Part Four

Modern Work and the Creation of New Professional Identities
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The Construction of a New Professional Self: A Critical Reading of the Curricula for Nurses and Computer Engineers in Norway

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13.1 Introduction

The vision of what it means to be a professional has changed profoundly in the course of the last decades. In contrast to prior phases of history, where the professional was envisioned as a collective being whose main challenge was to appropriate the shared knowledge and values of the occupation and to act in accordance with these, we now face an era where the professional ‘self’ is cast as innovative and autonomous; as an ‘overriding self’ who is expected to bear the brunt of producing new knowledge as well as creating new relationships of commitment and trust in an ever-changing and increasingly complex society. The shifts entail what sociologists have described as ‘insourcing’ (Lash, 2003), that is, a reallocation of functions, activities and responsibilities onto the individual, that were traditionally understood to be a collective matter. In this chapter\(^1\) we aim to draw attention to a

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\(^1\) This chapter is written as part of the project Professional Learning in a Changing Society, which is being carried out at the University of Oslo, Institute for Educational Research. For more information, see Jensen and Lahn (2003).