

Pedagogical Professionalism and Professionalization in Norway and Japan

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Abstract

Pedagogical Professionalism and Professionalization of Teachers has been frequently discussed by educators and the media in recent years. This paper is a discourse on the problem with Teacher Education in Japan and Norway as the context. This discourse is based on a review of governing documents, scientific articles and interviews of teachers. The discourse concludes that the concept of pedagogical professionalism has changed over the last decades, and now applied differently by different interest groups like students, teachers and school owners. Pedagogical professionalism is also interpreted, explained and used differently ways in different countries. The main conclusion is that pedagogical professionalism is the "integrated composite" of different skills that makes the role of teachers unique and different from other professions.

1. Introduction

In most countries, attending schools is more or less compulsory for at least eight to ten years. More and more children also go to kindergarten, either full time or part time. From early years they become dependent on the quality of the teachers and their influence from the rest of their lives. But what is a good teacher, what ethical standards should he or she have and how can teachers adapt to expectations from parents, family and a society that seems to change more and more rapidly? On the other hand, we also have the perspective of the teachers: How are teachers valued and respected? To what degree should the competences and autonomy of teachers be trusted, and how can teachers improve their work for the best of their students? Should the school owners implement more strict control over teachers work and students learning results, or should teachers be offered better education and better chances to improve their own competences?

Most people spend more and more time on education, in kindergartens, schools, universities and other forms of education and or training. The importance of education in the society today - and the investment made in time, effort and money - more and more often tend to question the competence of teachers.

What are the typical trends of contemporary discourse on Pedagogical Professionalism and Professionalization, the meaning of the concepts, and how are these concepts applied on the role of Teachers and Teacher Education?

The etymology of concepts like professionalism and professionalization may not be very clear. The concept seems to appear in the late medieval ages with the establishment of universities, and like medical education provided by professors at a university. However, in this paper we will not deal much with etymology, but analyze the cotemporary use of the concepts with reference to the role of teacher and teacher education in general, and more specifically teacher professionalism in Norway and Japan.

2. Method

This paper is based on qualitative methods by analysing written and oral texts as the main sources of information. The ambition was to apply a critical discourse on the problem, but some may criticise and say it is more descriptive than critical. Discourse refers to ways of constructing the meanings of concepts, phenomena, knowledge and reality, and the networks connecting them. A discourse emphasizes the construction of knowledge and reality by using language and other semiotic systems. The method makes it possible to explore the construction of meanings of human interaction (Ulleberg, 2007; Wetherell, 2001). Critical discourse analyses refer to a discourse theory that put more emphases on aspects like ideology and power (Ulleberg, 2007, p. 67).

Our starting point was the assumption that problems and phenomenon like professionalism and professionalization may have different meanings for people in diverse situations, both within the context of teachers and compare to other professions like plumbers or medical doctors. The aim of our research is to explain and analyze these various meanings of the concepts in use. Our strategy includes analyses on both a macro level and a micro level of social practices, processes, and the experiences of individuals.

All sources of information we choose to explain as texts, though these texts also include some interviews and observations related to the phenomenon. The discourse was carried out from four different perspectives: 1) A discourse on the concepts, and how they are used by educators and researchers. 2) A quantitative survey of articles published in one relevant database. 3) A discourse on recent governing documents related to teacher education, and 4) a discourse based on reports from and interviews with school owners, teachers and teacher students. All three perspectives includes both Japan and Norway.

3. Perspective 1: A discourse on concepts used by educators and researchers

The discourse on pedagogical professionalism seems not very new. Some educators like John Dewey addressed the problem hundred years ago. At that time he saw professionalism in education as something historically inevitable, though not wholly desirable or admirable (Dewey, 1922, p. 419). He saw the growth of professional tendencies as a result of social and economic change, the increase of people taking higher education, and the demand for more education in a more developed society. A recent example of this idea related to teacher education may be the announcement by the Solberg government in Norway to make teacher education five years with a master degree from 2017. More research based knowledge among future teachers is one of their main arguments on how to improve teaching and learning in the schools. A preliminary conclusion seems to be: Higher education and research based knowledge are two main factors in the concept of professionalism and professionalization. What more can be added?

However, in the public opinion professionalism seems to follow two different discourses: More and more often "proff" seems to refer to many kinds of high quality works, weather it is good work by a plumber, carpenter, a teacher or a doctor. The other discourse seems more traditional referring to types of work based on higher university education of a certain length, combined with high salary, social status, autonomy and practical skills. When people are asked, they tend to mention professions like medical doctors, lawyers, priests, psychologists and some few others. On the other hand, a mathematician or historian may also have higher education of similar length as a medical doctor, but not referred to as professional. Few decades ago teachers, nurses and engineers were not referred to as professions, but in recent years it seems more and more common. One reason could be that the length of such educations has been extended, but there may also be other reasons.

These opposite trends still seem to exist. Therefore we may not see professionalism as a static phenomenon independent of space and time, but rather continually changing over time under different social and cultural conditions. We may even assume that the meaning and use of the concept professionalism has changed over the last twenty years.

A fundamental question in this case is whether teacher is a profession or not. A historical review of teachers in Japan and Norway may not give a clear answer. In Japan teachers have had the status as public servants since the beginning of the Meiji era when a western school system was introduced in the 1870's (Okano and Tsuchiya, 2003, p. 142). Already from the beginning they also had forms of professionalization and methods of improving teaching, like *jugyou kenkyu* (授業研究), that are still in use (Arani et al, 2010). From the beginning, teachers in Japan were recruited from the upper class of samurais, and later the farmers that also had a high status in the society. Still Japanese teachers have the status as public servants and treated different from other professions, but also under heavy pressure from a society changing very rapidly, but also still very conservative on many areas like family life and on raising new generation. Before world-war II, Japanese teachers were educated at special seminars. However, after world-war II teacher education in Japan was "opened up" and made more liberal through a four year university program. Japanese teachers are frequently referred to as "professionals" in documents and scientific papers (Okano and Tsuchiya 2003). On the other hand, the role of teacher union in Japan, where less than 30 % of the teachers are member of the union, seems more problematic than in Norway. Today there is a discussion in Japan on a five year master program, just like in Norway. But do Japan really have the will and the capacity to implement such a system today?

Teacher professionalism appeared on the agenda in Norway and many other western countries in the 1970's. The Norwegian teacher union "Norsk Lærerlag" prepared a proposal on teacher professionalism for their congress in 1973. The proposal suggested that teaching should be defined as a profession developed through a special type of education including certain knowledge, skills and practical experience. The proposal also included a second perspective on encouraging own professional development through personal and collective improvement, and to promote good working conditions for teachers (NL, 1973, p. 145). The discussion was based on the idea of autonomy and ethical codes similar to professions like that of medical doctors. The content of teacher professionalism at that time was less discussed. However, the proposal was not approved by the congress in 1973. The dominating arguments against it seems to have been influence by the idea that it would weaken the teacher union in their negotiations with the government, and that teachers would become responsible for the quality in the schools instead of the school owners.

The discussion about professionalism and professionalization continued within the teacher union the next decades. Forty years after the first proposal, an ethical platform for teacher professionalism in Norway was approved by on the teacher congress in Norway, (Utdanningsforbundet, 2012). This platform includes teachers in kindergarten, schools as well as school leaders. However, it does not specifically mention vocational education nor apprentice training in companies. Lawrence Stenhouse was one of the most influential educators on teacher professionalism on the international scene at the time, also in Norway. His idea of teacher autonomy and ethical code formed the bases of his discussion of teacher professionalism. His idea of the teacher as a researcher on teachers own practice formed the strategy on teacher professionalization, (Stenhouse, 1975). He argued that the school curriculum is not something prescribed by school owners for teachers to implement, but that the process of making and improving the school curriculum is the core of teacher professionalism. His book on curriculum research and development became compulsory in pedagogical studies in Norway for next decades, both in university studies on pedagogy as well as teacher education.

The ideas of Stenhouse were mainly normative and not much based on empirical research, and there were no clear categories of teacher contents in his theory. Teacher content was made more concrete by Lee Shulman and his research during the next two decades, and he has further developed his ideas until quite recently (Shulman, 1987; 1998; 2004). In Norway Erling Lars Dale developed similar categories of ethical codes and teacher content in his book *Pedagogical Professionalism* in 1989, and further developed in his later articles and books on the problem (Dale, 1989; 1997; 2011). Dale introduced three overall teacher competences: Competence in 1) action, 2) planning and 3) reflection on theory and practice. He was also more specific on ethical codes than Shulman, who sum up the base of teacher knowledge into the following six categories:

Content knowledge; 1) General pedagogical knowledge, with special reference to those broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organization that appear to transcend the subject; 2) curriculum knowledge, with particular grasp of materials and programs that serve as tools of trade for teacher; 3) Pedagogical content knowledge, that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding; 4) knowledge of learners and their characteristics; 5) knowledge of educational contexts, ranging from the working of the group or classroom, the governance and financing of schools districts, to the character of communities and cultures; and 6) knowledge of educational ends, purpose, and values and their philosophical and historical grounds (Shulman, 1987, p. 8).

We may notice that Shulman does not include specifically any ethical codex like we have seen in earlier definitions, though it may be included on one or more of the other categories. The same with autonomy, which may indicate that autonomy was less emphasized in America than in some European countries after ww2. The categories listed above seems still to be valid in the contemporary discourse on teacher professionalism and professionalization (Moos & Krejsler, 2006; Shulman, 2004; Schön; 2003; Sundli et al, 2003). However, in recent years also some other aspects have been introduced. First of all the idea from Stenhouse of the teacher as a researcher on own practice, and the need for teachers to be capable of adapting to change and to make improvements, have been further discussed and emphasised by educators. Recent research has also confirmed the important role of teachers, and especially the teacher as a leader, in relation to the quality of schools and students learning (Hattie, 2009). Finally, digital competences have been stressed because we live in an area where digital technology, digital communication and media seem to change the role of the teachers as well and the lives in modern classrooms. One of the conclusions of this seems to be decisions in extending teacher education to five years with a master degree, and more emphasis on educational leadership, both for teachers as well as leaders of schools and kindergartens.

4. Perspective 2: A quantitative and qualitative survey of the ERIC database

To get an indication of the volume of publishes papers on Pedagogical professionalism and such in the ERIC database was done. The ERIC database was chosen because it is one of the most used databases on publications about education. A search on four different keywords was made: 1) Pedagogical Professionalism, 2) Pedagogical Professionalization, 3) Teacher Professionalism, and 4) Teacher Professionalization. The keyword “teacher” was included in the search because the use of the concepts may overlap, and sometimes may have the same meaning in different countries. The results of the search are included in Table 1 below. There are two main columns: One with the number of all articles in the database, and the other the number of reviewed articles.

Articles in ERIC: 18.03.2014	All Articles				Reviewed Articles			
	2013	2010	2005	1995	2013	2010	2005	1995
<i>Pedagogical professionalism</i>	4	23	54	76	4	18	44	55
<i>Pedagogical professionalization</i>	1	6	9	16	0	4	7	11
<i>Teacher Professionalism</i>	31	234	557	1008	29	178	448	651
<i>Teacher Professionalization</i>	5	46	83	202	4	34	66	118

Table1. Number of articles on professionalism in the ERIC database

First we may notice that the number of reviewed article is about half of the total of all articles. We also notice that there are a lot more articles on Teacher Professionalism than on Pedagogical Professionalism, and also more articles on Teacher Professionalization than on Pedagogical professionalism. The number of published articles have also increased almost exponentially since 1995, though the table do not display this trend very well because the results of the search is separated into shorter and shorter time span, from 1995-2005 which is ten years, and from 2005-2010 which is five years, and finally only three years.

From the reviewed articles four articles were selected for further analyses, one from each of the four categories. They are from different countries, one from each of Australia, UK, Japan and Finland.

Article 1: Pedagogical professionalism

The title of this article is “*Crossing the divide between teacher professionalism and national testing in middle school mathematics*” (Demarco, 2009). Demarco is professor at James Cook University in Australia. We notice that the title use the concept “teacher professionalism” and could have been category 3, which indicates the author do not distinguish clearly between the two concepts, but she also use the concept “pedagogical professionalism” several times in her article. This seems true for many of the other articles as well. We also notice that this article deals with content and the subject mathematics in middle school, and the dilemma of national testing. Four teachers were interviewed on their views and practices of ‘quality’ in relation to the teaching and learning of mathematics.

There was on teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge as an essential component to engaging students successfully in the classroom. One of the four teachers interviewed gave this interesting comment on helping students to understand mathematics in a context:

Students should understand what mathematics is involved in a problem, e.g., finding area, multiplying, conversions, fractions; and break each question into smaller parts to solve, using only relevant information. Students also need to see that the maths is important and useful (Demarco, 2009, p. 8).

Based on the interviews the author is critical about external test systems and the effect on profession teachers. She concludes that national test is creating a divide that destabilises the professionalism of teachers, which then raises concerns about how teachers can remain motivated and empowered to engage students in quality mathematics.

Article 2: Pedagogical professionalization

The title of this article is “*Some preliminaries to action research with mature students*” (Hartley & Norton, 2009). Hartley is professor at Keele University. This article was selected because it focuses on pedagogical professionalization on university level, and not teacher education. The context is teaching psychology on university level, and improving practice through pedagogical action research. There seems to be some similarities between pedagogical action research, and research based practice that is the focus in some of the other papers on teacher education.

The aim of this project was to bridge the gap between theory and practice in education, with mature and young students in psychology as a context. This research seems to be more related to problem based learning in a university program, and not related to research related to research out in the field. Existing data was taken from 324 mature students graduating over a 12-year period at Keele University, compared with those obtained by 324 traditional entry students matched in terms of their sex and subjects studied. The comparison resulted in no significant difference. The research also concluded that mature students performed as well as, or better, than younger ones in the smaller, local studies. Broader national studies showed that overall results were sometimes affected by the nature of the discipline, with most students, mature or otherwise, doing better in the arts and social sciences than in the sciences.

Problem based learning in teacher education has been discussed and implemented to some degree in Norway, as a means of bridging the gap between theory and practice, and as such a way of professionalization. However, we do not have any evidence of this strategy really working better.

Article 3: Teacher professionalism

The title of this article is “*The Professional Educator. Lessons from Finland*” (Sahlberg, 2011). Sahlberg is Director General of the Centre for International Mobility and Cooperation (CIMO) in Finland, and professor at the Universities of Helsinki and Oulu. Finland earned world-wide reputation in recent years because of their high scores on international tests like the PISA. The main question asked in this article is on how a country with an undistinguished education system in the 1980s surge to the head of the global class in just a couple of decades? His answer seems to emphasize some few important factors:

First, teacher professionalism in Finland seems to start with the entrance system, and the fact that many young people in Finland want to become a teacher. Not because of high salary, but because the profession has high status. Entrance is based not only on grades from secondary school, but carried out in three steps including also interviews and even practical tests in authentic school contexts. In that way the students with high academic scores from secondary school are selected, and they are well motivated and well prepared for a five year master program in university. This program includes both theory and practice in pedagogy, didactics, content on a high academic level, and research based practice guided by teachers and university teachers in special teacher training schools.

Teacher education in Finland emphasizes a combination of research, practice, and reflection. That means it must be supported by scientific knowledge and focused on thinking processes and cognitive skills used in conducting research. In addition to studying educational theory, content, and subject-specific pedagogy, each prospective teacher for primary school and beyond completes a master’s thesis on a topic relevant to educational practice.

Sahlberg also focuses on teacher autonomy, the fact that education in Finland is decentralized, and that teachers make their own community of professionalization through curriculum development

and local improvement independent of control from central government. It seems that there exist an expertise and professional accountability of teachers who are knowledgeable, instead of a test-based accountability. The teacher union in Finland also seems to have a strong position, and most of the teachers are members.

Article 3b: Teacher professionalism

The title of this article is *“Comparing Teacher and Administrator Perspectives on Multiple Dimensions of Teacher Professionalism”*, by Mercedes and Tichenor at Stetson University UK (2009). The authors made a review on relevant literature and conclude that professionalism is a multidimensional concept. From concept they design an instrument with a total of 51 professional behaviours and characteristics that operationalize the multiple dimensions of professionalism. They organized their characteristics in four overall categories: 1) Personal Character, 2) Commitment to Change/Continuous Improvement, 3) Subject and Pedagogical Knowledge, and 4) Beyond the Classroom. These categories correspond to the categories developed by Lee Shulman (1987, p. 8), though in some other words and outlined in more details.

The list of 51 characteristics were used for a survey on a group of teachers and administrators in UK. Their findings suggest that teachers and administrators agree on many aspects of professionalism. However, there are also important areas of disjuncture between administrators and teachers. From their survey they concluded that on which there is greatest agreement between teachers and administrators are: 1) Personal Character and 2) Subject and Pedagogical Knowledge. On the other side there were significant levels of disagreement on the level of priority that should be placed on items in the professionalism dimensions Commitment to Change/ Continuous Improvement and Beyond the Classroom.

Article 4b: Teacher professionalization

The title of this article is *“Teacher Community in Urban Elementary Schools: The Role of Leadership and Bureaucratic Accountability”*, (Weathers, 2011). Weathers is a professor at University of Colorado at Colorado Springs in USA. The focus of this article is the relation between principal leadership, and teacher professional communities and professionalization. The authors also discuss ethical aspects of professionalization in relation to a top-down strategy of leadership versus bottom up strategy of leadership.

The starting point of research in this case is a review and definition of teacher community and its role in teacher professionalization under different strategies of principal leaderships. Data for the quantitative analyzes were existing data taken from the National Center for Educational Statistic’s (NCES) School and Staffing Survey’s (SASS). SASS is a US national database on surveys of elementary and secondary public, private, and charter schools. Teacher community seems defined rather narrowly, including such variables as shared culture and sense of obligation to rules, norms and cooperation.

The article concludes that school leadership is an important predictor of teachers’ sense of community. A more controversial conclusion may be that bureaucratic accountability does not seem to have any negative effect. There are also indications that the effect of leadership more based on teachers’ perceptions rather than direct measures of principal activities, such as frequency of supervision. On the other hand, the article also conclude that teachers’ perception of principal leadership in relation to sense of community depends on factors like communicated expectations in a clear way, that the principal is supportive, help to enforce discipline, is kind, recognizes staff for their work, and discusses instructional practice

The importance of strengthening “teacher communities” was also discussed by a national commission on teacher education in Norway in 1996, (NOU 1996:2).

Article 5: Teacher professionalization

The title of this article is “*Lesson Study*” as Professional Culture in Japanese Schools, (Arani et al, 2010). Arani is Dr. of Education at Seijoh University, Aichi, Japan. The article examines “lesson study” as a traditional model of professionalization and creating professional knowledge in Japanese schools. In recent years lesson study (*jugyō kenkyū* 授業研究) has gained some positive reputation outside Japan as well (Lundgren & Schantz Lundgren 2011; Stigler & Hiebert 1999). The article is a historical review, and shows how lesson study was implemented and developed in Japan from the Meiji era in 1872, and still practiced in teacher education and schools in Japan. That means it is not at all any new idea.

The basic idea seems to be a collective teacher community sharing the responsibility of a collaborative process of preparing lesson plans, conducting and observing lessons, checking and evaluating teaching, reflecting on practice, and re-planning for further improvements. Integrated in the lesson study are training sessions conducted for lesson plan review, for classroom observation documents, and for lesson reflection and critical evaluation.

The article is historical and deals mostly with rather old documents, and less focus on contemporary teacher education and improvement processes in Japanese schools today. Problems like autonomy, ethical codes of conducts, length of practice and the role of teacher union as part of teacher professionalization are not addressed in the article. From other sources we know that less than 30 % of Japanese teachers are member of a teacher union today. However, the authors make a connection to similar group oriented improvement processes in Japanese industry known as *kaizen* 改善, which are well known and frequently discussed outside Japan (Liker 2008; Aakre 2013).

Perspective 3: Discourse on Norwegian governing documents

Governing document in this case refers to national policy, structure of management and curriculums related to teacher education. That means the context in which professional teachers work, and how their professionalization is influenced by policy, laws and regulations made by the government. This context may have changed in many ways during the last decades, not only because society has changed, but also because the policy of government has changed. Governing documents need to be analyzed and understood with this in mind.

In order to modernize and make the public sector more effective, management by objectives (MBO) was implemented by the Norwegian government in 1987. Later it was adapted to the system of education in 1991, (KUF, 1991). This philosophy of governance has later been confirmed by several documents and committees, and still operating, (KUF, 2001; UfD, 2003). In recent years this philosophy of governance is often referred to as New Public Management (NPM) (Karlsen, 2007). The basic idea of the theory is to set overall goals, decentralize responsibility and operation, and by means of measurements evaluate the effect in order to make further improvements. The testing regime that’s was implemented in the system of education the last ten to fifteen years is a result of this philosophy. Some claim that even the teacher becomes the object of testing and control, even though rhetoric concepts like “professional” and “professional teachers” may be used quite frequently in recent governance documents. “The national test acts as a control mechanism and reinforces the notion that “despite the rhetoric about teacher professionalism, current State and Federal governments do not trust teachers to make the big curriculum decisions, (Dimarco, 2009 p. 9; Reid, 1999, p. 198). Furthermore, the national test appears to reinforce the notion that ‘good’ teachers should act as

passive recipients of government initiatives, and conform to 'official' curricula. With this in mind we will analyse a few relevant document on teacher education.

Professionalism, and the categories and criteria of professional teacher competence that are used in Norway today, were developed and suggested by a commission in the 1996, (NOU 1996:2). However, the meaning and operationalization seems to have shifted since then. This commission seems to have been influenced by a progressive view on education that is different from the ideas of present NPM. However, they a comprehensive discussion on management by objectives (MBO), including perspectives also from similar discussions in Sweden and Denmark. They came up with a sort of "soft version" still respecting the autonomy and professionalism of the teachers, but suggesting a "collective community of teachers" in the schools to guarantee for professional development and professionalization. School based evaluation was implemented as one of the means to operationalize this idea.

In chapter five and six the commission discussed professional teacher content from a theoretical perspective, and by analyzing the different types of teacher education in Norway and the Nordics countries at that time. Five categories of professional teacher content were developed and suggested for future curriculum development in Norway:

1) Ethical codes of conduct, 2) Expertise in one or more school subjects, or professions in vocational education, of a certain length and level, 3) Didactical skills and reflection, 4) Social competences related to students, parents, colleagues and society, and 5) Commitment to development and improvements, in other words professionalization. The same commission also emphasized competences in leadership, counselling, organizing and digital technology in education, (NOU 1996:2, p.75; 80-88).

These categories can be found in most of the governing documents related to teacher education since 1996 until today. Few or any discussions or critiques have been raised against their relevance, and they are still guiding teacher education n Norway today. However, there is one more aspect og professionalism, and that is some sort of practice and internship.

Internship and practice

Professions are specialized vocations that include some form of internship or practice under the supervision of professionals. That means the professionals also have some degree of control of the candidates entering the profession. This tradition can be traced back to the guild system. Even though teacher education in Norway include long practice, OECD made critical comments on the implementation of it: «Finally, teachers, and particularly young teachers, should be well supported and counselled and not left to find their own way. In particular, teachers just leaving initial teacher training should be regarded as being at the beginning and not the end of the acquisition of professional attitudes and skills. We were surprised to hear there was no effective period of probation and counselling in these early years of teaching work», (OECD, 1990, p. 29).

Until 1999 teacher education in Norway was regulated by the law of teacher education. § 22 in this stated that teacher education should include practice. The law did not specify the length of practice. But at that time general teacher education had 16-18 weeks of practice in schools, subject teacher education and vocational teacher education had 12-14 weeks, and kindergarten teacher education 20 weeks. The law specified that the purpose of practice was to give the students a "chance to observe students and the work of teachers in the schools, do experiment on planning and teaching, and to be trained in teachers work".

The law on teacher education in Norway was abolished in 1999, and teacher education was transferred to the general law of universities and colleges. Only one of the teacher unions protested.

However, the requirement of practice was maintained, and later even extended to 21 weeks for general teacher education in 2003. According to § 4 special criteria for teachers were implemented in separate regulations, for instance special procedures related to reputation and codes of conduct that has been strengthened in recent years.

Some countries have a system of one year candidacy before a can be qualified for teaching. A similar system was suggested by the Commission of 1996, and also discussed since then, but so far not implemented. On the other hand, the content of practice has changed from. Counselling of teacher students in practice often used to have focus on methods and skills in teaching. Today counselling has more focus on reflection related to planning, teaching, evaluation and improvements.

Specialization, “profesjonsrettet”, and professionalization of teachers

Specialisation in teacher education has been a trend in the Norwegian discourse on teacher professionalism since the reform of 1992, and until the last reform in 2009. In the first reform only 15 credits (1/4 year) in mathematics, and 30 credits (1/2 year) year in Norwegian language was compulsory. In the fourth and last year the students was supposed to continue they studies for 30 credits (1/2 year) more, but few students chose to take subjects like mathematics and languages studies. The consequence was that many teachers had limited skills in these fundamental subjects. When the national and international tests like the PISA were introduced, and the Norwegian results proved to be rather low compare to other countries like Finland, many argued that lack of skills in mathematics and language among the teachers was one reason. Gradually more mathematics and Norwegian language were made compulsory in teacher education. Another argument was that it is different to be a professional teacher in first or second grade than in ninth or tenth year. A third argument was that teachers on secondary level need to have at least one year of study in their main subject.

After many years of discussions and investigations, general teacher education in Norway was split into two separate tracks in 2009: One aiming at grades 1-6 (GLU 1-9), and the other aiming at grades 5-10 (GLU 5-10). At the same time a new concept on professionalism was “invented” and became common in Norwegian governing documents on teacher education: “*Profesjonsrettet*”, (Kd, 2010, p. 2). The concept is not easy to translate into English, but includes the integration of pedagogy, basic skills, knowledge of a subject and its way of instruction, practice and practice based research into one holistic body of professional teacher competence. The new subject on pedagogic (PEL) is supposed to have an overall and integrating function, and a special role on taking care of education in basic skills, (Kd 2010, p. 2-3). Basic skills had already been integrated in all subjects on all levels from grad 1 till 13 by the reform Kunnskapsløftet in 2006, (Kd, 2006). In addition teacher students should be capable of understanding and reflecting critically upon the role of teachers in a historical, social and cultural context (Kd 2010, p. 4).

Professionalization or just reproduction?

As a means of professionalization several steps were suggested. The overall idea was to organize teacher education as a program for “professional education”. First it means to stress the need for well structured integration and progression of both content and integration with practice, (Kd 2010, p. 8-9). A “bachelor thesis” was also implemented as compulsory in order to promote and introduce practice based research before graduation, not after, and in partnership with teacher training schools. Finally, a system of internship and counselling of new teachers were introduced.

However, recent evaluations of teacher education in Norway conclude there is still a long way to go (Følgegruppen for lærerutdanningsreformen, 2014). All conclusions will not be commented here,

but the idea of research based teacher education, integration between theory and practice, and practice based research still seem to be weak points. Higher requirements related to the students ability to deal with theoretical issues, critical reflection and competence seems to be necessary. The type of counselling practice used in Norway since the 1990's tend to be rather vague on standards and criteria for best practice. Very few teacher students fail to pass their practice. May be teacher training schools need to be more clear about their criteria?

The evaluation deals a lot with practice, and emphasizes its importance, but never question the quality of practice. It seems that any practice is good and with high quality. But is it true? If teacher training schools do not reach the national goals of student competences, what type of practice do the teacher students adapt to then? May be they just learn to reproduce the practice of "low quality" school?

Master of Education as a means of professionalization

Professionalism seems to be related to the length of higher education. In Norway and many other countries doctors and lawyers used have a university degree of 6-7 years. Teacher education became 3 years in 1975, and 4 years in 1992. "Look to Finland" where teacher education is 5 years with a masters degree, has been an argument in recent years. Similar discussions can be observed in other countries like Japan. The Solberg government announce on her inauguration that she wants to invest more on education, that teacher education will be five years with a master, and with focus on subjects like language, mathematics and science. A proposal on this is expected early 2015. Until then we need to wait and see.

Vocational teacher education and professionalism

Vocational teacher education had a lower status few decades ago. There seems be to two reasons: 1) Higher education was not a requirement to become a vocational teacher, even though more and more vocational teachers like engineers had college or university. 2) The length of teacher qualification was short, until the late 1970's only a few weeks seminar, often available during the summer vacation. Later this was changed to half year, and the one year of practical pedagogical education including practice counselled by a professional teacher. Therefore the commission of 1996 suggested a three year integrated vocational teacher education similar to the specialized subject teacher education program that already existed. The vocational program was implemented from 2003 as an alternative to the one year practical pedagogical program (PPU), and the present curriculum was implemented in 2006. The five overall categories and other criteria became the same for vocational teachers as others categories of teachers and teacher professionalism (Ofd, 2003, p.6; Kd, 2006, p.5).

The conclusion on this issue is that vocational teacher education in Norway today are regulated by, and need to meet the same standards as other forms of teacher education. The difference is that vocational teachers need to have skills and experience related to their field. Other countries now have a similar system based on the EU standard. Sweden implemented this system in 2011. In Japan vocational teachers already have to take a university exam similar to that of subject teachers. Skilled workers in Japan have to do the same, unless they feel happy to be just assistant vocational teacher with a role only in the workshop.

5. Perspective four: A discourse by teachers

The last dimension on this discourse includes interviews with teachers. The following text is the results from interviews of three Japanese teachers and six Norwegian teachers:

The nine interviews were carried out as semi structured interviews with pedagogical professionalism and professionalization of teachers as overall themes. In addition a list of follow up questions were prepared and used during each of the interview. These questions were related to teacher content, didactics and methodology, social and cultural aspect of education, ethics in education, research and improvements, educational leadership and ICT in education.

The interviewed teachers mentioned doctors, lawyer, professors, ministers, teachers and psychiatrists among the professionals. During the conversation they agreed to include also nurses, police and fire-fighters. In the criteria they included higher education in combination with some special certification and practical competences that cannot be replaced by someone who do not have this certification.

When it comes to pedagogical professionalism and teacher professionalism the opinions became more specific and diverse. The interviews did not reveal any clear distinction between pedagogical professionalism and teacher professionalism, though two of the respondents indicated that pedagogical professionalism might be understood as something less subject specific, and may be applied on activities outside kindergarten or schools. The respondents in most cases used the concept “teacher professionalism”, and teacher 1 emphasized the subject matter like this:

Teacher is a professional because he or she has advances knowledge and competences in a certain subject, and the ability to motivate and share this knowledge with the students, (Man, 40, High School, Norway).

Teacher 1 expressed the idea of a “dual competence”, but starting with the subject matter and advanced knowledge of what to teach. He argued that no “method” can compensate for lack of content carefully selected and structured for the purpose. The essentials of our culture have been collected and organized in the school subjects, and therefore important for everybody to learn in order to cope with, and to contribute to our democratic society. Basic knowledge of subjects, he argued, are also important for further studies, and in most jobs as well. His arguments may reflect the fact that he is a teacher in High School, and less experienced on teaching younger students. On the other hand, he also had the idea that the interests and opinions of the students depends on their social and cultural background. Therefore he argued that a professional teacher needs to prepare for discussions, to be open for discussions and even confront different views, but at the same time respect the individual person.

Teacher 2 who is from Japan and has been a teacher in High School for three years. She experienced to work as waitress in a hotel before she graduated from university. Part time job seems quite common for students in Japan because the tuition is quite high. She also studied hard to pass the entrance examination before she could enter the university.

The professional teacher programme I had at Nagoya University was almost only theoretical studies and not very useful for work as a professional teacher. However, I remember a teacher from outside teaching on the method of experiential learning. It was interested. I also often take part in other teacher’s lesson to improve my own lessons, (Woman 31, High School, Japan).

Teacher 2 seem to emphasize two means of professionalization in her career: One is about experienced teacher lecturing about a special topic in the university, based on experience from practice in his/her school. The other is about learning from other and more experienced teacher by attending their classes. Her statement seems to confirm the tradition

of “jugyou kenkyou” (授業研究). Lack of practical experience within the teacher program in university, is compensated by collaboration with other teachers in the school.

Teacher 3 emphasized her role as a professional teacher like this:

Teacher is a professional because of the ability to see in each student as unique individuals, and to help everyone to develop his or her own potentials on a broad scale of competences to the highest possible level, (Women 58, Elementary School, Norway).

Teacher 3 argued that the individual student is the starting point, and that the teacher is a professional because of the ability to handle a complex environment of learning activities that are more or less changing constantly. She emphasized learning before teaching, student interests before a fixed curriculum and competences on a broad range before specialized knowledge. She argued that a professional teacher is able to observe and see details a novice normally cannot see, and the ability to give help and support a student on the correct moment instead of repeating the same phrases all the time. Teacher 2 also made several comments on management of groups and classes, and the importance of clear classroom leadership with focus on content, structure and continuity.

Teacher 4 was like teacher 2 from Japan and graduated from Waseda University, a private university in Tokyo. He also introduced himself by addressing the problem to pass of entrance examination of a high ranked universities in Japan. The entrance examination might be interpreted as a means of professionalization and quality assurance.

After I became a teacher I feel my experiences from Waseda was useful, and I could adapt to students diversity. In the university I was lucky to belong to a seminar on pedagogy. I could discuss about many social problems. I could learn different perspectives from the discussion, not only memorize facts. However, after I became a teacher I also learn a lot from older and more experienced teachers in my school. (Man 40, High School, Japan).

Teacher 4 seemed more confident about his professional skills the university than teacher 2. Maybe it is because he belonged to a seminar on pedagogy where not only subjects but also pedagogical professionalism were discussed in a more deep way. Teacher 4 also emphasised the fact that Waseda has many students with diverse social and cultural background that became his friends. From these friends he could learn more on diversity and different background of students.

The ability to handle dilemmas was an aspect of professionalism all the respondents mentioned and reflected reflections on. Teacher 5 brought it up like this:

One of the dilemmas I have to cope with in my work is the relation between the overall objectives set by the law and national curriculum, and the interests, tempo and the progress I think my students can handle. I share the opinion that it is better for my students to learn something very well rather than fractions of everything on a superficial way, (Women, 27, Junior High School, Norway).

This problem seems to bother most teachers, but they give rather different answers to it. Some of the teachers tended to say that the national curriculum is compulsory by law, and that the teacher and the school may get into trouble if not the whole content of the subjects are covered. On the other

hand some teachers, like teacher 3, tend to say it is part of the professional freedom to decide in each case, based on professional evaluation. Some teachers also argue that some students will never reach the most advanced goals. Therefore the professional teacher may have to make a professional judgment of what is best for the student in each case.

Most dilemmas are related to ethical judgments, and the problem was discussed more or less by all the respondents as a typical aspect of professionalism. Teacher 6 reflected on the problem like this:

Ethical reflection can sometimes be an endless “pro et contra” with no conclusion or concrete steps. My starting point is therefore to be a “lawyer” for my student, independent of his or her age or cultural background. If for instance I am worried that there is something wrong with the family situation of my student, I involve the principal and other professionals into the evaluation before taking concrete steps, (Male, 28, Elementary School, Norway)

Few decades ago, ethics was more or less cultural codes to follow in schools and other arenas of society. However, in a multicultural society there may also be ethical dilemmas related to language, personal behaviour, wearing special clothes and even conflicts on the content of teaching, like the aniconism in Islam. On these dilemmas there are no universal answers, but need to be reflected upon in each case by the help of a professional teacher.

The social and cultural dimension of professionalism was in different ways mentioned by all the respondents. Teacher 7 explained in this way:

I started my career as a teacher three years ago in a school where the majority of the students are immigrants from many different countries. Some of them and their parents hardly understand or speak Norwegian, and I need to invest a lot of time and effort on social and cultural problems. We did not learn much about it in teacher college, but my colleagues helped me a lot, (Women 27, elementary school, Norway).

The respondents explained that few decades ago Norway was a mono cultural society. Even the same minorities were integrated in the same school system with no special rights on behalf of their ethnicity. Today this is totally changed. Communication across ethnic and cultural borders is therefore a new dimension of pedagogical professionalism.

Teacher 8 was like teacher 2 and 4 from Japan, and like teacher 4 he graduated from Waseda University in Tokyo, faculty of law. His experience from the university seems a bit different from teacher 4 when it comes to preparation for teaching. May be it is because of the tradition of teaching in the science of law?

None of the lessons in the teacher training course at Waseda University was helpful for my profession as a teacher. However, the lessons of special subjects like philosophy, economics and law was very useful for my teaching career. I learned these subjects deeply. However, I had the chance to be a volunteer teacher of law to foreign students at Waseda. It was fun for me to teach foreign students of law and culture in Japan. It was good practice to become a teacher. I think it was the starting point of my career as a teacher, (Man, High School, 38, Japan).

It has to be added that “teacher training course” in this case is similar to “practical pedagogical education – PPU” in Norway. His problems seem to be lack of integration

between his specific field of studies, which is Law, and the program to become a teacher. On the other hand, he mention one specific professor of law, Akira Yonekura, who became a “model” for his own teaching. Based on the teaching of professor Yonekura he could develop and adapt his own teaching on high school level.

Professionalization was not brought up by any of the respondents, and therefore introduced as a special topic in the end of the interviews. However, after introduced many comments and opinions were shared. Teacher 9 expressed it like this:

To become a professional teacher is a life-long process. Graduation from the university is only the beginning. Later you need to continuously improve and update your professional skills. Society is changing, the students next year will have some different experiences than the students had last year, and new research confront you with new theory and new knowledge about best practice, (Women 32, High School, Norway).

Several means and strategies of professionalization were discussed. Teacher 1 explained about his participation in a national forum on his special subject. The purpose is threefold he explained: Firstly they come together because they have a common interest in the subject. Secondly they come together to share experience on teaching the subject in the schools, especially on didactical issues. Thirdly the purpose of the forum is to strengthen this subject in the schools, promote research and to get a better understanding of the subject both in a historical and contemporary perspective. Some time, though not every year, the forum go on a study trip abroad and to meet colleagues in other countries. Sometimes this trip is supported by the school, sometimes not.

Teacher 3 emphasized teamwork in the school, and teachers working together on supporting each other as well as improving the way of teaching. Mentoring teacher students is also a good way of improving your own profession, she said. Sometimes she attended courses arranged by the school or the municipality, and during her career she invested two full years of further education in then university. She had also participated in different projects. She also explained that she had the impression that teamwork seems more common in elementary school than among teachers in high school.

Further education as a means of professionalization was mentioned by all of the respondents. Five of the six teachers had been taken one semester or more in university on their own initiative. Teacher 7 had been taking one semester on migration pedagogy to improve her competence on something relevant for her school. Teacher 4 had been taking one full year on special need education to cope with the integration of junior high school students with special needs, teacher 4 had one semester in university on outdoor activity, and teacher 8 was taking a master program on science education.

On the question about a more formalized school based system of improvement or research, the comments were rather vague. Teacher 3 already mentioned team work, but not really as formal and systematic way of research based improvement. Teacher 3, who was teaching language, had heard of lesson study and read about it in the teachers magazine, but never learned or practiced this strategy.

Both teacher students and teachers in Norway emphasize that a professional teacher need to “see each student”, and to keep the students in the centre of planning as well as on carrying out and evaluating learning activities. Both groups also mention “respect” and professional ethic as important criteria on teacher professionalism.

Teacher students and teachers mention the importance of both knowledge of the subject to teach and how to teach. However, teacher students tend to think that experience from practice in school is more important than learning fundamentals of theory of the same subject in the university. They also tend to think that teaching language or science in elementary school is easier and require less knowledge of the subject than in secondary school. Teachers tend to disagree on that, and some argue that a teacher needs to know a subject well independent of the age of the students, but that the way of teaching need to be adapted to the students' age and competences.

Discussions and opinions on issues like commitment to change, practice based research and continual improvement of teacher competences tended to be rather vague, both when it comes to its importance and how to do it. Courses initiated by the school owner, and continual education were frequently mentioned, and they preferred it is paid by the school owner. Reading scientific papers on educational issues seems not very common, but literature and courses on concrete methods and ways of doing things are valued. In elementary schools collaboration between teachers, and forms of teacher community, seems more than in secondary school.

Both teacher students and teachers in Norway think that teachers should have higher status and to be valued more by the society. Better pay and more respect from students, parents and teachers are mentions as factors that may improve the status of teacher. On the other hand, time consuming reports, testing and dealing with a growing number of social and behavioural problems were mentioned as hinders for teacher to do a good job teaching and learning.

6. Conclusions

This discourse concludes that a professional is a person we tend to trust because of his or her ethical codes of conduct, combined with higher education and practical skills in his or her field of work. Pedagogical professionalism is not aspects like ethics, teacher content knowledge and pedagogy as separated skills, but integrated into a "composite" of skills that makes the teacher profession unique and different from other professions.

Typical professions used to be medical doctors, lawyers and psychologists who have the freedom and right to open their own practice. In recent years also teachers, nurses, engineers and other types of work have been included among the professions, even though some of them are highly regulated by a variety of laws, rules and regulations. For that reason there have been an ongoing discussion about teachers, and either they are a profession or not. Some tend to say they are "semi-professions" because of their lack of freedom to decide the content of their practice.

Professionalism, pedagogical professionalism and professionalization are multidimensional concepts related to each other. Professionalism is a wide concept that includes Professionalization, which means a commitment to change and to improve the quality of own professional competence, often as a self initiated process. In most cases the context of "pedagogical" is related to education, and includes the profession of teachers or professors, and teacher education. The term pedagogical is less common than education or teacher education. The reason seems to be that "pedagogy" as a science is limited to the traditions in Europe, and even there the meaning of the concepts may change from one country to another. In Norway and the Nordic countries pedagogy is a core subject in teacher education, and in recent years its function is to integrate the different dimensions of teacher professionalism. On the other hand, there is no universal consensus on the content of teacher professionalism. In some areas like some Asian countries teacher professionalism is limited to professional knowledge of a certain subject, and the skills in helping others to learn this subject. In other areas like Europe and USA teacher professionalism include ethical, cultural, social, historical and other aspects of education.

Almost all sources emphasize what to teach, or content knowledge of at least one or more specialized school subject of a certain length in university, or a vocation in vocational education. In some countries like Japan content knowledge seems dominate as the overall criteria for professional teaching.

Most sources also emphasize didactical skills, or how to teach a certain subject or vocation.

In the Nordic countries, Western Europe and USA general pedagogical knowledge on who to teach, where and when to teach seems emphasized equally important as what to teach or how to teach. Some teachers may even argue that knowledge of the learner, the context and the mental and emotional state of the learner may have first priority. General pedagogical knowledge may also include the importance of classroom management and organization that appear to transcend the subject.

Recent document in the West emphasizes a socio cultural perspective on education. This perspective includes knowledge of educational contexts and communication, ranging from the working of the group or classroom, the governance and financing of schools, to the character of and partnership with local communities and cultures. This also includes historical knowledge and the values of education.

Recent documents in the West, and also in countries like Japan, emphasize some form of commitment to adapt to social change and continual improvement of teacher competences. These criteria include practice based research, knowledge of the state of research, and critical reflection on the status and quality of existing ways of teaching.

In the Nordic countries and Europe autonomy and ethical codes of conduct has been frequently mentioned as a criteria of pedagogical professionalism. In Germany and countries like Norway that was occupied by the Nazis, this discussion became more important after World War II and the Nazi period. Autonomy and ethical codes seems less emphasized in former Communist countries and also Asian countries like Japan.

Finally, integration with practical skills needs to be included in the criteria of pedagogical professionalism. The ideal seems to be the integration of all the factors mentioned above into a "whole body" of teacher competences where the different factors interact with each other. In Norway there is a new concept on this ideal, "*profesjonsrettet*". However, this ideal seems rather far from being realized. There also seems to be an international trend on educational management that is a contradiction to this great ideal. This trend is often referred to as New Public Management (Karlsen 2007). This trend is based on external control through different forms of testing, and also control on solely economical parameters far from the "live classroom".

The role of teachers union and professionalism seems to be a problematic issue in some countries like Japan. In Norway the freedom to organize and to negotiate for better work condition is an integral part of autonomy and also respected by the government and the society. Therefore more than 90 % of the Norwegian teachers are member of the union. In Japan the role of teacher union seems to be defined as something outside the definition of professionalism and rights for public servants like teachers. Japanese teacher who are active in the teacher union may face problems when it comes to promotion, or unless they leave the union well before they can expect to earn promotion or become a principal. Consequently less than 30 % of all Japanese teachers are member of the union, and the percentage has dropped constantly since the 1950's. One reason could be that the Japanese teacher union Nikkio tended to be rather left wing and using their position to support radical changes

in the Japanese society. In comparison the Norwegian teacher union seems more pragmatic and liberal, and not very much influenced by strong left wing ideologies.

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