FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS: CREATIVE CONFLICT OR NEGATIVE DISSONANCE?

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One would expect that parents and teachers would be friends. After all, they are both vitally concerned with the socialization and education of their children. But social scientists and our own experience recognize parents and teachers as *natural enemies*—a relationship that emerges out of their roles as they are defined by the social structure of society, not necessarily the dynamics of individual interactions. This essay will explore the authority relation between parents and teachers, their respective spheres of influence, the quality of their relationships, and the potential for building constructive alliances between them.[1]

[1]In this paper most of the discussion will focus on parents and teachers of elementary school children. Although many of the interactional dimensions between families and schools remain constant across grade levels. different issues emerge as children grow older, become more independent of their families, more identified with the values and perspectives of their peers, and feel less need for parental protection, guidance, and support.

In her very fine book, *Small Town Teacher*, Gertrude McPherson contrasts the *primary relationship* of parents and children against the *secondary relationship* of teachers and children. Parents have *particularistic* expectations for their children while teachers have *universalistic* expectations (1972, p. 121). In other words, when parents ask the teacher to "be fair" with their child or to give him/her "a chance," they are usually asking that the teacher give special attention (*i.e.*, consider the individual qualities, the developmental and motivational characteristics) to their child. When teachers talk about being "fair" to everyone they mean giving equal amounts of attention, judging everyone by the same objective standards, using explicit and public criteria for making judgments. With fairness comes rationality, order, and detachment. So Susie gets admonished, "Put away your candy. I won't let you bring it to school unless there

is enough to share with everyone in the class."

Even those teachers who believe in the individualistic approach to teaching and endeavor to diagnose the special cognitive and social needs of their children, seem to have universalistic standards and generalized goals that they are conscious of working towards. A teacher who believes in responding to the developmental stage of each child might proclaim publicly to her charges, "I am letting Richard have a special treat because he seems to have had a difficult morning trying to find a friend to work with." The candy becomes the replacement for the social affection of his classmates from which he has been painfully excluded. It is a public recognition of his temporarily unique position, but not an excuse for a general and stationary behavior pattern on Richard's part. As a matter of fact, the teacher's goal is to get Richard to the stage where he can move easily and comfortably into the various social groupings and act as mature and self-sufficient as his classmates.

In his article "The School Class as a Social System," Parsons rejects the differentiation made between those "progressive" teachers who stress independence, individuality, child-directed and exploratory learning and "traditional" teachers who are said to emphasize the authoritarian role of the teacher, competition among children, and pre-determined ways of approaching a curriculum. Parsons claims that even the progressive philosophy does not constitute a separate pattern but a variation on a basic theme.

> A progressive teacher, like any other, forms opinions about the different merits of her pupils relative to the values and goals of the class and will communicate these evaluations to them, informally, if not formally. (Parsons, 1959, p, 297)

Clearly, the universalistic relationship encouraged by teachers is supportive of a more rational, predictable, and stable social system with visible and explicit criteria for achievement and failure. It doesn't suffer the chaotic fluctuation of emotions, indulgence, and impulsivity that are found in the intimate association of parents and children. The generalized relationship between teachers and children becomes a protective kind of interaction that makes it possible for teachers and children to decathect each other at the end of the year. Even those teachers who speak of "loving" their children don't really mean the boundless, all-encompassing love of mothers and fathers, but a very measured and time-limited love that allows for withdrawal.

In *On What Is Learned in School*, Robert Dreeben is primarily concerned with those aspects of the children's experience shaped by the structural properties of schools and families. He also describes differences in the interactional and emotional dimensions defined by parents and teachers with children. He echoes McPherson's distinction between universalistic and particularistic expectations by describing the origins of the social norms of sanctioning in schools and families. The exercise of familial authority is based on a sustained relationship of warmth, nurturance, acceptance, and withdrawal of affection.

> The problem of confronting elementary school teachers, then, resembles that of parents with young children; to treat them so that they regard certain symbolic and physical expressions as rewards and punishments. As a prerequisite, the parents' initial job is to develop a relationship of love and nurturance with their children; analogously, the elementary school teacher's first job is to create among pupils a diffuse and positive attachment both to herself and to the school. (Dreeben, 1968, p. 35)

Issues of Territoriality and Control

Since parents and teachers share many of the same responsibilities for socialization of

children, much of the difficulty between them comes from the fact that their spheres of influence are not clearly delineated. Parents always seem to be fighting for special, individualized attention for their children while teachers struggle to establish an environment of equalized and generalized attention for all children. Parents want the child's education to reaffirm the cultural and social experience of their community while teachers often urge children to transcend the boundaries of their traditions and history and initiate the styles of mainstream America. Parents see themselves as primary teachers of children while teachers often judge parents to be educationally unsophisticated and mindless.

There is a sphere of ambivalence that surrounds the child's life in school and teachers and parents argue (silently and resentfully) about who should be in control within it. For instance, there are ambiguous areas of control around the child's attendance in school (*e.g.*, Do parents have the right to keep children out of school for reasons other than illness?); after school hours (*e.g.*, Do teachers have the right to demand that children stay after school for detention or extra work?). Although parents and teachers often seem to disagree about who has the right to govern a certain area of the child's life, usually teachers are forced to accept the parent's definition. The only sphere of influence in which the teacher feels that her authority is ultimate and uncompromising seems to be with what happens *inside* the classroom. Parents are often not welcome behind the classroom door and, if their presence is permitted, they are asked to observe rather than participate.

In a study done by Lightfoot and Watts (1974), teachers were given in-depth interviews which included questions about how they perceived the legitimate role of parents in and around the school setting. The children were ages three through six years and one might have anticipated more collaboration and interaction between teachers and parents in these early stages of development than in the later elementary school years. The teachers were unusually reflective, thoughtful, and conscious of their evolving relationships with children and parents. The school encouraged, in fact depended on, parental participation in fund-raising, class trips, and other extra-classroom affairs.

The teachers' responses to the potential involvement of parents within the classroom environment, however, showed that they were not merely concerned about territoriality and spheres of control. Their primary reasons for parental exclusion were embedded in their ideas about establishing an enduring and nurturant relationship with the children that would not be modified or entangled with the burdens and problems of home life. In some sense, they saw themselves as child advocates, protectors of the child's new domain, and they stressed the developmental and emotional need for a clear and early separation between familial patterns and the demands made upon children in school.

Whatever the origins of ambivalence between teachers and parents, whatever the rationale voiced by educators, about who should assume control of the child's life after he/she has entered school, it is clear that, for the most part, the relationship of parents and teachers is constantly uneasy and distrustful. The distrust is further complicated by the fact that it is rarely articulated, but remains as a pervasive thread of resentment between them.

Teacher Perceptions of Parent Groups

Despite the negative quality of the rel- tionship, parents and teachers are forced t have some minimal level of interaction co- cerning their children. Most schools organi Parent-Teacher Associations and invite pa- ents to highly contrived and public Ope

House meetings. These are usually vacuous, ritualistic practices which protect everyone from meaningful interactions and confrontations, but symbolically reaffirm the idealized parent-school relationship (Warren, 1973, p. 288).

Individual interactions between parents and teachers are rare and specially requested—usually arising out of dissatisfaction, frustration, or anger on the part of parents and/or teachers:

> When we call parents during the year, it's generally to say that your child is being disruptive or your child seems sad. Is there something the matter at home? Your child has been talking about some problem. Is that really true? (Lightfoot & Watts, 1974)

Teachers rarely call *in praise* of a child. Usually when parents are summoned to the school, the teacher is reporting on some trouble their child is having adjusting to the social milieu and/or learning the appropriate cognitive skills. Most often, the criticism of teachers brings defensiveness on the part of parents who blame the problems on inadequate teaching. Parents, on the other hand, rarely call a teacher to praise her. They ask for a parent conference when they sense that their child is unhappy with the school environment or the child isn't learning to read. The teacher often interprets the parents' concern as an attack on her skills as a teacher and she becomes defensive. Contacts, therefore, are rarely productive. Whether the contact is initiated by teachers or parents, it becomes a highly-charged defensive interaction.

Although the negativisms between teachers and parents are part of a universal phenomenon across all lines of class, race, and ethnicity, the teacher's perceptions of parents and the quality of the relationship varies enormously among different parent groups. In *Small Town Teacher*, McPherson reports that teachers identified with the average people in town, felt vulnerable and powerless in relation to the upper middle class, and considered only the lower class as really inferior to themselves. Sometimes teachers tried to form temporary alliances with identifiable sub-groups of parents who were perceived as being cooperative. Poor parents were sometimes taken into the teacher's confidence when they adopted an obsequious and humble manner. The teachers were viewed as the gatekeepers for their children's social mobility and teachers appreciated the parents nonthreatening appreciation. Middle-class parents often become potential allies for teachers because of their shared convictions about the value of achievement and hard work (McPherson, 1972, pp. 139-140). But, for the most part, teachers felt they could not trust nor depend upon coalitions with parents and they feared that real collaboration might lead to an awkward confusion of roles.

In this writer's interviews with black teachers (Lightfoot, 1972) in a public ghetto school, I found varying perceptions of the abilities and strengths of poor black parents—ranging from the stereotypic image of parents as shiftless, lazy, uncaring, and lacking ambitions for their children to understanding and empathetic views of parents as committed and caring but unable to negotiate the complexities and hostilities of the school system. The latter group of teachers viewed poor black parents as potential collaborators in an educational, cultural, and social enterprise. The teacher's perceptions of parents seemed to be related to her own view of parents as *victims* of an unjust and racist society (rather than responsible creators of their own helpless condition) and the teacher's identification of her own place on the social ladder—her own sense of power and influence in the occupational and social world.

> I lived in a real big ghetto, in a housing project. I was not really hungry or anything, but I know what it is to be a wel-

> fare recipient . . . and see my mother sneak out to work . . . I think I can identify quite easily with people who are lower class. People who are really trying. *My family is the working class* (emphasis the writer's).

This teacher was expressing both an ideological and political vision of the world and a personal need to identify with her own roots and culture. Part of her identification with the lives of the working class was reflected in her attitude towards parent involvement and participation in the educational process of their children. Teaching was not considered to be solely within the lofty province of the professional, learning was not reserved for inside classrooms; but the concept of teaching was far-reaching and inclusive and involved the active and critical participation of parents.

> No matter what you do as teachers, or what is done as a community, or what is done as a school system, *the parent is the first teacher* [emphasis the writer's]. Unless black parents come together, there's not going to be much hope for our children, they've got to be concerned.

Another distinction made between parent groups by teachers in a progressive, independent school (Lightfoot & Watts, 1974) seemed to combine elements of social class, life style, and attitudes towards child rearing. Upwardly striving middle-class parents (both black and white) were seen as aggressive, overly-demanding of their children, and obsessed with the child's achievement. Teachers often felt they had to protect the child and themselves from the unrealistic ambitions of the parents and establish classroom relationships which were consonant with the child's developmental stage.

Another group of non-collaborators were a group of parents who were labeled laissez-faire and were seen as possessing a sloppy, overly-permissive approach to child rearing. Teachers accused these parents of responding to their children with their heads (*i.e.*, looking for the origins and motivations for poor behavior) rather than the heart (*i.e.*, responding spontaneously to children without the benefit of a psychological orientation).

In some sense, lower-class parents who demanded order and respect, who didn't over-intellectualize their responses to children were seen by these teachers as potential collaborators. Teachers appreciated their realistic and objective appraisal of their child's abilities and development, and the parents seemed to permit the teacher a large measure of autonomy and had genuine respect for the difficulties and complexities of her role as teacher. The mutual admiration seemed to be a circular and sustaining relationship that was rarely articulated, but deeply enjoyed.

These teachers' voices reflect a wide range of work experiences, personalities, skills, and ideological views. McPherson's teachers worked in a relatively heterogeneous and stable community in a small town which exaggerated the distinctions of a hierarchical social order. This writer's research (1972) was done in a poor black ghetto school that was surrounded by the decay and the false promise of urban renewal. The most recent research of Lightfoot and Watts (1974) took place in a relatively progressive, independent school. In these three divergent settings, teachers gave different reasons for trusting some sub-group of compatable parents but they saw the parent-mass as a threatening force. They formed strong bonds among themselves in fear (and disdain) of parents and looked for institutional support to protect their interests.

In the small town school that McPherson describes, the teacher felt particularly anxious and threatened by the upper-middle class and upper classes because she experienced no institutional buffers between her and the parents. The principal owed his job and his allegiance

to those high in the community power structure and he worked hard to respond to their demands even if that meant being irresponsible and demeaning to his teachers.

In his article "The Teacher and the Authority System of the School," Howard Becker (1952) describes a different relationship among teachers, administrators, and the community. He claims that in the big city schools of Chicago, teachers and administrators banded together for mutual protection against parental intrusion. Teachers made an implicit bargain with their superiors that they would support the organization as long as the organization served to protect them from parents and critics. The mutual protection of individual teachers and the structure of the total school insulated both from the forces of change. In both McPherson's and Becker's analyses, teachers think of building alliances with other teachers as a move towards strengthening their position against the criticism of parents.

Fullan and Spady (1971) do not talk directly about school and community and the teacher's relatedness to parents, but they are concerned with the origins and characteristics of teacher authority. The authors also give a great deal of attention to: (1) the lack of real and meaningful communication among teachers within schools and (2) the strong tendency for administrators to oppose personal interaction among them. Fullan and Spady's observations of power alliances and authority networks in schools are based on Max Weber's classic distinction between *positional* authority and *personal* authority. Legitimate authority is granted to a teacher through the structure she represents, the socially recognized position she holds (positional authority) or through the teacher's individual qualities of expertise, charisma, and personality (personal authority).

Fullan and Spady claim that those teachers who lack expertise, an empathy and caring for students, a stimulating teaching style, will look to the school as a protective institution and to her formal, established role in the institution as a source of legitimate power. The less able teachers need more institutional support and work as system loyalists in support of the bureaucracy which is their only source of legitimacy. When administrators, therefore, encourage system loyalists, they are strongly opposing institutional innovation and openness.

One can extend Fullan and Spady's analysis to incorporate the relationship of teachers with parents. In other words, one would find that those administrators who support, encourage, and reward personal authority will probably be, at the same time, encouraging teachers to engage in relationships with parents that do not depend on the protection of institutional barriers. The teachers who are more confident of their skills, expertise, and abilities to communicate will be less loyal to the protection of an insular wall around the school and more dedicated to the establishment of a good educational relationship with children, that is, encompassing of parents, rather than exclusive of them.

Perspectives and Values of Parents

Although various social analysts and educators have talked about the teachers' relationship to parents and the surrounding community, people have not studied or cared to document the parents' role from the *parents' point of view.* In her book, *Small Town Teacher*, McPherson continues to remind readers that, although she is writing about parental concerns, she is always talking about the teachers' perceptions of their interactions with parents.

Sociologists have traditionally been concerned with the role of parents in families. They have studied the family's structure, interactional modes, developmental patterns, value orientation, and socialization of children.

The focus of their concern has been with how the family is created and sustained internally, the structure and function of the family as a comprehensive, self-sustaining social system. Even those sociologists who have sought to analyze the relationship between the family and other social institutions have seemed concerned with how the different systems are organized and constructed and how they operate, but not with their *relatedness* to one another. The literature presents a picture of the family and school as social organisms both engaging in the socialization, acculturation, and education of children. But social scientists have not focused on the dynamics of the intersection and interaction between school and family *from the point of view of the various participants.*

Certainly one does not hear the story of parents who are in the process of trying to communicate their concerns and cope with the complexities of the school system.

> Parents . . . remain nameless and powerless—always described from the position of the middle-class institution, never in relation to their own cultural style or social idiom. (Valentine, 1968, p. 80)

Without actually knowing them, without actually hearing their point of view, teachers and principals have developed strong negative images of parents which justify their exclusion from the schooling process. For instance, one of the predominant myths about black parents and poor parents, who surround inner-city schools, is that they: (1) do not care about the education of their children, (2) are passive and unresponsive to attempts by teachers and administrators to get them involved, (3) are ignorant and naive about the cognitive and social needs of their children.

Those parents who are active and vocal in school-parent meetings, are often labeled as community-organizer types who are not concerned with the children's well-being, but with disrupting and radically reforming the school system. These aggressive types are viewed as dangerous, non-parents who are using the school as a political arena.

When the parents of black children, however, are questioned about their attitudes towards schooling and their ambitions for their children, education is not only valued, but formalized schooling is seen as the panacea.

In his study of black communities in Washington, D. C., Hylan Lewis, a black sociologist, points out that "the added value placed on education of black children as a means of escaping low and achieving high status is a myth-like cultural theme" (1967, p. 400). As a matter of fact, he suggests that the conflict between the lofty aspiration of black parents for their children and the limited, realistic social and economic opportunities available to them, is precisely the pattern which invites deviant behavior in their children.

In an interview this writer had with a very sensitive and strong black woman teacher in an inner-city school, it was clear that she recognized some of the reasons why black and poor parents are often unable to initiate contact with schools on behalf of their children. Although she had survived several years of public school teaching, she strongly identified with the concerns and struggles of parents. This teacher felt that if poor black parents were questioned about their priorities, education would be the most important issue in terms of their children's lives. For most of these parents, however, the educational institution is a threatening monolith, not only in the sense that the power of knowledge makes them feel inadequate because they are uneducated, but because every bit of communication from the school comes as a negative appraisal of their child, a destructive comment about their lives.

> You can't always get them to conferences, but you can understand why. Each time you call them, it's because their child is

> bad and who wants to hear that, especially if she's got five or six kids. (Lightfoot, 1973, p. 216)

According to the experience of this teacher, the insensitive, paternalistic policies of the school system encouraged parents to develop an unresponsive, apathetic attitude towards participating in the educational process.

The antagonistic relationship between poor families and schools in an industrial society can be traced to the historical role of schools as major institutions for social order and social control—an institutional strategy designed to insure that deviant and threatening strangers would not challenge the status quo. In "Unequal Education and the Social Division of Labor," Samuel Bowles (1972) described the transition from a precapitalist society where the basic productive unit was the family to capitalist production and the factory system where the authority structure, prescribed types of behavior, and response characteristics of the work place became increasingly distinct from the family. An ideal preparation for factory work was to be found in the social relations of the school—discipline, punctuality, and the acceptance of authority. So there was an illusion of a benevolent government offering an opportunity for all. In actuality, schooling was (and is) a mechanism of social control and a place to inculcate workers with the motivational schemes for factory work.

In a recent observational study done in middle and lower-class public schools in New York, Eleanor Burke Leacock (1969) found the same systematic patterns of differentiation described by Bowles. The social relations of the educational process mirrored the social relations of the work roles into which students were likely to move. There was a clear difference in rules, expected modes of behavior, and opportunities for choice. Middle-class students were rewarded for individuality, aggressiveness, initiative, and lower-class students were reinforced for passivity, withdrawal, and obedience.

There is, therefore, the *illusion* of mobility and assimilation through schooling which creates distance and hostility between middle-class-oriented teachers and lower-class parents (*i.e.*, the parents expect that schools will change their child's orientation towards middle-class life; mothers are made to feel inadequate in preparing children for an uncharted future; and families relinquish the final remnants of their cultural patterning and familiar social structures) while in reality, the educational system serves less to change the results of primary socialization in the home than to reinforce them (and denigrate them) and render them in adult form.

Positive and Negative Dissonance

In conclusion, I believe that part of the distrust between parents and teachers emanates from the *real* differences in perspectives that evolve out of the definitions of their cultural and social roles. The parent is protective and highly invested in his/her child, sees the educational system as competitive and individualistic, and seeks to get the teacher to recognize the child's unique place and give favorably to him. These are neither misperceptions of the nature of the educational system nor antithetical to the role of the nuclear family in a hierarchical, materialistic society.

This phenomenon of individualistic protection is intensified when the parents and family feel vulnerable and powerless in the wider society. If parents are themselves poor, uneducated, and defenseless, the school is perceived as the single institution of social and occupational mobility. Their job as advocate, protector, and defender of the individual needs of their child is amplified by their desires for a better life for the next generation. Ironically, poor parents are often the least prepared

to negotiate the system and make their demands.

Teachers, on the other hand, view their cultural role as rational and universalistic. In their view, a teacher should create and sustain order in the classroom that might be flexible and responsive to the special needs of an individual child, but that is ultimately a system of equalized attention and favors. This means the criteria for success within the classroom must be explicit and visible and that children be socialized to respond to the symbols of success and failure in a relatively non-affective environment.

Those differences in the role behavior and perspective of parents and teachers in this society are real and should not inevitably lead to distrust and hostility. (They have to do with the nature of the social structure of society and the economic and social slots that people hold in the system.) It is not beyond reason to imagine a healthy educational system that was both responsive to the particularistic focus of parents and the universalistic orientation of teachers. It seems to me that the origin of resentment does not rest entirely with differences in role-behavior but also with the lack of communication and the modes of exclusion that are sustained by the institutional arrangements of schools. The bureaucratic and inflexible structure of the school system encourages parents and teachers to feel that they do not have goals and agendas in common.

It is extremely important, however, to recognize the potential for creativity and growth in the conflicts and discontinuities between families and schools. As we have seen, most often the academic literature characterizes the relationship between parents and teachers as distant, distrustful, and hostile. This negative association is viewed with nostalgia and sadness when it is contrasted with the idealized parent-school relationship rooted in the democratic traditions of American society. More importantly, the literature implies that homogeneity between the values, behaviors, and norms in the family and school will provide a more continuous, productive educational experience for the child.

Although this writer supports the notion that hostility and non-communication between parents and teachers is likely to create barriers for children who are trying to make the transition from home to school, it is not necessarily true that dissonance or difference between patterns of socialization, expectations and goals will be detrimental to the child or dysfunctional to society. In his essay, "Social Change and the Democratic Society," Philip Slater argues that in American society, people have endured a historical pattern of chronic change which has created an "experiential chasm" between parents and children (Ryder, 1965). This generational distance has, to some extent, invalidated parental authority and wisdom because parents have not experienced what is of central importance to the child, nor do they possess the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are adaptive to the conditions of contemporary society. This child-adult discontinuity is viewed by Slater as a natural lever for social change in society. Schools (and any other non-family-based collectivity) have served the important function of regulating and modifying parent-child relationships.

> One segregates children from adult life because one wishes to do something special with them—to effect some kind of social change or to adapt to one. Such segregation insulates the child from social patterns of the present and makes him more receptive to some envisioned future. (Slater, 1968, p. 40)

Dissonance between family and school, therefore, is not only inevitable in a changing society, but also helps to make children more malleable and responsive to a changing world. By the same token, one could say that absolute

homogeneity between family and school would reflect a static, authoritarian society and discourage creative, adaptive development in children.

The distinction between creative conflict on the one hand, and negative dissonance on the other, is critically important to educational practitioners who are daily engaged in trying to shape and clarify their relationships with parents and community. Firstly, teachers and administrators must recognize that differences and discontinuities between home and school are not necessarily dysfunctional, but can be productive for adaptive socialization of children and for positive social change in society. As early as 1932, Willard Waller noted that the child will experience more freedom of expression when different demands are being made by teachers and parents (p. 69). Both teachers and parents, therefore, should be socialized to anticipate and tolerate a level of creative tension, differences in perspectives, and opposing value systems.

Discontinuities between family and school become dysfunctional when they reflect differences in power and status in this society. When we perceive the origins of conflict as being rooted in inequality, ethnocentrism, or racism, then the message being transmitted to the excluded and powerless group (both parents and children) is denigrating and abusive. When schooling serves to accentuate and reinforce the inequalities in society, then it is not providing a viable and productive alternative for children.

The message of ethnocentrism is conveyed to parents and children when socialization, acculturation, and learning within schools are defined in the narrow, traditional terms of the dominant culture. The negative and paternalistic messages are also communicated when schools begin to take on the total range of familial functions—not just matters of cognitive and social learning adaptive to a changing society—but also the dimensions of primary socialization usually found within the family domain. Creative conflict can only exist when there is a balance of power and responsibility between family and school, not when the family's role is negated or diminished.

In an effort to initiate and sustain productive interactions with parents, educators must begin by searching for strength (not pathology) in children and their families. Teachers need to communicate praise and support for children so that criticism will not be viewed as a negative assault and so that children and parents will not begin to adapt their behaviors to negative expectations. There must be a profound recognition that parents are the first teachers, that education begins before formal schooling, and is deeply rooted in the values, traditions, and norms of family and culture.

Positive relationships with parents are not merely related to a deep appreciation of different cultures, traditions, and histories, but also interwoven with the teacher's feelings of competence and self-esteem. If a person feels secure in her abilities, skills, and creativity as a teacher, then parents will not be perceived as threatening and intrusive. As teachers express the dimensions of personal authority rather than the constraints of positional authority, they will feel less need to hide behind the ritualistic barriers of institutionalism and professionalism. There is need, therefore, to clarify and articulate areas of teacher competence, to make more explicit the spheres over which teachers have ultimate and uncompromising authority and those areas where collaboration with parents could be an educational and creative venture.

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