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INVESTIGATING CONCEPTUAL NOTIONS OF TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM

by

Frano Marsic

BA, BFA, Simon Fraser University, 2003

BEd, Simon Fraser University, 2004

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Abstract

Although teachers are commonly spoken of as professionals, establishing a clear definition and understanding of *teacher professionalism* has been demonstrated to be highly subjective and a source of great debate. Unlike other vocations, the professionalism of teachers has repeatedly been questioned and redefined over the recent tumultuous years of educational policy in British Columbia. In my experience as a teacher and BCTF representative, I have observed how conflicts are often rooted in competing subjective notions of teacher professionalism. Drawing on theories of professionalism (Ball, 2003; Grimmet and D'Amico, 2008; Hargreaves, 2000; Hyslop-Margison and Sears, 2010; Osmond-Johnson, 2018; Maxwell, 2015; Poole, 2007; Sachs, 2016;) and discourse analysis (Bloor and Bloor, 2007; Fairclough, 2010; Mogashoa, 2014; Strauss and Feiz, 2014), this study investigates how teacher professionalism has evolved and is currently understood in both the academic literature and by the education stakeholder organizations, the BCTF and the BCPSEA, who make up the bargaining relationship in British Columbia. I believe that each of these organizations present their own views of professionalism which can be seen to compete with each other as discourses, and through the analysis of textual documents I will attempt to construct an understanding of these conceptualizations. Then, through interviews conducted with practicing teachers, I attempt to develop an understanding of how current practicing teachers have internalized these competing discourses and have formulated their own views of their professionalism. By engaging in qualitative research based on a case study model using critical discourse analysis, I address the following questions: (1) How is teacher professionalism currently conceptualized and understood by both stakeholder groups (primarily the BCTF and the BCPSEA) and practicing

educators in the BC public education system?, and (2) in what way does each organization's narrative or perspective (discourse) manifest in the views of these practicing educators?

Preface

This graduating paper is an original intellectual product of the author, F. Marsic. The fieldwork reported herein was covered by UBC Ethics Certificate number H18-03402. This graduating paper was submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in the Faculty of Graduate Studies in Educational Administration and Leadership at the University of British Columbia (Vancouver). This inquiry was conducted and written by Frano Marsic under the supervision of Dr. Marilynne L. Waithman, Principal Investigator, and Dr. Gerald Fallon, Associate Professor and Research Supervisor.

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Chapter One - Research Proposal

Introduction

The object of this study is to research and investigate through qualitative study how *teacher professionalism* is conceptualized and currently understood by both education stakeholder groups and practicing teachers within the British Columbia public school system. This involves identifying the dominant narratives and discourses of teacher professionalism that are represented within that system, particularly those of the BCTF and BCPSEA, who make up the bargaining relationship which defines the role and responsibilities of teachers within the system. Strauss and Feiz (2014) define ‘discourse’ as “the social and cognitive process of putting the world into words, of transforming our perceptions, experiences, emotions, understandings, and desires into a common medium for expression and communication, through language and other semiotic resources” (p. 1). This is a social and cognitive process that reflects, shapes, and re-creates meaning in the world. The writers elaborate that discourse is language that enacts specific social activities and social identities, and for the purposes of this study I am interested in exploring how the discourses of some of BC’s primary education stakeholders have managed to shape the social identities and attendant language in relation to the concept of teacher professionalism.

Through critical discourse analysis (CDA), I will examine relevant documents produced and distributed by both stakeholder groups (BCTF and BCPSEA) which reflect their conceptions of teacher professionalism. Fairclough (2010) describes CDA as an analysis of “dialectical relations between discourse and other objects, elements or moments, as well as an analysis of the

‘internal relations’ of discourse,” and “not analysis of discourse in itself” (p. 4). He sees the primary focus of CDA as the relation between discourse and power, which includes questions of ideology, which are understood to be “meaning in the service of power” (Thompson, 1984 as cited in Fairclough, 2010, p. 8). These ideologies represent aspects of the world which contribute to establishing or sustaining unequal relations of power. The landscape of education in British Columbia is one that has been repeatedly characterized as a struggle for power between the province’s teachers and the government, and this conflict seems to center on the ideological roots that form the basis of each organization’s view of teacher professionalism. Fairclough believes that due to the way ideologies represent or explain parts or aspects of the world inadequately, they are therefore open to study and critique.

This analysis includes an examination of bylaws, directives, and articles published by the BCTF and similar literature and articles made available by the BCPSEA. After, through interview analysis, I investigate which of these conceptualizations seem to be most dominant or aligned with the views of educators currently working within the school system. Therefore, this research project requires two levels of analysis: first, document analysis in which the narratives and discourses are first identified, and second, the analysis of teacher interviews.

Research problem: Purpose and relevance of this study

As stated, the term *teacher professionalism* is one subject to wide disagreement, and there is an inherent contradiction in this term being highly subjective yet also widely used in the highly bureaucratic environment that is public education. In my experience, it has become apparent that conflict is often generated within a school or district when an individual or group’s

subjective notion of their professionalism is not seen to be understood, shared, represented, or respected. Finding a common ground of understanding is a worthwhile endeavour.

Significance of the study

British Columbia's public education system has experienced a great deal of conflict and debate amongst its various stakeholder groups, and much of this discord seems to be a product of the competing perspectives and narratives surrounding teacher professionalism. During the last teachers strike in 2014, the professionalism of teachers was repeatedly brought into question as the two sides (employer and the teacher's union) engaged in a very public battle for the support of the province's citizens. The relationship between the BCTF and different governments of BC, most notably that of the BC Liberals, has repeatedly been characterized as both "dysfunctional" and "tortured" (Giovanetti, 2014). During this last strike action, the government was accused of engaging in a "massive spin campaign to make teachers look greedy" (Smith, 2014), while teachers were repeatedly characterized as being overly emotional and unreasonable. In *The Globe and Mail*, Justin Giovanetti (2014) reported comments made by one of the province's previously appointed mediators, in characterizing the province's teachers as having "a sense of grievance [which] goes back 40 years. It is real and is played out at the table. They can't overcome the past." Such statements characterize teachers as being led by subjective and emotional drives, rather than the objective views one would expect of professionals. After the strike was concluded, the education minister of the time, Peter Fassbender, suggested new legislation was to be tabled to clearly define professional standards for teachers, contrasting teachers to "most profession – such as lawyers, accountants or nurses – [which] set detailed standards for ongoing learning" (CBC News, 2015), ignoring the reality that teachers are

required to attend professional development sessions, and instead presenting a view of teachers who need to be more highly regulated. Such views resulted in the province replacing the BC College of Teachers with the Teacher Regulation Branch, cementing the government's belief that a greater need existed for tighter regulation of the teaching profession in British Columbia.

The term *teacher professionalism* is both “complex and multi-dimensional, [bringing] to mind other issues such as teacher autonomy, regulation, and discipline” (Wyper, 2013, p. 2). This debate has affected nearly all facets of public education in the province and contributes to the forces that continually attempt to reshape the role and status of teachers. Grimmet (2009) characterizes the province's teachers as having gone through a process of ‘professionalization’ over the past sixty years, one which has consisted of increased standards-based accountability and deregulation (p. 72). Sachs (2003; 2016) echoes this movement of professionalization by identifying two dominant discourses of teacher professionalism, which she terms: *managerial professionalism*, which reinforces traditional hierarchies, and *democratic professionalism*, which is more rooted in teacher empowerment. Sachs notes that other writers have used the terms *organizational* and *occupational* professionalism in their own analysis of teacher professionalism, and notes that these ideas largely parallel hers. These designations in many ways seem to align with the views expressed about teacher professionalism by the education stakeholders in British Columbia. The BCTF often speaks to issues of teacher empowerment found in democratic professionalism, while varying BC governments have echoed the need to adhere to a greater degree of managerial professionalism in the province. Other writers, such as Ball (2003) and Poole (2007), explore how political forces have worked to shape teacher standards and conceptions of professional identity as contemporary policies that focus on

increased performance standards and external accountability have continued to stoke the debate surrounding the identity of the province's teachers.

While dysfunction between BC's teachers and government is clearly evident at the provincial level, it also becomes apparent at both the district and institutional or school level, where conflicts can generate as a result of competing notions of teacher professionalism held by staff. This can be seen in interactions between administrators and teachers, who often become embroiled in conflict regarding competing notions of autonomy, accountability, and power, and also between teachers themselves, who can fall into conflict between colleagues over subjective and personally held views of professionalism. These disagreements often seem to strike at the heart of teacher's sense of professional autonomy, which can be defined as "independence of judgment and freedom of action" (Friedson, 2001, p. 122) and self-regulation, "the privilege and obligation to set and maintain standards for education and training, entry into practice, and the standards of practice" (Cruess, Johnson, and Cruess, 2002, p. 209 as cited in Wyper, 2013). By gaining a greater understanding of these competing perspectives and attempting to identify which ideology seems most prevalent at the current time, I would hope this may help to mitigate future conflicts in some way, leading to greater transformative or transformational potential within a school.

It has now been a number of years since the release of the Avison (2010) report which led to the dissolution of the BC College of Teachers (BCCT), which was replaced by the Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB). Self-regulation has been identified as a major feature of professionalism by many authors (see Walker and von Bergmann, 2013). Under the TRB, which is regulated by an appointed commissioner, it can be said that teachers in British Columbia have

been denied this professional right. Does this mean that they have thus been de-professionalized? It is therefore important to discover how views of teacher professionalism have evolved under this regulatory regime. Likewise, recent legal decisions, such as the BCTF Supreme court win in 2016, may have affected and in fact emboldened a greater sense of personal and professional autonomy amongst teachers as a result, helping to shape their views.

Personal motivation

I have spent the last five years or so of my career as a teacher involved with the BCTF and my local union as both a staff and local representative. A great deal of my voluntary time has been spent advocating for the rights of my colleagues under our collective agreement and promoting the professionalism of teachers. Through these efforts, I have come to recognize that there is a great deal of confusion and inconsistency when “teacher as professional” is discussed and conceptualized. Many of my colleagues, both teachers and administrators, seem to have very differing views of what the term means when it applies to teachers. The term seems subject to the perspectives and interests of the individual, which are often inconsistent and also seem to be very malleable, changing in different contexts, often to justify a course of action or decision. I have also witnessed the demoralization and resulting negative effect on the performance of teachers when they begin to feel their value as professionals is not recognized.

Within schools, this can lead to dysfunction and frustration on the side of teachers and administrators when both sides feel that their power and responsibilities are not being respected by the other. Teachers can be seen to disengage with school processes when they feel overly-managed by their supervisors, while principals can in the same breath express frustration that their staff is not following and conforming to a narrow set of instructions or directives handed

down by management, while at the same time expecting teachers to “use their autonomy” and figure out how to actually implement such directives absent any direct support or assistance. Contemporarily, this has been best and most recently illustrated by the rollout of the new BC curriculum, which in some ways has been interpreted by employers to define a few narrow methods of teaching as acceptable but is also very general in its scope and lacking any provided resources by the Ministry or school districts, who expect teachers to figure out how to implement it. This has proven to be a source of frustration for many, and I wish to understand better why this situation exists and contribute to the efforts to bring greater clarity to the professional understanding of teacher identity and the work teachers do.

As previously stated, issues of professional autonomy and self-regulation, and the degree to which teachers should be afforded freedom within these professional dimensions, seem to lie at the heart of much of this conflict. As all leaders can be seen to have a vested interest in achieving transformational or transformative change in their organizations, I believe that finding a greater sense of clarity regarding how both teachers and employers perceive the professional identities of teachers to be key in helping all leaders achieve this purpose. By finding this common ground, a leader will not risk alienating their staff by appearing to not share or value their teachers’ sense of professionalism, worth, and self-respect.

How my experience has shaped these questions

My experience both as a teacher and as a member of the union have led me to recognize that there are competing narratives surrounding teacher professionalism which often seem to be at the heart of many conflicts in this field. The malleability and lack of a clear understanding of the term and the way it can be reshaped due to the objectives and perspectives of competing

points of view often leads to continual conflict between teachers, administrators, district leadership, and their stakeholder groups. In a field as bureaucratic as education, it is strangely contradictory that such ambiguity can exist, and I believe this state leads to much disfunction within the system.

The BCTF and the BCPSEA seem to be perpetually locked in an adversarial state and much of the debate seems to stem from the competing beliefs about the boundaries of teacher professionalism that each group should respect. The BCTF understandably see teachers as having as much unrestricted autonomy in the classroom as possible, while the BCPSEA understandably believes that it is the employer's right to limit this autonomy under the umbrella of managerial rights in order to best manage within the bureaucracies of the Ministry of Education and individual school districts. Each organization attempts to impress their vision of professionalism upon the other. While one would think that collective agreements (CAs) would make these distinctions clear, what I have learned throughout my career as a teacher is that collective agreements are constantly shaped and then reshaped by the changing interpretations of CA language brought about by newly installed district and union leaders. Furthermore, grievance arbitrations, often a lengthy and time-consuming process, also help to reshape the understanding of this relationship as new decisions are made by arbitrators or settlements are reached between the affected parties. This leaves the concept of teacher professionalism as one that is continually in flux and it is important that continued research be done to identify what might be seen as our current understanding and practice.

As stated, my research proposal is centered on the premise that each organization, the BCTF and the BCPSEA, possess differing notions of teacher professionalism that compete with

each other as discourses. Many of these differences seem to center on differing views of common themes of professionalism, such as accountability and autonomy. These differing views are apparent even amongst individual teachers, who often possess their own notions of teacher professionalism, and can lead to debate within schools. I believe there is great value in examining these competing notions in order to better understand how educators view their professional identities, and to determine the dominant discourses that currently exist within the education system. This may help us to better understand how such conflicts may be mitigated in the future.

Therefore, in the pursuit of this research project, I intend to answer the following two primary questions:

- How is *teacher professionalism* currently conceptualized and understood by both stakeholder groups (primarily the BCTF and BCPSEA) and practicing educators in the BC public education system?
- In what way does each organization's narrative or perspective manifest in the views of practicing educators in the BC public school system?

Research questions

As I am interested in exploring the relationship between organizational notions of teacher professionalism and how those notions may or may not be accepted by practicing teachers, my research is broken into two stages. The first stage involves investigating organizational views of teacher professionalism, as can be determined through document analysis. I have chosen document analysis as my preferred method for this stage of the research as views of each

organization could not be reliably captured by speaking to a few individuals. Both organizations are a product of the views of their membership and their history, and therefore I believe my purpose can best be reached by investigating multiple documents that each organization has approved, written, and published. These are presented as the “voice” of the organization. As both the BCTF and the BCPSEA have a good deal of literature available on their respective websites, I will focus my attention on choosing any documents that have been highlighted as dealing with the theme of teacher professionalism or organized under similar categories.

The second stage of analysis involves investigating individual teachers’ notions of professionalism through interviews, and then through a comparative analysis investigating whether the organizational notions can be observed to align with the individual teachers, or not. I have determined interview analysis to be the best method for this stage of research as through questioning I believe it should be possible to construct an understanding of an individual’s view of professionalism. Once both stages of research are complete, document and interview analysis, then it will be possible to investigate the commonalities and differences inherent in the two sources of data.

Therefore, the following questions guide the two distinct analysis stages of this process:

Document analysis

- What are the key aspects of the competing narratives or discourses surrounding teacher professionalism, and how are they represented by each organization?
- How is teacher professionalism reframed and reshaped within the bureaucratic setting of public education in British Columbia?

- How does the current understanding and practice of teacher accountability in the BC school system intersect with various understandings of teacher professionalism?

Interviews and perceptions of teachers

- How do current teachers conceptualize themselves as professionals?
- Which organization's notion of professionalism is most dominant in the minds of practicing teachers in the public-school system? Whose vision do these teachers seem to most align with and why?

Chapter Two – Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter attempts to capture and express an understanding of teacher professionalism as defined in relevant academic literature. In order to begin to investigate subjective notions of teacher professionalism, it is first necessary to construct an understanding of how professionalism in education has been commonly understood. This necessitates a review of relevant scholarly literature on this topic in order to reach a determination of any common themes or dimensions of professionalism which can be seen to recur. At the conclusion of this review, I attempt to identify and define the key aspects of professionalism which I can then use to guide and code the analysis of organizational documents and interviews in chapters three and four. I also present two competing notions, democratic professionalism and managerial professionalism, that can be viewed to exist within a continuum of teacher professionalism. Therefore, the following questions have guided my selection and review of scholarly articles:

- How have views of teacher professionalism been represented and changed over political eras in education?
- What are the common themes or dimensions of professionalism which recur in the literature, and can they be defined?

To begin, I carried out a literature search using keywords such as *teacher professionalism*, *professional*, and *education eras* as excerpted from these research questions. From the initial selection of articles, I expanded my search to their reference lists and citations to identify further articles. My focus was on articles that explicitly used the terms *teacher* and *professionalism* or

professional in the context of education. Reading abstracts allowed me to further narrow my list of articles.

Professionalism can be seen as “a multi-dimensional structure which includes one’s work behaviours and attitudes to perform the highest standards and improve the quality of service” (Demirkasimoglu, 2010, p. 2048). In reviewing the literature on teacher professionalism, it is immediately apparent that a variety of themes or characteristics are argued as being essential to the profession. For instance, Wardoyo, Herdiani, and Sulikah (2016) view teacher professionalism as being drawn from four competences: pedagogical, personal, social, and professional (p. 90), while Coleman, Gallagher and Job (2012) state that teaching as a profession must be viewed as a praxis (a set of practices used in complex ways) that requires reflection and continual growth for success (p. 27). Teaching is argued to be intelligent behaviour brought to bear on moment-to-moment decision-making regarding how to help students learn, and this decision-making hinges on “on the insights that link general knowledge with specific contextual needs, and the ability to do this well is part of the teacher’s professional repertory” (Hiebert et al., 2002 as cited in Coleman Gallagher and Job, 2012). Teaching should therefore be considered “a thinking profession.” In this view, teachers are not seen to be technicians mechanically following rote procedures. Rather, their professionalism is reflected in the “the insightful use of a complex knowledge base to achieve the goal of teaching: that students learn” (p. 29). Teachers are expected to have a body of knowledge and also serve altruistic purposes that place the student’s and public’s needs foremost. However, it is in the tension between those who pursue a conceptualization of teacher as technicians working within the bureaucracy of education versus those who view teachers as autonomous individuals working within their institutions that much of the debate surrounding teacher professionalism can be found. This debate is often viewed to

be an inherently political one, as it repeatedly plays itself out within the contested landscape of teacher professionalism.

The OECD (2016) conceptualizes teacher professionalism as being comprised of: “knowledge base, defined as necessary knowledge for teaching; autonomy, defined as teachers’ decision-making over aspects related to their work; and peer networks, defined as opportunities for information exchange and support needed to maintain high standards of teaching” (p. 1).

This view identifies these three dimensions as being essential to the provision of quality, professional teaching which equips students with important life skills. Knowledge base is seen as the necessary knowledge for teaching and includes both formal teacher education and the participation in further professional development. Autonomy is defined as “teachers’ decision-making power over aspects related to their work, such as: content, course offerings, discipline practices, assessment and materials,” while peer networks are identified as opportunities for information exchange and support needed to maintain high standards of teaching, such as mentoring and networking (p. 2). These three dimensions touch on themes that are commonly discussed in the literature of teacher professionalism, explored over many eras of teaching.

Eras of teacher professionalism

In a scholarly paper, Hargreaves (2000) illustrates his comprehensive and influential view of the eras of professional practice in teaching. When discussing teaching as a profession, he notes that teachers themselves often conceive of themselves in two ways. First, they discuss *being* professional, in terms of the quality of what they do and the standards, conduct, and

demeanour which guide it. He identifies this behaviour in the literature as *professionalism* (p. 152). Second, he states that teachers will discuss *being a professional*, “which encompasses how they feel they are seen through other people’s eyes in terms of status, standing, and levels of professional reward (p. 152). In relation to these concepts, Hargreaves identifies attempts to improve the standing and status of teachers as *professionalization*. These two notions, professionalism and professionalization, are therefore complementary projects (i.e. if one improves standards, they will improve status) but also can serve to contradict one another. Hargreaves demonstrates that in teaching, stronger professionalization does not always mean greater professionalism.

He theorizes that teaching has gone through four distinct phases of practice, which he terms:

1. the pre-professional,
2. autonomous professional,
3. collegial professional,
4. and post-professional or postmodern professional.

In the first two phases, Hargreaves theorizes that “teachers are viewed primarily as technicians in the classroom” (Grimmet and D’Amico, 2008, p. 26). During the pre-professional phase, teachers followed system-wide directives about instructional strategies, and then in the autonomous professional phase, they were given greater authority to select from pedagogical approach while people in positions of power such as principals and superintendents prescribed their actual practices. Within that relationship, curriculum was presented in such a manner that left little room for teachers to co-construct or modify it (p. 156-157). In the latter two phases, that

of the collegial and postmodern professional, the emergence of inquiry both as an element of teaching and central to the concept of teacher professionalism can be seen (p. 26). Teachers are viewed in these phases as learning best in their own professional communities by building ongoing relationships and teams through the pursuit of special projects and tasks (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 165). Collaboration among teachers fosters professional learning in the third phase that is able to responsively address local issues, and it is in the fourth phase in which these processes come to terms with complexity and uncertainty. Hargreaves theory begins to illustrate the swinging pendulum that is teacher autonomy and practices of collegiality in the profession.

Hargreaves (2000) sees one of the consequences of postmodern developments to be a set of assaults on professionalism among many disciplines, including teaching. He argues that market principles have become embraced strongly by many governments and that, as a result, schools have been rationalized, cut-back, made more economically efficient, and set in competition against one another for 'clients' (students). As the most expensive budget item in schools, teacher salaries and their working conditions have been a major target for economies. He writes,

Teachers and their professional organizations (along with other members of what is sometimes derisively termed the educational establishment) have also been regarded as obstacles to the marketization of education, so they have been weakened through legislated changes in the conditions of union membership; restricting the scope of their decision-making; prescribing centralized curricula; shifting them towards more temporary contracts; and generally lowering their

status through 'discourses of derision' that repeatedly hold them responsible for the alleged ills of public or state education (Ball, 1990; Hargreaves, 2000, p. 168).

In this way, market and business-minded management principles in school can be seen as eroding some of the traditional aspects of professionalism, such as autonomy, in the pursuit of the manager's greater interest – accountability.

While Hargreaves views teaching as having entered the fourth phase, some writers see teaching in British Columbia, along with most Canadian provinces, as being on the cusp of the third and fourth phases of professionalism (Grimmet and D'Amico, 2008, p. 27). Policy contexts in recent years have emphasized continual change focused acutely on revolutionizing power relationships. The BCTF has positioned itself as "authoring a social movement for educational change while the government has putatively put in place policies designed to make the profession more responsive to parents and learners" (p. 27). These policy changes have begun to have the effect of promoting a narrower conception of professionalism, one constrained by accountability and fiscal efficiency which greatly impacts the practices of teachers in the workforce (p. 29).

Osmond-Johnson (2018) illustrates how "a complex, mutually reinforcing relationship exists between these elements that change over time as teachers, their unions, and governments respond to each other in new and evolving ways" (p. 62). Education is viewed as existing within a discursive arena around notions of teacher professionalism, and in recent years finds that deficit discourses of teacher professionalism have actively contributed "to a limited body of literature that broadly conceives the work of teacher unions and the roles of teacher leaders within the policy arena" (p. 62). This relationship is framed as being influenced by both

engagement in teacher organization and the greater policy environment. Osmond-Johnson (2018) argues that discourses from government and the corporate media and those of teachers and their teacher organizations “evolved alongside and in relation to one another, amid policy reform and paradigm shifts that characterize the ebb and flow of educational change: two sides of the same coin rather than completely separate entities as they are often described in the current literature base” (p. 70). These competing discourses are perceived to have a profound effect on changing notions of teacher professionalism throughout recent years in education.

Performativity, performance cultures, and their effect on the professional identity of teachers

In an examination of performance-driven initiatives in education, Ball (2003) identifies the following as key elements of educational reform: the market, managerialism, and performativity (p. 215). He identifies these elements as *policy technologies* which, through calculated employment, are used to organize human forces within organizations in functioning networks of power. He terms this organizational process “performativity”, and defines it as “a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change based on rewards and [both material and symbolic] sanctions” (Ball, 2003, p. 216). These technologies of educational reform are not simply used to sustain technical and structural change in organizations but are “mechanisms for reforming teachers and for changing what it means to be a teacher” (p. 217). This reform changes the teacher’s social identity – a change in their subjective existence and relations with each other, a process Ball characterizes as “a struggle over the teacher’s soul.”

Through performativity, Ball (2003) demonstrates that teachers find their values challenged or displaced by what he terms the “terrors” of performativity. A key aspect of performativity, he states, is that within it teachers are represented and encouraged to think about themselves as individuals, calculating about themselves, adding value to themselves, improving their productivity and striving for excellence while living in an existence of calculation (p. 217). This reframes the teacher as an “enterprising” individual who cares more for “value” than “values,” and within the new policy regime lessens the importance of commitment and service to the common good.

Ball (2003) argues that the ethics of competition and performance are different from the traditional ethic dimensions of professional judgement and co-operation. As performance culture incentivizes the individual to demonstrate their value, Ball demonstrates that thusly teachers are both “deprofessionalized” and then “reprofessionalized” through this process (p. 218). Site-based management and competitive initiatives are introduced in public institutions which encourage these institutions to make themselves different from each other, stand out, and improve themselves (p. 219). This requires employees, both individually and collectively, to take responsibility for the security of their employment and their contribution to the services they produce. These two levels of transformation, at the individual and institutional level, further weaken cooperation and older forms of collective relations among workers, replacing them with performative competition. This is further reinforced by the work of the manager, “the new hero of educational reform” (p. 219), who instills the attitude and culture within which workers feel accountable and personally invested in the organization. Ball likens this to what Foucault terms the “technicians of behavior,” whose task it is to produce bodies that are “docile and capable” (p.

219). This process reframes the teacher into the previously discussed educational technician, one who works at the direction of the manager.

Subsequently, as a result of these processes, the act of teaching and the subjectivity of the teacher are profoundly changed. A contradiction arises within the individual as their increasing individualization results in a destruction of solidarities based upon common professional identities while “constructing new forms of institutional affiliations based upon a traditionally corporate culture” (Ball, 2003, p. 219). Ball argues that the self is alienated in this process, which results in teachers no longer being encouraged to have a rationale for their practice, or “account of themselves in terms of a relationship to the meaningfulness of what they do, but instead are required to produce measurable and ‘improving’ outputs and performances” (p. 222). Methods instead are given importance when they are judged to “work” within these performance indicators. Therefore, a new kind of teacher is produced by educational reform, one who maximizes performance while setting aside irrelevant principles or obsolete social commitments.

Ultimately, Ball (2003) views recent performativity-centered educational reform movements as being part of a larger process of ethical retooling of the public sector, which replaces ‘client need’ and professional judgement with commercial decision-making (p. 226). Autonomous ethical codes based on shared moral languages, of which the professional identity of teachers and their affiliation within trade union organization are often said to be based, are colonized or closed down. The policy technologies of performativity leave no space for the autonomous or collective ethical self. Ball sees these technologies as having profound consequence on the nature of teaching and learning and on the inner-life of the teacher, reframing questions of “who we are or what we would like to become or emerge” (Dean, 1995 as

cited in Ball, 2003, p. 226). This point is key to my research, as I am interested in investigating the proximity to which current practicing teachers find themselves to be with their own trade-union organization, the BCTF.

The political context of education in British Columbia

Such educational reform is often discussed as deeply reflective of or rooted in the political ideology of neo-liberalism (Poole, 2007, p. 1), an ideology which many have judged to have taken hold in British Columbia over the last two decades. Poole defines neo-liberalism as “a political ideology grounded in an unshakeable belief in unbridled markets as the source of all benefits for a society and its citizens” and argues that “neo-liberals believe the application of market principles to the public sector will result in greater efficiency and contribute to overall economic prosperity” (p. 1). In a discussion paper in which she traces the long and difficult conflict between the Gordon Campbell led BC Liberal parties and the BCTF, Poole demonstrates that many of that government’s economic policies and priorities can be interpreted in a manner that reflects Ball’s views of performativity. This conflict is one that has profoundly reshaped the views that both teachers and the public have of the teaching profession.

Poole (2007) characterizes the Campbell government as employing “decidedly neo-liberal rhetoric and policy,” while the BCTF is said to be “vehemently anti-neo-liberal” (p. 1). While the conflict between the two parties is grounded in political ideology, Poole states that it is also heavily based in contested conceptions of both teacher professionalism and the purpose of education. In her analysis of the discourse and power relations between the BCTF and government, Poole (2007) argues that a “neo-liberal agenda on the part of government and anti-

neo-liberalism on the part of the BCTF” (p. 9) can be plainly seen, one which centers largely on conflict over the vision and purpose of public education and the meaning of professionalism.

The BCTF has consistently and publicly declared itself to be a “union of professionals,” a “statement of self-identity [which indicates] that teachers perceive no contradiction between being a professional and being a union member” (Poole, 2007, p. 10). In this conception, the union rationalizes away this inherent contradiction by viewing itself as serving the dual interests of teachers and of students in promoting public education. Poole states that teachers as professionals expect to be self-regulating, consulted on manner of education policy, and to possess a high degree of autonomy in their work, and that these qualities enable them to serve their supreme purpose of protecting the public interest. The Campbell-led BC Liberal government is argued to have challenged that professional identity through policy and rhetoric.

Poole (2007) states that neo-liberals view unions as “third parties that interfere with the natural operation of market forces, including the forces of supply and demand operating between employers and labor” (p. 10), and that the BC Liberals frame the BCTF similarly, as a “special interest group operating within provincial and local politics to serve the needs of its members” (p.10) which ultimately does not serve the interests of students. Poole critiques this approach of the Campbell government, arguing that by viewing the union as an obstacle to the government’s educational agenda, government action may be seen as merely a “means of weakening or even breaking a political enemy” (p. 10). Poole states that neo-liberals seem to make an assumption that one cannot have more than one identity; they assume that teachers cannot be both unionists and professionals. This view is in stark contrast to that of the union. She characterizes this modernist view of identity as “unitary and fixed that leads to the construction of dichotomies and

to simplistic either/or thinking” (p.10). Poole argues that taking “a postmodern perspective accommodates teachers' views of themselves as representing multiple interests that are often complementary” (p. 10), which may support the union’s seemingly contradictory view of teachers. Within this educational climate, the teacher has been reframed, and in the next sections of this review I will discuss the common dimensions that recur in the literature surrounding teacher professionalism.

Accountability

Many writers have attempted to characterize the broad changes that have occurred over time to the concept of teacher professionalism. As previously discussed, accountability is repeatedly noted as a key theme in this arena. Sachs (2016) argues that teacher professionalism is continually shaped by the external environment, and that different discourses of professionalism circulate and gain legitimacy in different periods as themes of professionalism are emphasized and deemphasized (p. 414). In support of this argument, she organizes her investigation of professionalism around three primary themes:

1. The factors shaping teacher professionalism
2. Teacher professionalism as a contested site
3. Teacher professionalism as a strategy to shape and improve professional practice.

(Sachs, 2016, p. 414).

Sachs (2016) views the current era as one shaped by an increased focus on accountability and performance culture, noting that this view relies greatly on technology to provide performance indicators as measures of accountability and as an indicator of alignment with organizational

strategies (p. 415). This emphasis on accountability as a key theme of professionalism is often highlighted as a defining feature of contemporary views of professionalism. Such performance cultures within public service organizations tend to “imply a low level of trust in the professionalism of their employees” (p. 415), and instead invest trust in government through the use of “objective” metrics which are used to demonstrate to the public that improvement has been “objectively demonstrated. In this way, Sachs (2016) argues that projects of accountability are inherently political.

Teachers are commonly identified as being accountable across multiple dimensions in their work. First, they are accountable to the students they teach and the communities in which they work, and, second, they are accountable to implementing government policy and enacting government priorities (Sachs, 2016, p. 415). While teachers would seem to be working with government collectively to ensure a high quality of learning, differences become immediately apparent over how that quality is both defined and measured. Maxwell (2015), in an analysis of the commonly applied structural-functionalist model of teacher professionalism, finds that this model often hides the fact that teachers are accountable to multiple parties: children, parents, colleague, taxpayers, and governments, among others (p. 103). He argues that these differing parties place competing demands on teachers and that this thoroughly pervades teaching, and therefore finds that the common conception of the act of teaching as an “intervention in service of the client” is deficient in its ability to accurately reflect the profession.

The issue of teacher standards is also continually raised within the theme of accountability. Sachs (2016) characterizes the process of defining the scope and content of standards as “difficult,” noting that there is a distinction between references to teacher standards

and others' teaching standards or teacher professional standards. Sachs views teacher standards as referring to "levels of competence expected of individual teachers, either for entry into the profession or for measuring ongoing performance," while "the scope and remit of *teaching standards* is the teaching profession *rather* than individual teachers" (p. 416-417). Sachs sees the distinction as one which leads to a greater focus on compliance and accountability approaches, driven by administrative imperative, rather than using professional standards for the purpose of catalyzing the realization of authentic professional learning.

Poole (2007) notes that on the issue of accountability, the BCTF as an organization can be seen to object to systems that emphasize external mechanisms of accountability, and instead views the internal accountability of teachers as essential components of the teaching profession (p. 6). In this objection, the union is seen to be viewing external accountability systems as implying that internal accountability does not exist or is not sufficient. If true, this would indicate that such models demonstrate a lack of trust in teachers and in the teaching profession.

Poole (2007) views this objection of the union as identity-based (p. 6). She states that teachers self-identify as professionals who are accountable to the profession. This encompasses themes of accountability which also links to the related theme of vocational ownership. As has been noted by other writers, teachers as professionals are accountable on multiple levels. They are accountable to the profession, to their school districts, to their students, and to parents. Poole characterizes attempts by government to increase levels of bureaucratic accountability in education as "insulting to the teaching profession" (p. 6), and characterizes teachers as viewing external accountability measures such as large-scale assessments as "blunt instruments that can have a deleterious effect on teaching and learning by narrowing curriculum and instruction,

decreasing student motivation, and further disadvantaging already disadvantaged communities (BC Teachers' Federation, Accountability in public education, 2006 as cited in Poole, 2007, p. 6). These include objections to school planning councils, district achievement or accountability, contracts, and the long conflict over the *BC College of Teachers* which will be discussed further in this chapter.

Hyslop Margison and Sears (2010) demonstrate that accountability in recent years has come to dominate the educational policy discourse in Canada, pervading the majority of government documents and policy. They view moves by governments to define teacher professionalism solely in the terms of enhanced academic qualification as undermining attempts to strengthen professional governance and autonomy (p. 10). Grimmet and D'Amico (2008) identify a number of Ministry of Education restructuring policies in British Columbia that focus on making districts, schools and teachers more accountable (p. 8), which include changes in standards and testing and the creation of district accountability contracts. Examples discussed include the *School Board Flexibility Bill* (2002), which was seen to be promoting greater accountability within the system by increasing parent and community involvement, while *The Public Education Flexibility and Choice Act* (2002) attempted to address the system's perceive overregulation and collective agreement constraints by giving school boards management flexibility in their governance by "giving them the powers to determine class size, class composition, and staffing" (p. 9).

Collegiality

Collegial collaboration is repeatedly framed as a dimension of teacher professionalism that is critical to the development of both autonomy and self-imposed accountability (Hyslop

Margison and Sears, 2010, p. 7). Hargreaves (2003) argues that in the recent years of emphasis on competition within educational institutions, which have been driven to view themselves as marketplaces, external accountability measures have served to lessen professional collaboration practices which would enhance pedagogy and education. This economic competition breeds environments in which teachers and schools are prevented from learning from one another (p. 168), which would seem to detriment of the learning environment. He cautions that collegial and collective initiatives within education can at times be seen to intrude on autonomy and individuality when it appears to be prescribed by those in leadership positions. He warns that “if collegiality is ‘forced’ or ‘imposed’, teachers can quickly come to resent and resist it” (p. 166).

Hyslop Margison and Sears (2010) write, “there is little doubt among members of the educational community that current accountability measures and the de-professionalization of teaching is impacting negatively on the quality of teaching and education more generally” (p. 11), and instead urge teachers to re-embrace the collegial practices that have often defined the profession and lead to successful teaching and learning environments. This view is echoed by Grimmet and D’Amico (2008), who state that it is “very evident [that] teachers report engaging less in professional collaboration during the first decade of the 21st century than was found by previous studies conducted during the 1990s” (p. 24). In their view, as teachers begin to perceive themselves as doing more with less, they choose or are unable to devote time and energy to collaborative practice and learning (p. 25).

Vocational ownership and self-regulation

Hyslop-Margison and Sears (2010) argue that as professionals who assert their autonomy, teachers must critically engage with contemporary ideas about teaching and learning. They state

that “a key component of a vibrant professional life is the continual exploration and critique of widely accepted knowledge and ideas,” to hold a view in which “orthodoxy about classroom practice becomes suspect, and knowledge and ideas about teaching and learning remain open to re-examination and revision” (p. 8). The professional views research about teaching as an “ongoing dialogue about contextual possibilities” in pursuit of the betterment of the individual and educational field. They believe that the teacher as professional must take ownership of his or her vocation through effective research, practice, and curricular development.

In their discussion paper on the changing political landscape of education in British Columbia, Grimmet and D’Amico (2008) identify the Ministry of Education’s *Year 2000: A Framework for Learning*, a program published in May of 1990, as embodying an important shift in the way curriculum and the teacher’s relationship to it was viewed in the province. This program was intended to develop and lead the public education system in British Columbia into the next millennium. This program expressed an important shift in education: “a move away from viewing curriculum as ‘ground to be covered,’ or something to be ‘delivered,’ to a broader concept of curriculum that begins with a focus on the learner” (p. 4). Grimmet and D’Amico assert that this intended change was characterized by the expectation that “teachers would become curriculum builders rather than curriculum deliverers” (p. 4). This change helped to reshape understandings of the teaching professional as one who was required, through significant professional creativity and dedication on the part of teachers, to successfully implement the challenging *Year 2000* program, a move away from the technician’s view of the education towards that of the thinking professional. The program established clear principles and high expectations while promoting decentralized decision-making and local educational initiatives. Grimmet and D’Amico believe that the *Year 2000* vision of education had the potential to vastly

improve teaching and learning with British Columbia, but concede that since 2001, government policy changes shifted their emphasis back towards a tighter understanding of curriculum delivery (p. 5).

The establishment of *The British Columbia College of Teachers* (BCCT) in 1987 is viewed by some as the moment teachers in the province achieved true professional standing and is looked back on as “unique North American experiment” (Avison, 2010, p. 9), as at the time there only existed a similar self-regulatory organization in Scotland, which had been established in the 1960s. The BCCT was intended to regulate the teaching profession and serve the public interest, both by dealing with issues of competence, qualifications, and professional development. The history of the College is tumultuous and ultimately led to the dissolution and replacement of that institution with the *Teacher Regulation Branch* (TRB) in 2012. This was in part due to the perception that the BCTF’s relationship to the College was inappropriately close (Avison, 2010, p. 19), but also because “unlike other professional self-regulatory bodies that have become increasingly involved in setting competence expectations and monitoring the commitment of their membership to on-going professional development, the College of Teachers [had], from the outset, avoided this role” (p. 26). The College council was viewed as consistently frustrating efforts to maintain appropriate levels of knowledge and competency among BC teachers. In comparison, similar bodies such as the *College of Physicians and Surgeons* and the *Law Society of British Columbia* were seen to have “comparatively stronger mechanisms for the certification of members, comprehensive requirements for on-going professional development of members and discipline processes that, by comparison, are more responsive to the public interest and certainly more transparent than what can be found at the College of Teachers” (p. 27).

Ultimately, the government-commissioned Avison (2010) report concluded that the BCCT was unable to effectively meet its mandate as a self-regulating institution. The investigator found the institution to have lost its credibility as a self-regulating body, viewed by many as dysfunctional. The BCTF was seen to have too greatly intruded on the capacity of the College to be credibly regarded as an independent entity, and a proper balance was not seen to consistently exist between the “public interest” and the “interest of members.” This determination raises interesting question about the limits of teacher professionalism within the landscape of education. As Avison (2010) stated previously, at the time of its inception the College was a “unique experiment” in North America. While other professions, as referenced above, are able to successfully maintain a balance between the need to promote the interests of members versus the need to protect the public interest, the teachers College evidently was not. The changing political landscape of education has already been discussed to have a strong impact on the changing notions of teacher professionalism. It could be that this unique relationship between politics and practice that might make conditions for authentic and meaningful self-regulation in education difficult.

In an overview of the eras of professionalization and ‘deprofessionalization’ of teachers in British Columbia, Walker and von Bergmann (2013) discuss three models of teacher education governance proposed by Hoyle and John (1995) – the *political*, the *institutional*, and the *professional* - which conceptualize the role of teachers differently (p. 84). In the *political* model, the teacher is considered a public servant, while the *institutional* model positions the teacher as a public intellectual. The *professional* model views that teacher as a skilled practitioner. Walker and von Bergmann (2010) argue that when Bill 12 was passed in 2012, governance of teachers shifted from the *professional* model to the *political*. Bill 12 replaced the

existing *Teaching Profession Act* with the *Teachers Act*, dissolving the BCCT and paving the way for the TRB. They state that “while the dismantling of the BCCT could have led to the emergence of an independent quality assurance body with real power, governance effectively reverted back to the Ministry of Education” and teachers were ultimately positioned by government once more to be public servants. In their analysis, they conclude that recent education policy reforms revealed a discernible trend over the past twenty years, resulting from a struggle between “an increasingly neoliberal conceptualization of education—illustrated by an emphasis on student and parental choice, individual freedoms, competition, and accountability—and a push from teacher education institutions and the profession itself for more autonomy and respect, with a desire for greater professionalization and self-regulation” (p. 87). This struggle over the ability of teachers to self-regulate has currently fallen to the oversight of the TRB, an institution headed by a government-appointed commissioner. At this point of time in British Columbia, it can be said that teachers are denied this professional dimension.

Professional competence and ongoing professional learning

As professionals, teachers are required to competently possess the skills and knowledge base that allow them to best serve the public. Sachs (2016) argues that teachers, like any other professionals, must commit to ongoing professional learning, which “must be fit for purpose and recognize that at different stages of their careers teachers require different types of activity to improve practice and extend their skill sets and should be personally transformative in its intent” (p. 423). The act of teaching itself and the skills required to do the work successfully are a common topic of discussion.

In a lengthy discussion paper on the structural-functionalist model of teacher professionalism that is commonly used, Maxwell (2015) argues that the model overlooks key elements of the knowledge and skills required of teachers. Maxwell defines structural-functionalism as one of two competing approaches to defining professionals which vie for dominance in the sociology of the professions in the mid-twentieth century and characterizes the model as a response to perceived limitation of “traits-based” approach introduced in the 1930s in classic work on the sociology of professions. He writes,

Trait-based models simply list the traits that appear to distinguish the work of professionals from that performed by other classes of workers, namely: specialised skills based on theoretical knowledge acquired in extensive university-based training, adherence to a strict code of ethical conduct, independent control over membership in the profession, etc. What characterises the structural-functionalist approach, and what sets it apart from the earlier trait-based models, is that structural-functionalism involves drawing explicit conceptual links between the professions’ defining traits. (p. 95).

The structural-functionalist model views the act of teaching as an intervention, in that the teacher intervenes for the good of the child or student. Intervention involves “putting a body of theoretical and practical knowledge to work to respond to a client’s request for help” (p. 103). Maxwell argues that while this model maps well onto some aspects of the teachers’ work, it obscures or misrepresents others. To start, Maxwell notes that to view a student as a client ignores an important socio-moral dimension of teaching. To view a child as the teacher’s primary client in teaching is complex and multifaceted in that children do not

consent to being taught, nor can they be viewed as moral equals. While parents do consent to their children's education, the child itself is not always yet in a position to understand the point of what they are taught in school or the broader social aims of obligatory schooling. While these objects function as a tacit social consensus among teachers and other adults, to view teaching as "professional intervention" ignores this highly unusual feature of the profession (Maxwell, 2015, p. 99).

Maxwell (2015) also argues that as a public service, teaching should be viewed as similar to law and medicine in that each discipline is centrally concerned with "promoting and advancing a fundamental human good on which the wellbeing and flourishing of societies and individuals depend" (p. 98). For medicine and law, that good is identified to be health and justice, and for teaching it is "knowledge, skills and personal development." Teaching is seen to be creative knowledge work, and in order to effectively further the basic public and personal good at the center of teaching, "teachers must possess and judiciously apply a body of highly complex practical knowledge" (p. 98). Maxwell argues that in their work, teachers have social power. That is, the decision teachers make at work about individual students' performance and their aptitude for certain programs of study and roles in the economy, "have important and often unforeseeable consequences in the lives of young people and their families. Teachers' social power in turn entails the establishment and enforcement of ethical standards for practice as a prophylactic against the abuse of power and to maintain public trust towards teaching" (p. 98). For these reasons, the teacher as professional must earnestly and consistently work towards the betterment of themselves as teachers so that they may best achieve the purpose of their work.

Maxwell (2015) identifies at least two distinguishable kinds of knowledge that can be associated with the 'knowledge base of teacher professionalism' when viewing the profession through a structural-functionalist model. The first, termed *taught-subject knowledge*, is identified as knowledge of a particular curricular area such as math or literature. The second is termed *general pedagogical knowledge* or *instructional knowledge*. Teachers are seen to use their *general pedagogical knowledge* in order to deliver to their students *taught-subject knowledge*, and therefore must be proficient in both in order to be a successful professional. For example, the teacher's knowledge of inquiry-based teaching methods might be used to teach and transmit to students their knowledge of the anatomy of insects. Maxwell does note that the exclusivity of teachers' taught-subject knowledge is thoroughly undermined by the fact that almost all adults were once taught in the course of their own schooling what is taught to students in schools now, but also acknowledges that even when curricula is reformed and updated, as has been happening in British Columbia in recent years, "teachers teach virtually by definition what is generally regarded as important knowledge for any basically educated individual" (p. 100). When viewing the act of teaching as an intervention, as previously discussed, Maxwell argues that the typically highly complex work that the profession does to help the client (or student), is reduced to an instrumentally simple goal to achieve a discrete objective identified by the client (p. 103). In other professions, this could be ridding the body of dangerous cancer cells or relieving a toothache, but this model ignores aspects of the nature of teachers' work that set it apart from other professions. Namely, that teaching involves close and sustained interpersonal social contact, and "because teachers typically work with young people, teaching has a socio-moral dimension that is not captured by the structural-functionalist model of professional intervention" (p. 103).

Professional autonomy

Professional autonomy and the question of who controls the work of the teacher is a theme that continually recurs within discussions of teaching professionalism. In practice, teaching autonomy might be characterized by high autonomy over instruction, pedagogy, resources and materials, and formative assessment (Newton, 2016). This can vary greatly from province to province due to differing labour contexts, though it is generally common across the country that teacher labour unions are seen as equal partners with government and school divisions in a variety of policy, curriculum, and regulatory environments” (p. 1286). Two major problems are commonly identified as being the result of working conditions which affect the professional autonomy of teachers. First, that talented teachers often reject external micro-management that result from external accountability initiatives and consequently often leave the vocation, and, second, that the erosion of professional autonomy actually” undermines teacher initiative to accept personal responsibility for their work” (Hargreaves, 2003; Hyslop-Margison and Sears, 2010, p. 2).

The power relationship between administrators and teachers within the dimension of professional autonomy can be difficult to articulate in a matter that leads to consensus. This can often lead to struggles for control between the competing parties. Hyslop-Margison and Sears (2010) state that “public education administrators have a responsibility to afford teachers professional working conditions, [while] teachers have a reciprocal obligation to assume personal responsibility to improve their classroom practice” (p. 2). They argue that in the right environment, respecting professional autonomy will enhance rather than undermine teacher responsibility by “situating educators as the primary authors of their own success or failure” (p.

2). They believe that such an environment will encourage teachers to take ownership of their teaching and assume responsibility for student achievement. This contrasts with the previously discussed neo-liberal approach of increased accountability towards measurable administrative objectives. The writers believe that a mature teaching profession is ultimately supported by three key pillars: “a) the recognition of the professional autonomy of teachers, b) the grounding of that autonomy in a professional community of practice, and c) the engagement of individual teachers and the professional community in public dialogue about education” (Hyslop-Margison and Sears, 2010, p. 4). Demirkasimoglu (2010) concurs, writing,

autonomy is a component of teacher professionalism and it provides both an individual decision-making area to achieve one’s aims and an effect on controlling the situations related to his/her work. Autonomy not only functions as a buffer against the pressures on teachers, but also means of strengthening them in terms of personal and professional sense (p. 2048).

The question of how to evaluate the work of educators is repeatedly brought up in tandem with issues of professional autonomy. Proponents of increased autonomy for teachers argue that, rather than eliminating evaluation, instead the source of evaluation is shifted away “from administrative bureaucrats and politicians to professional educators themselves” (Hyslop-Margison, 2010, p. 5). In relation to the theme of vocational ownership, it is then the academic and professional community, comprised of professional educators, who become the basis for “setting and applying standards for knowledge, learning, and pedagogical expertise” (Seixas, 1993 as cited in Hyslop-Margison, 2010, p. 5). This professional community is one that through

collaboration develops a consensus on what constitutes an effective and professional practice (p. 7).

Hyslop-Margison and Sears (2010) also argue that one method to strengthen teacher autonomy “is to enhance the professionalization of teaching generally” (p. 9). They state that a central and defining characteristic of modern professions has traditionally been a high level of relative autonomy, and also note that across North America teachers have generally struggled to gain the recognition and authority that have been afforded to other professions. This consistently relates to the issue of self-regulation, very tightly connected to the concept of professional autonomy. This view suggests that teachers in British Columbia did not first gain control over their own profession until the passing of the *Teaching Profession Act* in 1987, which established the *BC College of Teachers* and gave teachers control over entry to the profession, the educational preparation of its members, and the judgement of their autonomous competence.

Hyslop Margison and Sears (2010) also argue that it is crucial for the teaching professional to exercise their autonomy in order to shape professional discussions about educational policies, to influence their communities, and to determine best classroom practices (p. 11). Teachers are tasked with preparing their students to take part in the country’s civic communities and to respect its diversity and legal freedoms. The writers argue that “teachers cannot be expected to prepare autonomous, reflective and politically engaged citizens unless they possess the professional autonomy and political freedom to act as a role model for their students,” stating that “professional autonomy for teachers is not merely a fundamental requirement of quality education, but for creating students who become engaged and politically active democratic citizens” (p. 12). In the conclusion of their analysis, they share their worries

that attempts to weaken teacher autonomy and de-professionalize teaching will actually create situations that not only undermine teacher competence and vocational ownership, but also hinder the advancement of “robust [and] democratic schooling practices” (p. 12).

The role of ethics in teacher professionalism

Maxwell and Schwimmer (2016) identify the role of ethics education to ensure that teachers know and understand the collective norms of the teaching profession as a perennial and generally uncontroversial view in scholarly writings on professional ethics in teaching. They see this view as drawing on the idea that teaching, like other professions, has its own unique set of ethical concepts and professional values which define and frame ethically responsible conduct, and that “these notions are often expressed through a range of widely expressed norms of professional conduct” (p. 426). They suggest that some of these values might include fairness, due process, respect for privacy and dignity, intellectual honesty, integrity, and personal achievement, but note that there is apparently little agreement in the literature on the ethical base of teacher professionalism (Martin, 2013, as cited in Maxwell and Schwimmer, 2016). This lack of common ground on the ethical base of teacher professionalism is framed as a problem for the teaching profession. They note, “at best, it is an obstacle to identifying the knowledge, skills and personal dispositions that should be prioritized in teaching and learning about of professional ethics for future teachers. At worst, it is an embarrassment” (p. 469).

In an interpretive analysis of 13 codes of ethics of teacher organizations, they found that “on the whole, the codes present a fragmentary portrait of the deontology of teaching” (Maxwell and Schwimmer, 2016, p. 471). Their interpretive analysis of the data set revealed six core professional values of teaching expressed in ethical codes: *care, solidarity, pedagogical*

excellence, liberal democracy, integrity, and reliability. (p. 478). They comment that solidarity was strongly represented in the codes of conduct of many organizations, which they attribute to the fact that teachers are in contact and must work cooperatively with not only teachers but other stakeholders such as support staff, employers, parents, students, and the professional community. The value of reliability was also strongly represented while the values of care and liberal democracy were the most weakly represented (p. 477). This was seen as an anomaly as they note that care has “consistently been singled out in theoretical literature as one of the personal qualities that good teachers possess” (p. 478). They also comment that the codes’ strong emphasis on reliability was surprising, as this value seems “to run together somewhat problematically teachers’ obligations to act in the public interest with obligations to act in the interest of workers’ association” (p. 478).

Maxwell and Schwimmer (2016) also identify as a problem with ethical codes what they term ‘corporatist’ obligations which send a negative message about teachers’ capacity to assume professional responsibilities and which create confusion around the meaning of ethical conduct in a professional context (p. 478). They state that the tendency of codes to present “admonitions to respect specific institutional rules and contractual commitments as ethical obligations of teacher professionalism lend some credence to a common critique according to which codes of professional ethics operate to encourage passive conformity to the rules and discourage dissent” (p. 478). As teachers are seen to be required to respect and obey the decisions of workplace superiors, government regulations, or labour union decisions among others, this can be seen through the enforcement of ethical codes to diminish the professionalism of practicing teachers.

However, this is also tempered by the higher ethical duty of teachers as owners of the vocation to “protest conditions considered, in their best critical judgement, seriously detrimental to pupils' educational interests” (Maxwell and Schwimmer, 2016, p. 479). The writers argue that codes of ethics and their tendency to place and remove emphasis on selected professional values, run the risk of conveying an incomplete picture of the deontology of teaching. This muddies the distinction between ethical obligations and associative obligations, which in turn can exclude rich aspirational conceptions of teacher professionalism.

Constructing a view of the contested themes of teacher professionalism

In a thesis paper examining contested discourses of teacher professionalism as represented by stakeholder organizations in British Columbia’s public education sector, Wyper (2013) identifies these competing notions as existing within a spectrum of professionalism. On one end of the spectrum, he identifies “the bureaucratic professional,” a view which sees professionalism as necessarily bounded by the fact that education must exist in an accountable and effective bureaucracy that is run using market-based and data-driven principles (p. 50). The other end of the spectrum he terms “the fully autonomous professional,” a discourse characterized by an emphasis on individual and collective teacher autonomy, which should be enjoyed by all teachers as long as they are able to maintain the public trust (p. 50). These discourses are defined by differing views of the limits and freedoms enjoyed by teachers within common themes of professionalism, and he argues that differing notions of professionalism can be assigned a place on this spectrum.

Within the political arena of public education, these discourses seem to recur and bring focus to key themes of teacher professionalism. The following table summarizes what has been

discussed and identified. Competing notions of professionalism tend to agree on the topic of these common dimensions but differ greatly in their view of how these themes should be implemented in the sector of public education. Therefore, I have first constructed a common definition of each theme of teacher professionalism, and then formulated questions, which I will use to guide my document and interview analysis.

These following themes have been derived from the work of Hargreaves (2000), Ball (2003), Poole (2007), Osmond-Johnson (2018), who illustrate the eras and movements that have shaped and reshaped the concept of teacher professionalism. Sachs (2016) and Maxwell (2015) provide key insights regarding the issue of accountability, while Hyslop-Margison and Sears (2010), Grimmet and D'Amico (2008) and Avison (201) informed my understanding of self-regulation and vocational ownership. Maxwell (2015) and Sachs (2016) demonstrate the importance of professional competence and ownership, while Demirkasımoğlu (2010), Hargreaves (2003), Newton (2016), and Hyslop-Margison (2010) discuss the contested theme of autonomy. Finally, Maxwell and Schwimmer (2016) provide an overview of the issue of ethics amongst teachers, and Grimmet and D'Amico (2008) and Hargreaves (2000, 2010) each provide key insights into collegiality.

Table 1

Common Themes of Teacher Professionalism

Theme of teacher professionalism	Definition	Questions to guide subsequent stage of research
Accountability	Teachers serve the public interest and are accountable to multiple parties in their	To whom is the teacher accountable to in their work and how should their

	work. External and internal mechanisms of accountability are employed to determine the effectiveness and improve the quality of the teacher's work.	performance in this regard be evaluated?
Professional Competence and Ongoing Professional Learning	Teachers must possess both skills and knowledge that will allow them to best serve the public, and the ongoing development of both contributes to the esteem of the profession and the improvement of outcomes in education.	What is the nature of the teacher's knowledge and skillset, and what conditions lead to the ability of teachers to continually improve their practice and their profession?
Ethics in Professionalism	The teacher behaves in an ethical manner and in accordance with a stated code of ethics in order to serve the public interest, fulfill their duties, and interact with colleagues.	What are the best standards of conduct and behavior which guide teachers in the fulfilment of their professional obligations?
Professional Autonomy	Teaching autonomy is characterized by the degree to which teachers have decision-making power over aspects of their work such as instruction, pedagogy, resources, and assessment practices.	To what degree and in what context does the professional act to perform the duties of their work within their own judgment and discretion?
Vocational Ownership and Regulation	Teachers take ownership of their profession through research, practice, and curricular development. Self-regulation is viewed as an extension of internal and/or external measures of accountability.	To what degree do members of the profession control the standards of entry and the conduct of their members?
Collegiality	Teachers work collegially with others to exchange information and support each	How important to the profession is the collegial interaction and collaboration

	<p>other in order to improve their teaching practice, serve the public interest, and develop their own autonomy and internal accountability measures.</p>	<p>of members and how should this be facilitated and managed?</p>
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It is in differing interpretations of these themes that contested notions of teacher professionalism are formed and circulated. Using the terms previously defined by Sachs (2003; 2016), the two most prominent competing notions can be identified as follows:

Table 2

Competing Notions of Teacher Professionalism

Managerial Professionalism	Democratic Professionalism
<p>The managerial professional is viewed as a public servant and/or skilled technician who is tasked with serving the public interest and client needs while working within the bureaucracy of public education. High quality education is provided through efficient and data-driven principles and external accountability measures are viewed as necessary to properly protect the public interest and to regulate the teaching profession. Teachers are required to possess a high level of qualifications to do their work and should be engaged in ongoing professional improvement that coincides with organizational directives and initiatives. Professional autonomy is acceptable to a degree in which it does not conflict with accountability measures and the need to meet organizational directives. Collegial practices are important to improve learning outcomes and to develop the internal accountability of teachers.</p>	<p>The democratic professional is viewed as an empowered individual who learns and works best in their own professional communities. High quality education is provided by maintaining a high level of professional autonomy among teachers, and teachers are able to maintain the trust of the public through internal accountability measures such as rigorous self-regulation and an enforcement of ethical codes. The profession is at its best the individual is insulated from the bureaucracy of the education system. Collaboration and collegial practices among teachers are essential in fostering professional learning that is able to responsively address the complex needs of the education system. Teachers are required to possess a high level of qualifications to do their work and these standards are best determined and maintained by the professional community.</p>

Chapter Three - Methodology

Research purpose

The purpose and central goal of my research inquiry is to develop a comprehensive understanding of the ways that teacher professionalism is currently conceptualized by the BCTF and the BCPSEA, the primary stakeholders who make up the bargaining relationship in British Columbia's public education system, and to investigate how those conceptualizations are manifested in the minds and attitudes of practicing teachers engaged in the school system. These conceptualizations are considered to represent each organization's narrative or discourse within the field of education. This research is premised on the notion that each stakeholder presents and pursues a competing notion of teacher professionalism, and also that a close relationship exists between the acting provincial government and the BCPSEA, who can be seen to be acting in the pursuit of the Ministry of Education's agenda.

As has been previously discussed, in recent years the education sector in the province has gone through prolonged and profound change, partly as a result of the increasing politicization of the work of teachers. I believe as a focus of research it is worthwhile to examine how this period of change may have affected teachers' own self-conceptualization of their professionalism, and to investigate whether the discourses of the BCTF or BCPSEA have been more successful in reaching the minds of those educators.

In order to achieve the objectives of my research purpose, I engaged in qualitative research based on a case study model, using critical discourse analysis to investigate the data. The following chapter will elaborate on the practical methodology of this research model.

Method of research

Qualitative researchers “focus their research on exploring, examining, and describing people and their natural environments. Embedded in qualitative research are the concepts of relationships and power between researchers and participants” (Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden, 2000, p. 93). In qualitative studies, the researcher acts within this relationship in order to gain an understanding of a phenomenon from the participants’ point of view. The phenomenon I seek to gain an understanding of is notions of teacher professionalism as they are held by both organizations and practicing teachers. To examine this phenomenon, I engaged in a process of both document and interview analysis to attempt to assemble an understanding of each participant’s point of view. The analysis of documents allowed me to identify how each organization frames and promotes their subjective view of the previously identified key themes of teacher professionalism, and these insights are used to guide my comparative analysis of the interview data, in which I attempt to understand how the practicing teacher has or has not internalized the competing discourses of each stakeholder organization.

Qualitative research relies heavily on collecting data through interviews, observations, written materials, and audiovisual materials. The intent of the researcher is to “listen to the voice of the participants or observe them in their natural environments. The researcher’s interpretation of these experiences is usually described as an emic perspective” (Field & Morse, 1992 as cited in Orb et al., 2000, p. 94). Xia (2011) characterizes the emic perspective as “from the subject,” describing an emic analysis as culturally specific with the mentality of insider’s beliefs, thoughts and attitudes (p. 77). These statements caution the researcher to recognize that in this mode of research, the participants should be regarded as autonomous people who will share information

willingly, and to pursue a balanced research relationship that will encourage “disclosure, trust, and awareness of potential ethical issues” (p. 94). As I engaged in the interview process of my research, careful steps were taken to maintain the necessary balance within the researcher-participant relationship. As this research proposal includes both document and interview analysis, I will outline each method later in this chapter.

Case studies

Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark and Morales (2007) advise that “qualitative researchers must select an interpretive paradigm and afterward, identify a research question which informs the approach or design in using qualitative research to collect and analyze the data” (p. 238). They view case study research as “a methodology, a type of design in qualitative research, an object of study, and a product of the inquiry” (p. 245). For the purpose of my research question, I employed a case study model to develop “an in-depth understanding about how different cases can provide an insight into an issue or a unique case” (p. 239). By investigating different cases in the form of organizational and individual notions of teacher professionalism, I attempt to gain an insight into the dominant narrative of teacher professionalism (the unique case) within public education. The document analysis provides me with the key features of the discourses which compete within the definition of teacher professionalism, and the interviews provide the data needed to assess which discourses or narratives seem to most influence the subjectivity of the teacher as professional.

Case studies

are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied by one or more methods. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame – an object – within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates. (Thomas, 2011, as cited in Wyper, 2013, p. 513)

In this definition, a distinction between subject and object is drawn. The subject offers a unique perspective from which the researcher may investigate the object. With regard to my research, the subjects are identified as the both the stakeholders (the BCTF and the BCPSEA) who offer differing notions of teacher professionalism within British Columbia and the interview participants, while the objects of my research are their competing narratives and discourses and the degree to which they have influenced the subjectivity of the research participants.

Multi-case study involves the use of multiple data sources such as from documents and interview analysis and scholarly research articles. Case study research builds an in-depth, contextual understanding of the case by relying on these multiple data sources (Yin, 2003, as cited in Creswell et al., 2007, p. 245). Case studies are best suited for exploring problems that exists within a bounded system, such as one informed by time or place. The context of my research objective is specific both to the geographic setting of BC's education system and to this particular political era of public education, which further justifies the use of a case study model.

In case study research, the researcher explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) using a qualitative approach over time “through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual

material, and documents and reports) and reports a case description and case-based themes” (Creswell, et al. 2007, p. 245). The research is thus ended with a broad interpretation of what has been learned from studying the cases. The researcher “interprets the meaning of the case, whether that meaning comes from learning about the issue of the case (instrumental case) or from learning about an unusual situation (intrinsic case). In the final interpretive phase, the researcher reports, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested, the lessons learned from the case” (p. 248).

Case studies are typically divided into three categories, namely exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. (Yin, 1984, as cited in Zainal, 2007, p. 3). Exploratory case studies are set to explore any phenomenon in the data that serves as a point of interest to the researcher, while descriptive case studies set to describe the natural phenomena which occur within the data in question. The goal set by the researcher is to describe the data as they occur. The third category, explanatory case studies, examine the data closely both at a surface and deep level in order to explain the phenomena in the data. Zainal (2007) writes,

Case study method enables a researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context. In most cases, a case study method selects a small geographical area or a very limited number of individuals as the subjects of study. Case studies, in their true essence, explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships. (p. 1-2).

As the object of my research is focused on the specific context of teacher professionalism within BC’s public education sector, this research would best be considered descriptive, as ultimately, I

am interested in investigating and describing the attitudes towards professionalism (natural phenomenon) held by the subjects of my research.

Research site and interview selection – School District A

This research process will involve conducting interviews with three practicing secondary school teachers. School District A lies within a large city having a population of over 200,000 people. The district services a population of approximately 20,000 students who learn in elementary schools, secondary schools, and other educational settings which include special schools, and a variety of programs such as French Immersion, Montessori, and International Baccalaureate. These institutions all provide instruction based on the provincial curriculum and assessment requirements.

After having received ethics approval, I approached School District A for approval to conduct my research within their site (see Appendix A). The district has a process to handle such requests which involves distributing interview requests to staff through school administrators via email (see Appendix B, C, and D). In selecting interviewees, I chose to focus on secondary school teachers with at least ten years of teaching experience in the public sector. As there is a political dimension to this investigation of discourses of teacher professionalism, I believed it necessary to speak to individuals who have lived through the period of change and conflict that has characterized the last fifteen years of education in British Columbia. These teachers would likely have had sufficient exposure to the discourses I am seeking to investigate to be able to meaningfully contribute to this study. A random selection process was used to select and schedule participants for interviews, ensuring that participants met the established criteria and a balance of genders was achieved.

Stakeholder organization selection

The first phase of this case study involves the analysis of documents published by the BCTF and the BCPSEA. These organizations were chosen as they represent the primary agents that make up the bargaining relationship for teachers in BC's public education sector. While I do not consider these stakeholders to be representative of any larger groups, this research is premised on the notion that the BCPSEA operates in alignment with government objectives, as it operates under a co-governance model between public boards of education and the provincial government. This research study is also premised on the assumption that these stakeholder organizations differ in their views of teacher professionalism, which results in a debate between these competing discourses. The organizations are therefore participants in this debate.

The British Columbia Teacher's Federation (BCTF)

The BCTF (2018a) is the body representing public school teachers in the province. Describing itself as "a union of professionals," the BCTF was established in 1917 and represents approximately 43,000 teachers throughout the province. In British Columbia, membership in the BCTF and local teachers' associations is mandatory for all public-school teachers. The union was incorporated as a benevolent society in 1919 and achieved full collective bargaining rights in 1987. The BCTF views itself as working for the rights of teachers and students by advocating for the welfare of teachers, defending public education, and promoting social justice within the province and country.

The BCTF is organized as a democratically structured collective of teachers. The members ultimately determine the decisions and directions of the organization by electing

delegates to the BCTF AGM through their locals, and by electing local representatives to sit on the Representative Assembly. Delegates at the AGM elect the Executive Committee of the BCTF, approve changes to by-laws, establish yearly priorities, and make significant policy decisions for the Federation. The Representative Assembly approves the Federation's budget, elect the Judicial Council of the Federation, and also makes policy and procedure decisions. The Executive Committee consists of twelve elected teachers, three of whom serve in a full-time capacity: The President, First Vice-President, and Second Vice-President. The Executive Committee has overall responsibility for the running of the Federation. The Constitution of the Federation and by-laws establish the rules by which the organization is run.

The British Columbia Public School Employer's Association (BCPSEA)

The BCPSEA is the body representing school employers and is the accredited bargaining agent for the province's sixty public boards of education. Wyper (2013) describes it as representing "the bureaucracy within which teachers operate" (p. 56). The BCPSEA (2018a) describes itself as

a full-service employers' association [and] the accredited bargaining agent for the province's 60 public boards of education, for unionized teaching and support staff in the British Columbia K-12 public education system [providing] a full range of human resource services with a focus on the development, coordination and facilitation of human resources best practices.

In 1992, the provincial government established a Commission of Inquiry into the Public Service and Public Sector with a mandate to examine human resource practices and propose a new

framework of human resource management which would allow government to meet the public's demand for service within fiscal limitations. On July 9, 1993, the Final Report of the Commission was released, which established the basis for legislation to change the structure of the public sector. The *Public Sector Employers Act* (PSEA) was passed, which established the *Public Sector Employer's Council* (PSEC) and employer's associations in public sectors. The BCPSEA was formed in May 1994. On June 7, the *Public Education Labour Relations Act* (PELRA) was passed, which established BCPSEA as the accredited bargaining agent for all school boards and the BCTF as the certified bargaining agent for all public-school teachers in the province. The BCPSEA is governed by a board of directors which consists of four government representatives appointed by the Minister responsible for the *Public Sector Employers Act*, and seven school trustees elected by the sixty boards of education. The BCPSEA is a member of PSEC, which was established by the provincial government to provide a link between the government and public sector bodies on compensation and other human resource management issues.

Document analysis – Selection process

I began the document analysis component of this research project by selecting documents published by both stakeholder organizations. These are textual documents which can be considered primary sources of data as they consist of written material and policy documents from the competing organizations involved in the current debate over teacher professionalism. These documents were collected from each organization's website after I familiarized myself with the overall structure and layout of the sites and performed some searches using terms such as "teacher", "professionalism", and "professional" as keywords. My own prior knowledge of how

each organization categorizes its publications and general by-laws also helped me to make these determinations.

BCTF documents

Relevant documents published by the BCTF take the form of both published documents and website pages made available in a section of the BCTF website titled *For Teachers*. The most significant document for analysis is the *2018-2019 Members' Guide to the BCTF*. An expansive document, it contains the stated goals of the organization, the Federation's code of ethics, and consists of five parts:

1. BCTF Priorities, Services, and Organization.
2. The Constitution and by-laws of the organization.
3. A compilation of the BCTF's policies and procedures, in the form of motions passed from 1953-2018 by the AGM and by meetings of the Representative Assembly, the Executive Committee, and the former (until 1965) Consultative Committee.
4. Information about the Federation
5. BCTF Simplified Rules of Order and RA and AGM Rules of Order.

Through their governance structure and democratic practices, all wording contained in the member's guide would have been approved and adopted by elected teacher representatives. For this reason, the guide could be considered the most relevant textual representation of the voice of teachers and the Federation, and for that reason I will focus my analysis on it.

Other potential documents included research reports and newsletters. The BCTF Research Department carries out projects that support the leadership priorities and key objectives

of the BCTF in bargaining, education policy, professional practice, and social justice. The BCTF Research team claims to advocate for the development of educational policy, school programs, and classroom practice based on teacher knowledge and experiences. These documents include:

- Professional Rights and Responsibility: <https://bctf.ca/ProfessionalResponsibility.aspx>
- Professional Development and Support: <https://bctf.ca/ProfessionalDevelopment.aspx>
- Case Study: The State of Educators' Professional Learning in British Columbia (2017)
- Professional Development: What does the research say? (May/June 2015)
- The politics of curriculum making: Understanding the possibilities for and limitations to a “teacher-led” curriculum in British Columbia (July 2018)
- Educational technologies and teacher autonomy (February 2018)

BCPSEA documents

Relevant documents made available by BCPSEA largely take the form of employer bulletins, which they term *Perspectives in Practice*, some research and arbitration reports, and the organization's own constitution. It should be noted that the majority of documents available on the BCPSEA website seem to have been published between 2010-2012. In this regard, their public output seems to have diminished since. Listed below, the relevant documents are as follows:

- Teacher-Public School Employer Collective Bargaining in BC: Historical Perspectives – Resource/Discussion Paper (2006)
- Perspectives in Practice: The Organization of Schools, Legislation, the BC Supreme Court, and Now What (May 2, 2011)

- Perspectives in Practice: Employment in Transformational Times – or Change as Usual? (May 11, 2011)
- Perspectives in Practice: Teacher Professional Development: A Question of Development, Growth, and Currency (undated)
- Perspectives in Practice: Employee Assessment in Public Education: Integrating roles, responsibilities and development (undated)
- Perspectives in Practice: Professional Autonomy – Discretion and Responsibility in K-12 Public Education (undated)
- Perspectives in Practice: Continuing the Discussion on Professional Growth, Development and Currency (Nov 14, 2011)
- @issue - Arbitration Award: Professional Autonomy (Oct 2, 2009)
- Teacher Collective Bargaining in BC: Bargaining Scope – Why We Bargain What We Bargain – Resource/Discussion Paper (2003)
- BCPSEA Constitution and By-Laws

Interview process and data collection

When conducting interviews, Dilley (2000) recommends that protocol questions be used to guide the journey the interviewer wishes the respondents to take (p. 133). He states that six questions are the heart of any interview: who, what, when, where, why, and how, and advises researchers to begin with close-ended questions to establish the subject's ability to answer and to put the respondent at ease, and then be prepared to ask follow-up question.

The following framework presents the themes and questions which guided my research and interview questions that formed the substance of the 60-minute interviews. Follow-up questions were asked when appropriate.

Table 3

Interview Protocol

Theme of Professionalism	Guiding Research Question	Sample Questions
Introductory and Close-Ended Questions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long have you been teaching? • Where did you complete your education? • What do you teach? • Have you had any formal involvement with the BCTF?
General ideas of Professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do teachers generally think professionalism means? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you call yourself a professional? • What is your understanding of the terms professional and professionalism? • Do you believe that teachers are professionals? Why or why not?
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To whom is the teacher accountable to in their work and how should their performance in this regard be evaluated? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do teachers answer for the quality of their work, and to whom? • What is the best way to evaluate a teacher's work?
Professional Competence and Ongoing Professional Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the nature of the teacher's knowledge and skillset, and what conditions lead to the ability of teachers to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do teachers do that is unique to their profession? • How do teachers improve their teaching practice?

	continually improve their practice and their profession?	
Ethics in Professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the best standards of conduct and behavior which guide teachers in the fulfilment of their professional obligations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe an ethical teacher? • What value is there in acting ethically as a teacher?
Professional Autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what degree and in what context does the professional act to perform the duties of their work within their own judgment and discretion? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are you allowed to do as a teacher? • Is there anything you are not allowed to do? • How much freedom does a teacher need to do their job well? • Are there any restrictions that a teacher should have in their duties?
Vocational Ownership and Self-Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what degree do members of the profession control the standards of entry and the conduct of their members? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who do you feel should control the standards needed to become a new teacher? • What should those standards be? • How important is it that teachers act to bring respect or esteem to the profession?
Collegiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How important to the profession is the collegial interaction and collaboration of members and how should this be facilitated and managed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How important to teaching is working with other teachers? Is collaboration part of the behavior of a professional educator?
Closing Question(s)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any other aspects of teacher professionalism that we have not discussed?

Methodology framework table

The following table presents the overarching methodology framework of my research project.

Each phase has been identified by key research question, method of data collection, and timeline.

Table 4

Methodology Framework

Research Phases	Research Questions and Data Collection Methods	Timeline
<p>Review of the research literature</p>	<p>Question(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is teacher professionalism currently conceptualized within the research literature and what are the common themes? • What are the key aspects of the competing narratives or discourses surrounding teacher professionalism? Why is there so much confusion and ambiguity surrounding the term? <p>Source of Data: Scholarly articles and studies on the topic of teacher professionalism</p>	<p>September – December 2018</p>
<p>Analysis of Stakeholder Documents</p>	<p>Question(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is teacher professionalism framed by the different stakeholders in public education, primarily the BCTF and the BCPSEA, and what are the implications of this framing? • How is teacher professionalism reframed and reshaped within the bureaucratic setting of public education institutions in British Columbia? <p>Source of Data: Primary documents published by the BCTF and the BCPSEA</p>	<p>January – February 2019</p>

<p>Interviews and Analysis of Data</p>	<p>Question(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do current teachers conceptualize themselves as professionals? <p>Source of Data: Interviews conducted with teacher respondents.</p>	<p>January – February 2019</p>
<p>Comparative Analysis of Documents / Interviews and Final Report Writing</p>	<p>Questions(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What themes of teacher professionalism are evident in the data? • Which organization’s notion of professionalism is most dominant in the minds of practicing teachers in the public-school system? Whose vision do these teachers seem to most align with? <p>Source of Data: Comparison of previously collected document and interview data.</p>	<p>February – March 2019</p>

Data analysis – Critical discourse analysis (CDA)

In attempting to define Critical Discourse Analysis, Strauss and Feiz (2014) write

Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth, CDA) centers on the view that all of discourse is *social practice*. That is, our ways of using language and discourse—as producers of discourse and as consumers of discourse—are shaped by society. ... Critical Discourse Analysis seeks to uncover the discursive processes through which ideologies are shaped and communicated, normalized, and propagated—ideologies which involve hidden dimensions of power, control, injustice, and inequity, all of which typically go unseen and unnoticed because they are couched

in what appear to be common-sense assumptions of social reality and “truth.” (p. 313)

My research study is premised on the notion that the stakeholder organizations represent producers of discourse whose ideologies of teacher professionalism are communicated to consumers of said discourse – the practicing teacher. This relationship involves a process in which these ideologies are shaped and then communicated to teachers, and I am interested in uncovering whose notions are being normalized or propagated, and whose are not. Mogashoa (2014) writes,

the construction of official knowledge in schools involves discourses that transverse a range of texts and sites and situates discourse analysis as an interpretive and deconstructing reading of ‘multidiscursive texts’ (which have significantly different meanings or connotations according to their use within different discourses) which draw from a range of discourses, fields of knowledge, and voices (p. 108).

Through document and interview analysis, I investigate these texts as shared perspectives which encompass a range of approaches that frame the details into a coherent whole – the conceptualization of teacher professionalism.

Document Analysis

This research process involves investigating the ideologies of each group through document analysis. Waring (2018) defines *ideology* in two related ways: “(1) a system of ideas and practices that operate to the advantage of a social group; (2) a system of ideas and practices

that disguise or distort the social, economic, and political relations between dominant and dominated classes” (p. 197). The debate over teacher professionalism is contested in the politicized arena of public education. The ideas and practices of stakeholders in this arena work to advantage some groups over others, and each organization, the BCTF and the BCPSEA, can be viewed as attempting to position itself through rhetoric and discourse as dominant. These organizations do so in part through the publication of textual documents and other literature. Bloor and Bloor (2007) comment, “when we look at the highly structured organizations that hold most power and that control the way we live and influence the way we think, we can see that language is an integral part of that control” (p. 5). In some ways, each organization can be viewed as seeking to control the discourse of teacher professionalism within the public education sector through their own use of language.

Mogashoa (2014) describes thematic organization as an effective method for critical discourse analysis of documents. Thematic analysis is centered on trying to identify meaningful categories or themes in a body of data, revealing motifs that underpin discursive structures to advance a position (p. 109). The researcher’s task is to investigate a limited number of themes by identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006 as cited in Mogashoa, 2014, p. 109). He continues,

A theme is a cluster of linked categories conveying similar meanings and usually emerges through the inductive analytic process which characterizes the qualitative paradigm. By looking at a text, the researcher asks whether a number of recurring themes can be abstracted about what is being said, for example, consistency or blame. Data familiarization is a key to thematic analysis. After familiarization,

the researcher can code his/her data. In the results section of the report, the themes abstracted are collated and reported. Themes that were identified in this study [are] analysed and reported and recommendations made. (p. 109)

In the analysis of stakeholder documents, I investigate themes that are apparent in the data as they relate to the already identified themes of teacher professionalism which have already been outlined. These themes act as the primary codes used to familiarize myself with the data. In this way, I hope to gain an understanding of how each organization frames its own subjective views of these themes.

Lewin-Jones (2017) illustrates a three-stage framework to begin this process of familiarization:

1. The entire document is read to get the gist and the overall impression, and features of initial interest are noted.
2. Headings are used to classify those features.
3. Headings are further used in close readings of the document and any additional features are identified. (p. 77).

Interview Analysis

Fairclough (2010) writes,

Discourse is not simply an entity we can define independently: we can only arrive at an understanding of it by analysing sets of relations. Having said that, we can

say what it is in particular that discourse brings into the complex relations which constitute social life: meaning and making meaning (p. 3).

He states that CDA is a relational form of research in that its primary focus is not on entities or individuals, but on social relations. Fairclough defines CDA as an “analysis of dialectical relations between discourse and other objects, elements, or moments, as well as an analysis of the ‘internal relations’ of discourse,” rather than an analysis of discourse “in itself” (p. 4). This distinction is important for the focus of my research as I am interested in investigating the relation between an organization’s discourse of teacher professionalism and the way that notion may or may not be manifested in the discourse of practicing teachers – the individual. This constitutes a complex relationship in which meaning making is continually occurring in the arena of teacher professionalism.

Fairclough (2010) further elaborates that within CDA, objects of research allow for various ‘points of entry’ for the discourse analyst, and these points of entry are analyzed in relation to other elements, “always in ways which accord with the formulation of the common object of research” (p. 5). The published texts and interviews of my research provides the points of entry which, when analyzed in relation to one another, should help to achieve the object of my research – an understanding of the dominant notions of teacher professionalism. Mogashoa (2014) states that in oral analysis, parties follow norms of cooperation and coherence, and that to properly understand and interpret the meaning of text, the researcher must place it within the context of a particular community and the circumstance under which the text is rendered (p. 109). As my research is focused tightly on the teaching community and representative stakeholder organizations, this aids in the proper analysis of the interview data.

Burnard (1991) offers a qualitative research method to conduct an analysis of semi-structured interviews. The aim of such interviews is to “produce a detailed and systematic recording of the themes and issues addressed in the interviews and to link the themes and interviews together under a reasonably exhaustive category system” (p. 461-462). He describes a multi-stage process as follows:

- Stage 1 – Notes made after each interview regarding the topics discussed and transcripts are created.
- Stage 2 – Transcripts are read through with the aim of becoming immersed in the data
- Stage 3 – Transcripts are read through again and headings are used to describe all aspects of the content, which should account for all interview data. This stage is known as “open coding.”
- Stages 4-7 – Categories are grouped and reworked under higher-order headings, reducing them until final category determinations are made.
- Stage 8 – Transcripts are worked through again and coded according to the list of final category headings.
- Stage 9 – Each coded section of the interview is collected and grouped together. Care is taken not to lose the context of what is said.
- Stage 10-11 – The grouping is finalized.
- Stage 12-13 – The filing and writing up process begins
- Stage 14 – The researcher decides whether to link the data examples and the commentary to the literature.

Burnard, 1991, p. 462-463

As in document analysis, coding was used in order to analyze interviews by identifying common themes in their relation to terms that recur in the data, as discussed in the process outlined above. Lewin-Jones (2017) states that “researchers who have at their disposal state-of-the-art computer-based analytical tools, able to handle vast databases of text, are still convinced of the merits of close scrutiny of a text or a small set of texts” (p. 77), and it is for this reason that my methodology should help me to achieve the objectives of my research purpose.

As stated in chapter 2, the following themes and codes were identified as being relevant to the study of teacher professionalism:

- Accountability
- Professional Competence and Ongoing Professional Learning
- Ethics in Professionalism
- Professional Autonomy
- Vocational Ownership and Self-Regulation
- Collegiality

Study limitations

Zainal (2007) states that case study research is often limited by a lack of rigor, small number of subjects and a dependency on single case exploration which makes it difficult to reach a generalizing conclusion (p. 5). As a case study, this research is also limited in that it is not statistical in its approach but instead involves the investigation of a small selection of teachers which cannot be claimed to be representative of the teaching profession as a whole. These teacher subjects all come from the same school district and potentially the same schools. On the

subject of conducting interviews for research, Burnard (1991) questions “to what degree is it reasonable and accurate to compare the utterances of one person with those of another?” (p. 462). This research should be considered a snapshot of a particular moment in time. It presents no longitudinal data as the education landscape in British Columbia is one that is continually shifting. This can be seen in the recent government change that British Columbia has experienced at multiple levels. It should also be acknowledged that this research will be conducted in a bargaining year between the stakeholder groups. Such periods are often characterized by a heightened sense of conflict and greater engagement in union matters on the part of individual teachers, which might influence or shift teachers’ sense of their professional identity.

This research is also be limited by my own ability as a researcher, as this is the first project of its kind that I am attempting. Validity of research must also be considered. Burnard (1991) writes, “the researcher must attempt to offset his own bias and subjectivity that may creep through any attempt at making sense of interview data” (p. 465). My own involvement in the BCTF as an elected representative might indicate that I possess biases which would influence the outcome of this research project. Burnard advises that methods to mitigate such limitations can involve asking another researcher to check the data or to return to the people interviewed and ask them to identify what they see as the main points that emerged from the interview (p. 465). Each interview participant was sent a transcript of their interview for review and responded with clarifications and their approval.

Chapter Four – Findings and Discussion

The intent of this chapter is to summarize findings about the conceptual notions of *teacher professionalism* as articulated in both the organizational documents of the BCTF and the BCPSEA and how they are understood and translated in practice by three practicing public-school secondary teachers in British Columbia. This investigation was conducted by focusing on both how, and to what extent, these respective groups and individuals included in their understanding of *teacher professionalism* the six dimensions previously presented in my literature review. This investigation is premised on the notion that the organizations represent and perpetuate through discourse competing notions of *teacher professionalism* which are communicated to practicing teachers. In order to understand how these discourses may or may not be reflected in the interview data, it is first necessary to form a concrete understanding of these competing and contradictory views. Therefore, the discussion in each section of this chapter is organized around the six themes identified in my literature review (chapter 2). The data is presented as I investigate how each subject (BCTF, BCPSEA, and teacher participants) frames their understanding of the dimensions of accountability, professional competence and ongoing learning, ethics, autonomy, vocational ownership and regulation, and collegiality.

This chapter is organized as follows: first, I will examine the competing views of the BCTF and the BCPSEA. The order in which these organization's views are presented in this chapter should not be considered to be significant, as I am not attempting to indicate any hierarchical relationship between the two. Each discussion will begin by examining whether any definitions of *teacher professionalism* can be found in the data, which includes documents as produced by the BCTF and BCPSEA. Then, subsequent discussion will follow the dimensions

and themes of professionalism. At the conclusion of my literature review, I presented two competing notions of teacher professionalism – *managerial professionalism* and *democratic professionalism*, based on the academic research. In this chapter, I will conclude my discussion of each organization by attempting to identify to what degree their respective dominant narratives or conceptualizations of the notions of professionalism align with the concepts of managerial and democratic professionalism. This analysis focuses on documents such as bylaws, guides, media releases, research reports, discussion papers, editorials, and other organizational literature which has been published and made available by each organization.

Following this discussion, I will present my findings from the analysis of teacher interview data. As with the preceding analysis, this discussion will first focus on whether concrete definitions of *teacher professionalism* could be seen to be held by each individual. Then, I will proceed to discuss the participants' individual understandings of the respective dimensions and the degree of congruence between what is promoted by the organizations in terms of defining teacher professionalism and how the teacher participants conceptually and practically defined professionalism. At the conclusion of this chapter, I will synthesize these findings and consider to which extent are teachers' view of professionalism congruent with the perspectives of the BCTF and the BCPSEA and the definitions of managerial and democratic professionalism.

The British Columbia Teacher's Federation (BCTF)

As outlined in chapter three (methodology), my analysis of BCTF documents largely focuses on the union's members guide and other discussion and research papers. The current edition of the member's guide is a document of 209 pages which contains all bylaw's, resolution,

goals, and organizational literature produced by the BCTF. The union follows Robert's Rules of parliamentary debate in their representative assembly procedures and the text of the member's guide is a product of this debate. It can be considered a living document that is repeatedly altered, edited, and updated as the union meets with its representative assembly and at its annual general meeting. These representatives approve all language through vote and therefore this document can be best considered to reflect the voice of the federation and its collective membership.

For the purpose of this analysis, after reviewing the entire document I chose to focus my attention on select sections of the member's guide, which most clearly connected to the dimensions of teacher professionalism as guided by the results of my literature review. This resulted in my focusing on the following sections:

- Certification and Teacher's Council (p. 40-41)
- Education Policy (p. 43-59)
- Goals of the BCTF, including leadership priorities (p. 74)
- Professional Development (p. 124-127)
- Professional Ethics, Rights, and Standards (p. 127-131)
- Professional Relations (p. 131)
- Public Relations (p. 140-141)
- Social Responsibility (p. 149-151)
- Supervision and Reporting on Members (p. 153)
- Teacher Competence (p. 153)
- Teacher Education (p. 153)

From first glance, it is immediately apparent that the BCTF as an organization focuses heavily on dimensions of professionalism such as ongoing learning, autonomy, vocational ownership and collegiality.

Definitions of teacher professionalism

While the BCTF does not make a single definition of *teacher professionalism* explicitly available, there are references throughout the examined documents, which do present an organizational view. In citing Millerson (1964), Naylor (2011b) comments that there are four professional criteria which could apply to teachers:

- the use of skills based on theoretical knowledge,
- education and training in those skills certified by examination
- a code of professional conduct oriented towards the public good
- a powerful professional organization. (p. 4)

These criteria help to establish a view of professionalism that is tied clearly to the dimensions of professional competence and ownership. As will be illustrated later in this section, the BCTF views itself as the key steward of quality education in the province and ties its organizational identity to the individual and professional responsibility of teachers to work to secure the public trust.

Naylor (2011a) expresses the importance of professional development to the professionalism of teachers, writing “to be a professional implies that each member of a profession undertakes professional development” (p. 2). He writes that “many BC teachers pursue academic studies beyond the minimum necessary to teach, which indicates a high level of

professionalism” (Naylor, 2011b, p. 4), and ties this idea to an expression of support for teacher autonomy, another key dimension of professionalism to which the BCTF as an organization continually returns. In another article, the same writer states, “professionalism is about the search for improvement in practice and finding the best ways to teach the students we work with. For individual teachers, the commitment to continue learning needs to be maintained and extended: non-participation in professional learning plays into the hands of those wanting more managerial control” (Naylor, 2015). This connection between the teacher’s responsibility to continually develop and the dangers of managerial control illustrates a repeated theme that is apparent in the BCTF documents: that external accountability measures serve to infringe on the rights of the teacher and interfere with the provision of quality education in British Columbia.

The BCTF refers to itself as a “union of professionals,” and attempts to reconcile this contradiction in an article published in *Teacher Magazine*, a publication of the federation. The article reprints excerpts from *The Report of the Sullivan Royal Commission on Education* (1988), a report which was initiated to inquire into and report on education in the province. In using these excerpts in their newsmagazine, the BCTF has adopted Sullivan’s language as their own. In part, the report states:

Teachers are salaried professionals. In addition, in B.C. they are now also members of a trade union as defined by the *Industrial Relations Act*. Trade union membership, however, does not negate professional status; teachers still possess specialized knowledge, are bound by codes of professional practise, and are still entrusted with a unique educational responsibility [...] A profession is seen to provide a specialized and valued service to the public; in theory at least, it is

accountable to the public interest for the conduct and performance of its members. A profession, therefore, typically has a governing body that establishes standards of entry, certification, conduct, and performance, and which imposes sanctions against members who fail to meet the conditions for continued practice [...] Put simply, a *union of professionals* is not a contradiction in term [...] Teachers are also salaried professionals and, like many others in that category, perform their work in the context of a formal employment relationship with an employer—in this case, the local school board. Such a context does produce some tension in that responsibility to the standards of the profession are separated from the supervisory authority of the school board and its management personnel. To establish formal influence over how they perform their work and the conditions under which they work (two characteristics of a profession), teachers, like unions, take collective action—they bargain. Recent provincial legislation granting union certification to teachers simply formalizes and legitimizes the employer–employee relationship that has always existed between school boards and teachers. Such action does not de-professionalize teaching in any way. (Royal Commission on Education, 1988, as cited in BCTF, 2003, p. 7).

These excerpts articulate the union’s view of their professionalism and emphasize the dimensions of professional competence and vocational ownership. Sullivan acknowledges the employee / employer relationship as a necessary function of trade-union status and positions the act of collective bargaining as one which allows teachers to maintain control of their vocation (specifically in regard to working conditions) through the mechanism of the union. In this way,

the BCTF acknowledges the dimension of accountability, but attempts to reframe it as an asset to their unionism.

Accountability

Accountability, particularly in the form of external accountability measures, is not widely discussed in BCTF documents, and where it is, it is typically framed or presented as existing within a problematic relationship to another dimension of professionalism or to the teacher's responsibility to serve the public good. In the union's organizational goals, the exercise of professional autonomy is presented to be incompatible with external regulation, stating the federation's desire "to ensure, through the development of democratic processes, professional autonomy for teachers and protection from capricious or malicious action, unjust regulations, and the abuse of authority" (BCTF, 2018b, p. 74). Adjective choices such as "malicious, unjust" and "abuse" clearly frame external accountability as harmful to the profession, a view that recurs throughout the data.

Within the member's guide, the union provides a section titled "Standards and Accountability," which further outlines the federation's position and concerns on accountability issues. Resolution 9.A.09.1 of this section states,

Public schools must be organized and operated in a manner that balances public accountability structures of government and school boards with the principles of participatory democracy, in order that members may model the democratic processes about which students learn. (BCTF, 2018b, p. 44)

The union seems to frame public accountability structures as being difficult to reconcile with participatory democracy, a Canadian public ideal which teachers model to their students.

Therefore, these structures would impact the teacher's ability to serve the public good. This is further developed in resolution 9.A.27 which states "that systems of accountability should be based on democratic principles that recognize the primary value of the professional judgment of the teacher" (p. 46). In this line of thinking, external accountability itself is incompatible with the public responsibilities of the teacher's work.

Numerous ministry and school district external accountability measures are directly addressed in a series of BCTF resolutions. The union identifies as problematic accountability measures such as a focus on narrow or exclusively quantitative assessment data, programs which do not respect the confidentiality of students, and advocates for a "dramatic shift in our public-school system away from the current accountability agenda that emphasizes inappropriate testing, ranking, and narrow achievement measures" (BCTF, 2018b, p. 46). The union also expresses the "right of school staff to determine if an external assessment can happen and if that results of that assessment can be released" (p. 46-47), consistent with their view that accountability measures should remain within the control of members of the profession. The BCTF has waged a very public battle against ministry performance assessments and the use of that data by third parties to facilitate school rankings, which is directly addressed in the following statement of concern:

The government's current "accountability" system for public schools relies on narrowly focused standardized tests as the main vehicle for determining the effectiveness of our schools. Teachers believe we should be more concerned

about meeting the diverse needs of all the students in our public schools and the success of our schools is all about how well we do that. (BCTF, 2018b, p. 48-49)

Such statements which equate the pursuit of external accountability as being antithetical to the provision of quality education are consistent with the union's views. In fact, resolution 46.03, to be found under the heading "Teacher Competence," clearly expresses the direction of the union in this regard: "that the BCTF actively opposes the implementation or use of 'teacher competency testing' for any purpose, including the evaluation of teachers, hiring of teachers, the ranking of teachers, and the evaluation of schools" (p. 153). Naylor (2011a) reinforces this view, writing that high performing education systems throughout the world "build capacity through investments, support, and partnerships, rather than through focusing on narrowly-defined and imposed accountability which targets teachers as having deficits" (p. 2). In a research report, Gacoin (2018a) argues that "as a form of standardization, [ministry] assessments are based on narrowly focused outcomes, rather than the learning needs of the child" (p. 2). This is presented as having the potential to take time away from teaching and learning, as well as to restrict what gets taught within the curriculum, further reducing autonomy and the provision of quality education. The BCTF asserts that educational policy and practice must shift away from standardization and return to focusing on student's individual learning needs in order to be successful.

Naylor (2011a) explores the concern of the federation that the use of employer/employee language, common within the BCPSEA literature, serves to disempower teachers. He writes, "teachers are, of course, employed, just as doctors are in hospitals, or judges in a court, but the sustained labeling removes any concept of professionalism from their role. The teacher as no

more than an employee therefore places the teacher within the master-servant ‘relationship, denying both professionalism and reducing, if not eliminating, autonomy’ (p. 9). This view presents accountability as an imposition on the teacher’s professional autonomy, one which ultimately serves to harm students: “while reducing autonomy often increases accountability, the assumption made by those stressing increased accountability is that outcomes for students will improve. Such an assumption has proven problematic, if not false” (Naylor, 2011b, p. 17). However, the BCTF does not advocate for the complete removal of accountability measures from the school system. Rather, they argue that the internal judgement and voice of teachers brings accountability to the system, stating that through collegial practices teachers demonstrate the “responsibility to engage in discourse about practice in ways that teacher judgment can be shared and discussed with peers and others in public spaces [...by] giving an account of their teaching, [they] are being pro-actively accountable and thereby taking more control of accountability rather than reacting to the accountability demands of districts or governments” (p. 9).

Professional competence and ongoing learning

The BCTF places a great importance on professional development, linking this process to the professional competence of its members. As a stated objective of the federation, the BCTF intends “to promote professional growth of teachers through the development of pre-service, internship, and in-service education,” (BCTF, 2018b, p 74). These objectives are clearly reflected in the bylaws and resolutions of the union. As a statement of principle, the union writes: “it is through the knowledge, skills and example of teachers that schools foster the growth of students into autonomous, socially responsible citizens,” (BCTF, 2018b, p. 50), clearly linking

the professional status and expertise of teachers to the larger social importance of education.

Specifically, the union states that teachers help to achieve these goals by developing their competence and expertise in the following ways:

1. through philosophical understanding of the aims, goals and values of education for a society which is just, democratic and peaceful and which supports its citizens in their pursuit of happiness and fulfilment
2. through knowledge about teaching practice based on research and experience
3. through understanding current affairs and social developments such as technological changes, cultural changes and the arms race, which affect the context in which teaching and learning occur
4. by applying skills and understandings developed through formal and informal training, through feedback and coaching from colleagues, and through practice in the classroom
5. through serving as role models of caring, understanding, resourceful, responsible, self-directing adults who are committed to learning and personal growth and who exhibit honesty, openness and integrity
6. by planning and organizing learning experiences appropriate for their students
7. by participating within the teaching profession in developing new knowledge concerning teaching and learning, in sharing information, materials and knowledge with colleagues, and in supporting the development and enforcement of professional standards
8. by participating as an educational leader within the community, e.g., serving as an advocate for education, helping the community to understand the

connections between the conditions for teaching and learning and the quality of education and to appreciate the types of changes required in the schools.

(BCTF, 2018b, p. 50)

A common aspect of the BCTF's discourse is to link the pursuit of social justice issues with the professional competence of teachers. To the union, expertise in educational content and pedagogy is not sufficient, and instead the expectation that engagement with social issues in pursuit of a more equitable world is also presented as a condition of competence. The BCTF refers to itself as a "social justice union," and it is within this political dimension that the union frames its members' expertise as well as argues for increased autonomy and compensation. The union repeatedly reminds us that teachers are performing a social good, and for that reason must be respected and enabled to do their work. Another key aspect of these statements is the emphasis on collegial interactions with members. To the BCTF, a teacher can only improve by working with other teachers.

The BCTF (2018b) provides a clear definition of professional development (PD) in its member's guide: "professional development is a process of ongoing growth, through involvement in programs, services, and activities designed to enable teachers, both individually and collectively, to enhance professional practice" (p. 124), and states the purposes of professional development to include strengthening the professional body, maintaining professional relationships, initiating curricular and instructional reform, developing and applying educational theories, and improving the quality of professional practice. Naylor (2011a) concurs, writing that "to be a professional implies that each member of a profession undertakes professional development (p. 2). In discussing professional development, the BCTF also makes a

distinction between “professionals” and “staff” or “employees”, believing that meaningful PD must incorporate teacher autonomy (Naylor, 2015). While the union strongly advocates for the teacher’s individual control of their professional development, they also stress that employers and the ministry be systemically responsible for supporting teacher’s PD through service and funding. Specifically, enabling the “concepts and structures which enable professional learning to take place, and the funding which supports it” (Naylor, 2011a, p. 4).

The BCTF’s perspective of PD also includes advocacy for professional autonomy, the rights and responsibilities of members, social justice issues, and public education in its statements of principle. Again, in this example the union connects the pursuit of social justice and the political dimensions of both education and the union into its understanding of professionalism. It is likely that on this point the BCPSEA would strongly disagree.

Ethics

The BCTF maintains a code of ethics to which all members are held. This code expresses principles of best educational practice as well as serves to guide the collegial interactions of members. Curiously, the union also lists as one of its organizational goals “to establish a code of ethics and professional conduct, criteria of qualification, and criteria and procedures for the assessment of professional competence, and to ensure that teachers are effectively subject to the judgment of their peers in these matters, with guarantee of due process” (BCTF, 2018b, p. 74). In this objective, the union clearly links multiple dimensions (ethics and vocational competence) to their repeated assertions of internal regulation and accountability.

Of the BCTF's ten ethical codes, two overarching themes are observable. Codes 1-4 are clearly focused on maintaining ethical interactions between teacher and student. These include principles such as treating students judiciously, respecting the privileged relationship between educator and pupil, and maintaining confidentiality (BCTF, 2018b, p. 128). Codes 5-10 can largely be viewed to be concerned with governing the teacher's conduct and interactions within the union. These include handling criticism of other teachers, acknowledging the authority and responsibilities of the union, and adherence to collective agreements. That the BCTF's understanding of the ethical dimension of professionalism is strongly tied to teacher unionism is exceedingly clear. These codes largely do not directly address issues of regulation or accountability, though it could be presumed that the union's judicial council would resolve such matters. However, as it is school districts and the Teacher Regulation Branch who deal with matters of discipline related to teacher and student interactions, it may be assumed that the union itself would largely deal with violations of the codes that are more union-focused.

Professional autonomy

It is arguable that professional autonomy is the dimension which receives the most attention in BCTF literature and is continually related back to issues involving the other professional dimensions. As stated previously, the goals of the Federation include the protection of professional autonomy for all members, free from "capricious or malicious" action in the form of management accountability initiatives. The union's *Educational Policy* resolutions include numerous calls to strengthen the autonomy of members, including advocating to rescind sections of the school act which are viewed as undemocratic and eroding the autonomy of teachers (BCTF, 2018b, p. 44), and for the inclusion of curriculum development processes which adhere

to the “centrality of teaching,” in which curriculum implementation “recognizes teachers as the key agents of educational change” and “respects teachers as self-directed professionals committed to improving education policies, practices, and curriculum” through professional learning (p. 48). Naylor (2015) views the term *professional learning* as describing “reflective and autonomous professionals who are engaged not to address deficits but to reflect on and further their understanding about teaching and learning.” In advocating for the increased autonomy of teachers, he argues that countries with significant managerial control over teachers’ professional learning cannot make any impressive claims about student learning when compared to British Columbia.

In a curriculum research report, Gacoin (2018) describes the experience of teacher participants in recent ministry curriculum development processes. He writes: “teachers were often framed as ‘experts’ in teaching, but not necessarily as experts in curricular content” (p. 33), and states that the “overarching question of who is the ‘expert’ in curriculum is also a key potential source of tension” (p. 34). This tension is central to the question of teacher autonomy. In the current relationship between the ministry and teachers, the ministry sets shared learning objectives through curriculum while teachers use their pedagogical autonomy to employ best methods to achieve these objectives. This tension over control of the curriculum and the learning environment is a key point of contention for the union.

In the view of the BCTF, professional autonomy can be seen to encompass a range of rights and responsibilities. Under the heading of *Professional Ethics, Rights, and Standards*, section 31.A.02.5 of the member’s guide, the federation includes the following as rights of the teacher:

- a. autonomy in environment; establishing the teaching/learning environment;
- b. primary control in diagnosing learner needs, in planning curriculum and in determining appropriate methods of instruction to meet these needs;
- c. primary control over evaluation instruments and processes and the interpretation and communication of evaluation data in regard to students;
- d. significant influence over decision-making and policy formation through the school staff at the school level and through professional organizations at the district and provincial level;
- e. sufficient human and material resources to meet standards of professional practice. (BCTF, 2018b, p. 128).

These statements demonstrate a view of teacher autonomy that places the teacher in control of the internal classroom environment and supplements this control with significant influence externally. The union clearly states its opposition to any accountability measures which may threaten this autonomy in a later resolution (46.05), which reads, “that locals work to ensure that matters of teacher performance and competency are addressed through the teacher evaluation procedures in the collective agreement, and that locals resist practices that do not recognize members as self-directed professionals” (p. 153).

The individual teacher’s control of professional development is also a theme which continually recurs. The union views their members as autonomous professionals who, “in concert with BCTF colleagues and/or the local union [determine] the content of professional development activities scheduled for professional development days” (BCTF, 2018b, p. 126). These planned activities, however, may not “impinge on the professional autonomy of any

teacher” and “school staff decisions may not compel the pedagogical practice of any teacher” (p. 49). The BCTF language both attempts to direct management and member actions away from impinging on any aspect of personal professional autonomy.

The BCTF remains consistently vigilant to any challenges to teacher autonomy. The proliferation of educational technology in recent years raises “the concern [that] educational technologies can contribute to the deprofessionalization of teaching and profoundly impact teacher autonomy” (Gacoin, 2018a, p. 1). A research report written in response to the current implementation of a new curriculum in British Columbia serves as a prime example. Gacoin (2018a) writes: “the tension around assessment and implementation has been exacerbated [by] the implicit assumption that concept-based curriculum will necessitate pedagogical change for many teachers” and warns that “any model of curriculum change that is reliant on a particular pedagogical approach is in direct tension with a teacher’s right to professional autonomy” (p. 13). The best implementation practices, in the eyes of the union, provides spaces for teachers to work within the curricular model in the context of their own pedagogical practices, a key principle to maintaining professional autonomy during periods of intense educational change. Furthermore, Naylor (2011b) argues that “exercising, refining, and testing [professional] judgment is crucial to teachers’ work and to their profession,” viewing teachers as “morally and ethically bound to exercise such judgment in the best interests of children and youth in schools” (p. 6). This view positions teacher autonomy as essential to enabling teachers to successfully meet the obligations of their professional roles, such as ethical and vocational goals. He concludes, “one primary goal of teachers’ work is to build independence, autonomy, and self-control in students, a task difficult to complete if the teachers have not autonomy in their work” (p. 7).

Vocational ownership and regulation

Since the dissolution of the BC College of Teachers and its replacement with the Teacher's Regulation Branch and the BC Teacher's Council, the BCTF has carefully navigated its participation within the latter institution. In the Member's guide, on the topic of regulation and the teacher's council, the union provides the following statement of principle (7.A.17):

The BCTF is committed to the teaching profession, the public interest, and public education. Teachers have a necessary role on the Teachers' Council and bring the experience, expertise, and teacher voice to decision-making at the council. To ensure this commitment to the teaching profession, the public interest, and public education, the BCTF must take action to protect the role of the Federation as the voice of the profession and oppose all attempts by the Teachers' Council, or the BC government, to create competing alternate structures that would undermine public education and diminish the profession. (BCTF, 2018a, p. 40)

This principle positions the union as the guardian of both the profession and of quality education. Numerous resolutions assert the right of teachers to participate in any ministry or district discussions which may have a bearing on this professional responsibility. However, the union does recognize that this is a process of partnerships in which multiple stakeholders have a role: "the BCTF believes that the responsibility for providing educational leadership in the public school system of BC is a shared one and that members have provided and will continue to provide effective educational leadership at the school, district and provincial levels" (p. 46).

The BCTF's adopted identity as a social justice union also comes to bear on their sense of vocational ownership. The union has, at times, been criticized for taking vocal stances on both political and social issues, but the union's response to such criticism can be found in its language on social justice and social responsibility. It states:

Professionally responsible members are committed to fostering the growth and development of all individuals, to the end that they will become and be self-reliant, self-disciplined, participating members with a sense of social and environmental responsibility within a democratic society. Professional responsibility involves a commitment to non-sexist, non-racist education, and dedication to the equal consideration of all individuals. All of us, regardless of subject and grade level, are engaged in introducing our students into an inquiry into human values, experiences and understandings. Respect for persons and peoples, for democratic process, for equality and a deep concern for justice are integral to educating students for citizenship in a democratic society. Social issues strike to the core of what teaching and education are all about (BCTF, 2018b, p. 149).

In this preamble, the union reveals a view that a teacher is not professionally living up to the responsibilities of his or her role if they are not working towards objectives which are in line with the Federation's views of social justice. Later in this section of the member's guide, the union lists examples of such issues, such as poverty, racism, and sexism. Reducing or eliminating societal inequities are understood to be part of the vocational responsibilities of all teachers.

Collegiality

Each dimension of teacher professionalism has repeatedly revealed the union to highly value collegial relations between its members. This collegiality is seen to be an essential aspect of professionalism and is repeatedly encouraged and, at times, expected. The BCTF closely links the democratic processes of the union to the collegial dimension of professionalism, and repeatedly connects the work of the membership to the teacher's professional obligation to serve both the public trust and the public good. Leadership priority number one states: "Advance the cause of public education as a public good" (BCTF, 2018b p. 74), and this is linked to a related goal of the federation which states, "to help ensure that public schools provide for the continued intellectual, physical, social, and emotional growth and development of each individual." The union ties these ethical objectives directly to the elevation of professional status of teachers in a related goal: "to maintain for teachers a level of status and economic standing appropriate to the responsibility of the profession" (p. 74).

The BCTF continually "affirm[s] the importance of critical reflection and collaboration to the growth and development of knowledge, understandings and skills of teaching" (BCTF, 2018b, p. 124). The union later states that members, individual and collectively, have an obligation to maintain a standard of professional practice that reflects knowledge, understanding, and competence in the application of principles of collaborative practice such as:

- a commitment to relationships with colleagues that encourage on-going programs of collegial professional development, promote co-operation in the teaching and learning process, and reflect a commitment to expand the body of professional expertise;

- a commitment to promote shared decision-making practices and to contribute to the education and mentoring of pre-service and novice professionals;
(BCTF, 2018, p. 128)

Interestingly, the BCTF sees individual teacher autonomy as being strengthened by collegial practices: “the value placed on autonomy by teachers appears to be identified along with values placed on community and relationships, suggesting that many teachers thrive in a combination of autonomous decision-making within a supportive community” (Naylor, 2011b, p. 15-16).

Constructing a view of the BCTF’s notion of teacher professionalism

The union’s view of teacher professionalism largely corresponds with the definition of *democratic professionalism* as previously identified in my literature review. These findings are summarized in the table below:

Table 5

BCTF views of teacher professionalism

Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability is achieved through teacher’s efforts to secure the public trust. • The exercise of teacher’s internal judgement and voice within professional communities brings accountability to the system of education. • External accountability can be difficult to reconcile with participatory democracy and impedes the teacher’s ability to model these values to students. • Accountability is best achieved by moving away from standardization and towards meeting the individual learning needs of children.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability measures must respect the professional autonomy of teachers.
Professional competence and ongoing learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers possess high levels of qualifications and develop their skills through research, experience, and participating in the teaching profession with their colleagues. • Teachers serve to further social goods and model this behaviour to their students. • Professional development is an ongoing process of growth through which teachers, individually and collectively, enhance their practice and strengthen the professional body.
Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers act ethically at all times in order to secure the public trust and enhance the esteem of the profession • Teachers at all times respect their relationship to students, the community, and the union
Professional autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased teacher autonomy increases student achievement and respects democratic practices. • The teacher is best positioned and suited to make decisions about the educational environment to best serve the needs of students.
Vocational ownership & regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BCTF serves a role as the voice of the profession and must oppose any efforts that would undermine public education and diminish the profession. • Professional responsibility includes a commitment to fostering the growth and development of all individuals with a sense of social and environmental responsibility.
Collegiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical reflection and collaboration within a supportive community of professionals helps teachers to meet and maintain standards of practice and strengthens individual autonomy.

At the conclusion of my literature review (Chapter 2), the *democratic professional* was defined as an empowered individual who learns and works best in their own professional communities. The BCTF's conceptualization of teacher professionalism largely aligns with this view. The union views professional autonomy and self-regulation as key to maintaining the trust

of the public and in ensuring the provision of quality education. Repeatedly throughout the BCTF documents the intrusion on individuality or autonomy is viewed as detrimental to the landscape of education in British Columbia. The BCTF largely rejects external attempts to regulate, control, or supervise the work of its members, and speaks highly of the need for the professional community to determine standards. These key points are reflected within the definition of democratic professionalism. Where the union differs is in its inclusion of themes of social justice when discussing the professional competence of teachers, and the importance placed on respecting the community and authority of the union.

The British Columbia Public School Employer's Association (BCPSEA)

In contrast to the BCTF, the BCPSEA has produced or made available a comparatively lesser volume of relevant literature. The organization has also seemed to slow their production of these documents in recent years, as the majority of what I was able to find was produced prior to 2012. These include briefing papers titled *Perspectives in Practice* as well as historical bargaining documents and discussion papers. However, from these documents a view of teacher professionalism is still readily made apparent.

The organization does not make any explicit definitions of teacher professionalism available. In one document, they briefly suggest the following criteria as being said to define a profession: shared standards of practice, monopoly over service, and long periods of training (BCPSEA, 2011d, p. 2), and the organization's view of some of the dimensions of teacher professionalism are discussed throughout the BCPSEA's various position papers. In contrast to the BCTF, which dedicates a great deal of energy towards the argument that teachers require as much freedom and autonomy as possible, the BCPSEA argues the opposite: that limits must be

placed on the teacher's freedom, duties, and authority, in order to ensure the provision of quality education in British Columbia. Accountability, regulation and a need to limit the autonomy of teachers continually recurs throughout the BCPSEA documents. Where the union tends to frame issues within the larger context of the teacher's responsibility to work towards the social good, the BCPSEA frames the need to limit aspects of teacher's professionalism in the name of achieving "balance" in the education system.

The following discussion of data will be organized according to the dimensions of teacher professionalism previously identified: accountability, professional competence and ongoing learning, ethics, autonomy, vocational ownership and regulation, and collegiality. Unlike the BCTF, I was not able to find sufficient direct discussion of the ethical or collegial dimensions of professionalism in BCPSEA literature and will therefore not include dedicated sections on those dimensions. The organization clearly emphasizes teachers' ethical responsibilities to their students, employers, and the public through regulation. They also value the process of teachers working with other teachers through mentorship or professional growth opportunities. Yet, in terms of the conduct and work of teachers with other teachers, the BCPSEA is largely quiet.

Accountability

The BCPSEA (2011a) does not hide its organizational focus on accountability. This dimension is seen to be directly related to ensuring the professional growth of teachers in order to improve education outcomes (p. 6). The BCPSEA frames the relationship between teachers and school districts as the traditional arrangement between an employer and its employees. They note that in 1987, the BC government passed the *Industrial Relations Act* (IRA) which

structurally changed the relationship between teachers, principals, and their employers. At the time, the IRA included teachers under the definition of “employees,” while principals and vice-principals were renamed administrative officers and considered to be part of management in the “traditional labour relations sense” (2006, p. 12). When teachers unionized and became bound to the provisions of a collective agreement, the BCPSEA notes that employers’ objectives focused on an employment model which categorized terms and conditions of employment by the degree of standardization that the employers believed was necessary to successfully operate a school system (p. 30). Therefore, to the BCPSEA it can be argued that the labour relationship itself requires teachers to be conceptualized more accurately as employees and that limits to professional freedom are necessary in order to achieve operational success.

Balance is a theme that continually recurs in the BCPSEA literature when discussing the need for accountability. This too, is viewed as resulting from the bargaining relationship. The BCPSEA states that through bargaining the two parties pursue their goals, but this pursuit must be balanced both against the costs of bargaining and against the need to recognize the interests of parties external to the bargaining relationship, but who have a stake in the public sector, such as trustees and the parent community. Inevitably, this recognition “leads to certain structure choice related to authority, responsibility, and accountability” (BCPSEA, 2006, p. 69).

While the organization does recognize the importance of teachers developing their professional practice, they argue that this is best done through regular and ongoing assessment, “which will ultimately lead to increased student learning and engagement” (BCPSEA, 2011b, p. 2). In this context, the employer views assessment as a professional responsibility and the BCPSEA argues that outside feedback, formal evaluation and personal assessment “should be

accepted as appropriate practice by any professional group” (p. 2). To the BCPSEA, external accountability measures are far more effective than the internal accountability of the teacher. Consistent with the language of employer/employee, the organization lists the following practices as successful methods of external accountability: *performance management*, *performance appraisal*, *performance review*, and *career development*. These methods are seen to accomplish two key goals: the provision of accountability and professional growth. The BCPSEA expresses a direct frustration that to the union, “evaluation is not seen as an opportunity for reflection and growth, but as a potential infringement on a teacher’s professional competence (p. 9). Ultimately, for the education sector, performance management is deemed to be so important because the stakes are so high: the improvement of student achievement by consistently developing the skills of employees (p. 10).

Professional competence and ongoing learning

While the BCPSEA does not include explicit definitions of professionalism, in discussing the importance of professional growth and development, they do write,

One of the hallmarks of a profession is its commitment to ensuring that its members engage in a process of continuous learning so that they can maintain the profession’s standards and stay current with new knowledge and best practices. Professional development also plays an important role in keeping a profession’s members motivated and interested in innovation. (2011e p. 1)

Not dissimilar to the BCTF, the BCPSEA also values strengthening the professional competence of teachers through ongoing professional development. However, where the BCTF firmly

believes that professional development should remain within the control of the individual teacher and not be encumbered by regulation or external accountability measures, the BCPSEA sees a strong role for the employer in this process as a guiding hand. In describing effective professional development, the BCPSEA states that it should be linked to the standards of practice defined by the profession's regulatory body. They also add, "it must also balance the need to respect a professional's autonomy to decide upon his or her personal professional development goals, with the need to ensure that those goals are aligned with those of the employer" (p.3). The organization does not view professional development as solely benefiting the individual and the student. The needs of the employer must also be taken into account. They conceptualize professional development as part of a performance management cycle (BCPSEA, 2011b, p. 9), one in which identifying areas of self-improvement can come from a supervisor or administrator and would better reflect the "accountability component of the performance management cycle" (p. 10).

In describing professional development processes and structures in the public sector, the organization criticizes the lack of oversight from an external agency:

From an employment perspective, the way we organize the development and professional growth of individuals is determined by various independent structures, practices, and processes that include professional development provisions in collective agreements, limited mentorship initiatives, district in-service, professional development days, periodic evaluations and the like. Unlike other professions, the self-regulatory body for the education profession in BC does not oversee the professional currency of its members and it is left largely to

individual teachers to decide how they want to continue learning as professionals (BCPSEA, 2011a, p. 1).

In drawing a parallel to other professions, the BCPSEA implies that this lack of self-regulatory oversight indicates a lack of professionalism on the part of teachers. In criticizing the now dissolved BC College of Teachers, they state, “as a result of significant dysfunction at the level of the College Council since its inception in 1987, the College has never taken responsibility for the professional development of educators beyond pre-service requirements” (p. 4). This perceived lack of responsibility on the part of the BCCT contributed to the dissolution of the College, and the further deprofessionalization of teachers. These stains on the profession of teaching help to make the employer’s proposal to include more external oversight a reasonable response. They propose that professional development be based on principles which are identified through self, peer, and administrator assessment, and outline a professional growth program that is supported by ongoing feedback.

The BCPSEA criticizes “outdated provisions in collective agreements that do not reflect best practices in development, evaluation, discipline, and dismissal” (2011a, p. 5), and seek to integrate professional growth and development initiatives and evaluation processes to facilitate professional currency and engagement. Key to these proposals is the expectation that school and district goals and objectives as well as individual employee goals would serve as the foundations of any professional growth programs. The common theme of all BCPSEA discourse surrounding professional competence and growth is the presence of the strong hand of the employer guiding and overseeing this process.

Professional autonomy

Just as the BCTF produces a great deal of literature arguing for the autonomy of their members, the BCPSEA produces a large quantity advocating for restrictions. To the BCPSEA, teachers are employees who work in a unionized setting and are bound to the provisions of a collective agreement. The organization sees teachers as holding a “dual status as both professionals and employees,” which brings to their duties added obligations (BCPSEA, 2011d, p. 3). These obligations require teachers to provide both teaching and other educational services, and therefore “limit and/or restrict a teacher’s ability to exercise professional autonomy” (p. 3). In the employer’s view, teachers’ professional autonomy is necessarily more limited than that of other professions due to the regulated environment in which teachers work (BCPSEA, 2011d, p. 1). The BCPSEA views professional autonomy as lying “on a continuum” (p. 7), one in which teachers fall to the more limited end.

The BCPSEA (2011d) claims that the regulated work environment of teachers, in which they must generally follow a prescribed centralized curriculum and are often asked to administer assessments on behalf of their school, district or the ministry of education, necessitates a lower level of professional autonomy. Teachers are limited by the ministry’s authority over the curriculum, the obligations and rights of management to evaluate and supervise teachers, and the teacher’s own obligation to operate consistently with effective educational practices (p. 4). They point to arbitration rulings that have upheld the rights “of a board and its administrators to determine the overarching framework of assessments, materials, and processes to be used by teachers in meeting [a] specified mandate,” and state that such directives do not infringe on a teacher’s individual professional autonomy as defined in a collective agreement (p. 7). The BCPSEA often cites the writing of Arbitrator Dorsey in an arbitration dealing with professional autonomy to defend their view:

The highly regulated structure of public education limits the extent to which teachers can negotiate and be contractually guaranteed freedom from control and direction from their employers and others... Legislation, regulation and Ministry and Board of Education policies circumscribe teachers' professional autonomy. Teachers must teach the curriculum defined in educational programs and assess students on prescribed learning outcomes. They have the autonomy to decide the instructional and assessment strategies to do that. Article F3 recognizes their autonomy must be exercised "within the bounds of the prescribed curriculum and consistent with recognized effective educational practice... Beyond these boundaries or limitations, teachers do not have unfettered discretion to comply with or refuse to comply with employer policies or directions on all matters that relate to teachers' duties and responsibilities" (BCPSEA, 2009, p. 1).

To BCPSEA, the arbitration upholds the rights of administrators and boards to determine the overarching framework of assessments, materials, and processes to be used by teachers to meet a specified mandate, and also establishes that professional autonomy cannot be used as a defense when the conduct of a teacher offends against a standard of professionalism that all teachers can be expected to know (p. 2).

The BCPSEA also notes that, unlike the autonomy enjoyed by post-secondary teachers, public school teachers are not afforded the same freedom due to the nature of the students they serve: "a captive audience [which does] not have the choice or capacity – depending on their age and maturity – to deal with controversial discussions in the classroom" (p. 3). They also note that

public school teachers are not engaged in research and scholarly endeavours that would necessitate a high level of academic and professional freedom.

The issue of balance also is consistently raised when discussing the limitation of teacher autonomy. The BCPSEA states, “best practices in other organizations [...] emphasize balance [...] Yes, employees have autonomy, but they also operate as part of a team within an environment focused on goals that are only achievable when everyone is supported to work together towards a shared outcome” (BCPSEA, 2011a, p. 6). To the BCPSEA, this shared outcome is one that is ultimately determined by the employer. In this view, autonomy is appropriate only in determining the method to reach that outcome. They write, “professionals apply knowledge to specific situations based on a body of evidence and standards of practice [...] they do not make decisions based entirely on their personal style or preference” (p. 6), again reiterating a view that autonomy is not the natural right of a teacher professional.

Vocational ownership and regulation

In relation to the discussion of professional autonomy, BCPSEA advances the argument that all professions further impose limitations on professionals through regulation. They state that self-regulating professions “are governed by standards and codes of conduct that bring with them the ethical obligation to place the interests of the public ahead of the profession’s interests” (BCPSEA, 2011d, p. 2). In discussing the BC College of Teachers, they argue that although teachers were granted the privilege of self-regulation by statute, the complicated nature of the relationship between the BCCT and the BCTF resulted in a structural lack of policies and oversight to regulate the professional activities and autonomy of its members. In effect, the

BCPSEA reasons that when given the chance to prove their ability to self-regulate, BC's teachers proved themselves lacking.

The organization contends that these issues stemmed from “the difficulty in reconciling what it means to be a professional operating as an employee in a regulated system accountable to the public,” and states that “teachers, seeing themselves as autonomous professionals, take issue at having their authority limited by what they perceive to be a bureaucratic, regulated, accountability-driven and assessment-focused education system” (p. 5). Again, the discourse surrounding the environment of education being incompatible with autonomous teacher professionalism is a recurring BCPSEA theme.

The BCTF champions itself repeatedly as the protector of public education in British Columbia, and through these claims advances their argument for increased ownership of their profession. BCPSEA counters these claims, stating that historically in British Columbia employers took exception to the BCTF view that teachers through their union were the sole defenders of public education through the enforcement of the collective agreement. They state that “trustees contended that they were elected to provide education programs to students in their communities’ and argue that “trustees and the community, not a labour union through its collective agreement, should be determining the structure and size of public education” (p. 32).

Constructing a view of BCPSEA's conceptualization of teacher professionalism

Many of the views of the BCPSEA fall in line with what was identified as *managerial professionalism* at the conclusion of my literature review. These organizational views can be summarized as follows:

Table 6***BCPSEA views of teacher professionalism***

Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The labour relationship that exists within British Columbia requires that teachers be viewed as employees with limits to autonomy in order to effectively achieve organizational outcomes. • Balance is required to ensure that teachers are supported while the interests of external parties are recognized. • Performance assessment in the form of external accountability measures provide for accountability and professional growth and should be accepted as appropriate practice by any professional group.
Professional Competence and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of a profession commit to continuous learning to maintain standards. • Regulatory bodies define the standards of practice and these should ensure that professional goals are aligned with the objectives of employers. • External agencies should provide necessary oversight of all professional growth activities.
Professional Autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are professional employees working in a regulated environment whose obligation to provide teaching and educational services limit or restrict their ability to exercise professional autonomy. • Employers retain the right to determine the overarching structures and framework to be used by teachers to achieve a specified mandate.
Vocational Ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are regulated professionals who must place the interests of the public ahead of the interests of their profession. • The path of education must be determined by a series of stakeholders, including employers, government, trustees, and the community.

While the BCTF largely aligns with the definition of *democratic professionalism*, the BCPSEA also corresponds strongly in their views with the definition of *managerial professionalism*. Repeatedly throughout the BCPSEA literature, the teacher is conceptualized as

an employee and public servant who is accountable to their employer and limited by the bureaucracy of public education. This is seen as key to maintaining balance within the system of education. Another key theme of managerial professionalism is the need to maintain high quality credentials through ongoing professional development that is aligned to organizational objectives. This, too, is a common theme throughout the BCPSEA literature. Both the definition of managerial professionalism and the BCPSEA literature views collegial practices as important for the achievement of high learning outcomes but do not give the relationship and interaction between teachers much attention. The relationship between employee and employer is of primary importance.

Teacher participant interviews

In the remainder of this chapter, I will summarize my findings after having conducted three interviews with practicing teacher participants in the public-school system. I will begin by providing a brief introduction to each participant, and then will organize my discussion surrounding the themes of teacher professionalism: accountability, professional competence and ongoing learning, ethics, autonomy, vocational ownership and regulation, and collegiality.

Teacher A is a secondary school teacher of Math, Career Life Connections, and Special Education. He has been teaching for approximately nineteen years and began his career as an elementary school teacher.

Teacher B is a secondary school teacher of French and Social Studies. She has been teaching for approximately eighteen years in secondary schools.

Teacher C is a secondary school counsellor who has been teaching for approximately forty years. She began her career as a secondary Home Economics teacher and then later became a school counsellor.

General definitions of professionalism

Each teacher participant stated that they viewed teachers as professionals but provided differing reasons as to why. Teacher A stated succinctly that a professional teacher “is somebody who conducts themselves in a responsible and respectful way with students.” A great deal of the conversation with Teacher A focused on the importance he places on the teacher/student relationship, and this was repeatedly reflected in his understanding of the various dimensions of professionalism. He commented that it is essential for a teacher “to know the privilege [they have] and the fact that you’re dealing with teenagers, working in high school, and aware of what your actions are all about and how they’re perceived,” likening this process to “a delicate dance.” The ethical dimension in regard to the teacher/student relationship seemed most prominent in this teacher’s mind.

Teacher B stated that teachers were professionals but chose to qualify this statement by stating “it gets complicated.” To Teacher B, aspects of the teacher’s job requires professionalism, but this can be impeded should the individual conduct themselves in a problematic way. Whereas Teacher A had a strong view towards the importance of the teacher/student relationship, Teacher B placed a great deal of importance on the conduct and behaviour of the teacher in all aspects of the job, both within the school and outside in the community. She stated that in teaching, and in similar professions: “you are the job and the way you behave is part of the job.” When asked to delineate between jobs that embody professionalism versus those that do not, Teacher B stated

that the key difference was to be found in whether the job required the individual to model professionalism at all times or not. She stated: “I think *being professional* is a choice and you can turn it on and turn it off and *being a professional* [is] no choice.” Teacher B reveals an understanding of “being professional” as defining a certain code of conduct or behaviour, while “being a professional” indicating that one must behave in this way at all times, whether at the workplace or not. Status then, seems important in this teacher’s view. She elaborated by describing being seen by students or parents in the community, and how at all times she feels she is required to model the expected behaviour of a teacher, never being able to drop this role, as she must continually represent her profession. In this description, she seems to reveal a strong sense of vocational ownership, in particular with regard to the esteem of the profession, as a key dimension of teacher professionalism.

Teacher C gave a detailed response when asked to define teacher professionalism, describing clear criteria in her thinking. She stated:

People who are professionals are people that have a level of education or credentials. They have gone through a training period that usually involves some supervised work or practicum, a clinic of some sort. Maybe they've done articles, that sort of thing. So, all of those things I see as being part of being professional membership, and they're able to apply the standards of their practice, whether it's engineering or law or teaching unsupervised, they have the ability to work, independent of supervision, make independent decisions in their area of expertise, they can mentor or supervise others, they can take on responsibilities of, you know, project management, classroom management, be a team leader, that sort of

thing. I think those are all of [the...] sort of [what] professionals do. So, yes. I feel that that the teaching profession meets those criteria and therefore, that makes me a professional.

Teacher C further elaborated that professional status is awarded to an individual who has met standards of practice and training which may include hours of licensed supervision in the form of a practicum, as well as the attainment of certain levels of education, such as a particular degree. Vocational standards and regulation seemed to play a large part of the discussion of Teacher C's understanding of the general definitions of teacher professionalism.

Participant views of accountability

In discussing the dimension of accountability, Teacher A returned to the importance of the teacher/student relationship, stating that “the students really keep us accountable.” He believed accountability to be a key aspect of teacher professionalism and described the many groups to which teachers are accountable: parents, administration, the school district, students, and the bureaucracy of the ministry, echoing the writings of Maxwell (2015). When discussing the process of evaluation, he stated that processes were in place in the district to evaluate teachers but that it was only in the beginning phases of the teacher's career that he felt teachers were under much scrutiny. Teacher's B and C also described this lack of formal evaluation after the beginning years of their careers. Relating this to the concept of students keeping their teachers accountable, Teacher A stated:

This is maybe where the students keep you accountable to some degree. If things aren't going well in the classroom and the students start to, you know, branch out

and complain. As an example, they're going to do that probably to their counselor or probably to admin and then you'll probably get the shoulder tap and be back under more scrutiny in terms of what you're doing in the classroom and the rationale for what you're doing in the classroom.

This description seems to relate to Teacher A's belief that evaluating the work of a teacher through a series of drop-in observations by an administrator is exceedingly difficult. Again, this sentiment was shared by the other teacher participants. He acknowledged that it was the work of administrators to evaluate teachers in their schools but felt that they were ill-equipped to do so. This stemmed largely due to their perceived distance from the classroom. He stated,

It's ironic that admin does the evaluations, but I would actually say like, to me, it would be somebody who's also in the trenches. So, it would be another teacher.

Like to me, if I take a step back, teachers understand what other teachers are going through. And they understand how dynamic a classroom is and how challenging a classroom is. And I think what happens, again, this is maybe a generalization, but with a lot of administrators, they started off in the classroom.

Now, they're not in the classroom. And then, you know, for them to critique what you're doing in the classroom... Maybe it seems to be a touch ironic because they're quite removed from how difficult it is.

This idea of proximity to the classroom was a recurring theme not only in Teacher A's interview but also others. Ultimately, it was thought that perhaps that best method of evaluation would involve teachers being evaluated by other teachers. While it was acknowledged that all administrators were classroom teachers at one time, their current status as working "outside of

the classroom” seemed to situate them as unsuitable in the teacher participants minds. This was echoed by Teacher C, who when asked to describe a more ideal process of evaluation, spoke of a team of teachers brought in to work with an individual, “not to evaluate but maybe to offer mentorship and support [...] a teacher that is not meeting the standards.” This echoed notions of collegiality and internal accountability measures which are common throughout the BCTF’s discourse.

The notion of scrutiny as a theme of accountability was further elaborated on by both Teachers B and C. As discussed previously, each participant described the multiple levels of accountability and scrutiny which teachers are subject to. Interestingly, while each participant identified administrative observation or scrutiny as being an aspect of teacher accountability, they all seemed to view it as less effective when compared to the scrutiny of students, parents, or the general public. Teacher B was the only participant to firmly state that the evaluation of a teacher should be performed externally by the school principal. However, she also seemed to feel that these processes were largely ineffective, due to a lack of consistency, and that as a result the professionalism of teachers was diminished. Her response to this problem was to suggest that more evaluation and more monitoring of teachers was needed in the school system.

To further cloud the issue of effective evaluation and accountability, each participant also stated that it was very difficult to fully evaluate the work of the teacher, as measurable metrics to do so were difficult to identify. They did not believe that simply focusing on the achievement of students was effective, as to the participants, there is more to teaching than simply achieving good grades. They stated that teachers do other work such as helping to shape students into “better human beings” or “responsible citizens.” They also believed in the importance of helping

students to find and pursue their passions. Ultimately, it was stated by Teacher B that teachers “were here for the kids to succeed,” but what that ultimately looks like in practice can be wildly different from one student to the next and was therefore difficult to evaluate.

Participant views of professional competence and ongoing learning

Just as it was seen to be difficult to measure the work of a teacher, so too did the participants find it difficult to clearly express professional competence. Credentialing and the process of obtaining one’s degree(s) and qualifications were acknowledged to be essential to determining competence. However, each participant also acknowledged and recognized teaching to be a demanding vocation in which regular teaching duties such as planning, presenting, assessment and reporting needed to be carefully balanced against the social dimension of working with students who come from diverse and unique backgrounds with differing needs that all must be considered. Teacher A described this process as having to repeatedly shift his “lens” or view of the classroom to consider the sensitivities of the students he serves. He stated that the social-moral dimension of teaching requires adopting a sensitive point of view:

You have a girl in the corner, whose dad is ill with cancer, you have boy over there on the side who is dealing with a dysfunctional family, you have somebody over there who’s dealing with addiction issues and yet you’re supposed to teach the curriculum, and so you’re constantly having to [be careful] about what you’re going to say.

This continued with a personal example: “I was teaching a lesson and the concept of incarceration came up and it quickly dawned on me that there’s somebody in my class whose

sibling was incarcerated. And so, all of a sudden that kind of changed what I had to do and how I had to shift my focus [which is] the constant juggling act that all teachers do.”

Teacher B also firmly stated that it was the “human” aspects which makes the job complex, stating that the traditional view of the teacher as a “bearer of information” is perhaps the most simplistic and inaccurate view of her work:

I think kids are bringing to the table more to education than they ever have before.

I think it’s more of a collaboration in the classroom, more than ever, at least in my career when I began teaching nineteen years ago, I was almost always the bearer of most information [...] Now, I’m just the facilitator. I feel like just as much comes from the other way, which is the kids.

Teacher C also commented extensively on the difficult nature of teacher’s work in dealing with children and teenagers as students. These comments all reflected on what I discovered in my literature review, particularly of the work of Maxwell (2015), who identified the socio-moral dimension of working with children as one of the most demanding aspects of the teacher’s work.

Teacher C elaborated more on the importance of qualifications than the other participants. She described clearly the process of receiving one’s credentials to determine expertise, and then applying that expertise to the context of a unique classroom by making responsible and independent decisions as an important feature of the professional work of the teacher, one which differentiated it from other vocations that are not seen to be professional. She stated that “in acting as a professional, then, I feel that we’re duty-bound to use the best practice” in order to enhance the experiences of the child/student.

Finally, each teacher spoken highly of the importance of professional development and that teachers are continually working to develop and refine their practice. None of the participants expressed any opinion that might align with the BCPSEA's notion that professional development is best performed when aligned and guided by administrative, district, or ministry priorities.

Participant views of ethics in teaching

When discussing the ethical dimensions of teaching, each participant focused their comments largely on the interaction between teacher and student. Whereas the BCTF focuses much of their code of ethics on the relationship between teachers and their union and other teacher professionals, this was not of much consideration to the participants. The three participants spoke more of the importance of not crossing professional boundaries with students or engaging in any conduct that would be improper or serve to discredit the profession. When describing the importance of acting ethically as a teacher, the participants commented frequently on the need to model appropriate behaviour to their students and to act collegially with their teacher colleagues in order to ensure a productive and positive work environment.

Both Teachers A and B focused their understanding of ethics strongly on the behaviour of the teacher, commenting that "it's more about what you do and how you conduct yourself" or "just being cognizant of teacher student boundaries that you're fully aware of again your role and responsibility that you have as a teaching professional" (Teacher A). Teacher A elaborated that to work in this way meant applying an ethical lens to all situations, asking himself "how can I ethically deal with this [...] in a fair and respectful manner?" This applied to both student interactions as well as those with teacher colleagues. In the interview, he elaborated on his

understanding of BCTF ethical codes in regard to teacher interactions and described an incident in the past in which he had to have a conversation with a colleague about their behaviour. While he characterized this interaction as difficult, he did find it to be useful and productive in the end.

Teacher C also spoke of her belief that teachers were ethically obligated to keep themselves informed about developments in educational theory and best practice. To her, the ethical dimension was closely linked to that of professional competence and development, in that teachers were continually obligated in a moral way to better their teaching to the benefit of their students: “a teacher strives to do the best possible job to keep abreast of developments in educational pedagogy, to implement those, [to achieve] best practice, and to fulfill their duties as a teacher.” She noted that this is a “tremendous responsibility because kids are spending in many cases more hours in the course of the day with us than they are their own parents” and that “we can have a significant impact on their self-esteem and their well-being, which can then impact them into life.” She described as unethical such behaviour as teachers not following through on their responsibility to contact parents with concerns or to ensure that interventions occur before a student reaches a crisis point. When asked of the importance of behaving ethically as teachers, each participant commented that it reflects positively on the profession and is in the best interests of students.

Participant views of professional autonomy

In discussing professional autonomy, the participant interviews did not diverge. Each teacher identified pedagogy as remaining within the purview of their professional autonomy. They acknowledged that teachers are tasked with teaching a defined curriculum which they do not have much control over but are able to choose the methodology with which they can achieve

those learning objectives with their students. Teacher A described this as “driving the curriculum,” stating that there were a “variety of ways to kind of get to the same point [curricular learning outcomes]” and there’s a lot of “flexibility and freedom as a teacher as to how you get there.” This could include choosing from a range of resources and teaching methods, and also being able to differentiate their instructional strategies in order to meet the needs of a particular classroom or group of students. Teacher B stated: “I have the autonomy to get to the same endpoint of the year, but through different ways, so I can use different resources [or not]” and Teacher C also concurred, stating “I had the freedom to draw on whatever I wanted to achieve those learning outcomes for the students.” She stated that teaching differs from other jobs in that “it isn’t so prescribed [...] We can draw on our expertise and make decisions about how to get to that end point.” This was seen as a crucial aspect of teacher autonomy as the participants felt that without this freedom teachers would not be able to effectively teach a diverse group of students.

The importance of maintaining one’s individuality as a teacher was also seen to be a defining characteristic of professional autonomy. Standardizations of teaching methods were viewed by the participants to be highly problematic. Teacher A described this as follows:

I think about different teachers, and I think about how you can't paint all teachers with the same brush because if you take somebody who's really, really creative and if you constantly clip their wings and say you can't do that, you can't do that, you can't do that; you're cutting, you're cutting down the essence of who that person is.

Teacher C also shared a similar observation when describing her experience as a classroom teacher:

I had the freedom to draw on whatever I wanted to achieve those learning outcomes for the students. So, and I think that's part of the professionalism that I see with teachers that it isn't, you know, it isn't so prescribed whereas a lot of, lots of jobs, it might be. It's very prescribed, whereas, as a teacher, we can draw on our expertise and make decisions about how to get to that end point.

This need for flexibility and individuality on the part of the teacher was seen as an important aspect of public-school teaching.

Some participants voiced frustrations with aspects of their work that they did not have control over. This largely focused on the bureaucratic aspects of teaching in school districts, such as paperwork involved in planning field trips or the reporting requirements of the ministry. Teacher B also emphasized the importance of following professional codes of behaviour as being outside the autonomy of the teacher. Interestingly, while Teacher B spoke highly of the need for professional freedom, she qualified such statements with the belief that regular external supervision was still needed:

But I think that freedom needs to be regulated. Yeah, I think that within that freedom, I think there still needs to be regular supervision, regular pop-ins, some sort of regulation that still allows though for that - lots of freedom. I think the more freedom, the better. I think, ironically, because I'm also saying that there's some teachers that I think could use a bit of observing, is what I'm saying.

This qualification seemed largely to be rooted in the need to balance professional autonomy with accountability so as to not diminish the profession or result in a poor educational experience for the student.

Participant views of vocational ownership and regulation

Each participant throughout their interviews repeatedly spoke of the need for teachers to conduct themselves in a manner that preserves and does not diminish the esteem of the profession, especially in regard to the general views of the public. This was reflected in comments such as being seen by members of the community in a grocery store and judged by appearance, (Teacher B) or being observed (Teacher C), if inaccurately, leaving the school grounds too soon after student dismissal by groups of parents. Teacher B described this experience as follows:

I'm constantly aware that I am being either witnessed or perhaps followed or emulated or listened to, like, I know that eyes are always on me or mostly on me. So, I feel like [a] big part of my job is, let's face it, is to be a role model. And I think that I am being a professional because I am acting in a way that I am hopefully coaching kids one day to act if they're not already acting in that way.

The importance of modelling good behaviour to both teach students and bring esteem to the profession is a theme that continually recurred throughout the participant interviews. In discussing the observations of parents, Teacher C described her belief that members of the public tended to view the work of teachers through the lens of their own experience in schools, and this often contributed to a sense of negativity or aggression towards teachers: "I think sometimes

people look at [teaching] through the lens of their own experience in school themselves and if it hasn't been a particularly positive experience that can really colour how they see teachers in their profession." She commented that people in the community "sometimes approach us with respect and appreciation, but it can often be from an approach of sort of aggression and negativity" as a result of their prior experiences. Teacher C stated that it was very important for teachers to educate the public in regard to the complexity and demands of their work, because this would ultimately lead to support in dealing with students as well as benefiting teachers during contract negotiations, touching upon the very public nature of teacher bargaining. However, none of the teacher participants seemed to view this level of scrutiny as inappropriate, with Teacher C specifically stating that teachers have responsibilities they must live up to because they are "entrusted with the community's children."

Teacher C was the only participant whose career started before teachers became unionized in British Columbia. When asked about that transition, and its effect on the professional status of teachers, she replied:

You know, it was a sad day for me when we became a union because I had at that point, I felt, you know, I knew that we had to become a union and I'm so glad that we have our union. Yeah, because so much stuff and certainly the past – what - 15 years, I guess, it's really told us what can happen when a government doesn't respect and doesn't want to fund and so and so. But the day that we became officially, became a union, because I've been at this long enough that I thought, you know, now I'm kind of lumped in there with the longshoremen. And to think

that I needed to be a union member in order to get what was needed in the classroom and to be paid fairly, that - I found that really disturbing.

These conflicting feelings about the need to unionize teachers in British Columbia reveals the complex ways unionizing did impact the professional identities of practicing teachers who, in this case, seem to have equated that choice as a necessary act to secure “what was needed in the classroom.” As our conversation turned towards the dissolution of the BCCT and the effect of that act on teachers, Teacher C described how in her view, the BCTF has taken the place of that self-regulating body.

In discussing the standards of certification needed to become a new teacher, all participants seemingly agreed that the current processes existing in the province were sufficient and working. They felt that higher education institutions were best suited for the education and delivery of practicum students in concert with the supervision of an experienced classroom teacher. They largely were satisfied that, in this regard, the system was working as it should.

Participant views of collegiality

Each participant spoke of the importance of collegiality and collaboration in teaching. This was reflected in conversations about many aspects of teacher professionalism. Collegial interactions and collaboration with other teachers were repeatedly stated to be an essential component of being a teacher professional. Teacher A described teaching as a “lonely profession” in which it was “incumbent” on teachers as professionals to reach out if something isn’t going well and talk to colleagues in order to professionally develop. Teacher B stated that it was not possible to have a “properly functioning [and] effective school learning / teaching

environment without collaborating.” Teacher C related this back to her experience as a clinical counsellor, stating that in that field it is a standard of practice to consult with a colleague and that such a formalized standard might be good to bring to classroom teaching as well.

The participants also spoke highly of the role of mentorship and co-teaching opportunities in the profession. They described their own experiences observing and learning from other teachers at different stages in their careers and felt that these forms of collegial interactions were extremely important in developing the professionalism of the teacher. In this regard, Teacher C offered that it might be preferable to the profession for teachers to change schools at more frequent intervals throughout their careers, just as administrators do, so that they can experience a range of teaching environments and work and learn from a diverse group of professionals.

Constructing a view of teacher participant conceptualizations of teacher professionalism

The following table attempts to capture the key points of understanding of the six dimensions of teacher professionalism that became evident within the interview data. As teachers A and C often aligned in their views, I have chosen to amalgamate their responses into one column. Teacher B’s views did not always align with those of the other participants, and for that reason I have used a second column to capture Teacher B’s data. For instances in which all three participants do align in their views, I have included a row titled *Shared perceptions* within each dimension.

Table 7

Teacher participant views of teacher professionalism

	<i>Teachers A & C</i>	<i>Teacher B</i>
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrators are not suited to evaluate teachers due to their distance from the classroom. Teachers may be best suited to evaluate other teachers, informally through collaboration and mentorship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation should be done by a school principal and more often, although current processes are not effective. A lack of evaluation diminishes the professionalism of teachers.
<i>Shared perceptions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are accountable to their students, administration, employer, colleagues, and community. Evaluating a teacher's work through periodic observations is difficult and does not happen much outside the first years of a teacher's career. Student success is the best indicator of successful teaching, but this is not easily measurable and cannot be done by only examining achievement scores. 	
Professional competence and ongoing learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are qualified professionals who apply their expertise to their job independently and responsibly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The human aspects of teaching are what gives it complexity; the daily tasks of the teacher are not as demanding.
<i>Shared perceptions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Credentials determine a teacher's professional status and expertise. Teacher's must develop and refine their practice through professional development, and this is a personal and independently-guided process. Teaching is a demanding profession in which regular teaching duties must be balanced within the social dimension of working with children who have differing needs and backgrounds. 	
Ethics		
<i>Shared perceptions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher/student relationship is the most important ethical boundary in teaching. Respecting ethical boundaries reflects positively on the profession and is in the best interests of students. Ethics is most evident in the behaviour of the teacher and the way they conduct themselves with others. 	
Professional Autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining the individuality of the teacher through practice and pedagogy is a defining characteristic of teacher autonomy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional autonomy does not extend to choosing to behave in an unprofessional manner or failing to be accountable within one's work.
<i>Shared perceptions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedagogy and the choice of methodology in teaching lies within the bounds of individual professional autonomy. 	

Vocational Ownership and regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The unionization of teachers was a necessary act to ensure the provision of quality education. The union now acts in place of a self-regulating body. 	
<i>Shared perceptions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers must conduct themselves in a manner which does not diminish the profession in the eyes of the public. • Teachers must be scrutinized as they are trusted to care for the community's children. • Post-secondary institutions are best suited to train and certify new teachers, acting in collaboration with practicing teachers through consultation and practicum experiences. 	
Collegiality		
<i>Shared perceptions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration and collegial interactions with other teachers are highly valued and essential components of teacher professionalism. • Mentorship and co-teaching are an extremely important component of developing a high-quality teaching practice. 	

One of the objectives of this research project was to attempt to gain an understanding of which organizational conceptualization of teacher professionalism was most dominant in the minds of the practicing teachers. While the teacher participants did in many ways align with the views of the BCTF, there were still a number of inconsistencies, and in some ways, the teacher participants revealed views which were not reflected by either the union or the employer's association. The teachers interviewed each valued individuality as expressed through professional autonomy, a key theme of the BCTF. The participants acknowledged the need for teacher accountability but only one participant felt this should be done through external accountability measures such as a principal or district assessment. Both the BCTF and the BCPSEA value a high level of qualifications and credentialing for teachers, and this too was reflected by the participants. The participants did not reflect the views of the BCTF which link the pursuit of social justice to professional expectations of the teacher, a conspicuous omission as the union is very vocal on such matters. The teacher participants placed a great importance on

the need to reflect the profession well in the eyes of the public through behaviour and conduct, perhaps to a greater degree than that reflected in the views of the BCTF or BCPSEA. The greatest divergence seems to be in the relationships most focused on by the organizations and participants. The BCTF gives a great attention to relationships between teacher/teacher and teacher/union. The BCPSEA differs by focusing on the relationship between employee/employer. While the teacher participants acknowledged these relationships, they instead seemed to continually return to the teacher/student relationship as being the most important to their profession. This should not be a surprise, as this is the relationship most constant throughout their careers, and continually comes to the center of their understanding of the dimensions of teacher professionalism.

Concluding comments

As stated by one of the teacher participants, teachers are highly scrutinized in their work as they are entrusted to care for the community's children, and this contributes to the highly contested and politicized arena that is public education. As organizations, both the BCTF and the BCPSEA promote particular discourses when it comes to educational issues including the professionalism of teachers. The interviews conducted in this research project revealed that aspects of these discourses are apparent in the minds of some working teachers. The participants revealed that, like the BCTF, they placed a strong value on collegial practices, professional autonomy, and the promotion of their profession in the eyes of the public. They also revealed that they felt evaluation and accountability was needed in the system, akin to the views of the BCPSEA. The primacy of the teacher/student relationship was also shown to be that which most motivated the participants, repeatedly mentioned in their discussions of multiple dimensions of

teacher professionalism. More research in this regard is need, as the qualitative nature of this study and its small sample size is not conclusive. It would be interesting in future research to broaden the scope of such interviews, perhaps engaging with parents, administrators, or other members of the community to begin to discern how notions of teacher professionalism may have evolved in the eyes of the public. This could also include pre-service teachers, to begin to understand the perceptions they carry as they attempt to start their professional careers. In the past, the BCTF and the BCPSEA have waged a public campaign during periods of bargaining and job action, and their influence has likely extended beyond the attention of just practicing teachers.

Appendix A – Letters of Invitation



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Department of Educational Studies

Faculty of Education
Education Centre at Ponderosa Commons
6445 University Boulevard
Vancouver B.C. V6T 1Z2
CANADA

Tel: 604-822-5374

Fax: 604-822-4244

Web: <http://www.edst.educ.ubc.ca>

School District A – Seeking organizational approval to conduct research

Dear School District A,

I am a master's student in the Educational Administration and Leadership Program in the Department of Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia. I am writing to seek the approval of the School District A to conduct a research study entitled *Investigating conceptual notions of teacher professionalism*. I will be supervised by Dr. Marilynne Waithman (Adjunct Professor and Principal Investigator) and Dr. Gerald Fallon (Associate Professor and Research Supervisor), who are my instructors in the Department of Educational Studies at UBC.

Educational Context:

The recent era of education in British Columbia has been characterized in the public as one of conflict between the primary stakeholders who make up the bargaining relationship in public education: the BCTF and the BCPSEA. I believe that much of this conflict stems from each organization possessing differing notions of teacher professionalism, which compete with each other as discourses. Many of these differences seem to center on differing views of common themes of professionalism, such as accountability and autonomy. These differing views are apparent even among individual teachers, who often possess their own notions of teacher professionalism which can lead to debate within schools. I believe there is great value in examining these competing notions in order to better understand how educators view their professional identities, and to determine the dominant discourses that currently exist within the education system.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to research and investigate how notions of *teacher professionalism* are currently understood and conceptualized by both the stakeholder groups and practicing teachers within British Columbia's public education system. As previously stated, the province has recently gone through profound change in education and I believe it is worthwhile to examine how this

period of change may have affected teachers' own view of their professionalism. This study is intended to answer the following questions:

- 1) How do teachers currently conceptualize themselves as professionals?
- 2) What themes of teacher professionalism are evident in the data?
- 3) In what way does each organization's narrative or perspective manifest in the views of the practicing educators in the BC public school system?

Research Procedure:

Upon the UBC Ethics Review Board's issuance of a research certificate of approval and your approval, an invitation to participate in the study with a copy of the consent form will be sent via email by the district to the administrators of secondary schools in the district with the request that the administrators forward the invitation to their teachers, as per district policy and procedure. The invitation will also request teachers interested in participating to contact the researcher via e-mail. Upon receiving expressions of interest, I will e-mail a copy of the interview questions to the selected participants.

The study will consist of up to three interviews conducted by the investigator. All study participants will be drawn from educators who have at least ten years teaching experience with a continuing contract and are teaching in a secondary school. These educators will be invited to participate in a single face-to-face interview wherein they will be asked open-ended questions. There are minimal risks to participants of this study as all participation is completely voluntary and participants may choose to withdraw from the study at any point with no repercussions. Participants do not have to answer questions that they do not feel comfortable answering. Interviews will be up to one hour in length. The venues for these interviews will be determined based on what is mutually comfortable and convenient for both participants and researcher. The interviews will be audio recorded. Following each interview, the audiotapes will be transcribed verbatim and transcripts will be sent to the participants to be checked for clarity and accuracy. We expect to transcribe the interviews in a period of seven days and they would be sent to the participants. We will ask the participants to review the transcripts in two or three days and email them back.

Confidentiality:

Participant confidentiality will be respected. The researcher will ensure that participants will be assigned pseudonyms or will be identified by a code number. All data will be encrypted, password protected, and held in a password protected file space accessible only to the research team.

Reporting:

We will ensure that the results of our study are shared with the participants involved in our research. To accomplish this, we will forward a copy of our findings to the School District and to the interview participants.

Please accept this letter as our formal request to seek approval from the School District A for the aforementioned research study. Should you have any questions or

concerns, we will be glad to answer them. Alternatively, you may contact our Research Supervisor, Dr. Gerald Fallon, Associate Professor, at gerald.fallon@ubc.ca

With sincere thanks for your time and consideration of this request.
Frano Marsic



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Department of Educational StudiesFaculty of Education
Education Centre at Ponderosa Commons
6445 University Boulevard
Vancouver B.C. V6T 1Z2
CANADA

Tel: 604-822-5374

Fax: 604-822-4244

Web: <http://www.edst.educ.ubc.ca>**Administrator letter of invitation to participate – forwarded by the school board office**

Dear School Administrator,

I invite your grade eight to twelve teachers to take part in a research study entitled *Investigating conceptual notions of teacher professionalism*. This participation will take the form of one-hour semi-structured interviews. Please forward our participant letter of invitation (enclosed) to grade eight to twelve educators in your school. Dr. Marilynne Waithman (Adjunct Professor and Principal Investigator) and Dr. Gerald Fallon (Associate Professor and Research Supervisor), instructors in the Department of Educational Studies at UBC supervise my work. I am master's student in the Educational Administration and Leadership Program in Educational Studies at UBC and a current employee of the district, working as a secondary school teacher of English and Social Studies.

The purpose of this study is to research and investigate how notions of *teacher professionalism* are currently understood and conceptualized by both organizations and teachers within the British Columbia public education system. I am interested in investigating how teachers characterize the work they do as being that of a professional and finding common ground in an understanding of the term.

Please forward the following participant letter of invitation (enclosed) to your secondary school teachers inviting them to participate in this study. Participation in the study is completely voluntary and participants may withdraw at any point. All interview responses and identities in this study will be kept completely confidential. All identifying information will be deleted from the interview transcripts and final report. The researcher will store the data on a password-protected computer. Electronic copies of the data will be kept by the research supervisor in a locked filing cabinet in accordance with the University of British Columbia's research and ethics policy.

If you have any questions, please contact Frano Marsic at fmarsic@sd38.bc.ca, our principal investigator: Dr. Marilynne Waithman at marilynne.waithman@ubc.ca, or our research supervisor: Dr. Gerald Fallon at gerald.fallon@ubc.ca.

This study will assist me to understand teachers' perspectives of their own professional identities and will hopefully prompt conversations that may enrich the practice of the participants.

I appreciate your support,

Frano Marsic



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Department of Educational Studies

Faculty of Education
Education Centre at Ponderosa Commons
6445 University Boulevard
Vancouver B.C. V6T 1Z2
CANADA

Tel: 604-822-5374

Fax: 604-822-4244

Web: <http://www.edst.educ.ubc.ca>**Teacher letter of invitation to participate – forwarded by the school board office.**

Dear Teacher,

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled *Investigating conceptual notions of teacher professionalism*. Dr. Marilynne Waithman, Adjunct Professor in the Department of Educational Studies at UBC, is our principal investigator and Dr. Gerald Fallon, Associate Professor, is the research supervisor. I am a master's student in the Educational Administration and Leadership program in the Department of Educational Studies at UBC. I am also a teacher in this district, as well as a local representative to the BCTF, although this research is not related to those voluntary duties.

Research Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to research and investigate how notions of *teacher professionalism* are currently understood and conceptualized by both organizations and teachers within the British Columbia public education system. I am interested in investigating how teachers characterize the work they do as being that of a professional and finding common ground in an understanding of the term.

I am seeking to interview secondary school teachers who have a continuing contract and who have been teaching for a minimum of ten years in the public education system. The in-person interview will be up to one hour long and will take place at a location of your choice at a time that is convenient to you and the interviewer. I expect to transcribe the interviews in one week, following which, the transcriptions will be forwarded to the participants. I will ask you to review the transcripts in two or three days and return them via email with corrections or clarifications included. This could take up to an additional thirty minutes of your time.

If you are interested in being a participant in the study, please contact Frano Marsic at fmarsic@sd38.bc.ca

Participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any point. All interview responses and identities in this study will be kept completely

confidential. All identifying information will be deleted from the interview transcripts and final report. The researcher will store the data on a password-protected computer. Electronic copies of the data will be kept by the research supervisor in a locked filing cabinet in accordance with the University of British Columbia's research and ethics policy.

If you have any questions, please contact Frano Marsic at fmarsic@sd38.bc.ca, our principal investigator: Dr. Marilynne Waithman at marilynne.waithman@ubc.ca, or our research supervisor: Dr. Gerald Fallon at gerald.fallon@ubc.ca.

I would appreciate it if I could hear from teachers interested in participating by January 18, 2019. Selected participants will be contacted to arrange an interview time. You will receive a copy of the interview questions and a copy of the informed consent form in advance of the interview. This consent form must be signed prior to the start of the interview. This study will assist me to understand teachers' perspectives of their own professional identities and will hopefully prompt conversations that may enrich your teaching practice.

I look forward to learning from you,

Frano Marsic



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CANADA

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Participant consent form for academic research

This research is being conducted towards the completion of the researcher's graduate degree in Educational Administration and Leadership at the University of British Columbia. The information received through the interviews will form the basis of research in the researcher's graduating paper. A copy of the graduating paper will be forwarded to the participants upon the completion of the study. The graduating paper will be accessible to the educators, faculty, researchers, and fellow university students upon publishing.

Research

Supervisor:

Dr. Gerald Fallon, Associate Professor
Department of Educational Studies, University of
British Columbia
Email: gerald.fallon@ubc.ca

Principal

Investigator:

Dr. Marilynne Waithman, Adjunct Professor
Department of Educational Studies, University of
British Columbia
Email: marilynne.waithman@ubc.ca

Co-

Investigator:

Franco Marsic, Student, M.Ed. (Educational
Administration & Leadership).
Department of Educational Studies, University of
British Columbia
Email: fmarsic@sd38.bc.ca

Research Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to research and investigate how notions of *teacher professionalism* are currently understood and conceptualized by both organizations and teachers within the British Columbia public education system. I am interested in investigating how teachers characterize the work they do as being that of a professional and finding common ground in an understanding of the term.

Research Procedure and Participation:

The study will consist of three interviews conducted by the co-investigator. The study participants will be currently practicing secondary school teachers in the public-school system who are employed on continuing contract and have worked as teachers in the public education system for at least ten years. School District A has been selected to be the site of this study. These teachers will be invited to participate in a single face-to-face interview wherein they will be asked open-ended questions. There are minimal risks to participants of this study as all participation is completely voluntary and participants may choose to withdraw from the study at any point with no repercussions. Participants do not have to answer questions that they do not feel comfortable answering. The participants will be provided with a copy of the interview questions in advance.

Participants may benefit from participating in this study as they may find it provokes discussions that enrich their teaching practice.

Interviews will be approximately one hour in length. The venues for these interviews will be determined based on what is comfortable for participants and what is mutually convenient for participants and researcher. The interviews will be audio recorded. Following each interview, the audiotapes will be transcribed verbatim and transcripts will be sent to the participants to be checked for clarity and accuracy. This may take an additional hour of the participants' time.

Confidentiality and Data Storage:

Participant confidentiality will be respected. The researcher will ensure that participants will be assigned pseudonyms or will be identified by a code number. All data will be encrypted, password protected, and held in a locked file cabinet accessible only to the research team. Once the study is completed, an electronic version of the data, including audio files, will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the Research Supervisor's office for five years.

Contact:

If you have any further questions or concerns, you are encouraged to contact the Research Supervisor, Dr. Gerald Fallon, at gerald.fallon@ubc.ca, or the Principal Investigator, Dr. Marilynne Waithman, at marilynne.waithman@ubc.ca.

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics at (604) 822-8598 or if long distance email to RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.

Consent:

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions.

I am aware that the interview will be audio recorded.

I have retained a copy of this consent form for my own records.

I consent to participate in the study:

Investigating conceptual notions of teacher professionalism

Participant's Full Name (please print)

Participant's Signature

Date

Please return the consent form to Frano Marsic by _____.
Or kindly bring the signed Consent Form to the interview.

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