Second Language Learning and Teaching

Christine Coombe
Neil J Anderson
Lauren Stephenson *Editors*

Professionalizing Your English Language Teaching

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Second Language Learning and Teaching

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ISSN 2193-7648 ISSN 2193-7656 (electronic)
Second Language Learning and Teaching
ISBN 978-3-030-34761-1 ISBN 978-3-030-34762-8 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-34762-8

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank those who have served as role models for us. From those individuals, we met early on in our careers, Gilbert Jarvis, Elizabeth B. Bernhardt, Charles Hancock and Keiko Samimy (for Christine); Cheryl Brown, Patricia L. Carrell, David Eskey, Andrew D. Cohen and Harold Madsen, (for Neil) and Neil England, Robyn Cox, Tania Aspland, Barbara Harold and Rashida Badri (for Lauren) to the many TESOL professionals that we have encountered since over the course of our careers. These individuals, many of whom are chapter authors in this book, have shown us what it really means to be a TESOL professional and it is to them that this book is dedicated.

As always, our respective families have provided us with much-needed support throughout the writing and publication process. We also acknowledge our students and share our sincere appreciation for the opportunities they have given us to learn and grow with them.

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Volume Introduction: What It Means to Be a TESOL Professional

Christine Coombe and Chloe Burridge

1 What is Professionalism?

There has been much debate in recent decades about the concept of 'professionalism' and how it relates to the teaching profession. In fact, definitions of professionalism abound. The concept has been defined as the conduct, demeanor and standards which guide the work of professionals, and also the attitudes and behaviors towards a job that help achieve high-level standards. The terms 'profession' and 'professor' have their etymological roots in the Latin word for profess. To be a professional or a professor was to profess to be an expert in some skill or field of knowledge (Baggini, 2005 as cited in Demirkasimoglu, 2010). In 1975, Hoyle defined professionalism as 'those strategies and rhetorics employed by members of an occupation in seeking to improve status, salary and conditions' (Demirkasimoglu, 2010, p. 2048). Hoyle (2007 as cited in Burridge, 2014) later states that professionalism is related to the improvement in the quality of service rather than the enhancement of status.

The question of how to differentiate between the two terms of "professionalism" and "professionalisation" has received much scholarly attention. As far as a general consensus of the literature is concerned, professionalization is related to promoting the interests of the occupational group whereas professionalism focuses on the question of what qualifications, acquired skills or capacities and competencies are required for the successful exercise of an occupation.

Within a trait theory approach, the most important elements that discern a profession from other occupations are: a specialized knowledge; commitment to service

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C. Coombe et al. (eds.), *Professionalizing Your English Language Teaching*,
Second Language Learning and Teaching,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-34762-8_1

for clients; and autonomy in relation to practice (Ginsburg, 1987; Larson, 1977). Etzioni (1969) draws attention to an ideal-type teaching profession, characterized by autonomous practice; advanced training in theory-based, specialized skills; and peer regulation of qualifications, entry standards, selection and discipline (Popa & Acedo, 2006).

For the purposes of this volume, the following definitions by Hargreaves (2000) will be used:

- Profession: a distinct category of occupational work
- Professionalization: a process in which a professional group pursues, develops, acquires and maintains more characteristics of a profession
- Professionalism: the conduct, demeanor and standards which guide the work of professionals.

2 Perspectives on Professionalism

Being a professional is not merely an intellectual exercise, but rather, involves a commitment to being something compelling and transformative in the workplace (Bowman, 2013). Viewing oneself as a professional elicits one's best work, essentially because it involves living up to a set of ideas where professionals think and communicate in what Bowman (2013) calls "the language of those ideals" (p. 17). In this section, we will examine some historical and empirical perspectives on professionalism.

2.1 Historical Perspectives on Professionalism

The first mentions of professionalism originated within the fields of medicine and law. In fact, the first responsibility of a professional was chronicled 2500 years ago in the Hippocratic Oath: *Primun non nocere*, "Above all, not knowingly to do harm" (Drucker & Maciariello, 2004 as cited in Bowman, 2013, p. 17). In modern times, professionalism is viewed as a powerful motivating force of disciplinary control and change, in which schools and universities, and the professionals who staff them, can be measured, assessed, and compared (Evetts, Mieg, & Felt, 2006). At present, a wide range of professional associations, accreditation bodies and licensing boards provide normative and functional values in the socialization of teaching practitioners and these figure prominently in discussions of teacher professionalism.

2.2 *Professionalism and ELT*

Hargreaves (2000) presented teaching professionalism as passing through four historical ages: pre-professional, autonomous, collegial and post-professional ages. In the pre-professional age, teaching was managerially demanding but technically simple so teachers were only expected to carry out the directives of their knowledgeable superiors. In the subsequent age of the autonomous professional, autonomy, where teachers had the pedagogical freedom to choose the methods they thought best for their students, professionalism became an important component or value of the profession. In the age of collegial professionalism, there was an effort to create strong professional cultures of collaboration to develop common purpose in order to cope with the uncertainty and complexity caused by rapid changes and reforms. In the post-professional age, we can see a struggle between forces intent on de-professionalizing the work of teaching, against those who are seeking to redefine teacher professionalism and teacher learning in more positive and principled postmodern ways that are flexible, wide ranging and inclusive in nature (Demirkasimoglu, 2010; Hargreaves, 2000).

Further academic work in professionalism and ELT has seen an identification of two broad and competing discourses: 'new' professionalism and 'old' professionalism (Bourke et al., 2013). Sachs (2003 as cited in Demirkasimoglu, 2010) effectively compares 'new' professionalism with 'old' professionalism in Table 1.

New understanding of teacher professionalism provides professional space and conditions for teachers to take responsibility for their own practice. Sachs (2003 as cited by Demirkasimoglu, 2010) calls this transition from old to new models of professionalism "as transformative professionalism" (p. 2049).

Leung (2009) introduced the concept of second language teacher professionalism and defined it as "a selectively combined set of disciplinary-based knowledge, ethical principles, and time- and place-specific work practices" (p. 50). It has been suggested that this type of professionalism should include both *sponsored* and *independent* professionalism. Sponsored professionalism refers to institutionally endorsed and

Table 1 Sach's (2003) comparisons of 'Old' and 'New' Professionalism

Old professionalism	New professionalism
Exclusive membership	Inclusive membership
Conservative practices	Public ethical code of practices
Self-interest	Collaborative and collegial
External regulation	Activist orientation
Slow to change	Flexible and progressive
Reactive	Responsive to change
	Self-regulating
	Policy-active
	Enquiry oriented
	Knowledge building

publicly heralded definitions of teachers' disciplinary knowledge and practical experience as expressed by regulatory bodies. Independent professionalism, in contrast, refers to more individually-oriented notions of professionalism, in particular individual teachers' commitment to careful and critical examination of the assumptions and practices embedded in sponsored collective professionalism with reference to discipline-based knowledge and a readiness to take action to effect change where appropriate. In short, independent professionalism includes the willingness for individual practitioners to be engaged in reflective examination of their own beliefs and actions (Leung, 2009; Richards, 2008).

More recently, discussion of 'Managerial' professionalism has come into the literature. Managerial professionalism sees teachers as "unquestioning supporters and implementers of a competency-based, outcome-oriented pedagogy related to the world of work" (Bourke et al., 2013, p. 403). Richards (2008) sees managerial professionalism as the approach of ministries, teaching organizations and regulatory bodies.

In a 2012 publication, Snoek, one of the most prolific authors in the field of professionalism put forward a list of three contributing elements to teacher professionalism: knowledge, skills and attitudes. As far as 'knowledge' is concerned, Snoek recommends that for teachers to be highly professional they need to have a thorough knowledge of a number of different aspects about their jobs including knowledge of the subject matter they are teaching; knowledge about the teaching and learning process; knowledge about the society in which they teach and knowledge of the policies of their institutions and organizations in education.

The second contributing element of teacher professionalism is 'skills'. According to Snoek, to be professional teachers need to have the skills to be able to communicate and discuss educational issues with a wide audience of educational stakeholders. They also need to be able to be accountable for the quality of their work in the classroom to the outside world. An additional skill mentioned in the Snoek framework was the ability to conduct research within the educational environment. Being able to contribute to collaborative learning processes within their own professional learning communities was also found to be a useful skill for teacher professionals. The final skill relates to the importance and necessity of innovation in the classroom or the school.

Snoek's third contributing element was 'attitudes.' The attitudes that were found to be essential include: a dedication to student learning, a commitment to the profession and to professional colleagues, a willingness to contribute to the collective knowledge of the profession through research and the dissemination of presentations and publications. A willingness to follow and abide by the ethical code of their profession and to be accountable to all stakeholders figured prominently in the attitudes portion of contributing elements. Lastly, a focus on professional development, lifelong learning and innovation in teaching rounded out the list.

2.3 Empirical Perspectives on Professionalism

There has been much debate in recent decades about the concept of 'professionalism' as it relates to the teaching profession. This debate has heightened in recent years as governments and educational boards have sought to articulate new concepts of professionalism and to convince teachers of the merits of these new concepts. Less common, however, has been research that investigates how teachers themselves actually define and understand 'professionalism' as it relates to their own work.

One of the most oft-cited studies into this area was a four-year study conducted at the University of Cambridge titled the *Teacher Status Project* (Hargreaves et al., 2007). Commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills, this study explored the impact of government policies on teachers' sense of their own professional status. Two large-scale surveys were conducted with 7500 + primary and secondary school teachers. Major findings included that teachers' thinking about their professionalism may be construed as consisting of an inner core of strong, shared beliefs and commitments; an intermediate set of coherent but contested components of professionalism; and an outer layer of disparate elements which are generally highly disputed and which remain unintegrated into broader ways of thinking (Swann, McIntyre, Pell, Hargreaves & Cunningham, 2009, p. 549).

Research specific to elements of teacher background and practices have found that teaching experience is not necessarily related to professionalism. This means that a teacher with a limited number of years of experience can be deemed as professional as another with 30+ years of experience. Academic qualifications were not found to correlate with teacher professionalism either. Although those with higher academic and professional qualifications were found to have a (perceived) higher degree of professionalism. Another finding was that professional development was found to be an important variable. Teachers who attended more PD rated themselves as more professional than those who did not take advantage of PD opportunities (Keng, Hoong, & Aun, 1994; Burridge, 2014).

Several studies have investigated the characteristics inherent in teaching professionals who have been identified as having high degrees of professionalism. One way to examine English language teacher professionalism is through comparison to classical professions like doctors or lawyers. Using these classical professions as exemplars, typical characteristics have been derived as archetypes of 'true professionals' (Snoek, Swennen, & Van der Klink, 2009). Typical attributes include:

- Professional autonomy
- Control over entry requirements to the profession and to further professional development of individual members
- A strong academic knowledge base, consisting of formal or technical knowledge (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996)
- An ethical code
- Freedom of establishment where members do not have a job contract but are independent and self-employed.

Based on a review of the literature, Snoek (2012) has provided much of the professional literature on the characteristics inherent in teaching professionals and the contributing elements to teacher professionalism. According to Snoek, the twelve characteristics of teacher professionalism include:

1. Professional autonomy, through control over their own work.
2. Involvement in the entrance to the profession.
3. Control over the central values and good conduct within the profession through the use of ethical codes, connected to sanctions for breaking the code.
4. Membership to professional societies that can take the responsibility for these elements.
5. A focus on integrity and dedication of the professional.
6. Public accountability for outcomes of professional performance.
7. A strong academic and practice-based knowledge base that underlies professional activities.
8. Involvement in the development of that knowledge base through involvement in academic research, action research and self-study.
9. Lifelong professional development of the members of the profession.
10. Collaboration with colleagues and stakeholders.
11. Involvement in the innovation of the profession.
12. Commitment of the teacher to support both the public and the state in their understanding of educational matters.

Further studies on the competencies that teachers need for high levels of professionalism reveal that competencies centered around subject knowledge, pedagogical skills, classroom management, linking theory to practice, cooperation and collaboration, continuous and lifelong learning, leadership and less prominent quality assurance are among the most important skills teachers need to have (Snoek et al., 2009).

3 How This Volume Is Organized

The 36 chapters in this volume represent the scholarly work of English language educators from fourteen countries. The volume is divided into 10 parts. The first part of this volume looks at various aspects of the theoretical foundations of professionalism. The remaining parts are centered around aspects like teacher self-care and wellbeing, organizational and productivity skills, communication skills, technology and professionalism, leadership skills and abilities, the role of individual and collective professional learning, and research and its link to professionalism. The final two parts of this volume center around skills that will help us share our academic work with others and ways that professionals can move forward and onward in the field of ELT.

Part I of the volume, the theoretical and foundational perspectives on professionalism, consists of two chapters. Parra-Guinaldo and Gregersen begin with general

definitions of professionalism and their evolving meaning and then consider what it means to be a teaching professional. Building on this background, they advocate for viewing language teacher professionalism through a positive psychology lens, with particular attention emphasis on emotional intelligence and nurturing the teacher-learner relationship. In their chapter, El Sheikh and Yahia argue that, although there is a plethora of language teacher identity (LTI) research, language scholars and practitioners need to engage more critically with and investigate how professional identities are constructed within current dominant discourses such as globalization, superdiversity, transnationalism, multilingualism, among others. Their chapter concludes with implications on and the relationship between LTI and professionalism.

Part II of this volume examines topics related to Teacher Self-Care and Wellbeing. Abu Rmaileh looks at stress and its effects on English language teachers and offers suggestions on how to alleviate stress and avoid burnout. Coombe and Anderson provide an overview of the literature on positive psychology and its relationship to happiness and how it influences many aspects of our personal and professional lives. They then highlight a number of research-based factors that can influence and even increase a teacher's happiness quotient. Coombe, Bouslama, Hiasat, Medina and Manser examine the importance of emotional intelligence skills in teachers. Drawing on a six-dimension model, they provide a variety of intervention strategies to help teachers increase their self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship management, general mood and adaptability.

Part III provides an overview of how organizational and productivity skills relate to a teacher's professionalism. The three chapters in this part present important aspects of professionalism like how the most productive English language teachers fit it all in (Coombe, Quirke, Shewell and Al-Hamly), work/life balance (Anderson), and the importance of personal and professional strategic planning (Coombe).

The next part of this volume (Part IV) focuses on communication skills and their relationship with teacher professionalism. Three chapters make up this part of the volume. Murphey and Knight examine our abilities to listen, ask, visualize and tell stories which they believe are all crucial productive leadership tools. The next chapter focuses on the level of language proficiency needed by nonnative English speaking teachers (NNESTs) to be effective teachers. Eslami argues that conventional definitions that associate with general English proficiency do not address the type of language that classroom teachers need in order to teach effectively. She concludes her chapter with some suggestions on how NNESTs can enhance their English language proficiency to be more effective teachers. Chapter co-authors, Christison and Murray believe that learning how to manage conflict efficiently, diffuse anger, and facilitate productive communication is an important skill for all ELT professionals, not just for teachers in leadership positions. In their chapter, tools for managing conflict are provided.

The following three chapters which focus on important aspects of the use of technology and its links to professionalism are found in Part V. Kessler provides the reader with information on how to professionalize their use of technology through suggestions for developing foundational skills and abilities that can be adapted across technology-based interventions. Creating an online profile as one strategy to improve

teacher professionalism is the topic of Sabieh's chapter. This chapter provides a practical perspective on how to successfully build an online profile through the use of social media platforms. Making the transition from classroom teacher to online educator is the focus of Stephen's chapter. This chapter describes the multiple roles and dimensions of an online educator and provides best practices to help educators fulfill each role in the online learning environment.

Leadership skills and abilities and their relationship to professionalism is the topic under discussion in Part VI of this volume. Stephenson and Hiasat explore different aspects of leadership and their connection to professionalism. More specifically, Stephenson looks at the issues and contextual factors that enhance and impact the growth of leadership capacity in teachers and draws on participative approaches, together with critical inquiry, collaboration, coaching, and teamwork. Hiasat takes the reader on her own leadership journey and her transition from language educator to educational leader. Harold clarifies the difference between mentoring and coaching and identifies key dispositions and actions required for the two important leadership processes. In the last chapter of Part VI, Bailey explores the benefits of giving back to the profession and couches these benefits through a seven-level framework. Her chapter also discusses the value that comes from engaging in leadership activities like mentoring new teachers, sharing our experiences and expertise with colleagues, sharing our expertise through writing, and volunteering with professional associations.

The Role of Individual and Collective Professional Learning is the focus of Part VII of this volume. Reflective practice and professional development and its role in professionalism comprise the topics of the next chapters. Curtis provides a definition of reflective practice and highlights important differences between just thinking about our teaching and systematically reflecting on our professional practices. Diaz Maggioli discusses a principled approach to Continuous Professional Development and offers guidelines on how to combine individual teachers' professional development needs with the development needs of the institution in which they work. Quirke introduces one strategy for the development of a personal professional development and lifelong learning plan, which aims to support how teachers can further their own knowledge, practice and career whilst modeling best learning practice to their students. In her chapter on conference organization skills as a means of professional development, Gobert looks at how organizing conferences and ELT events can offer many opportunities for professional growth and development. Aronson shows the reader how engagement with professional associations can have an impact on a teacher's professionalism and outlines how teachers can leverage their professional associations in order to deepen their content expertise, enhance their leadership skills, network with colleagues, and strengthen their ability to influence policy decisions that affect their professional lives.

Part VIII examines the role of Research in English language teacher professionalism and how the process of doing research can increase a teacher's professionalism levels. Reynolds makes the case for how research engagement supports professionalism in language teaching. Strategies for conceptualizing and planning, conducting and reflecting, and disseminating and receiving feedback are discussed along with

various resources that teachers can turn to for support. Professional learning communities (PLCs) are the topic of focus of the next chapter. Smith, Jones and de Oliveira explore a sample PLC that is unique in both its contextual features and its approach to collaborative learning. Drawing from their experiences, successes, and challenges, they propose an optimal PLC that facilitates collaboration within and across institutions to enhance teaching practices and to promote positive student learning outcomes. Shehadeh examines the important concept of contextualization as a way of linking it to the relevant research and to the setting of the study. In doing so, he describes and illustrates the two main ways in which research is contextualized. The last chapter in this section is centered around growing your research impact. Chapter co-authors, Minh and Renandya provide us with useful and relevant information on ways to ensure our research has impact and contributes to building new knowledge. They then share ways teachers can make their research more visible to the academic community using both traditional and non-traditional means.

The following three chapters in Part IX center around the important process of sharing your work with others in the field. Broady demystifies the process of putting together a conference proposal, getting it accepted and presenting scholarly work at an ELT conference. Littlejohn and Reinders look at the topic of getting published and—more broadly—at disseminating published work. In addition to looking at the many reasons why educators publish and reviewing the broad range of publication platforms available, the authors also highlight some of the potential publication pitfalls and strategies for success. Pathare and Pathare share their experiences with writing coursebooks and other pedagogical materials and explore the skills and attitudes required to succeed as authors.

The last few chapters of this volume examine other diverse aspects of professionalism with a view to moving forward and onwards in the ELT profession. Aubrey details an often overlooked part of one's life-long career development, that of the job search. His chapter addresses the complex nature of what's involved in an international ELT job search. England and Schmidt share how they have expanded their geographic and professional horizons through travel to foreign countries and how they have acquired skills and knowledge unavailable without such efforts. In their chapter, the authors seek to provide information on opportunities for expanding cultural horizons beyond familiar geographical locations. The last chapters in the volume provide readers with information that might be needed for mid to late-career level teachers. Wolfersberger presents a three-part framework (teaching, research and service) that institutions typically use to appraise faculty during their promotion and tenure process. In this chapter, the author provides a definition, explains typical evaluation criteria, and presents strategies for documenting one's work in each of these three areas. Algren provides a unique perspective on how important it is to give back to the profession through volunteerism and service. He explores the many varied opportunities that teachers have to give back to their field, and to pay it forward to those who follow and who take over when others exit. In the final chapter of the volume, Reinders and Lewis share their views on the many ways that English language teachers have to retire, how to plan for their retirement and leverage their skills for life outside the classroom and academic environment.

4 Final Thoughts

Educators view themselves as professionals either "because they choose to, regardless of the quality of the culture around them, or because the culture sways them with a desire to do so" (Wiersma, 2011, p. 48). For which ever reason, English language teachers need to consider the long history of 'professionalism' and work on ways to increase their own professionalism levels. It is our hope that this volume will help English language teachers do just that.

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Language Teacher Professionalism: What Would Learners Say (WWLS)?

Víctor Parra-Guinaldo and Tammy Gregersen

Abstract This chapter advocates for going beyond traditional sources and definitions of language teacher professionalism in order to consider the perspectives of the language learner. We attempt to re-direct the evidence on relationship building (e.g., between teacher-teacher, teacher-administrator, and teacher-parent) as a key characteristic of teacher professionalism and apply it to the relationships that language teachers build with their learners. The chapter begins with general definitions of professionalism and their evolving meaning and then considers what it means to be a teaching professional and the stakeholders who are given the authority to make such judgements. Building on this background, we advocate for viewing language teacher professionalism through a positive psychology lens, with particular emphasis on emotional intelligence and nurturing the teacher-learner relationship.

Keywords Language teacher professionalism · Positive psychology · Emotional intelligence · Relationship-building

1 Introduction

Understanding what it means to be a language-teaching professional necessitates wading into murky social contexts and complex cultural perspectives. Although definitions of *professionalism* abound, few would deny that an element of authority and expertise is woven into its semantic denotation. Justified or not, today's generation seems eager to question those in authority. Such demands for accountability of those with authority have resulted in an apparent lack of consensus on respect for it. As a consequence, we have experienced an upsurge in a philosophy of participation wherein individuals are encouraged to assert their rights with respect to claims

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C. Coombe et al. (eds.), *Professionalizing Your English Language Teaching*,
Second Language Learning and Teaching,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-34762-8_2

of authority. This is particularly the case with learners' attitudes towards teaching professionals:

> …it is an unwise teacher who believes that all of the children in their class will conduct themselves in a desirable fashion purely because the state invests teachers with formal authority. Authority exists only in so far as subordinates accept its legitimacy and consent to do what is required of them and western societal views about the nature and exercise of authority have changed in recent times (Elliott, 2009, p. 198).

Such a situation makes it all the more untenable that current responses to questions surrounding what it means to be a teaching professional, broadly speaking, are almost completely void of learners' voices. As you read further through the literature review of this chapter, you will discover that although the voices of policy makers, union leaders, school administrators and even teachers themselves are heard loud and clear, little mention–if any–is made of what learners think makes their teacher "professional". Although research has addressed what it means to be a professional and a teaching professional, we know very little about the expectations of the people with most at stake: learners.

The circumstances are even more complex when we talk about language teaching professionals. According to Leung (2012, p. 26):

> Language teachers' positions are, arguably, more complicated than that of other subject areas because their work draws on knowledge and research from a number of academic disciplines related to language teaching and learning. Their professionalism is at least partly shaped by the roles and tasks associated with particular political curriculum requirements and expectations of local, regional and/or national language minority communities, the characteristics of their students, the work processes in their institutions and the prevailing intellectual climate. All of this is further complexified by the fact that language teachers like everyone else in society have their personal views on social and moral issues which can bear on their professional work.

To give language learners a place at the table, we attempt to re-direct the evidence on relationship building (e.g., between teacher-teacher, teacher-administrator, and teacher-parent) as a key characteristic of teacher professionalism and apply it to the relationships that language teachers build with their learners.

2 What is Professionalism in General Then?

Professionalism, as a concept, is not very easy to pin down with a single definition. As Evans (2008) points out, a varied number of definitions of professionalism seem to exist whilst simultaneously lacking consensus about the most apt one. In her own interpretation of professionalism she "liken[s] [it] to a service level agreement" (Evans, 2008, p. 27). And thus as far as agreements go, they must rely on the existence of multiple parties for their fulfillment. This in turn confirms even further the relevance of examining professionalism in education through a psychological perspective because any human interaction inherently implies dealing with the human psyche as well. In the language classroom, the most notable and crucial

agreement is made between learners and teachers by way of the development of a working relationship. Coombe and Burridge (2018) also emphasize the human component of teacher professionalism by noting that "it is not simply about having the right teaching qualifications … [but] it [also] involves a commitment to … helping both students and colleagues achieve their goals" (p. 93). Thus, professionalism is one part concerned with the self, the educator, and one part concerned with the other, especially the one who is at the receiving end, namely the student. Echoing the sentiment about the human element of professionalism, Bowman (2013) turns his attention very fixedly upon the 'professionals' themselves in pointing out that "professionalism is less a matter of what professionals do and more a matter of who they are as human beings" (p. 17). He emphasizes the fact that "living up to a set of ideals" and having "an inner commitment that is deeply personal" are some of the essentials required for a successful educational professional (Bowman, 2013, p. 17). In his view, as will be proposed in this chapter, psychology concepts play a vital role in professionalism. And therefore the *self* portion is in fact of great importance when considering the wellbeing of the ultimate benefactor in this agreement or relationship, the student. According to Bowman, "[e]motional intelligence is a key component of professionalism" as it enables its practitioners to gauge their own as well as others' emotions in order to improve interpersonal relations and optimize their own emotions (2013, p. 18). An educator whose professional *self* is optimized by means of positive psychology elements is better equipped to optimize the *other* (person) component of their professionalism, which is the ultimate goal as we hope this chapter will demonstrate.

Returning to Bowman's points regarding what it takes to be a professional in the *self* sense, Demirkasimoğlu writes that the defining features of professionalism for an educator are related to their skills on the job, their maintenance of standards, and their accomplishment of quality (2010, p. 2049). In nurturing such features, the benefits spill over onto the student. Having explained the act of being professional, the second step is to edge closer towards the source of this act, the actual practitioner of professionalism, the *professional*.

2.1 The Evolving Meaning of Professional

Let's begin first with denotative meanings of *professional*, which tend to take a positive slant. According to Dictionary.com, the term can function as an adjective or a noun. As an adjective it refers to "following an occupation as a means of livelihood or for gain" (e.g., professional educator), "relating to, or connected with a profession" (e.g., professional studies); "appropriate to a profession" (e.g., professional opinion). As a noun, it means "a person who belongs to one of the professions, especially one of the learned professions" or as "a person who is expert at his or her work" (e.g., this teacher is a real professional). The Oxford English Dictionary Online likewise includes an entry referring to "a specified occupation or activity for money" and considers the following terms as defining characteristics: "special skill or training",

"knowledge, experience, standards, or expertise; competent, efficient", and "high level of competence, commitment".

However, considering various connotations of the word *professional* demonstrates its evolving nature and its acquisition of somewhat pejorative implications. To discover where the definition might be headed, we consulted the *Urban Dictionary*, a crowdsourced website that records new words and their meanings. One of this dictionary's allures is its ability to capture many of the variations of words that emerge over time, as well as register new words and their meanings. Users rely on the site to keep them up to date with slang, common usage and popular culture as it drives linguistic change (Nguyen, McGillivray, & Yasseri, 2018). Although the Urban Dictionary contained definitions similar to the more standard ones found in conventional dictionaries (e.g., Professional: "Somebody who gets paid for what they do–as opposed to an amateur" and "Somebody who works at a job that requires a decent amount of skill and knowledge"), it also registered definitions that took a disapproving tone. For example, "One who is enslaved to the characteristic of professionalism in order to keep their job" and "One who wears fancy clothes that tell nothing of their character or skill, whether good or bad".

2.2 What Does It Mean to Be a "Professional" and Who Defines This?

Broadly speaking, there are three interrelated concepts that are central to a traditional notion of what it means to be a professional: knowledge, autonomy and responsibility. That is to say, because professionals often confront complex and capricious conditions, they need to draw on a specialized body of knowledge, commitment and trustworthiness. To apply such knowledge however, they need the autonomy to make their own judgements, which bestows upon the professional a certain degree of power and status. Autonomy though demands the promise to act responsibly (Furlong, Barton, Miles, & Whitty, 2000; Leung, 2012).

Among common characteristics of professionalism are exclusivity in the provision of specialized services for society using valuable skills and practicing them according to standards that are established and maintained by the profession itself yet are also publicly recognized. Professionals are in positions of privilege and responsibility as they exercise personal judgment informed by their recognized training and experience in offering a service to the community. They are tasked with protecting the public by ensuring specific minimum standards of competence and performance and in return are meritoriously recognized with remuneration and status (Lindop, 1982).

So, who is responsible for setting and maintaining these criteria? In general, whether we are talking about teachers, doctors, lawyers, or any other group, the profession is composed of a body of people who uphold shared principles of competence, codes of conduct and service. The self-imposed and self-maintained values are sustained by communal action of the profession as a whole and they include

a variety of functions such as limiting access into the profession to those who are qualified by paying attention not only to the degree of qualifications but also to the relevance of said qualifications in performing the services of the profession. Implied in this expectation is that the profession will ascertain that the competence necessary to practice is assessed and updated via professional development and that the profession as a whole will self-regulate and take corrective measures when members of the profession fail to endorse the agreed upon standards of performance and competence (Lindop, 1982). Clarke and Newman (1997: p. 7) suggest that 'Professionalism operates as an occupational strategy, defining entry and negotiating the power and rewards due to expertise, and as an organizational strategy, shaping the patterns of power, place and relationships around which organizations are coordinated'.

2.3 What Does It Mean to Be a TEACHING Professional and Who Defines This?

Our purpose in this section is to aggregate specialized criteria to that already mentioned above to provide an overview of previous literature on what being a "teaching professional" means. Notice the scarcity of any direct references to learners and classroom relationships. Table 1 combines information from various sources and completes the sentence, "A teaching professional…".

As for who defines these criteria, there are several sources, two of which Sachs (2001) identified as coming from both inside and outside the profession itself. She investigated teachers' professional identities as they navigated significant changes in government policy and educational restructuring. She noted two kinds of professionalism: democratic, emerging from the teaching profession itself, and managerial, which was imposed by authorities via policies on teacher professional development that emphasized accountability and effectiveness. These competing publicly circulating discourses resulted in changes in the meaning of teacher professionalism and restricted "what can be said, thought and done with respect to debates and initiatives designed to enhance the political project of teacher professionalism" (Sachs, 2001, p. 151). Dominant discourses in teacher professionalism assert particular realities and priorities; and where people locate themselves in relation to them reflect the socially sanctioned dominance of certain ideologies and subjugation of others (Sinclair, 1996). According to Sachs (2001, p. 150),

> …definitions of 'professionalism', what constitutes a profession and so on have been sites of academic and ideological struggle between union leaders, bureaucrats and academics that are currently being played out in a variety of settings. There is no singular version of what constitutes professionalism or teaching as a profession that is shared by these diverse groups. This is despite the fact that each of these groups claims to be acting in the best interests of teachers individually and collectively.

Tichenor and Tichenor (2005) go straight to the source in their study using focus groups composed of in-service teachers. Their purpose was not to arrive at a lone

Table 1 Characteristics of teaching professionals

A teaching professional..	
possesses subject knowledge exhibits pedagogical skills manages the classroom links theory to practice cooperates and collaborates invests in continuous and lifelong learning demonstrates leadership (Snoek, S. & van der Klink, 2009)	demonstrates the pre-requisites for teacher effectiveness displays teacher-as-person qualities manages the classroom maintains instructional organization utilizes effective instructional practices monitors student progress (Stronge, 2002)
looks the part is punctual uses proper language develops relationships with colleagues (Hurst & Reding, 2000)	is analytic is dutiful is expert is reflective is respected (Cruickshank & Haefele, 2001)
possesses high degree of generalized and systematic knowledge oriented to community-interest and self-interest maintains self-control via codes of ethics perceives rewards system as symbols of achievement exercises autonomy (Barber, 1965)	shows character remains committed to change and continuous improvement possesses subject and pedagogical knowledge meets obligations maintains working relationships beyond the classroom (Sockett, 1993)
is punctual dresses neatly understands learning theories clearly communicates with colleagues, parents, and students (Kramer, 2003)	

inclusive definition of what it means to be a teaching professional but instead to determine behavioral boundaries and features of effectiveness that teachers can nurture. Their objective was to answer the question: "How do practicing teachers define professionalism?" (p. 91). Their findings suggest that teachers maintain rigorous standards, ideals, and expectations for everyone practicing in the profession and that there are teacher qualities that distinguish professional behavior that not all teachers have. Teachers in this study discussed "character" more than any other aspect, which raised the important question as to whether "character" can be taught or whether it is simply a disposition that individuals bring with them to the teaching profession.