Reagan, T. (2010). The professional status of teaching. In R. Bailey, R. Barrow, D. Carr, & C. McCarthy (Eds.), The SAGE handbook of philosophy of education. (pp. 209-223). London: SAGE Publications Ltd. doi: 10.4135/9781446200872.n14

The SAGE Handbook of Philosophy of Education

The Professional Status of Teaching

Contributors: Richard Bailey & Robin Barrow & David Carr & Christine McCarthy
Print Pub. Date: 2010
Online Pub. Date: March 31, 2011
Print ISBN: 9781847874672
Online ISBN: 9781446200872
DOI: 10.4135/9781446200872
Print pages: 209-223

10.4135/9781446200872

[p. 209 ↓]

Chapter 14: The Professional Status of Teaching

The professional status of teaching is a much-debated topic. This is understandable since the extent to which classroom teachers are ‘professionals’ has important implications for a variety of issues, among them pay, social status, control of one's own working conditions, and so on. At the same time, though, much of the debate has been less a debate per se than a series of polemics. The problem, from a philosophical and conceptual perspective, is that we lack clarity about what it means to be a ‘professional.’ More than half a century ago, the American historian Carl Becker observed:

> Now, when I meet a word with which I am entirely unfamiliar, I find it a good plan to look it up in the dictionary and find out what someone thinks it means. But when I have frequently to use words with which everyone is perfectly familiar – words like ‘cause’ and ‘liberty’ and ‘progress’ and ‘government’ – when I have to use words of this sort which everyone knows perfectly well, the wise thing to do is to take a week off and think about them. (1955: 328)

This is very much the case with the terms ‘professional’ and ‘professionalism,’ especially as they apply in the educational domain. In this chapter, we will explore the notion of ‘professionalism’ as it relates to the occupation of teaching. The chapter is divided into four parts: the first deals with the contemporary debate and discourse about professionalism; the second with professionalism as a social construct; the third with the actual case for teacher professionalism; and the last with a discussion of alternative ways in which teacher professionalism might be usefully and productively conceptualized.

[p. 210 ↓]

Current Perspectives on ‘Teacher Professionalism’

The current literature that addresses issues of ‘teacher professionalism’ is fairly extensive, and on the surface also diverse. In actuality, though, the extent to which it is really diverse is quite debatable. Insiders (i.e., educators and their advocates) tend to assert that teachers are indeed ‘professionals,’ fully engaged in professional practice and entitled to the benefits that should (but generally do not, in their case) accrue to professionals (such as physicians, lawyers, architects, engineers, and so on). Outsiders have been more skeptical, in part because of honest misunderstandings of what classroom teachers really do need to know and be able to do, and in part because of all too accurate understandings of elements of teaching as an occupation, and of teacher education as occupational preparation (see Koerner, 1963; Kramer, 1991; Labaree, 2004). Underlying both sets of arguments, though, is the lack of a clear and coherent definition of what we really mean by ‘professionalism.’ As Tomas Englund argues, the phrase ‘teaching as a profession’ ‘has no unequivocal meaning, and the conceptual meaning of profession is a void, being no more than a “buzzword”’ (1993: 1). This lack of clarity has had significant impact on the reform of education, as Richardson and Placier have noted: ‘Teacher professionalism motivated a number of recent reforms, the outcomes of which are disputable because different versions of the supposedly same reform and multiple, conflicting definitions of “professionalism” as an outcome conflict’ (2001: 929).

There is, nevertheless, a body of literature that deals with questions of ‘teacher professionalism’ that requires examination here. What we are exploring at this point might best be termed the ‘dominant discourses of teacher professionalism.’ The discourses of ‘teacher professionalism,’ of course, are not static in nature. In fact, these discourses have evolved and developed dramatically over the past half-century, although many of the core assumptions upon which they rest have remained fairly constant, as we shall see. It is also important to note here that we are concerned principally with ‘professionalism’ rather than with ‘professionalization’: the former ‘refers to the internal works of a profession and the concern of a profession's members to do

the best possible job for their clients' while the latter 'refers to external criteria such as status, salary, specialization, and control' (Noddings, 2001: 102).

Initial work on the nature of 'professionalism' in general in the 1950s, largely conducted by sociologists, focused on identifying the specific criteria that might be utilized in identifying a 'profession' and, more significantly, in distinguishing 'professions' from (mere) 'occupations.' Millerson (1964), for example, suggested that the characteristics that distinguished 'professions' from other kinds of work included:

- the use of skills based on theoretical knowledge;
- education in these skills;
- examinations to ensure competence in these skills;
- a code of professional conduct oriented toward the 'public good'; and
- a (powerful) professional organization.

Such a model is very useful in explanatory and descriptive terms. It helps us to understand why medicine and law, for instance, have traditionally been considered 'professions' and why teaching has not been so considered. It is problematic, though, if used (as it has been) to try to promote 'teacher professionalism,' since it assumes that the same path must be followed to gain professional status regardless of whether that path makes particularly good sense or is particularly relevant to the occupation at hand.

This early descriptive model of 'professionalism' was not replaced, but rather supplemented, by more normative models in the 1980s and 1990s. Shulman, for instance, has suggested that there are 'six commonplaces' that are common to all professions:

- *Service to society*, implying an ethical and moral commitment to clients.
- *A body of scholarly knowledge* that forms the basis of the entitlement to practice.
- *Engagement in practical action;* hence the need to enact knowledge in practice.
- *Uncertainty* caused by the different needs of clients and the non-routine nature of problems; hence the need to develop judgment in applying knowledge.

- *The importance of experience* in developing practice; hence the need to learn by reflecting on one's practice and its outcomes.
- *The development of a professional community* that aggregates and shares knowledge and develops professional standards. (1998: 516)

This model of ‘teacher professionalism’ is useful in that it is inward-looking, and focuses on both the individual teacher and the members of the profession as a whole engaging in what many scholars have called critical reflective practice. The core idea here is that teaching cannot be thought of in solely technicist terms, but rather can be understood only as an intellectual – and a critical intellectual – undertaking (see Giroux, 1988).

Another useful example of this development can be seen in the US Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics’ study, *Teacher Professionalization and Teacher Commitment: A Multilevel Analysis*, in which five broad areas are used to define ‘teacher professionalism’:

- credentials;
- induction;
- professional development;
- authority; and
- compensation (1997: vii).

Here, we see a number of educational, political and economic factors used to determine the extent to which teaching can be reasonably considered to be a ‘profession.’ The criterion of ‘credentials’ refers not simply to the legal credentialing process in the state (although it does, of course, include that), but even **[p. 212 ↓]** more to the education of the teacher, both in terms of subject matter knowledge and with respect to pedagogical knowledge. These two aspects of the education of the classroom teacher are, in turn, supplemented by the induction process. This process is comparable to the residency and internship experiences of medical students, and includes (but is not limited to) the student teaching experience. Of late, induction in many states has gone beyond initial licensure, and includes a multi-year initial school-based induction experience. Ongoing professional development for practicing teachers ensures that professional knowledge remains up to date, and again parallels the model provided by the medical profession. The criterion of ‘authority’ is concerned with both the collective role of teachers in the

school, district and profession, and with the individual role of the teacher, especially at the classroom and school levels. Finally, ‘compensation’ is concerned with ensuring that teachers are paid at a level appropriate to their preparation.

Such a view of ‘teacher professionalism’ is not unique to the United States; in fact, it is fairly common throughout the contemporary Anglophone world. For instance, in England the 1998 Green Paper, *Teachers: Meeting the Challenge of Change*, articulated the Government's view of what the contemporary ‘teaching profession’ needed in the following manner:

- to have high expectations of themselves and of all pupils;
- to accept accountability;
- to take personal and collective responsibility for improving their skills and subject knowledge;
- to seek to base decisions on evidence of what works in schools in the UK and internationally;
- to work in partnership with other staff in schools;
- to welcome the contribution that parents, business and others outside a school can make to its success; and
- to anticipate change and promote initiative.

In essence, although the earlier descriptive models of ‘professionalism’ have been supplemented by normative ones in the case of ‘teacher professionalism’ in recent years, both continue to play substantive roles in the definitions, and definitional debates, about ‘teacher professionalism’.

‘Professionalism’ as a Social Construct

A great deal of the discussion and debate about ‘teacher professionalism,’ as we have seen, presupposes that one can talk about ‘professionalism’ in a generic manner. In other words, what counts as a ‘profession’ (and, of course, what does *not* count as a profession) is a matter of certain criteria that are fundamentally unchanging and context-free. Such a view, while common, is nevertheless simply untrue. As Thomas Popkewitz has noted, ‘The term profession is a socially constructed word which changes in

relationship to the social conditions in which **[p. 213 ↓]** people use it. Further the word has no fixed definition or some universal idea irrespective of time or place' (1994: 2).

Typical discourse about 'teacher professionalism' is provided by the Holmes Group. In *Tomorrow's Teachers*, the Holmes Group asserts that, 'the established professions have, over time, developed a body of specialized knowledge, codified and transmitted through professional education and clinical practice. Their claim to professional status rests on this' (1986: 63). The problem with such a view is that it is simply ahistorical, and is based on a misunderstanding of the rise of other 'professions.' In fact, used as a noun, the term 'profession' dates back roughly to the sixteenth century and denoted those occupations of university-educated men. Indeed, we still occasionally come across the phrase 'the learned professions' in this regard.

Fundamentally, as Eliot Friedson noted in his book *Professional Powers*, professions 'addressed each other and members of the ruling elite who shared some of their knowledge and belief in its virtues. They did not address the common people or the common, specialized trades. So it is in our time' (1986: 3). When discussing 'professions' and 'professionalism,' in short, we are in fact discussing social status determined by a wide variety of factors having little if anything to do with the innate nature of the occupation. It is, of course, precisely because of this that some educators and teachers may wish to be considered to be 'professionals.'

At the same time, it should be noted that there are challenges to such conceptions of 'teacher professionalism.' In the early 1990s, for instance, the Australian Teachers Union sought to define and advocate for what they termed 'democratic professionalism':

> democratic professionalism does not seek to mystify professional work, nor to unreasonably restrict access to that work; it facilitates the participation in decision making by students, parents and others and seeks to develop a broader understanding in the community of education and how it operates. As professionals, teachers must be responsible and accountable for that which is under their control, both individually and collectively … (quoted in Preston, 1996: 192)

What is most interesting is this passage, it seems to me, is not what it says, but rather, how far it is from what might be considered to be the ‘dominant discourses of teacher professionalism’ that we discussed earlier (see also Sachs, 1999).

The Criteria for ‘Teacher Professionalism’

In this section of the chapter, I want to reexamine the extent to which there is really a compelling case for considering teachers as ‘professionals.’ As we have seen, there have been a number of different, and different kinds of, efforts to articulate what might be considered to be the sufficient conditions for an occupation to be considered a ‘profession.’ Although each is useful in its own context, **[p. 214 ↓]** the fact that the meaning of the term ‘profession’ is, as has been suggested, ultimately a socially constructed one, leaves us in a somewhat difficult position. The debate about whether teaching does or does not constitute a ‘profession’ is simply not resolvable on the basis of any particular empirical evidence, nor can it be settled based on any particular set of logical arguments. It is a political matter, in fact. That said, while identifying the criteria for sufficiency may not then be possible, there are nevertheless criteria that would, based on the existing literature in the field, seem to be necessary conditions with respect to the question of whether teaching, at this particular point in time and in our own particular setting, can be deemed to constitute a ‘profession.’ These, I think, could be safely said to include:

- a subject matter knowledge base;
- a knowledge base with respect to pedagogical knowledge;
- a practical and experiential knowledge base, grounded in classroom practice;
- both personal and collective authority with respect to issues of curriculum, assessment, and other policy and decision-making matters;
- control of entry to the profession;
- a meaningful ‘career ladder’ once one has been admitted to the profession;
- a code of ethics for the profession that is enforced by members of the profession; and
- a commitment to ongoing personal and professional development (see Norlander-Case et al., 1999; Reagan et al., 2000).

At this point, I want to explore these necessary conditions to see if they really do function as promised to distinguish teaching as a truly ‘professional’ activity.

The first criterion identified as a possible necessary condition for teaching as a ‘profession’ is that the teacher should have a solid subject matter knowledge base. This is probably among the least debated claims about what teachers need to know; virtually everyone appears to agree that one needs familiarity with a subject in order to teach it. And yet, this is itself problematic in the ‘real world’ of contemporary public schooling. The requirement in the *No Child Left Behind* legislation for ‘highly qualified’ teachers – a phrase defined by examination-demonstrated subject matter competence – is one, albeit problematic, manner in which such competence might be determined. The fairly common practice, in some school districts, of teachers teaching ‘out of certification area’ is also illustrative of this challenge. There is a further concern here, though, that is less discussed, and that is whether an undergraduate degree in a particular subject ensures sufficient subject matter knowledge for teachers. Even with the rise of subject area examinations for future teachers, this largely remains an assumption rather than a demonstrated reality. As for the case of elementary level teachers, the situation is even more problematic, given the breadth of knowledge that is required for effective classroom teaching. In short, although issues of the quality of future teacher subject area knowledge are often laid at the door of schools and colleges of education, the real problem may be in the actual liberal arts and sciences programs that students complete.

[p. 215 ↓] The second criterion that might be considered as a possible necessary condition for teaching to constitute a ‘profession’ is that of the teacher's familiarity with an identified and articulated knowledge base in terms of pedagogical knowledge. It is with this pedagogical knowledge base, and the provision of appropriate clinical opportunities, that schools and colleges of education are primarily concerned. Much has been written with respect to this pedagogical knowledge base, but it remains a controversial topic. The basic problem here is that while elements of this pedagogical knowledge base may indeed be useful, it is far from clear that they are themselves actually necessary conditions for effective teaching. Nor, in spite of our efforts to demonstrate otherwise, is it clear that *explicit* pedagogical preparation is either *necessary* for effective classroom teaching or that it actually ensures or improves student learning. While many of us have concerns about both alternative certification programs and programs such as ‘Teach for America,’ which place individuals who are,

by traditional standards, minimally prepared in pedagogical terms, into classrooms, the outcomes of such efforts are not all that different from the outcomes of traditional teacher education programs. Some studies have suggested positive outcomes from the use of 'Teach for America' teachers (see Decker et al., 2004; Zeyu et al., 2008), while other studies have been more critical of the outcomes of such teachers (see Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). Certainly such programs do sometimes result in poor teachers being placed in classrooms – but they also sometimes result in placing good teachers in classrooms. The same is true for other approaches to preparing classroom teachers.

There is a further concern to be raised with respect to the pedagogical knowledge base, and that has to do with the extent to which much of it is really academically defensible. To be sure, much of the content taught in schools and colleges of education is immensely useful for the practitioner (see, for example, Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005). Lesson and unit planning, classroom management strategies, professional ethics, assessment theory and practice, the appropriate use of educational technology, meeting the needs of exceptional students, and so on, all are valuable topics to which future teachers should be exposed. At the same time, though, there is much that is taught as scientifically sound 'fact' that is simply not so. I have, for instance, argued elsewhere that much of contemporary learning theory, as taught typically in educational psychology courses, is not so much psychology as it is metaphorical discourse on learning and the learning process (see Reagan, 2006). This may seem to be a trivial semantic difference, but I do not believe it to be. There is a significant difference between a metaphor for understanding how a particular student constructs reality, and for a scientific theory about the matter. In education in general, and with respect to understanding 'learning' in particular, we are not really at the point where we have anything close to a 'scientific' model or theory to speak of. Claims to the contrary are not merely wrong-headed, but perhaps dangerous. I am thinking here of such popular fads as 'multiple intelligences' (see Gardner, 2006a, 2006b) or, even more, the discourse on 'brain-based' **[p. 216 ↓]** teaching and learning in particular (see, for instance, Jensen, 2005; Sylwester, 1995). There is no question that the study of the human brain has made phenomenal progress in the past decade, nor that we now know much more about the workings of the brain than we once did (see Solso, 1997; Carter, 1998; Obler and Gjerlow, 1999; Thagard, 2005; Purves et al., 2007). We do not, though, know yet what the practical implications of such knowledge are for the learning process,

nor are we anywhere near a point at which we might be able legitimately to claim to be ready to utilize ‘brain-based’ teaching and learning strategies (whatever they might be) in the classroom. To suggest otherwise is to misrepresent what is known – and it is claims of this type that have historically been those which have resulted in criticisms of educators for jumping on the most recent fad to come around.

Finally, there is an additional problem with respect to pedagogical knowledge, and that is how one might go about measuring or assessing it. To be sure, there are now national and state examinations of pedagogical knowledge, but it is by no means certain that what they measure is really pedagogical knowledge at all – nor that what is measured (whatever it is) is actually related in any meaningful way to the ability to teach effectively in a classroom, let alone to actual *classroom practice.* To the extent to which this is true, such examinations really are little more than unnecessary hurdles for potential teachers, as indeed some critics have argued are schools and colleges of education themselves. As Clifford and Guthrie have noted,

> Some would say that neither university schools of education nor the public schools to which they are conceptually and historically linked have a future in the twenty-first century. First, it is argued, education schools have no *content:* the academic departments ‘own’ the only substantial knowledge which future teachers require. Second, education schools have no *function* except that of keeping bright people from teaching … (1988: 323)

In spite of the fact that this is a remarkably popular view, it is one that does not in fact seem credible in the context of ‘real world’ public education. Although one can indeed make a case for alternative certification programs and programs such as ‘Teach for America,’ even these efforts include pedagogical training, albeit less than many of us might think appropriate. The fact is that pedagogical knowledge, whatever its limits, does seem to be useful in teaching in the public schools. If one has doubts about this, consider the range of quality of instruction in universities, where one assumes that faculty members are indeed subject matter experts. Many of these experts, we all know, are at best weak teachers, and in a public school setting would be disasters. Knowing one's content, in short, really is not enough.

Related to, though distinct from, the criterion of the pedagogical knowledge base is the third criterion, that of the experiential knowledge base. This refers to the clinical components of teacher preparation, as well as to the tacit knowledge that the experienced classroom teacher possesses. It is clear that the clinical component of teacher preparation plays a crucial role in the process by which **[p. 217 ↓]** educators are prepared, and recent efforts in some states to extend the initial induction period into and even past the first year of actual teaching is an indication of how potentially effective such efforts can be. It is, perhaps, also with respect to the clinical component of teacher preparation that 'teaching as a profession' comes closest to 'medicine as a profession.' It is also important to note that, regardless of the extent to which one decides that teaching is indeed a 'profession,' the experiential and clinical component of teacher preparation plays an essential role in teacher preparation.

The fourth criterion that we have identified as a possible necessary condition for teaching to constitute a 'profession' is that of both personal and collective authority with respect to professional issues. In the case of teaching, such issues would include most notably those of curriculum and assessment. This raises some interesting questions for us, since while historically these were matters that were addressed at the classroom, school and district levels, and only to a minor degree at the state level, we are now witnessing increasing policy-making at the federal level, and at the state levels, in these areas. To a significant degree, much of the historical freedom of the teacher, especially in districts and schools identified as 'low-performing,' has been lost. We are seeing more and more examples of 'scripted instruction,' the curriculum is being increasingly narrowed, and curricular options are being eliminated. Further, in terms of assessment, we are relying increasing on state-level assessment systems that in turn drive curricular and assessment policy at the school and district levels. In short, in terms of this fourth criterion, what seems to be taking place is that we are moving away from evidence of teacher 'professionalism' rather than toward it. As Geoff Whitty has observed in the UK setting, the 'golden age' of teacher autonomy has moved to one in which teachers at best 'steer at a distance' (2006: 3–4). To some extent, of course, most if not all 'professions' in the United States are undergoing similar developments, though nowhere is the change more apparent or significant, I would suggest, than in the case of teaching.

Control of entry to the profession, the fifth criterion, is one of the criteria that has often been used historically to distinguish occupations from 'professions.' The issue here is the extent to which the 'profession' is in fact self-monitoring in terms of who is allowed entry to the profession. In the cases of law and medicine, for example, although external bodies play key roles in the process by which an individual is licensed, so too does the profession itself, both collectively and through individuals (see, for example, Ludmerer, 1985; Mallon, 2007). Although entry to the teaching profession is indeed restricted, more so now than in the past, the restrictions are not for the most part determined by the profession itself. Rather, they are legislative and regulatory restrictions, devised and monitored by state departments of education, generally with minimal input from the profession itself.

The sixth criterion that might be used in determining whether an occupation is in fact a 'profession' is the extent to which there is available, within the occupation, some sort of meaningful 'career ladder' or 'career path' for practitioners. This is **[p. 218 ↓]** an interesting criterion, since it has been much discussed in educational circles as one of the problems in the profession. Although I do not believe that the presence of such a 'career path' is a bad thing – in fact, it is a very good thing, for a variety of reasons – it is not clear that this is a component of the other 'professions' to which educators typically aspire. Although one can, in law, seek to become a partner, other than adding new specialty areas, there is really no equivalent in the practice of medicine. Pediatrics is pediatrics, and once approved to practice as a pediatrician, apart from ongoing professional development requirements (which also exist for teachers), there is really no 'career ladder' to speak of. One could, of course, become a medical administrator, but then a classroom teacher can become a principal. So, where does this leave us? It leaves us, I think, with something of a 'straw man' argument with respect to what are necessary criteria for an occupation to be considered a 'profession.' It is desirable, but not necessary.

The seventh criterion that we have identified here as a possible necessary condition for teaching to be considered a 'profession' is that of a code of ethics for the profession that is enforced by members of the profession. On the one hand, this is a relatively straightforward and easy matter. The National Education Association (NEA) has such a 'Code of Ethics of the Education Profession,' adopted by the NEA Representative Assembly in 1975 (see Strike and Soltis, 1992: xiii–xv), and many states have their own

professional code of ethics for teachers as well. The problematic component of this criterion has to do with enforcement. In terms of state professional codes of ethics, it is largely the task of the state department of education to enforce the code, normally through legal and certification sanctions. The NEA's ‘Code of Ethics of the Education Profession’ does not have a procedure associated with enforcement, and so its force is solely rhetorical and voluntary. This is by no means unique; although there are clear sanctions involved in the practice of both law and medicine for ethical violations, there are also commonly voiced doubts about the extent to which these sanctions are actually applied to members of the profession.

The eighth and last criterion that has been suggested here is that of a commitment to ongoing professional development. Although not unique to ‘professions,’ such a commitment is clearly a characteristic of them, especially in contemporary settings. In the case of teachers, such professional development is largely (though not exclusively) devoted to what we have called the pedagogical knowledge base. This is interesting, because it tells us something about what practicing classroom teachers, and practicing administrators, believe to be most useful and relevant with respect to improving classroom practice. Although there may be identifiable (and even identified) gaps in teachers’ subject matter knowledge, issues with respect to the involvement of teachers in policy and decision-making, ethical issues in the classroom and the school, and so on, it is primarily with the ‘how’ of teaching that professional development is sought and provided. Apart from anything else, this ought to raise concerns for us about claims related to the lack of usefulness of the pedagogical knowledge base. Clearly, once again, simply knowing one's subject is not enough.

[p. 219 ↓]

Alternative Approaches to Conceptualizing Teaching

The discussion thus far in this chapter has focused on the contemporary concept of ‘profession’ and the question of whether teachers can, indeed, be considered to be ‘professionals.’ I would like now to turn us back a bit to the related concept of

'professionalism.' It is with the notion of 'professionalism' that the normative, value-derived nature of the concept of 'profession' is perhaps most clear. We generally do not speak so much of 'professionalism' as we do of 'unprofessional-ism,' which is itself an interesting point. In other words, we utilize the concepts of 'professional' and 'professionalism' not so much to produce a positive synthesis of appropriate beliefs, behaviors, and dispositions, but rather to produce lists of the reverse – that is, of beliefs, behaviors and dispositions which are not acceptable for educators. What we are really concerned with here, it seems to me, is what Thomas Green once called the 'conscience of craft':

> There is such a thing as the conscience of craft. We see it whenever the expert or the novice in any craft adopts the standards of that craft as his or her own. In other words, it is displayed whenever we become judge in our own case, saying that our performance is good or bad, skillful, fitting, or the like. (1985: 4)

To talk about teaching as a 'craft' is perhaps somewhat anachronistic to the ear, but it is nevertheless a valuable and accurate perspective in many ways. More to the point, the concept of 'conscience of craft,' which the novice is expected to be in the process of acquiring and the master craftsperson is assumed to have internalized, is a very powerful one if we are concerned with defining 'teacher professionalism' – one that merits, at the very least, our serious reflection.

Concluding Thoughts

The question of whether teaching is in fact a 'profession' has been the focus of this chapter. We have noted that the concepts of 'profession' and 'professionalism' are not static ones, but are rather socially constructed and thus changing over time. Thus, there is not, and could not be, any permanent or 'objective' list of criteria by which one could determine whether teaching is or is not a 'profession.' All the same, we can, at least in the contemporary context, make a reasonable effort to begin to ask the question, 'Should teaching in the United States today be considered to be a profession?' In order to answer this question, we have identified and examined a number of criteria that one might argue constitute necessary conditions for an occupation to constitute

a ‘profession’ in today's world. The result of this effort is ambiguous: in some ways, teaching clearly meets reasonable standards for being considered a ‘profession,’ while in others it is certainly in the process of becoming a ‘profession,’ and in still others, it seems at present to be moving away from ‘professional’ status. There is really no easy answer, then, to the question of whether teaching is a ‘profession.’ This does not, however, mean **[p. 220 ↓]** that teachers are not obligated to behave in what would be considered a ‘professional’ fashion. Furthermore, we have seen that using a different set of concepts and terminology, Thomas Green has provided us with a valuable and worthwhile alternative to the discussion of ‘teacher professionalism’: that of ‘teacher as master craftsman.’ Although the language of this concept may strike some as outdated, and while it may not meet our political goals particularly well, as a description – both empirically and normatively – of teaching, it has the potential to be exceptionally powerful, both with new and with experienced teachers.

Timothy Reagan

References

Becker, Carl ‘What are historical facts?’ Western Political Quarterly vol. 7 p. 327–340 (1955)

Carter, Rita (1998) Mapping the Mind . Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Clifford, Geraldine Guthrie, James (1988) Ed School: A Brief for Professional Education . Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Darling-Hammond, Linda, ed. Bransford, John, ed. (2005) Preparing Teachers for a Changing World: What Teachers Should Learn and Be Able to Do . San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Darling-Hammond, Linda Holtzman, Deborah Gatlin, Su Jin Vasquez Helig, Julian Does Teacher Preparation Matter? Evidence about Teacher Certification, Teach for America, and Teacher Effectiveness (2005) Stanford, CA: Stanford University Downloadable at: http://www.srnleawds.org/data/pdfs/certification.pdf.

Decker, Paul Mayer, Daniel Glazerman, Steven The Effects of Teach for America on Students: Findings from a National Evaluation . Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research (2004) Downloadable at: http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/PDFs/teach.pdf.

Department for Education and Skills (1998) Teachers: Meeting the Challenge of Change . (Green Paper.). London: Author.

Englund, Tomas (1993) ‘Are professional teachers a good thing?’ , paper presented at the Professional Actions and Cultures of Teaching Conference, London, Ontario.

Friedson, Eliot (1986) Professional Powers: A Study of the Institutionalization of Formal Knowledge . Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gardner, Howard (2006a) Five Minds for the Future . Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Publishing.

Gardner, Howard (2006b) Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons in Theory and Practice . New York: Basic Books.

Giroux, Henry (1988) Teachers as Intellectuals: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Learning . Westport, CT: Greenwood.

Green, Thomas ‘The formation of conscience in an age of technology’ American Journal of Education vol. 94 (1) p. 1–32 (1985)

Holmes Group (1986) Tomorrow's Teachers: A Report of the Holmes Group . East Lansing, MI: Author.

Jensen, Eric (2005) Teaching with the Brain in Mind , rev. 2nd edn. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Koerner, James (1963) The Miseducation of American Teachers . Baltimore: Penguin Books.

Kramer, Rita (1991) Ed School Follies: The Miseducation of America's Teachers . New York: Simon and Schuster.

Labaree, David (2004) The Trouble with Ed Schools . New Haven: Yale University Press.

Ludmerer, Kenneth (1985) Learning to Heal: The Development of American Medical Education . New York: Basic Books.

Mallon, William ‘Medical school expansion: Déjà vu all over again?’ Academic Medicine vol. 82 (12) p. 1121–1125 (2007)

Millerson, G. (1964) The Qualifying Association . London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

National Center for Education Statistics (1997) Teacher Professionalization and Teacher Commitment: A Multilevel Analysis . Washington, DC: US Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Noddings, Nel (2001) ‘The caring teacher’ , in Virginia Richardson (ed.), Handbook of Research on Teaching , 4th edn. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association pp. 99–105.

Norlander-Case, Kay Reagan, Timothy Case, Charles (1999) The Professional Teacher: The Preparation and Nurturance of the Reflective Practitioner . San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Obler, Loraine, Gjerlow, Kris (1999) Language and the Brain . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Popkewitz, Thomas ‘Professionalization in teaching and teacher education: Some notes on its history, ideology and potential’ Teaching and Education vol. 10 p. 1–14 (1994)

Preston, B (1996) ‘Award restructuring: A catalyst in the evolution of teacher Professionalism’ , in T. Seddon (ed.), Pay, Professionalism and Politics . Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Purves, Dale, ed. Augustine, George, ed. Fitzpatrick, David, et al. (eds) (2007) Neuroscience , rev. 2nd edn. Sunderland, MA: Sinauer Associates.

Reagan, Timothy ‘Learning theories as metaphorical discouse: Reflections on second language learning and constructivist epistemology’ Semiotica vol. 161 p. 291–308 (2006)

Reagan, Timothy Case, Charles Brubacher, John, (2000) Becoming a Reflective Educator: How to Build a Culture of Inquiry in the Schools , 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Richardson, Virginia Placier, Peggy (2001) ‘Teacher change’ , in Virginia Richardson (ed.), Handbook of Research on Teaching , 4th edn. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association pp. 905–947.

Sachs, Judyth (1999) ‘Teacher professional identity: Competing discourses, competing Identities’ , paper presented at the Australian Association of Research in Education Conference, Melbourne.

Shulman, Lee ‘Theory, practice, and the education of professionals’ The Elementary School Journal vol. 98 (5) p. 511–526 (1998)

Solso, Robert (ed.) (1997) Mind and Brain Sciences in the 21st Century . Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Strike, Kenneth Soltis, Jonas (1992) The Ethics of Teaching , 2nd edn. New York: Teachers College Press.

Sylwester, R. (1995) A Celebration of Neurons: An Educator's Guide to the Human Brain . Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Thagard, Paul (2005) Mind: An Introduction to Cognitive Science . Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Whitty, Geoff (2006) ‘Teacher Professionalism in a New Era’ , paper presented at the First General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland Annual Lecture.

Zeyu Xu Hannaway, Jane Taylor, Colin (2008) Making a Difference? The Effect of Teach for America on Student Performance in High School . Working Paper 17.

The Urban Institute , Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Educational Research. Downloadable at: http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=411642.

10.4135/9781446200872.n14