the problem and casts teachers as in deficit.

Critics has argued that a focus on ‘developing’ the individual teacher disempowers them as lone agents against inevitability, and conveniently brackets out the educational system and its actors as partners in the problem and the solution (Fenwick 2003; McWilliam 2002). Such an individualised CT approach also might fail to encourage – indeed it might prevent – the marshalling of teachers as a collective force for action. Bold teacher leadership arguably could be central not only in empowering and connecting teaching for social and educational change, but also in promoting thoughtful approaches to global citizenship, critical engagement of teachers and pupils, breaking free of problematic conventions and generating new futures for education. New forms and capacities of teacher leadership also will be significant as the UK faces increasing shortages of formal school leaders. Yet while teacher leadership is emphasised as part of the CT Standard, there is some silence about just what this means. In fact there seems to be little scope for the development and exercise of such bold leadership.

Gaps in Systemic Support

Part of the problem in promoting the advancement of teaching in Scotland can be attributable to a certain lack of effective support. This lack of support arises through what may be fairly described as gaps in the Scottish system of educational governance and delivery. These gaps are enacted in contradictions in structure and message, confusing territorial overlaps, and some lapses in coordination of services. For example, we have witnessed a proliferation of publicly-supported educational agencies in this small country all intervening in teaching and education, all producing various position statements and prescriptions for practice with different agendas and emphasis, and without a great deal of distinction or linkage among them. Until the systemic gaps are sorted, it is unrealistic to expect teaching to flourish.

The primary long-standing systemic issue has been described at length by prominent Scottish educators (Priestley and Humes 2010, Reeves 2008). That is, the fundamental contradiction between the CT expectations for teacher innovation and leadership alongside the rhetorical openness of Curriculum for Excellence - colliding with the existing assessment criteria and processes of school inspections. On one hand the CT/CfE ideals promote decentralisation and creative experimentation while on the other hand the grip of centralised control and audit has been tightened. While admittedly the HMIE (HM Inspectorate of Education) has softened its procedures in recent years, its emphasis remains on academic achievement evidenced by student test scores. Even teachers seeking more expansive approaches to assessment are compelled to identify concrete moments of ‘achievement’ in minute terms that fragment student learning. These minute terms often focus schools, pupils and parents on the most mundane and trivial details of educational experience, leaving aside the more difficult knowledge and complex dilemmas. The very existence of an inspectorate is rooted in principles of distrust, surveillance, and measurement according to pre-determined outcomes. These principles, however gently they may be parlayed, contradict the rhetorical position of CT/CfE which celebrates collegial trust of teachers and teaching, freedom, and emergence of that which is not yet known. If innovation and emerging new forms of teaching practice are truly what is desired, evaluation systems need to be designed in utterly different ways.

Within this system, Chartered teachers, supposedly models and leaders of advanced teaching, in fact occupy a precarious position. They have no official status in Scottish systems of school governance or special occupational designation. In fact they are cut off from leadership career trajectories in schools by the separation of the CT and Headteacher career routes, a rather odd distinction given the contemporary emphasis on effective school management being rooted in instructional leadership. The argument here is not for a simple articulation of these career routes, for they are distinct in history and purpose and any linkage is a complex proposition. The point is more the problems of utterly separating these positions and their responsibilities. As Reeves (2008) has argued, the CT at present navigates amidst three contradictory discourses of professionalism: 'bureau' (limited teacher autonomy within bureaucratic frameworks administered by headteachers); 'managerialist' (heightened accountability controls restricting teacher autonomy); and 'new professionalism' (expectations for teachers to be collaborative, active and innovative). Within this difficult and highly indeterminate space, the CT must 'invent' a role of practicing CT standards that are in fact contested, rather than supported by or connected with existing leadership structures. At the same time there is no clear articulation of CT programmes with other CPD opportunities, or even with other Master's programmes. The future sustainability of Chartered Teachers is also unclear given the link to salary increase. What happens when there becomes a critical mass of Chartered teachers? How will the system afford to make this route to CPD as widely accessible as it needs to be to promote equitable opportunity for Scottish teachers? If selection of participants becomes more restrictive, what criteria and whose authority will be permitted to make the decisions about who is enabled to become a more 'accomplished teacher'?

Further and most sobering, Chartered Teachers in some schools report informally that they receive little support to improve teaching, or are actively discouraged by their Headteachers from exploring more expansive teaching. Prospective CT teachers tell of colleagues who become marginalised because they are portrayed as trouble-makers: too innovative, and asking too many questions. Perhaps the CT programme ought to introduce strategies of micro-politics to help teachers create the necessary spaces for educational professionalism: critical dialogue, wisdom and leadership for change. But is this fruitful activity for teachers who should be able to rely on other educational actors to do this important work? Even if it were, the possibility looms that very good teachers in Scotland who choose the CT route could eventually become isolated, ignored and neutralised in terms of their potential to mobilise educational improvement.

But perhaps the most problematic gap in the existing Scottish education system is its continuing focus on the individual teacher. This individual focus implies that a teacher by herself is the key to a child's success. It implies that if a teacher were simply trained better, then topped up with the right kinds of development, that she will go forth and improve education. It ignores her school's leadership history, constraints, resources, curriculum contradictions, testing expectations, scheduling bottlenecks, the capability and professionalism of fellow teachers, repressive orthodoxies and so forth that together produce teaching practice. Surely there are better ways of conceptualising teaching, when it is widely accepted that effective teaching and education is embedded within a complex, continually emerging web of relations that reach far beyond the school's world to the socio-economic worlds and cultures of the children and parents, the nature of children's

needs, and the values and priorities of the community (e.g. Reeves 2010). When focus is concentrated upon the individual teacher, this entire web is rendered invisible. Educational success becomes projected onto the lone teacher achieving some sufficiently complete state of competency, as though this were desirable, or even possible to consider outside very particular complex webs of joint action. Why isn't attention focused where it should be, on understanding and strengthening the relations that could connect, energise and expand the system's possibilities? Instead, the teacher is made the lightning rod for all educational problems, and the salvation for the system as a whole. With this kind of thinking, it is easy to make something as minute and abstract as a child's academic 'accomplishment' the measure for the entire system. What is needed is a much broader notion of what educational success can look like, and how it emerges.

Timidity in a Teaching Standard

The vision for education implied in Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence documents will require of educators not only considerable boldness and even strategic rudeness, but also risk. This CfE embraces the complex emergence that occurs when children are encouraged to question and create collectively, it embraces the undecidability of following issues rather than pre-selected content, and it embraces the surprises yielded by decentralised control. This is potentially heady stuff, and emulates leading-edge thinking in education that incorporates principles of complexity science (see for example Davis and Sumara, 2006; Osberg, Biesta and Cilliers 2008). To make it work, all facets of the educational system from the auditors and leaders to the teacher educators and curriculum developers need to be less focused on accomplishment and more committed to risk-taking.

However, and disappointingly, the CT Standard is timid in its scope. Instead of outward-looking boldness and risk, it tends to turn teachers inward to classroom basics. Indeed in its existing representation as a 'standard', rather than as guidelines or points of departure, it potentially promotes teachers' timidity through concern for compliance. The danger here is keeping teachers focused on technique, rather than the big questions of education and educational purpose. The further danger of any competency standard is its reinforcement of 'the teacher' as an individual unit, measuring herself in isolation against this standard of 'accomplished teacher' as though teaching is the completion of pre-conceived ideal rather than an ongoing collective project of emergence and surprise.

Any universalised standard for practice is bound to be timid. In attempting to provide a generic one-size-fits-all blueprint, a standard is reduced to minimal or benign statements that can be rendered acceptable to all. A standard often must satisfy so many stakeholders that it moves to levels of abstraction that gradually become stripped of their most challenging, radical, and potentially exciting directions. A universalised standard for practice also is problematic in its decontextualisation. There is no universal 'good teacher', nor is it desirable to promote a cookie cutter mould of teaching. Effective teaching is enacted in a range of styles and forms crafted for different grade levels, different communities, and different available resources.

This is why a standard for teaching, beyond the minimal specifications for novice professionals' entry to practice, may perhaps even be inherently problematic. Stripped of contextual nuance, difference, dilemma, and visionary aspiration, a standard focuses

prospective Chartered teachers not on what is possible but on simply attaining a pre-determined level. Therefore we potentially face the interesting situation in Scotland of professionals seeking all or part of this certification by demonstrating that they have ‘accomplished’ the CT standard through everyday practice. Of course practice-based experiential learning can be valuable, even in some cases far superior to academic experience (Fenwick 2003), but some forms of practice serve to teach professionals only to reproduce convention, not to transform it. Even odder, we have Scottish universities – which should be spaces where critical thought may flow without retribution and where professionals may engage the bigger questions – being compelled to design their postgraduate programmes as delivery of a CT standard. These moves foreclose the invitation for teachers to jump into the unknown, to expand existing conventions to re-envision good schools, teaching and education, and to risk.

Where to Go From Here

One would hope that in Scotland we are committed to an educational professionalism that can navigate global complexity, that can gaze critically upon *what is*, and that can envision what *could be* with bold imagination. This discussion has argued that educational professionalism cannot focus solely on the individual teacher, but supports good teaching as emerging from within a web of connections, supports, and improvisations. This is a continual emergence, not a fixed state of accomplishment. It is about collective action, not individual heroes and rescuers. It is about teaching as intellectual leading: bold in capability, and unafraid to take intellectual and pedagogical risks in trying new things and confronting repressive practices. We could imagine such teacher leadership as being less polite and more rude. The word ‘rude²’ has at least three historical meanings. Rude is tough and robust. Rude also is interrupting the expected and causing surprise. Rude finally is resisting disciplinary straitjackets and refusing to be tamed. In fact, education more generally could arguably benefit from more ‘rudeness’ in these senses, in all of its registers.

But what steps can be taken to promote bold, risky and rude teaching? To begin, here are three approaches, calling upon three different educational stakeholders that can contribute. First, the Scottish government can directly address the gaps in systemic support beginning with evaluation procedures for schools and teachers. If evaluation is to be effective, it must be thoughtful and explicit about its real purposes. Inspections would place more emphasis on reflecting the visions dominating current Scottish education policies: emphasising experimentation and risk rather than achievement, tracing processes rather than products, identifying emergence of new possibilities, and examining the evaluators’ own influences on the complex systems in which they engage. The Scottish government in conjunction with the GTCS also could do much to focus and streamline policy documents on selected key directions, and to consolidate educational agencies to provide support with more coordination and efficiency. Finally, the government could help to broaden and coordinate the existing career trajectories and CPD provision available to Scottish teachers. Chartered Teachers should not feel that they are barred from a leadership track. Nor should teachers feel that the only CPD worth doing for the payoff is a CT programme. How narrow schools would become if the staff all have been trained in exactly the same way. Teachers should be encouraged to seek

postgraduate CPD in a variety of educational areas that can enrich our schools' intellectual life and lead school-based critical inquiry in education: educational leadership, curriculum development, policy studies, global and youth studies, early childhood, multiculturalism, digital media cultures, equity and inclusion, and so forth.

Second, the universities can offer much to promote educational professionalism and bolder, riskier teaching. Universities can offer the latest research for professionals to draw upon in rethinking pedagogy and purpose, in understanding educational issues, and in engaging with international trends and communities. University research into evidence and evaluation is opening new approaches and indicators to assess impact that actually work for the indeterminate complexity that is contemporary teaching. University-based postgraduate programmes for teacher CPD should demand no less than any Master's-level programme in developing intellectual leadership: rigorous inquiry, robust analysis, critical questioning of key issues, and capacity to formulate strategic action for change. Universities can offer a safe oasis for busy professionals' critical inquiry into large questions, helping them to formulate arguments and experiment with actions for the long term, free from retribution for being rude. University programmes must not be governed by policies such as the CT standard, which are crafted to serve political rather than educational purposes. Instead, university CPD should offer a space in which educators can work with, through and around a standard, interrogating its assumptions and stretching its silences and limitations. For example at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver Canada, the provincially-mandated teaching standards are treated as important but pliable starting points for interpretation. Students discuss issues such as 'What assumptions about teaching and learning are implicit/explicit in the standard?' and assemble artefacts from their teaching that demonstrate 'tensions or difficulties or dilemmas that may surround the standard in practice' (Phelan 2007).

Finally, schools and local authorities have a crucial role to play as active partners in enabling effective teaching. Headteachers should be expected to support and expand, not contain and discipline, teachers' critical inquiry and creative initiatives. Indeed, Headteachers logically would work with their teachers to develop distributed networks of teacher leadership in their schools, and to promote teachers' continuing education in a variety of areas. Schools can actively encourage practitioner or school-based action research where groups of teachers lead inquiries into issues of concern. Schools also can promote learning communities among their staffs. Not the popularised 'professional learning community' which, as Frankham (2006) argues, often functions as an a-political network of consensus: it seeks harmonious collaboration, resists critical questioning, focuses inwardly on classroom technique, and can even actively suppress truly innovative alternative educational approaches. Instead, the kind of learning community advocated here is a collective that honours difference, and that is committed to fostering wise democratic action for educational change.

Scotland at this historical moment enjoys an unusual confluence of positive dynamics for an exciting educational future. That is, we are a very small population yet richly resourced in both strong schools and an astonishing number of university providers of educational research and higher education for educators. We are small and centralised in our policy systems in ways that can quickly develop and implement bold new ideas, partly because most major stakeholder representatives can be gathered around one table.

This doesn't mean it actually happens, but it could. We are relatively free from the antagonistic factionalism and single-issue lobby groups that can paralyse policy development in very large heterogeneous countries. We are at the centre of a nation-wide initiative in Curriculum for Excellence that could catalyse educational and public imaginations. We are about to experience unprecedented financial constraints, which will undoubtedly mean some hardship and loss for education: but it can also compel elimination of duplication and fragmentation, more focused coordination of interests and activities, and creative new solutions.

In other words, we are potentially positioned to create collectively the conditions and to mobilise the webs of activity that could bring forth a more vibrant world of educational professionalism. This is not just about good teaching, but about orienting an entire system to its responsibility to serve teaching and students. Indeed, Scotland could fashion itself as a laboratory to catalyse the sort of leading system of teaching that other regions aspire to emulate. But at present, we may be wallowing a bit in fantasies, contradictions, disconnected resources, and unfair projections of responsibility on the individual teacher. We – policy-makers, educational administrators, parents, inspectors, teacher educators and educational researchers collectively – might instead take up the call to educational professionalism ourselves. Rather than prescribing and ‘developing’ and assessing teachers, we might consider standing beside them in taking up the sort of bold, rude and risky leadership that a new education for global complexity demands, and that will enable teaching to become as bold, rude and risky as it shall need to be.

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¹ This paper in the main represents the text for an address to the ‘Invited International Symposium on Accomplished Teaching’, University of Glasgow, June 23 2010. Thanks are extended to the anonymous reviewers who suggested amendments.

² One reviewer suggested that the word ‘rude’ may be questionable here, as it can mean unsophisticated or rough, and suggested alternate terms such as radical, unconventional, combative, contentious, etc. This is a valid point, and I leave it to the reader to decide. In my view, the pejorative term unsophisticated is used to socialise that which disturbs and resists normative behavioral conventions. But sometimes these conventions of ‘sophistication’ require disruption. My use here of the term ‘rude’ itself is intended precisely to highlight and interrupt such unproblematic normativities.