Perspectives on Teacher Professionalism: A Review of Literature

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Abstract: Teachers, more than any other concerned people, often stand in the centre of the ever on-going debates in advancing education quality. In recent decades, when the need for a professionalization agenda of the teaching job has been made urgent in every education context, teacher professionalism (TP) is among the most frequently mentioned dimension. It is impossible to name any professionalization effort without describing what the corresponding teaching professionals look like. In Vietnam, recent years have also witnessed a rapid increase of studies and attention for teacher' knowledge and competence while the local literature on this issue is still rather limited. By presenting the existing perspectives of TP along with practical examples before discussing them in the light of major education goals, this article aims to provide a more systematic conceptualization of this construct and its relatives, taking into account the well studied theories and practices by world education researchers, to provide a reference source for concerned policy makers, teacher education curriculum developers, teacher trainers, researchers, and student researchers in education.

Keywords: Teacher professionalism, teacher competence, teacher education.

1. Definitions of key terms

Professionalization indicates all the measures to improve *the status* of the teaching job and the teachers. This definition is agreed by many authors, namely Ballantyne who says it is the "drive towards creating teachers as professionals" [1] or Zeichner [2], who argues that professionalization is the most influential agenda to affect teacher education. Professionalization as such is realized in a number of dimensions, one of which is professionalism.

In the past, one popular definition of professionalism referred to *the methods a professional group of people use to enhance their status and working conditions.* When applied for teachers, professionalism indicates the methods they and other educational authorities use to elevate the low status which has been characterizing the teaching job for many years. In contrast, most authors nowadays operationalize it as the contents of professionalization *or "the knowledge and competence equipped for teachers in order to improve the quality, conduct, demeanour and*

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standards" of teachers' job [3: 152]. More simply, it implies *everything teachers need to know and be able to do*. In this overview, **professionalism means the requirements of teachers' knowledge and/or competence** and is considered a versatile, ever-changing concept [4].

In recent decades, a professionalization agenda of the teaching job has been made urgent in mostly every education context, resulting or corresponding to the popularity of statements on TP. It is impossible to name any professionalization effort without describing what the corresponding teaching professionals look like. In Vietnam, however, such descriptions are still rare. In response, this article will discuss professionalism from outstanding research perspectives, with the variety of opinions being obtained from key researchers and theorists in the field of teacher education before being thematically classified and supported with examples from both quality peer-reviewed journals and authorized governmental reports across countries.

2. Research perspectives of TP

The following sections classify TP perspectives according to their major requirements for teachers, and their time order of prevalence.

2.1. Knowledge-based teacher professionalism

The classification of requirements for teachers according to their knowledge(s) is described herebelow under the umbrella term of "knowledge-based approach" in teacher professionalization. These are the most traditional requirements for teachers.

The focus on subject matter knowledge

One crucial requisite for teachers is the mastery of subject matter knowledge. Zeichner [2: 4] referred to this trend in teacher education as the "*Academic Tradition*", which focuses on "the importance of disciplinary knowledge for

pre-service teachers, gained through a classical liberal arts education combined with an apprenticeship in schools". However, problematically, the emphasis on subject-knowledge is synonymous with teachers' inconfidence about their competence and efficiency, their lack of coherence and consistence with each other, and their limited catering for students' needs. This is because their professional knowledge is not comparable to their subject matter knowledge base. An example of the focus on subject knowledge was provided by Shulman [5]. As described, 950 points of the total 1000 points in the 1875 California Teachers Examination deal with subject matter and only 50 points were given for the questions on Teaching knowledge and skills. In other words, the weighing for teaching/pedagogical knowledge is minimal. This trend emerged in the US at the time teacher professionalization was toward mass public education and the educational goal was mainly socialization of education.

The focus on teaching skills

Resulting from the increasing significance of accountability in the professionalization agenda, clearer national and local requirements for teachers in what they do in the class have been established, especially regarding their ability to make judgments. As opposed to the first trend, most academic literature in teacher education in the world more recently reflects **the higher emphasis on teaching skills, compared to and separated from that on subject knowledge**. The justifications are new responsibilities and roles for teachers, indicating the functioning of new skills which should be cognitive-based rather than behavioristic, and calling for new dispositions for good teaching.

When the focus moves to teaching skills, research skills and teacher commitment are popular requirements. Teachers also need to collaborate even more in order to fulfill various new responsibilities for the students, and to individualize their teaching for different

students. Therefore, processes, problem-solving and field practices plus reflection are made important contents in teacher standards and teacher preparation, in the hope that they would solve the inequality and injustice in education [6]. The problem with the pedagogy-based orientation is these contents may be too specific and unconnected [7]. More seriously, the acquired competences are often quantified, differentiated and then qualified without little consideration for teacher learning capacity.

Many examples can be taken to illustrate this trend. The success of Finnish students in PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) and international examinations, for one example, has been attached with the strong pedagogical competencies of teachers [8]. Besides professional knowledge (subject matter knowledge), English teacher standards pay higher attention to professional attributes (such as developing relationships, communicating, understanding legal documents) and professional skills (establishing expectations, positive attitudes to learning, keeping disciplines, etc). For another example, the following instrumental skills for teachers were listed in the US in the 1980s [5]:

- Organizing the preparation and presentation of lesson plans
- Evaluating
- Recognizing students' differences
- Being aware of cultures
- Understanding the youth
- Managing
- Understanding educational policies and processes

Other practical examples of pedagogical knowledge emphasis can be taken from Indian, English and Australian teacher education [9]. Hardly anyone would say that subject matter knowledge is sufficient for teachers. It is even mis-taken for granted as a common knowledge every teacher must have.

When the emphasis on these pedagogical knowledge and skills is extreme; teachers are no longer prerequisitely trained about the subject they teach. Moreover, surprisingly, not many of the well reported frameworks of teacher knowledge give sufficient care for both classroom management skills and knowledge management skills [10]. Meanwhile, one remarkable feature of many teacher pedagogy knowledge frameworks is that they are still expressed in task-analysis behavioral statements such as "allocate time and turns", "praise and blame", "ask questions", etc. [5: 9]. The failure to capture contextual difficulties, the inadequate attention to teachers' emotion, the ignored or overemphasized role of reflection are among the key critiques. Despite the drawbacks, thanks to the effects of these requirements in improving pedagogical skills, teachers are more concerned as professionals than ever before.

A more balanced knowledge-based teacher education

Against the bias in favour of either subject knowledge or pedagogical skills, some researchers provide more balanced frameworks. Evertson [11] mention in their meta-analysis of teacher education research a trend that teachers should be required to deepen their knowledge in both the **subject area**, **liberal arts** and the **knowledge/capacity about teaching**. Furthermore, Shulman [5] [10] suggests teachers should not only be trained in either discipline knowledge or pedagogy. Teacher education, on the other hand, must logically connect pedagogy to the specific subject knowledge, and provide the teacher candidates with courses in using their:

- **content knowledge**: the body (facts, concepts, explanations, emphases, etc.) and organization of knowledge (such as via Bloom's taxonomy, Gagné's varieties of learning)

- **pedagogical content knowledge**: including general pedagogical knowledge (the subject matter knowledge for teaching such as idea representations, analogies, examples, illustrations, models, frameworks, demonstrations, knowledge on student learning

and errors, etc.) and pedagogical content knowledge (teachers' personal form of professional knowledge which blends content and pedagogy into ready instructions of each unit or lesson)

- **curricular knowledge**: the knowledge about programmes to apply the content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge (instructions, programme features, contexts, instruction-assessment process, alternative methods for instruction, etc.).

- **other educational knowledge** such as knowledge of learners, education contexts, education goals, perspectives, values and their history.

Although Shulman's framework for teacher knowledge is well known for its completeness, it still receives criticisms. It is claimed to base on rather theoretical *knowledges*. Teacher's personal development and knowledge of educational outcomes are also not included in the list. The framework also seems to pioneer in the quantification and *limitation* of TP, an approach which may give rise to the omission of the other rich elements of the teaching job (contexts, ethics, emotions, etc.) [12]. This approach of listing the instrumental requirements for teachers, however, has since then been echoed by many authors, such as Feiman-Nemser [13], and continues until the year 2000 in the U.S., with the support of the government for certain key elements in teacher education [12]. Teachers in England, Australia and New Zealand are also encouraged to follow similar restricted version of professionalism.

The requirement for meta-knowledge in teacher education

Resulting from a prominent teaching philosophy dated for decades named *individualism,* individual teachers are believed to be sufficiently competent in teaching with their subject knowledge. The **autonomou**sly *prepared* teachers make their own decisions about how to implement curriculum innovations and about which teaching methods to choose by themselves in their classrooms. The

development of professional knowledge is often conducted via workshops by offsite experts on unrelated topics to the classrooms of the trained teachers. This requirement, or a**utonomous professionalism,** is apparent in many teacher education systems. In England, besides other countries, professional autonomy is one of the four aspects usually associated with professionalism (besides strong knowledge base, commitment to the job, strong individual and collective identities). Also, teacher professional autonomy has been reported as a major trend of TP in OECD (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development) countries in the early period [14].

Mean while, the overwhelming increase in the required subject knowledge amount, the wide variety of pedagogical approaches available for their choice and the involvement of many other stakeholders in education have led this autonomous teaching philosophy to change dramatically. Occupational heteronomy characterizes the teaching profession, rather than the traditional autonomy [12]. On discussing the variety of new teaching approaches and social responsibilities, Hargreaves [3] contrasts the *old, autonomous, individualistic,* and restricted TP with **new, collective, collegial and extended professionalism**. Teacher autonomy is no longer suitable to teachers who have to teach things they have not been trained, so teachers should be required to collaborate.

A good example for teacher collaborative professionalism can be taken from Irish teacher education, where teachers are expected to adopt a more interactive relationship with students, teachers, parents and other stakeholders. In the classroom subject teachers often work alongside special assistants and learning support teachers. Outside of the classroom, teachers also liaise with a range of other staff about school development, school evaluations and special education needs of students, among other areas [15]. Another appropriate illustration is the case of Finland, where the modern TP can be described in terms of

individuals who: (i) appreciate the role of active personal learning as a professional tool; (ii) cooperate, interact and communicate well; (iii) see themselves as both individuals and society member, and (iv) devote to their work [16].

2.2. Competence-based Teacher Professionalism

Competence is a newer concept than *knowledge* in education. According to Zeichner [2], the 1960s-1970s marks the impressive appearance and development of competence-based/performance-based teacher education in the US. All the previous versions of professional rules do not seem to solve the problems that the complex contexts of teaching are creating. Various versions of competencies have been defined. Authors base on different values and political perspectives/dimensions to create them. There is a lack of a shared view of occupational competence and a reliable knowledge of teacher learning to construct programmes. In other words, agreement in the most important contents for teacher competences simply does not exist. Contemporary competence-based TP is a typical case of *multidimensionality*, as reflected below through different lenses.

2.2.1. The components of competence

The components of competence are taken as the first lens to look at different definitions of competence-based TP. Most contemporary literature reveals that teacher competence models should integrate the **knowledge**, **skills**, and **disposition** teachers should apply in their job; competence is the general umbrella term for a major task of the job, while competencies are often conceptualized as the more specific responsibilities.

If knowledge (such as subject matter knowledge or knowledge of students) and skills (such as pedagogical skills) are familiar in knowledge-based TP, the emphasis on teacher dispositions or attitudes into this concept is a specialty of the competence-based era. In eastern countries such as Japan, Korea and China, teachers were required to have certain personalities in order to deal with the changes in modern students' mental features; in Malaysia, the teachers must be dedicated to the national identity. Teachers are believed to be active in the realization of the ideal society and the transformation of the society, with everything they possess (knowledge, skills, values, etc.). Despite all that, inadequate attention has been paid to the integration of this content into teacher education.

To explain for the focus on disposition, a number of reasons have been named. Hargreaves [3] considers that teaching is an emotional profession in which commitment, care, self-direction, etc. are named as important attitudes. Consequently, teachers always have to face worries, fear, loneliness, uncertainties and other negative feelings in their relationships at school and in conducting their tasks. This is not to mention the need to cope with complex and diversified school environments.

Many traits have been mentioned as important in teacher disposition. One of the most complete discussions of teacher dispositions is given by Sockett [17], who claims that this highly complicated concept can be interpreted from numerous perspectives. Stable as they are, they cannot be equalized to "personality traits" because they are conscious, cognitive, learnt and intentional actions. People often reflect and judge themselves based on the intentionality of those acts. A specific behavior will not lead to the same assumption of dispositions in different contexts. Therefore, it is impossible to explain actions based on dispositions, but it is possible to predict the tendency of actions. When dispositions become virtues, i.e., when they are initiated by a person, realized with intrinsic motivation after severe self-opposition, the construct of dispositions can be framed for assessment in teacher education. Sockett has also identified three relating domains of dispositions needed for teaching: character, intellect, and care, with the suggested components as below. The variation of dispositions in different times may result from changing educational goals.

Table 1. Dispositions of teachers

Character	Intellect	Care
Self-knowledge	Trustfulness	Tolerance
Courage	Accuracy	Tact
Sincerity	Consistency	Discretion
Integrity	Fairness and impartiality	Civility
Trustworthiness	Clarity	Receptivity
Endeavour (persistence,	Thoughtfulness	Relatedness
perseverance, heed)	Open-mindedness	Responsiveness

The best example of the disposition trend in Asia can be seen in Singaporean value-based education and teacher education. Teachers of the 21st century are required to be competent in disposition-based life skills such as flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, teamwork and collaboration, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability, leadership and responsibility. Leadership and management and personal effectiveness, which are highly related to teachers' spiritual traits, are even named as two of the three dimensions in teacher competencies, besides professional practice (National Institute of Education, Teacher education of the 21st century). Shi [18] states that in China, one of the cores of teacher education according to the revised educational laws is possessing good personality, moral values and commitment to work in education. When it comes to discussing teachers' dispositions, many teacher education curricula in the east introduce courses in the citizenships of the country (such as Malaysia's Islamic civilization, China' politics) in an effort to reduce the local polarization of values and improve the national spirit among the teachers who are responsible for preparing the nations' new generations (Australia, Malaysia, Philippines, China, etc.)

2.2.2. Political perspectives in defining teacher competences/professionalism

Previous sections focus on research perspectives of TP, while this section highlights the reconceptualization of this term under practical conditions.

Definitions

In practical definitions of TP, among the competing professionalism conceptions, the most noticeable difference is in terms of political management perspectives [4], between the democratic and social-contextual professionalism against the commercialized (also called the efficiency-based) one. Behind both of these competing approaches, teacher education is believed to be a political issue [19], or the right policy is assumed to create good quality in teacher education. Based on different education goals, the democratic professionalism emphasizes that social justice and equality should be the main aims: education should benefit everyone. The commercialized professionalism, which is often designed by a small number of members in the teacher education field on behalf of many groups of stakeholders, emphasizes standards, output controls, market type mechanism, competition, etc. Other features of the commercialized version include the focus on research and evidence.

Social contextual professionalism

This trend is named the Developmental Tradition in teacher education by Zeichner [2]. Besides the traditional requirements as above listed, in this democracy-focused era, teachers are required to have a knowledge of social justice, the skills to create social justice in the classroom and to train students on it, and the dispositions related to social justice, such as treating students fairly, caring for the underprivileged ones, etc…For example,

teachers should be able to teach students about global problems and interactions. Moreover, the students in the modern world face a fast changing society, and teachers should have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to teach them to adapt [20]. Otherwise, teachers themselves should be globally competent, dealing with students of all types, races, religions, etc. Never has learner-centeredness been so popular as an approach in education, in which students' individuality and personal role are highly respected [18].

Some examples can be taken. In China, teachers are required to give up the traditional teacher-centered approach and replace it with the utmost care for learners' needs [18]. The National Council for Teachers of Mathematics in the United States, for another example, has organized their standards and principles for effective teachers in several groups, the first of which is *Equity*. More critically than being knowledge transferors, teachers are considered agents of social transformation [12].

After the 2000s, teacher effectiveness must be understood not only as outcome-related but also in the influences of social contexts and relationships, resulting in holistic version of TP. Grant [21] mentions the following skills of effective teachers:

- Pedagogical skills: implementing teaching strategies based on all knowledge resources
- Reflection skills: analyzing, researching, acting on teacher-generated data based on goals, values, assumptions.
- Communication and collaboration skills
- Management skills to create learning environments
- The ability to use technology as a teaching-learning tool (to communicate, to plan, to improve lessons, etc.

Similar ideas were put forward by Collins [9] and in Australia where effective teacher preparation should include but do not limit to: a variety of meaningful concepts and related

theories, and a variety of principles to examine, justify and change practices (such as ethics, research, culture, theories of human (children and adult) development, insights into diversity and inclusivity, experience in learning sites, and human learning practices and debates about them).

It's hard to neglect the issue of integrating modern technology in teacher education. The boom of modern technology has impacted the training of teachers in almost every country, making mastery of technology a required competence in teacher professionality. To teach effectively, to access the resource of knowledge, and to produce good outcomes in education, i.e. students who have IT skills, teachers must be trained on and be competent in information literacy.

This trend has been reflected thoroughly in China and Singapore where the use of ICT is one of the major core courses in educational studies. In European countries such as Austria, France, in the US and Canada, ICT has become a compulsory subject for student teachers since the early 1990s. In England, ICT is not only a subject, but is practically embedded in the instruction of all subjects at teacher education schools and for professional development programmes to gain the maximum effect. Teachers are not qualified in England and France if they do not meet a set of ICT standards for pre-service teacher education courses.

As it is stated, the world has turned into an information age; teacher education cannot stay in the industrial age.

Commercialized professionalism

In this perspective, a (usually short) list of pre-specified and standardized teacher competencies is formed. Teachers are to respond to the needs of individual students, and to be more flexible on the choice of knowledge to equip themselves and to apply to students. Great attempts have been made to cut down on theoretical subjects and courses teachers need to learn at teacher education schools, lower

qualification is required from them, and more flexible input criteria are set for the teacher candidates/new teachers. This tradition is similar to the so named "social efficiency" one by Zeichner [2].

School-based teacher education is a key commercialized trend in teacher education, involving the recruitment of subject knowledge masters by schools due to the shortage of officially qualified teachers. Like in the pre-professionalization stage, subject matter knowledge is given priority over pedagogical knowledge and dispositions. Teachers are those with strong subject knowledge and just need to be trained at schools in the latter two contents. However, little training is provided on these alternative courses [22]. As an illustration, England is the country with the strongest wave of school-based teacher education in recent years (32 alternative routes) [22]. The 2002 Education Act of England has claimed one key policy that schools are allowed to use and train adults without certification for certain teaching tasks. These "paraprofessional" teachers can work as teaching assistants, teacher trainees or even advanced skill teachers. In the US, some examples of alternative teacher preparation programmes are Teach for America (one of the few clearly successful alternative programmes of teacher education) and alternative-route teacher education programmes [22, 23]. In California, for another example, teachers do not need to complete a teacher education programme or to be licensed before starting to work at schools [23]. Many teacher candidates have already worked as full-time teachers, with about 200 hours of formal instruction by mentoring teachers. In Finland, some schools have been able to enjoy the decentralized administration and take responsibility for training their own teachers. Other countries with alternative teacher education (sometimes named fast-tract programmes) include Chile,

Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, the Philippines, etc.

While this alternative route to train teacher professionals appear to bring new winds to the situation of teacher shortage, and bring focus back to the used-to-be respected teacher autonomy and subject matter knowledge training for teachers [23], there is a question mark over the quality of teacher training in these programmes, the preparation contents for teacher candidates, and the kind of guidance they receive. In order that the problems of alternative programmes can be avoided and that teacher professionalization is not undermined, collegial, the university-based teacher preparation which equips a teacher with many skills that schools cannot should still be the norm.

As a concluding note for this section, based on the political perspective, TP in the current days can be defined with an essentialist view, containing a short list of requirements for teachers or can be defined in a broad sense which enables it to reflect the most valued teacher education ideas in different period of times and the contexts of those ideas. Most definitions of professionalism in the postmodern time have avoided the overemphasis on either extreme of democracy and commercialization. The reliance on either extreme is considered ineffective as it neglects the advantages of the other.

3. Summary and discussion

This paper has attempted to look at TP from different perspectives. In the professionalization of the teaching job, the concepts of professionalization have evolved in quite a systematic journey. The different concepts of professionalism can be summarized in the following table:

Table 2. Perspectives on Teacher Professionalism

Research perspectives of TP	Political perspectives of TP (practical reconceptualization of the research perspectives)
Knowledge-based TP: requirements for a master in subject matters, teaching skills, or a balance of them, meta-cognitive knowledge (individual or collegial professionalism)	Social contextual TP: requirements for being an agent of social transformation (with competencies in ICT, communication skills, living skills, etc)
Competence-based TP: requirements for the integration of knowledge, skills, and dispositions	Commercialized TP: a shortened list of requirements

To explain for this diversity, apparently underlying the variation from one perspective to another as above are different teaching-learning philosophies and educational goals/outcomes. For one thing, research perspectives on the requirements for teachers can be based on many dimensions, such as student learning, teacher learning, or society reconstruction [2]. Many different teaching methods are available with the same purpose of improving student learning. As regards the roles for teachers and students, either of them can be the centre of the classroom. In the teacher-centred class prominent since the 1970s, knowledge was typically presented to the learner in a role of "a blank page" instead of a discovery-emphasized approach and the basic teaching methods were recitation or lecturing, along with other monotonous sequence of note-taking, question-and-answer. Such approach is still challenging the more newly developed and well-supported student-centred teaching approach, which focus on students' differences in needs, learning styles, backgrounds, etc. Besides, teaching methods can also vary in the content focus, from learning process to learning products. In the meantime, in terms of teacher learning, it is believed that one could learn to become a teacher through practical apprenticeship, and one improved as a teacher by individual trial-and-errors. This echos a popular teacher development perspective, i.e individualism, in which individual teachers are believed to be sufficiently competent in teaching. As opposed to that is the philosophy of collegialism, which suggests that teachers learn by collaborating, mostly on pedagogical topics due to the availability of multiple teaching methods to them. Finally, with regards to society reconstruction, at schools, certain instrumental subjects have been selected, for example, mathematics and science are emphasized for social efficiency and economic effectiveness; teaching quality is considered to be a more and more significant factor for successful student learning, and teacher education is believed to play an important role in shaping quality teaching [20]. These are several dynamics in the teaching and learning theories which lead to the changes in the requirements for teachers.

Facing so many versions or perspectives on TP, a more salient issue of interest for new researchers and teacher trainers is to decide which one is better than the other. This is a hard question to answer without investigating further into the functions and goals of teacher education. The better perspective should address the agreed functions and goals of education. According to Labaree [24], the social purposes to be embedded in all curricula include democratic equality (everyone is equal), social efficiency (education should efficiently serve the needs of the society and prepare the workforce for it), and social mobility (education should help a person to improve or maintain a good social status), which are mutually influential.

Judging from this classification, the goal of democracy in teacher education appeared to be dominant in the 1960s and 1970s before social efficiency takes the priority. Effective teachers have been defined as having either strong subject knowledge mastery (in the earlier

decades) or strong pedagogical knowledge mastery (in the later decades) but the increase in the types and complexity of knowledge for students has forced them to change from individualism to collectivism. The impact of social mobility is gradually escalated, illustrated by the extreme significance of accountability issues, the increasing value for education results rather than the qualities it creates (known as credentialism), and the adoption of standards of teacher competences in many countries. It is apparent that the political goals of education are considered more important than or at least as important as other similarly essential educational goals such as students' learning and meeting students' interests. This idea has been reflected by Cochran-Smith [25] by claiming that teacher education nowadays is a political sphere. Despite being one important educational goal, democratic values such as equality and diversity are not as emphasized in the period of 1980s-2000 as the other two goals, especially in Western countries.

Besides socialization, education has other goals which are not discussed by Labaree. Biesta's classification [26] of education functions also state qualification and subjectification (making learner self-sufficient and independent from external imposition to perform the work), in which education does not only serve the society but also the individuals. The three functions of qualification, socialization and subjectification are inter-related and inter-influential. As regards this classification, TP in the period from 1960s to 2000 has reflected the movement of dominant education functions from qualification to socialization. In the earlier stage, teachers were trained so that they can function in their profession and later to match the social requirements on the job. The goal of subjectification (making teachers more confident in teaching, such as focusing on their disposition) has also started to be appreciated in the later decades. However, this goal has not been paid equal attention to other goals.

In order to avoid goal bias, it is highly important for curriculum designers to reconsider not only the question of teacher effectiveness and the goal of socialization but also all available resources of content knowledge, education materials and principles (such as human understanding and learning processes, educational goals, curricula, school structures, culture, etc.), contexts and teaching practices [10]. In terms of educational goals, socialization and social efficiency/mobility are undoubtedly key goals, but democracy, qualification, subjectification **and students' learning** should also be in focus.

In fact, many teacher education and teacher professional development programmes are being improved in the consideration of a more balanced goal system. Positively, this effort is named "reprofessionalization" in which important values in the previous professionalization era are altered and improved. Specifically, the contents of training are again regarded to be important besides the form or structure of teacher education programmes. Although programmes contrast heavily on the contents they offer, based on more comprehensive definitions of education outcomes and competences, the range of contents becomes more balanced and holistic than in the previous stages of teacher education, demanding a higher flexibility and vision of teacher educationers. Prepared teachers need to be masters in subject matter, how students learn, how to represent knowledge, solve problems, test new teaching methods, reflect, and possess a range of dispositions as virtues. No longer can subject matter knowledge or pedagogical knowledge take the utmost position. Research-over-oriented teacher training programmes are no longer highly encouraged. Instead, other values are recovered or emerge such as the role of student learning outcomes, contexts, global development and field work in teacher education, besides others. From such development, it can be concluded that the role of teacher education in the post-modern world, in general, is not only to create

qualified teachers who have a good understanding of the norms and values in their job. In all programmes, including alternative routes, more attention has obviously been paid to the personal development of teachers in addition to the formal instruction in subject matter knowledge, pedagogy, attitudes. Such comprehensive professionalism is also inherent in the strong education systems such as Finland, Sweden. Optimistically, a highly important, though not really clearly articulated, goal of these programmes is to create teachers as well-rounded autonomous (qualified and socialized) practitioners – a more superb autonomy than in the pre-professionalization stage.

The conflicts between old and new professionalisms may be the most challenging obstacle for teacher education designers, but if conflicts are regarded as essential catalysts for the growth of profession and that a profession is only a profession when generalization of ideas in it is barely possible [4], the varied perspectives in the modern teacher education could be a good sign of improved teacher professionalization. Moreover, because social contexts always change, relying on contexts to define professionalism is not a sound choice [20]. It is always more persuasive to look back at teacher education and judge it from the goals it is serving.

With regard to localized TP in Vietnam, the scope of this paper does not allow for in-depth discussion, but some overall features can be conspicuous. First, there are signals that teacher education curricula still pay more attention to particular teacher education components than others. Subject knowledge, for instance, are more valued compared to pedagogical, pedagogical content knowledge and teacher dispositions. The major approach revealed in the outcome statements and curricula of most teacher training universities is also still largely knowledge-based, despite the recently widely discussed competence-based approach. Even in the knowledge-based approach, teachers' meta-knowledge to work with each other and colleagues are not yet adequately considered.

Thus, the teaching job in Vietnam has many features of the pre-professionalization period. Regarding the prominent teacher education goals, the system tends to focus more on qualification and socialization than on subjectification. Basically, this means teacher education mainly targets at equipping teachers with the skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, standards, etc. to do their job, and to develop the society rather than at how to make teachers competent enough to be independent from the norms, to decide or create their own way of doing their job. The professionalization of the job, with the features as described does not seem to affect Vietnam to a significant degree. A future and better invested analysis is highly needed to describe the complex situation of TP in Vietnam and make more detailed recommendations. Within the scope of this paper, the most obvious issues revealed about the TP and teacher education curricula in Vietnam that needs further investigation for improvement may include at first a redefinition of TP in the light of the targeted teacher education goals and objectives, the professionalization trends in the world, the knowledge- or competence-based frameworks, the issue of teachers ' disposition, etc. Moreover, a redefinition of teacher education curricula with new courses or renewed old courses in which research, practicum, reflection and other highlighted practicum strategies should be considered in deeper focus. Further investigations in these areas are highly needed.

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Các quan điểm về năng lực chuyên môn dành cho giáo viên

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Tóm tắt: Từ trước tới nay, năng lực chuyên môn của giáo viên luôn là tâm điểm của các cuộc thảo luận nhằm nâng cao chất lượng giáo dục. Trong những năm gần đây, khi việc chuyên nghiệp hóa nghề giáo viên đã trở nên quan trọng hơn, năng lực chuyên môn của giáo viên cũng trở thành một trong những cụm từ liên quan được nhắc tới nhiều nhất. Rất khó có thể mô tả những cố gắng chuyên nghiệp hóa nghề giáo viên mà không nói tới khái niệm người giáo viên cần có năng lực, kiến thức chuyên môn như thế nào. Ở Việt Nam, chủ đề kiến thức và năng lực của giáo viên cũng đang thu hút sự chú ý của các nhà quản lý giáo dục và nhà nghiên cứu, nhưng cơ sở lý luận để tham khảo về chủ đề này vẫn còn rất hạn chế. Bài báo này sẽ trình bày những quan điểm nổi bật về khả năng chuyên môn của giáo viên cùng các ví dụ của các quan điểm này trên thực tế cũng như trong lý luận nghiên cứu trước khi bàn luận về các quan điểm này theo các mục tiêu giáo dục quan trọng, với mục đích cung cấp một tổng quan có hệ thống về khái niệm này. Bài báo có thể là nguồn tham khảo hữu ích cho việc hoạch định chính sách giáo dục, phát triển chương trình đào tạo sư phạm, đào tạo giáo viên, và nghiên cứu giáo dục.

Từ khóa: Khả năng chuyên môn của giáo viên, năng lực của giáo viên, đào tạo sư phạm.