

A Qualitative Study of Barbadian Teachers' Professional Identity

By

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	I
ABSTRACT.....	II
CHAPTER 1.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
BACKGROUND.....	1
RATIONALE.....	2
RESEARCH QUESTION.....	3
SETTING.....	4
METHODOLOGY.....	5
SIGNIFICANCE.....	5
ORGANIZATION OF STUDY.....	6
CHAPTER 2.....	7
PROFESSIONS AND RELATED CONCEPTS.....	7
INTRODUCTION.....	7
HISTORICAL NOTE.....	7
THE CONCEPT OF PROFESSION.....	8
PROFESSION AS IDEOLOGY.....	11
PROFESSION AS BRAND.....	12
PROFESSIONALIZATION AND PROFESSIONALISM.....	14
THE "NEW" PROFESSIONALISM.....	20
CONCEPT OF PROFESSIONAL.....	22
TEACHING AS A PROFESSION.....	23
PROFESSIONALIZATION OF TEACHING.....	29
TEACHER PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR.....	32
FIGURE 1: TWO TEACHER PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR CLASSIFICATIONS.....	35
FIGURE 2: COMPARING MEDICAL AND TEACHER PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOURS.....	36
A SYNTHESIS OF TERMS.....	37
SUMMARY.....	38
CHAPTER 3.....	40
IDENTITY THEORY AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY.....	40
INTRODUCTION.....	40
IMPORTANCE OF IDENTITY DEFINITIONS.....	41
TEACHER IDENTITY VERSUS TEACHER PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY.....	45
NATURE OF IDENTITY.....	46
PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND THE SELF-SYSTEM.....	48
NATURE AND ORGANIZATION OF IDENTITIES.....	50
SELF-SYSTEM DYNAMICS.....	52
PROFESSIONAL SELF-CONCEPT.....	54
IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND IDENTITY STRUCTURE.....	54
MODELLING PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND ITS CONTEXT.....	59

FIGURE 3: A MODEL OF TEACHER IDENTITY	60
FIGURE 4: FLORES AND DAY’S IDENTITY CONTEXT MODEL	60
MEANING, IDENTITY AND SOCIAL REPRESENTATION	61
EMOTIONS AND IDENTITY	65
OCCUPATIONS AND IDENTITY	66
CONCEPTUALIZING TEACHER PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY: A SYNTHESIS	69
SUMMARY	72
CHAPTER 4.....	73
RESEARCH DESIGN.....	73
INTRODUCTION	73
METHODOLOGY: AN OVERVIEW.....	73
PHILOSOPHY AND METHODOLOGY	74
INTERPRETIVISM.....	78
METHODOLOGICAL DECISIONS AND THEIR ALIGNMENT	81
NATURE OF FOCUS GROUPS	83
FOCUS GROUPS VERSUS OTHER METHODS	84
FOCUS GROUP DATA	85
FOCUS GROUP LIMITATIONS	86
FOCUS GROUP DESIGN	87
FOCUS GROUP COMPOSITION AND SAMPLING CONSIDERATIONS.....	90
SAMPLING AND RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES USED	95
FIGURE 5: PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS BY GENDER.....	95
FOCUS GROUP COMPOSITION.....	98
FIGURE 6: ACTUAL FOCUS GROUP COMPOSITION.....	98
FOCUS GROUP DATA ANALYSIS	100
ANALYZING AND INTEGRATING FOCUS GROUP DYNAMICS	104
FIGURE 8: LAYOUT OF CONSENSUS MATRIX.....	106
RESEARCH QUALITY	109
FIGURE 10: RESEARCH DOCUMENTATION SUMMARY	111
SUMMARY	112
CHAPTER 5.....	113
ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS.....	113
INTRODUCTION	113
DATA ANALYSIS ORGANIZATION	113
FIGURE 11: DATA ANALYSIS LAYOUT.....	113
SPONTANEITY	113
FIGURE 12: RESPONSE SPONTANEITY	114
FIGURE 13: MAJOR THEMES AND THEIR BASIC MEANINGS	116
INVOLVEMENT	117
FIGURE 14 INVOLVEMENT WITH DIFFERENT THEMES.....	117
THEMATIC ANALYSIS	119
PROPOSITION #1:	120
FIGURE 16: CONCEPT MAP OF PROPOSITION #1:.....	130
PROPOSITION #2	131
CONCLUSIONS.....	138
SUMMARY	139

CHAPTER 6.....	140
INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS	140
INTRODUCTION	140
APPLYING THE IDENTITY STRUCTURE CATEGORIES	141
“I AM A PROFESSIONAL” CLAIM.....	142
ACCOUNTING FOR THE “I AM A PROFESSIONAL’ CLAIM	144
RECOGNITIONS AND THE PROFESSIONALITY CLAIM	146
SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND THE "I AM A PROFESSIONAL" CLAIM.....	151
EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT AND THE "I AM A PROFESSIONAL" CLAIM.....	155
ADDITIONAL CATEGORIES UNCOVERED.....	157
TRAINING AND THE CLAIM TO PROFESSIONALITY	157
AUTONOMY AND THE PROFESSIONALITY CLAIM	162
PERCEIVED ROLE AND PROFESSIONALITY.....	166
PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR.....	167
SUMMARY	167
CHAPTER 7.....	169
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	169
INTRODUCTION	169
THESIS STATEMENT.....	169
CONCEPTUALIZED VS. EMPIRICAL CATEGORIES	170
REVISING THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY.....	174
FIGURE 18: REPRESENTATION OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY.....	174
IMPLICATIONS FOR MULTIPLE IDENTITY THEORY	175
FIGURE 20: MODELS OF IDENTITY STRUCTURE.....	180
RELEVANCE TO TEACHER IDENTITY FINDINGS	182
ACTION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS.....	186
SUMMARY	190
APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FACTSHEET	192
APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM.....	194
APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPATION GUIDE.....	195
APPENDIX D: MODERATOR’S GUIDE.....	196
REFERENCES.....	197

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Abstract

This study is a qualitative investigation of the professional identity structure of teachers in Barbados, a small post-colonial Caribbean territory. The aim was to determine whether Barbadian teachers regard themselves as professionals and to what extent their occupational/professional identity structure could be described by a pre-conceptualized set of categories. Data was collected from a focus group made up of teachers of both genders from primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions in the country. Teachers in the study claim to be professionals despite acknowledging that teaching in Barbados is not recognized as a profession. This seemingly paradoxical claim is explained by the fact that teachers regard being a professional as an individual determination characterized by a different set of criteria from those that define a profession. By making this claim, Barbadian teachers appear to have mitigated the potential threat to the coherence of their professional self-concept brought about by the perceived discrepancy between the importance of their role as teachers and the non-recognition of teaching as a profession. The empirical data supports the four pre-conceptualized identity categories but four additional categories were uncovered. Overall, the findings support the contention that professional identity is an aspect of the self-concept; consequently, it is subject to the principle of self-concept maintenance.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Background

In the last ten to fifteen years I found myself wondering increasingly about myself as a teacher. Somewhere during this period I began to think of myself as a "professional" without understanding very much about what that meant except that it seemed to be connected to some notion of "excellence". This period roughly coincided with my increasing involvement in several "professional" matters outside classroom teaching, in particular, performing the role as Chief Examiner with the Caribbean Examinations Council. The activities associated with this role afforded me frequent contact with the work of both teachers and candidates from more than a dozen countries in the English-speaking Caribbean as well as with several specialists in the field of education. These experiences and my own attempt to grapple with thoughts about excellence, teaching standards and professionalism led eventually to the selection of the theme of teacher professional identity for this doctoral thesis.

This thesis centers around a small-scale, exploratory, qualitative study of the professional identity of a group of teachers in Barbados, a post-colonial country in the Caribbean. Teacher professional identity sits within a long-standing scholarly interest in the professional lives of teachers and the broader field of the sociology of teaching. It continues to receive a high degree of attention because it has been linked to the concept of teacher quality which has been singled out as a critical factor in student learning (Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain 2005, Anderson 2004) and which is often associated with or regarded as equivalent to such terms as "teacher professionalism", "teacher effectiveness" and "teacher professional standards" (Reynolds 1999). Teacher professional identity has, therefore, become associated with the quality of student learning through the construct of teacher efficacy or effectiveness. Beijaard, Verloop and Vermunt (2000) claim the following of teacher professional identity:

"Teachers' perceptions of their own professional identity affect their efficacy and professional development as well as their ability and willingness to cope with educational change and to implement innovations in their own teaching practice".

Beijaard, Verloop and Vermunt 2000 p. 749

It is acknowledged, however, that the quality of student learning depends on a multiplicity of factors (Campos 2005, Anderson 2004, Kupermintz 2003, Centra and Potter 1980) some of which include the perceived importance of education within particular communities, the quality of the curriculum, the motivation of students, the availability of resources both financial and material, governance of the national educational enterprise, the regulatory framework of education, the adoption of educational technologies and of course, teacher quality.

McBer (2000) has suggested that a clear relationship exists between professionalism and teacher effectiveness and has characterized professionalism as “the ongoing patterns of behaviour which make [teachers] effective” (p.8). According to this view, a professional teacher will engage in effective behaviours such as critically assessing his/her own work, collaborating with colleagues to improve his/her own teaching as well as working with students to improve their learning (Darling-Hammond 1986). However, this postulated relationship between teacher professional identity and teacher effectiveness rests on highly contested concepts such as “profession”, ‘professionalism’, “professional teacher”, "identity" and “professional identity”. It is not surprising that, although a growing number of studies have been devoted to investigating the concept of teacher professional identity, there is manifestly little agreement about the nature of teacher professional identity or how it ought to be defined. In the closing summary of their widely cited review of teacher professional identity research (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop 2004) found that:

The current research on teachers’ professional identity is not without problems. Different concepts were used to indicate the same thing, or it was not clarified how they are related; this pertains particularly to the concepts of ‘self’ and ‘identity’. We argued for better conceptual clarity of these concepts.

Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop 2004 p. 126

Rationale

Given the state of affairs alluded to by the authors quoted above, I am forced to agree with Ibarra (1999) that professional identity is an “under-explained concept”. It is my view, therefore, that before serious attempts can be made to use teacher professional identity

either as an explanatory or a dependent variable, as was attempted in some of the studies reviewed by Beijaard et al., greater effort has to be made to understand the concept of professional identity itself. That is the major goal of this study; to help clarify the nature of teacher professional identity particularly as it is understood by Barbadian teachers. This is attempted by undertaking a critical review of relevant literature followed by a small scale piece of exploratory qualitative research on the theme of teaching as an occupation among Barbadian teachers. This is followed by an attempt to position the findings in relation to the extant literature on the occupation of teaching, the self, identity and teacher professional identity.

Research Question

The basic notion of identity is that it is “how people think about themselves”; by extension, occupational and professional identity refer to how people think about themselves in relation to their occupation or profession respectively. The way people think about themselves is a function of their interaction with society. Thus, the identity of individuals is thought to reflect the “social structure”, namely, the pattern of roles and norms of society, which is the basic thesis of symbolic interactionism (Mead 1934; Collero 2003). By extrapolation, the fundamental notion of occupational or professional identity is how people think about themselves as workers in the context of an occupation or profession. While this interactionist perspective may seem to imply a social determinism, people, on the contrary, display a level of choice within the constraints and opportunities provided by social structure (Lin 2002; Costello 2005) and, therefore, they can be thought of as active participants in the construction or development of their identities. From this perspective, social influences can be treated as "resources" which can be classified in a number of ways (Schwartz, Luyckx and Vignoles 2011) and organized internally by individuals to play an active role in the construction of their identities. Therefore, a significant element of the structure or content of an identity consists of how individuals cognitively represent the influence of these resources (Serpe 2003; Collero 2003). This idea of representation forms the initial notion of occupational/professional identity structure which this study sets out to investigate among Barbadian teachers. But, what a profession is and whether teaching is a profession, an occupation or, for that matter, something else, are highly contested matters (Runte 1995). The research questions that underpin this study can be stated as follows:

Do Barbadian teachers regard teaching as profession? Do they categorize themselves as professionals? To what extent is the organization of their occupational/professional identity consistent with set of pre-conceptualized categories?

Setting

Barbados, the setting of this study, is a small post-colonial, "developing" country in the Eastern Caribbean with a published population of 268,792 (Barbados Statistical Services 2000) and an estimated population 287,733 as of July 2011 (Central Intelligence Agency online, 2012). Reported literacy is approximately 98% (Central Bank of Barbados online, n.d.). Barbados was a former colony of Great Britain and experienced slavery from approximately 1630 to 1834 the year in which slavery was terminated de facto in the colonies. It attained independence in 1966.

The high level of development in the country, indicated by typical development indicators such as PCI (per capita income) and the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme undated) Human Development Index, is invariably attributed, in part, to the availability and quality of free education among other factors (Blackman 1998). The PCI of Barbados has been put at US \$7,350 (BDS \$14,700) (The Central Bank of Barbados). UNDP bills the Human Development Index (HDI) as "an alternative to conventional measures of national development, such as level of income and the rate of economic growth" (United Nations Development Programme undated). The index, which ranges from zero to a maximum of 1, is designed to present a broader definition of human welfare by providing a composite measure of three dimensions of human development: health, education and income. At 2010, Barbados's HDI stood at 0.793, which places the country at a rank of 47 out of 187 countries (UNDP n.d.). Although the HDI of Latin America and the Caribbean as a region has increased from 0.582 in 1980 to 0.731 in 2001, Barbados has consistently scored above the regional average.

In Barbados, teacher quality has been an ongoing concern of educational policy makers (White Paper on Education Reform 1995, p. 38 - 39). Consequently, the free education that has been provided up to the tertiary level since 1961 has been matched with efforts at improving teacher training mainly through the University of the West Indies and Erdiston Teachers Training College. In addition, teaching has benefited from the existence of two

major teachers' unions: the Barbados Secondary Teachers' Union which was formed in 1946 and the Barbados Union of Teachers, representing primary school teachers, created in 1974.

Given the alleged quality of education in Barbados and its post-colonial status, it can be postulated that the quality of Barbadian education is due in part to the high level of professionalism displayed by Barbadian teachers over time and by extension, to their strong sense of professional identity. However, while this study does not seek to investigate this hypothesized relationship *per se*, the country provides a rich and perhaps unique setting in which to study the professional identity of teachers.

Methodology

In prosecuting this study, a qualitative methodology was adopted because the fundamental purpose of the study was to explore the topic and obtain depth rather than breadth, achieve rich description rather than count occurrences of opinions or variables. Typically, qualitative methodologies are characterized by a desire to achieve an understanding of a phenomenon that is grounded on the lived experiences of individuals rather than on seeking to confirm or disconfirm theories constructed in advance of the research which is a salient feature of so-called quantitative methodologies. This does not mean that a piece of qualitative research cannot start out with an *ex ante* hypothesis of the topic under investigation; on the contrary, Steinke (2004) argues that opposition to such "prior knowledge" is "epistemologically untenable and has restricted the applicability of qualitative research" (p.156).

Within the qualitative paradigm it was decided to use the focus group as the main data collection technique because of its merits relative to other potential techniques such as in-depth interviews which would not offer the benefit of interaction between respondents. Framework analysis which utilizes grounded theory resources such as thematic frameworks was used to analyze and interpret the data. However, this study does not make any claim to be a purely grounded theory exercise.

Significance

This piece of research has several potential points of significance. First, it can help to illuminate the concepts of "profession", "professionalism", "professional", "professional

identity” and how they relate to each other which, in turn, can contribute to building a theoretical perspective in professional identity. Second, the results may assist teacher training institutions in Barbados in devising curricula to foster a better understanding of professionalism, a strategy that has already been implemented in the medical field. This is important since previous studies (for example, Hargreaves 2000) have concluded that teachers show a very limited understanding of the nature of professionalism. A third potential use of this study is that its findings can act as an input into policies to assist teachers’ unions as well as Government, the major employer of teachers in Barbados, in developing policies to further enhance teaching as profession. Finally, insights gleaned from this study can be used to tacitly support or negate the link between the professional identity of Barbadian teachers and the alleged quality of Barbadian education.

Organization of Study

Chapters 2 and 3 are devoted to the literature review and reflect the perspective that professional identity is an amalgam of two major concepts: professionalism and identity. Therefore, Chapter 2 discusses the notion of profession and professionalism, whereas Chapter 3 reviews the concept of identity and concludes with a synthesis of the concept of “professional identity”. Chapter 4 outlines the research design employed in the study and the philosophical perspective that informs it. Chapter 5 presents the basic analysis of the focus group data on which the study is based. This is organized around the core investigative questions used in the focus groups. Chapter 6 applies the thematic framework developed out of the pre-conceptualization of teacher professional identity presented in Chapter 3, and therefore, shows how the third element of the research question has been addressed. Finally, Chapter 7 presents the thesis statement and discusses how it relates to the research questions, to the extant literature on the self and identity as well as to teacher professional identity. This chapter also offers suggestions for further research and policy recommendations for the teaching service in Barbados.

Chapter 2

Professions and Related Concepts

Introduction

Professional identity can be regarded as a fusion of the concepts of "professionalism" and "identity". Thus, two major theoretical strands underpin this study: the sociology of the professions and identity theory. The latter borrows from both the sociological and psychological literatures. Together, these two strands will be used to delineate the key construct addressed in this study, "teacher professional identity". The primary purpose of this chapter is to examine the concepts of "profession", "professionalization", "professionalism" and "professional" and their relevance to this study, drawing primarily on the literature of the sociology of the professions. In the following chapter I review literature relevant to the identity strand.

The professions are perceived as playing both economic and social roles, therefore, it is not surprising that both sociologists and economists have been some of the main scholars studying them. Whereas economic studies of the professions have been accused of inherent reductionism in their approach (Freidson 1989) and limiting their concerns to certain behaviours associated with professions - for example, licensing and advertising - sociological studies of the professions have taken a much broader approach and sought to study "professions as social groups and....the roles that professionals and professional associations play in society" (Savage 1994 p.130). While this chapter draws heavily on the sociological literature, it will also examine professions as brands which, depending on one's perspective, can be classified as either an economic matter or a sociological matter.

Historical Note

The sociology of the professions has been an accepted area of scholarly study for some time (Bellis 2000). Neal and Morgan (2000) have pointed out that contemporary debate on the professions often treats their historical development in a superficial manner thus making the development of the professions appear as a "recent and uniform phenomenon". So although a substantive treatment of the history of the profession here is not intended

and, indeed, is outside the scope of this study, a brief synopsis of the history of the professions is warranted at this juncture.

Relatively little appears to be known about the early history of the professions prior to 1800 (Hart and Marshall 1992). However, there are several publications dealing specifically with aspects of the history of the professions (for example, Grillaert 1951; Duman 1979, Duman 1980; Miles 1986; O'Day 2000; Neal and Morgan 2000; Law and Kim 2005). From the available literature a few salient points can be advanced. First, prior to the late 1800s, there were only three occupations considered as professions: medicine, law and theology, the so-called "learned professions" (Law and Kim 2005, Klass 1961). Second, the growth and development of these so-called "classic professions" in different parts of the world has not been uniform. For example, Neal and Morgan (2000) argue that the process of professionalization in the UK has been 'bottom up' whereas in Germany it has been 'top down' because of the different roles played by actors at the occupational ('bottom') level versus the state ('top') in these two jurisdictions respectively. Third, the traits now associated with the classic professions and which will be discussed to some extent in this chapter, took shape primarily in the nineteenth century (Duman 1980).

The Concept of Profession

Despite the many attempts to define it there is as no single authoritative definition for the term 'profession' (Hart and Marshall 1992). Evetts (2003) thinks that emphasis should shift away from defining profession to "to analysis of the appeal to 'professionalism' as a motivator for and facilitator of occupational change" (p. 396). For the purposes of this study, it is nonetheless necessary to offer some working definition of the term since it is part of a compound concept. I approach this from both a semantic and a scholarly angle.

Following Pellegrino (2002), one can derive some fundamental understanding of the meaning of the term profession from the etymological roots of the word. According to Collins 21st Century Dictionary (p. 1196), the word profession means "An avowal [or] declaration". The terms "avowal" and "declaration" connote that the "professor" is making a claim or "profession" to pursue "a specific kind of activity and conduct"; accordingly, the quintessence of a profession is this act of declaring commitment and dedication to an ideal (Pellegrino 2002). In the medical profession, this act of profession is taken literally in the form of the Hippocratic Oath, of which Pellegrino writes:

When the Oath is proclaimed, if it is taken seriously as a binding commitment to place one's special knowledge and skill at the service of the sick, the graduate has then made his "profession." He or she enters the company of others with similar commitments. At this moment, one enters a moral community whose defining purpose is to respond to and to advance the welfare of patients — those who are ill, who are in need of help, healing, or relief of suffering, pain or disability.

Pellegrino 2002, p.379

This lexical approach to deconstructing the term 'profession', while useful, does not account for several of the features and characteristics associated with the term. To address this, one must turn directly to the scholarly literature. Here we find, that in summary, the literature ranges from avoiding defining the term altogether to offering lists of occupations that qualify as professions or proposing lists of characteristics for professions (Ramsey 1983; Evetts 2003). There are, of course, those who have attempted to provide some definition of the term. For example, Berg (1986), following Hellberg 1978, defined it as "practitioners of an occupation who possess specific knowledge and who act independently to offer certain clients a specific service" (p.58) and Savage (1994), from an economics-oriented perspective defined it as, "a network of strategic alliances across ownership boundaries among practitioners who share a core competence." (p.131) The most common approach seems to be offering lists of characteristics or criteria. This so-called trait theory of professionalism (Webb, Vulliamy, Hämäläinen, Sarja, Kimonen, and Nevalainen 2004) holds that an occupation is a profession if it exhibits the characteristics of the older professions such as medicine and law. According to Wilensky, whose conceptualization is treated as a kind of base-line description, the classic traits of a profession are as follows:

Any occupation wishing to exercise professional authority must find a technical basis for it, assert an exclusive jurisdiction, link both skill and jurisdiction to standards of training, and convince the public that its services are uniquely trustworthy.

Wilensky (1964 p. 138)

Subsequent writers have tried to elaborate on the traits of a profession. For example, Khurana, Nohria and Penrice (2005), writing about modern attempts of management

specialists to establish management as a profession, lay out what they see as the characteristics of a profession:

1. A common body of knowledge resting on a well-developed, widely accepted theoretical base;
2. A system for certifying that individuals possess such knowledge before being licensed or otherwise being allowed to practice;
3. A commitment to use specialized knowledge for the public good, and a renunciation of the goal of profit-maximization, in return for professional autonomy and monopoly power;
4. A code of ethics, with provisions for monitoring individual compliance with the code and a system of sanctions for enforcing it.

Bellis (2000) offers an instructive analysis of the term. Writing from the perspective of a member of the actuarial profession, the author acknowledges the existence of different definitions of the term 'profession' and more importantly, suggests that the variety of definitions accounts for the different conclusions commentators reach regarding the current and future status of the professions. From the plethora of definitions available, Bellis abstracts four underlying elements: the cognitive, the normative, the organizational and the social (p.318). The cognitive element refers to the "specialized knowledge and long training" required of most professions. The normative element encompasses ethical standards, commitment and disinterestedness which speak to the fourth characteristic listed by Kharuna Nohria and Penrice. The organizational element refers to whether or not the members of a profession are organized into a professional body which can be considered to be implied in the second characteristic offered by Kharuna et. al. that is, a system for certifying members of the profession. Stemming from the organizational characteristic is the fourth feature - the social element - which refers to the extent to which the profession has been accorded social recognition. This recognition is one of the primary objectives of attempts at seeking professional status and the justification for the efforts made to imbue an occupation with the features of a profession as outlined by Wilensky.

The trait approach to defining "profession" is not without its critics. Commenting on the trait theory of the professions, Eraut (1994) contends that such lists of traits are not very helpful but are, in this author's view, "the most salient characteristics of high-status professions"; furthermore, some lists are "culturally specific", with some traits taking on

greater significance in different countries. However, Whitty (2000) offers a way out of the definitional quagmire:

A profession is whatever people think it is at any particular time and that can vary. So the fact that we normally talk about the teaching profession means that teaching is a profession, even when we cannot tick off those core characteristics listed earlier.

Whitty 2000 p.232

Whitty's definition implies that the term is socially constructed and therefore, in my view, it offers a dynamic conceptualization of "profession" which allows the scholar of the professions to background the problem of providing a rigid a priori definition. At the same time it makes allowance for incorporating a culturally and situationally grounded approach to researching the professions and the phenomenon of professionalism. The definition thus has the advantage of facilitating the operationalization of the concept on at least two planes. First, this definition implies that we must now specify the "people" who are the object of our research; in other words, it now matters whether the "people" are teachers, other professionals, the general public, unions or policy makers. Second, the expression "particular time" implies that the historical situation must be taken into account when conducting an investigation where the concept is a substantive issue. This in turn implies that attention must be paid to the economic, political and social issues that obtain in that epoch of time.

Profession as Ideology

Whitty's definition notwithstanding, the term profession also has important connotations which cannot be overlooked. Hoyle (1980) advances an ideological perspective of the term; a perspective, which following Hughes (1958) he defines as a "symbol for a desired conception of one's work and hence of one's self". Hoyle further argues that "profession" has both a collective and individual meaning. Collectively, it refers to the knowledge base which is used as a criterion for determining whether an occupation as a whole is a profession; individually it serves as the measure of the extent to which a single member of the profession has been, so to speak, "professionalized" by virtue of the extent to which he or she is in possession of this knowledge base.

The notion of profession as an ideology raised by Hoyle has fundamental implications for the theme of this study. In the first instance, if we are to interpret Hoyle correctly, having one's occupation described as a "profession" has implications for how one sees the quality of one's work and indeed how one wants others to see it; presumably the quality of work of a professional (meaning, "a member of a profession") is higher than that of a member of a "non-profession". The second implication of the ideological view, as propounded by Hoyle, is its inference about the identity of the member of the profession, a relationship which can be construed from the expression "conception ... of one's self" as found in Hughes' definition above. This notion is in fact what lies at the heart of the issue being pursued in this study, that is: what is the relationship between one's conception of one's occupation as a profession (teaching) and the construction of oneself as a professional (teacher)? But is the former (conceiving of one's occupation as a profession) a prerequisite for the latter (regarding oneself as a professional) as implied by Hoyle's definition or can these conceptions exist independently of each other? Because this relationship is not a foregone conclusion this study will address it directly at both the conceptual level and the empirical level. The third implication that may be drawn from this ideological view is the significance of the knowledge base of a profession and its suggestion that the level of training which members of an occupation are required to undergo may be critical to perceptions about the degree to which an occupation is worthy of the appellation "profession", on the one hand, or on the other hand, the degree to which an individual member can be credited with the term "professional". These are core issues which will be expanded upon in the course of this review. In the next section I examine another perspective on professions.

Profession as Brand

An alternative way of deconstructing professions is to see them as brands. From this perspective, "professionalization", to be discussed later in some detail, can be regarded as a process of "occupational branding". Ghodeswar's (2008) definition is typical of how "brand" is conceptualized: "a distinguishing name and/or symbol (such as logo, trademark, or package design) intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors". From this definition it can be gleaned that the two key elements of a brand are its power to create "identity" and to "differentiate" one's brand from competing brands.

Branding - the process of creating an brand – and brand identity – an outcome of the branding process - have been applied not only to mundane products but also to entities such as countries (Kotler and Gertner 2002), destinations (Pike 2005; Blain, Levy and Ritchie 2005), places of interest (Papadopoulos 2004), services (de Chernatony and Segal-Horn 2001) people (Rein, Kotler, Mamlin, Stoller 2006) and higher education (Temple 2006). Brand identity has been described as “a unique set of brand associations implying a promise to customers” (Ghodeswar 2008). Brand associations entail promises of both functional and emotional benefits (deChernatony 2007) as well as performance and quality. All other things being equal, the greater the distinctiveness of the claims and associations of brand, the greater is its potential to command differential attention and patronage from potential users.

However, brand identities are socially constructed “over time through mutually influencing inputs from managers and other social constituents” such as lawyers, advertisers, shareholders and regulatory agencies who all contribute to the configuration and maintenance of the brand (Silveira, Lages and Simões 2011) so that branding can be seen as a valid sociological explanation of the status of professions. The notion of social construction here also implies that the brand identity formed by clients or other stakeholders is not necessarily equivalent to the planned or desired identity envisaged by the marketer. Hence, it is that brand identity has to be (re)calibrated from time to time by the active involvement of the marketer. In the marketing literature this is closely associated with the concept and practice of repositioning (Kotler and Armstrong 2005).

As a brand, the label ‘profession’ functions to make a distinction between those occupations labelled as professions and those that are not. As a brand, a profession provides for the customers, clients and other stakeholders a promise of a certain level of quality and performance which presumably is not associated with non-professions. In functioning as brands, professions carry special meaning for those persons in non-professions. As Larson (1977) has noted, workers in non-professional occupations will perceive professions as being more attractive than occupations without the label because of the perceived benefits such as superior social status and the relative advantage that some professions have in extracting pecuniary premiums from clients.

While modern branding texts and a myriad of similar publications will provide branding how-to-do-lists and branding "cookbooks", it can be posited that the branding of

professions, at least the classic ones of law and medicine, has been a relatively "natural" process resulting from their long "association" with the "classic features" of professionals discussed earlier, namely, a body of esoteric knowledge, their lengthy training requirements, an assumption of altruism and autonomy. The power of a brand is derived from the strength of its associations which constitute the images marketers use to influence buyers and which buyers use to help them make buying decisions (Low and Lamb 2000; Belen de Rio, Vazquez and Iglesias 2001). Therefore, professions can be interpreted as possessing "brand associations" that have garnered for them the market position they enjoy in terms of the social acceptance, prestige and economic power that serve to differentiate them from other occupations.

But although professions still seem to enjoy this favourable position to a great extent, the brand differentiation of professions is being eroded or reconfigured by the impact of forces such as the increase in technology, the spread of higher education, proliferation of governmentality, the break-down of trust resulting from so-called post-modernist pressures (Freidson 1984; Helsby 1995; Dent and Whitehead 2001) and the description of themselves as professions by various occupations, for example, insurance providers, acupuncturists and interior decorators. Notwithstanding this, professions still exude an aura of superiority which invites attempts at emulation from other occupations. How this attempt at emulation plays out is taken up next.

Professionalization and Professionalism

Irrespective of the process by which one may attempt to account for the current status of the older professions, one of the discernible ongoing trends has been the attempt of occupations to transform themselves into professions. The process is generally referred to as 'professionalization' (Hoyle 1982; Hargreaves 2000; Ingersoll and Merrill 2011). Larson (1979) referred to the process as 'the professional project'. Hoyle (1982) conceptualized professionalization as the process whereby an occupation seeks to "meet more of the criteria" of a profession or to meet those criteria to a greater extent. This is inextricably linked to what the author refers to as the 'prescriptive' use of the term 'profession', that is, its use as a synonym for "achieving some desired state". But the term (professionalization) is loaded with psychological, social and political meaning beyond the simple objective of meeting desired criteria. According to Hoyle:

It is used by individuals as a token of their own self-esteem, by occupational élites as these seek to improve pay, status and conditions, and by governments as they seek to gain an occupation's acceptance of a particular policy by appealing to its professional responsibilities.

Hoyle 1982 p. 166

The professionalization project, therefore, according to Evetts (2003), has become a major fixation for a range of occupations such as engineers, accountants school teachers, pharmacists, social workers, care assistants, librarians, computing experts, the police and the armed forces. But this is not a new trend as the provocative title of Wilensky's 1964 article, *The Professionalization of Everyone?* might suggest. More importantly, the seeming preoccupation with professionalization raises a logical and important question: how does an occupation transition to the state of being a profession? Wilensky, in the article cited above, sought to provide an answer. The author advanced the proposition that an occupation will push towards professionalization in a certain order:

In sum, there is a typical process by which the established professions have arrived: men begin doing the work full time and stake out a jurisdiction; the early masters of the technique or adherents of the movement become concerned about standards of training and practice and set up a training school, which, if not lodged in universities at the outset, makes academic connection within two or three decades; the teachers and activists then achieve success in promoting more effective organization, first local, then national through either the transformation of an existing occupational association or the creation of a new one. Toward the end, legal protection of the monopoly of skill appears; at the end, a formal code of ethics is adopted.

Wilensky 1964 p. 145

But the path to professionalization of different professions in different geographical locations does not necessarily follow this neat sequence described by Wilensky. For example, Siegrist (2004) describes the different trajectory taken by professions in England and Wales versus Germany:

professional functions and professional knowledge existed in principle in all of Europe, but that the various European societies treated them

differently and thus constructed the professions differently. The national and regional differences between professions of the same name can be explained to a large degree through differences in the political, social, cultural and scientific orders and the traditions of the various countries. Even at first glance, it is evident that in individual countries the same expert knowledge and institutional models were, in many respects, used slightly differently on the basis of specific presuppositions and conditions.

Siegrist, 2004 p. 72

This is quite understandable if it is acknowledged that a profession is a social phenomenon situated in specific political, economic and cultural circumstances. Berg (1989 p. 58) concurs: "The basic condition for professionalization is that it must be sanctioned by the environment in which it is carried on". Scholars of the professions have noted the changed environment in which the professions find themselves today (Helsby 1995; Dent and Whitehead 2001) but I will return to this under the section "professionalism" where associated issues such as 'the new professionalism' and the "culture of performativity" will be treated simultaneously. But *why* is the status of "profession" and the complementary term "professional" so attractive?

One of the main reasons given is that the designation "profession" is used to protect the incumbents of the profession from competition or set up what Friedson (1982) calls "market shelters" which is somewhat of a retreat from the stronger concept of "market closure" as advanced by McDonald (1985). Higher remuneration is obviously another powerful motive, so also is the drive to achieve higher social status. Professions have long been conceived as occupying a higher social status than other occupations and the aspiration to become a profession was regarded as a way of upward social mobility or a way to achieve 'gentlemanly status' (Duman 1979). Against this background, one is forced to ask a perennial question: given its social importance, why has teaching not become professionalized? Intriguing though it is, this discussion is deferred for the section 'Teaching as a Profession', so that attention can now be turned to the closely related concept of "professionalism".

The term "professionalism" is perhaps, a more nebulous concept than professionalization. Conceptions of professionalism range from the simple to the sophisticated depending on the profession under scrutiny and the theme of the discussion. In a paper dealing with

educational reform and teacher professionalism, Berg describes professionalism as “roughly synonymous with competence and skill” (Berg 1989). The American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) frames professionalism as “that set of attitudes and values” that engender the “set of standards for physician competence in regard to knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior in the care of patients” (ABIM 1995, p.1). The term, “professionalism” is sometimes used as a synonym for professionalism. Hoyle, who is often cited in debates on the professions, used the term at one point to describe the quality of practice of individuals in a profession in contradistinction to the term “professionalization” which was used to refer to efforts to improve the status of the occupation and its practitioners (Hoyle 1974). However, in a revision that reflects the conceptual complexity that still bedevils the study of the professions, the author retreated from this position in favour of using the term ‘professionalization’ to indicate the first process, that is, improving the status of the occupation, and the term “professional development” to refer to the complementary process of improving practice (Hoyle 1982). Evans (2008), following Hoyle, used the term professionalism to represent the professionalism of individuals and consequently suggested that professionalism may be construed as “as an amalgam of the ‘professionalities’ of the individual practitioners” (Evans 2008, p.10).

It is clear that the use of and meanings attached to these terms is by no means uniform. Some scholars use the term “professionalism” strictly to capture what Hoyle referred to as professional development or the process of improving practice (For example, Hargreaves 2000 p.151; Goodson 2000; Berg 1989). Other accounts, unwittingly or otherwise, blur the conceptual boundaries between professionalization, the collective process of improving the status of teaching as a profession and professionalism, the enhancement of effectiveness of the practice of teachers (Ingersoll and Merrill 2011; Hildebrandt and Eom 2011). It is quite understandable how such conceptual migration can occur because improvements in status and conditions are assumed to lead to improvements in practice. But, according to Hargreaves (2006) this does not necessarily follow:

Professionalism (improving quality and standards of work) and professionalization (improving status and standing) are often presented as complementary projects (improve standards and you will improve status) but sometimes they are contradictory. For example, defining professional standards in high-status, scientific and technical ways as standards of

knowledge and skill can downgrade, neglect or crowd out the equally important emotional dimension of teachers 'work in terms of being passionate about teaching and caring for students' learning and lives. Stronger professionalization does not always mean greater professionalism."

Hargreaves 2006 p. 673

Apart from and perhaps stemming from the conceptual difficulties with the term, a closer reading of the literature suggests that professionalism is indeed a very loaded concept, more replete with connotations than denotations. The "load" assigned to the concept, so to speak, has much to do with the positionalities of different authors and the multiple perspectives from which the concept can be viewed. For example, Ozga (1995), writing in the critical power theory tradition, regarded professionalism as a form of occupational control of teachers by the state adding that "as a form of control it is always dangerous and contradictory" (p.35); on the other hand, Friedson (1999) saw professionalism as an attempt to create a market shelter designed to partially protect the incumbents from the encroachment of 'non-professionals'.

Up for contention therefore, is the matter of who decides what are the knowledge and skills, values and attitudes that constitute professionalism and which were alluded to by the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM). The traditional view is that professionals, as autonomous "knowledge-workers", should be self-regulating and therefore, should be responsible for deciding what determines professionalism. However, the realities of organized labour today require that critical attention be paid to the policy context (Ozga 1995) in order to decipher whose definition of professionalism is being promoted. Ozga suggests that such a perspective would lead one to view professionalism as "a service offered by the members of that occupation to those in power". Professionalism then is not some absolute concept (Evans 2008) but, as Troman suggests, "a socially constructed, contextually variable and contested concept...defined by management and expressed in its expectations of workers and the stipulation of tasks they will perform' (Troman 1996 cited in Evans 2008 p.3). Even so, conceptual space must be provided to acknowledge the real differences between the version of professionalism that management (or even the profession itself) may wish and that actually enacted by individual professionals in a given occupational situation. Evans (2008) describes these complementary concepts as 'demanded' or 'required' professionalism and 'enacted professionalism' respectively and makes the key point, at least from the perspective of this study and its methodology that:

....Since only [enacted professionalism] may be considered to reflect reality – albeit a phenomenologically defined reality – it remains the only meaningful conception of professionalism; any others represent insubstantiality ranging from articulated ideology to wishful thinking.

Evans 2008 p.13

Based on the foregoing premise, Evans defined professionalism in the following terms:

My current thinking leads me to define professionalism as: professionalism-influenced practice that is consistent with commonly-held consensual delineations of a specific profession and that both contributes to and reflects perceptions of the profession's purpose and status and the specific nature, range and levels of service provided by, and expertise prevalent within, the profession, as well as the general ethical code underpinning this practice.

Evans 2008 p.13

One interpretation that can be placed on this conception is that professionalism is constructed and capable of interrogation at both the individual, phenomenological level as well as the collective, 'corporate' level of a profession and that both levels exert mutual influence on each other. In a more recent publication, Evans expanded on the concept. She suggested that professionalism is "something that applies to every occupational workforce" and consists of behavioural, attitudinal and intellectual components (Evans 2011, p. 856). The behavioural element refers to the practitioner's on-the-job performance in terms of the actual processes and activities practitioners carried out at the workplace. The attitudinal component, as defined by Evans, relates primarily to the self-concept (perceptions, beliefs, values) and what might be regarded as the individual's "occupational self-esteem". In the following chapter, I discuss the self-concept and self-esteem as two of the fundamental aspects of self/identity and argue that professional identity cannot be understood without reference to these. Finally, the third component, the intellectual, relates to practitioners' sources and use of what is in effect "professional knowledge". In the final section of this chapter I incorporate elements of Evans' conceptualization into working definitions of professionalism and the related notion of "professional". In chapter 3, I use

the components of her conceptualization to help address the call by Beijaard et al. (2004) for scholars to account for the notion of "professional" in professional identity.

The "New" Professionalism

The debate over inherent lack of clarity and contestability of the term professionalism is intensified and problematized because of the “fundamental changes in the social, political, economic and market contexts in which professional occupations and knowledge-based workers work” (Evetts 2003). Commentators have pointed to a new kind of professionalism that is a product of the post-modern era and argued that old notions of the professional as a person with certain skills, privileged social standing and the recipient of trust are on the decline and are being replaced by a new generic, globally mobile, professional person with a new identity (Dent and Whitehead 2001; Helsby 1995). According to Dent and Whitehead, this ‘new professional’ operates in,

...a culture of performativity, the belief in the veracity of apparently objective systems of accountability and measurement rather than the subjective judgement and specialized knowledges of an individual...whatever trust and respect is accorded the professional now has to be earned through their ability to perform to an externally given set of performance indicators..

Dent and Whitehead 2001 p. 2

How does one account for this ‘new professional’? According to Taylor and Runte (1995) the new professional is a product of the reconfiguration of the economics of professional work especially with respect to capital requirements and competition. They argue that in the old economic environment, “professionals, like craft workers, used to own their own tools and work independently in their own private practice”. However, professionals today, they assert, tend to work as employees in large government or corporate bureaucracies. They cite, for example, doctors working for hospitals or large clinics and lawyers working for large national or multinational law firms. In so doing, the work of doctors, lawyers (and other professionals) becomes increasingly specialized leading effectively to their “deprofessionalization”, and “proletarianization”.

The concept of de-professionalization is associated with the work of Marie Haug who defined it as the "loss to professional occupations of their unique qualities, particularly

their monopoly over knowledge, public belief in their service ethos, and expectations of work autonomy and authority over clients" (Haug 1973 p. cited in Ginsburg and Megahed 2009). The essence of the de-professionalization argument is that the increase in electronic methods of storing information and the expansion in higher education have eroded the monopoly of knowledge previously held by professionals. The increasing number of professionals working as employees in bureaucratic organizations rather than as autonomous workers is regarded as further evidence of the erosion of professional status. "Proletarianization" is the idea that the professional, like the proletariat in Marx's analysis, becomes reduced to being a supplier of wage labour through the process of "deskilling", which is brought about primarily by the separation of work into meaningless segments (Ginsburg and Megahed 2009).

Friedson (1984) took issue with both the de-professionalization and proletarianization theses. He refuted the professionalization thesis, contending that it is not persuasive and suggests that, while it is true that the consumer is more knowledgeable, it is also a fact that the knowledge base of some professions continues to expand. The author cited the case of the medical profession and argues that there is no evidence that physicians are running out of work; rather on the contrary, new knowledge and techniques are providing greater opportunities for work. On the proletarianization thesis, Friedson argued that the available statistical evidence did not favour the hypothesis of an increase in proletarianization; additionally he questioned the feasibility of the argument that the self-employed "enjoy greater economic security, higher economic rewards and more autonomy at work than the employed" which he suggests is one of the premises of the proletarianization argument.

It is instructive to assess whether the same arguments of deprofessionalization and proletarianization can be applied to teaching today. Computers and the Internet now provide access to a colossal amount of information which individuals can retrieve and do so freely, for the most part. Moreover, there is an increasing variety of self-study materials where learners can both gather information and assess themselves. This clearly militates against the role of teacher as knowledge provider or the so-called "sage on the stage" but has positive implications for the role of teacher as a knowledge intermediary or "knowledge encoder" as well as knowledge assessor although the role of assessor can be automated as evidenced in computerized tests such as GMAT and SAT. However, computer experts and "techies", rather than teachers, are the ones who appear to be in the

forefront of this knowledge encoding and configuration process so that there is a danger of technology leading pedagogy rather than the reverse (Watson 2001).

The "new" professionalism, in the case of teaching, must also be understood in the context of wider issues and forces such as the commodification and marketization of education and the adoption of the principles of New Public Management (Hood 1991). These, in turn, must be construed within the wider framework of the "black box" of economics and development within which international organizations such as UNESCO and the World Bank have played a significant role in defining and promoting "overall world-level principles and ideals that are then used to guide state policies" (Resnik 2006). The commodification of education is the idea that education should be treated as a private rather than a public good, the exchange of which can be analyzed and managed using the economic concept of markets (Bridges and Johnathan 2003). This is closely allied to the notion of marketization of education, that is, the idea that educational provision is best determined by the interplay of market forces of supply and demand, choice and competition. According to this view, education, like the marketing of any other commodity, should be circumscribed by the principles of management as practised in the private sector. This latter concept is what is implied and intended when the pejorative term "managerialism" is used in analyzing the approach of government to education in the 1990s and beyond (Ball 2006).

Both the marketization of education and the use of managerialism have been subjected to criticism. Critics argue that because education is an "impure public good" (Bridges and Johnathan 2003) the adoption of market principles distorts the provision of education. The adoption of managerialism has been criticized for emphasizing the use of performance indicators such as grades and scores - a practice unflatteringly referred to as "performativity" - to the detriment of a focus on more intangible aspects of educational "output" such as insight, creativity and the ability to think critically (Ball 2006) all of which bring into sharper focus the associated concept of being a "professional".

Concept of Professional

The term "professional" is closely associated with the terms "profession" and "professionalism" and in the light of what has been said above, it requires some measure of examination. An intuitive and perhaps simplistic meaning is that 'to be a professional'

means to belong to a profession. This nominative use of the word is invoked when, for example, an individual is described by a particular professional label, for example, 'lawyer' or 'accountant'. Using this line of thinking, if one assumes that teaching is a profession then it would follow that a teacher is a professional. The second meaning of the word "professional" occurs when it is used to imply a higher level of quality service or expertise than that of "amateur", a distinction made by Abbott and Meerabeau (2003) as well as Berg (1989).

It should be noted, though, that the two meanings elicited above are not necessarily disjunctive; the second meaning is invariably evinced when the first meaning is invoked. Thus a lawyer, by dint of his or her training, belongs to the legal profession and therefore, a certain level or quality of service is expected by clients. The second meaning, in particular, helps us understand why it is relatively easy to migrate the term over to occupations that have not been recognized as professions. Thus, for example, a carpet cleaning company may describe its service as "professional" and may in fact brand itself as "a carpet cleaning professional" to convey the notion that its services can be trusted to be of a high calibre. This mutually reinforcing relationship between the terms "profession" and "professional" is clearly one that occupations are conscious of and one which they seek to exploit to gain "professional" status.

A third possible meaning that can be ascribed to the term professional is the notion that a professional is "one who displays professionalism". At first this may appear to be synonymous with the second meaning ascribed to professionalism above, that is, a higher level of quality service or expertise than that of "amateur". But such an interpretation would be predicated on the notion that professionalism is primarily about performance. However, as Evans (2011) has suggested, and as has been discussed earlier, professionalism is not just about performance; attitudinal and intellectual components should also be included in the concept. Therefore, using Evans' tri-component model, this third view which I am delineating would hold that a professional is one who displays the "appropriate" performance, attitudinal and intellectual skills.

Teaching as a profession

While most of the attention up to this point has been directed at clearing general conceptual ground in relation to the professions and the concepts of professional and professionalism,

attention is now focused on teaching as a profession. Writing over half a century ago, Klass (1961) marvelled at the omission of teaching from the list of accepted professions:

It is an interesting and sobering reflection on human values and attitudes that, to the present day in many parts of the world, pure educators, although charged with the responsibility of the basic education for the three traditional professions, are denied public acceptance of their existence as a professional entity with distinctive rights and privileges.

Klass 1961 p.698

What is more interesting is that Klass intimates that there were teachers among the three oldest professions – religion, medicine and law - who were treated as professionals only by virtue of their membership of the these professions. This refers to university teachers and explains why university teaching has always been considered by some as the “key profession” (Perkin 1969) in contra-distinction to Primary School and Secondary School teaching which still struggles to be recognized as such. The general debate about whether or not teaching is a profession has continued; some scholars insisting that teaching is a profession (Ravitch 1983), others arguing that teaching is not quite a profession (Etzioni 1969) and yet others suggesting that the concept of profession does not exist and by extension, teaching cannot be a profession (e.g. Runte 1995). To further complicate matters, Carr (2000), in *Professionalism and Ethics in Teaching*, has juxtaposed the notion of ‘vocation’ against the existing dichotomy of "profession" and "occupation". But does it matter how teaching is seen? Buijs (2005) seems to think so:

Whether we think of teaching as a profession or think of it as a vocation does make a difference in how we deal with students, what we do in the classroom and beyond, how we interact with colleagues, what commitments we are willing to make, what expectations can be reasonably imposed, what career goals we might set, by what standards we should measure success, and how we view our relationship with the institution in which we work.

Buijs 2005 p. 326

An examination of the claims of teaching to be a profession, therefore, deserves further analysis. According to Runte the debate about whether teaching is a profession is sterile:

For the last 50 years educators have devoted a great deal of energy to the debate over whether teaching can be considered a profession. Unfortunately, this turns out to have been the wrong question...

Runte 1995 p.1

Drawing on the work of Ozga, Larson and Lockhart, Runte (1995) concluded that professions do not exist and that the label “professional” is the only attribute that ever made a distinction between the so-called “professions” and other occupations; we [teachers] Runte declared, are “knowledge workers”. This conclusion is intriguing since it is asking us to discard the conceptual label “professional” in favour of an alternative but equally contestable label, “knowledge worker”. However, the reality is that the term ‘professional’ remains a conceptual category used by teachers, policy makers and others to engage in discourse about teachers’ work. What is at issue, therefore, is not the appropriateness of the label “professional” but rather the inventory of concepts contained in that categorical space labeled “professional” in the minds of teachers and non-teachers alike; in other words, we would still need to do similar, if not the same analysis, even if the term “knowledge workers” were used to describe teachers’ work. Consequently, I concur with Lockhart (1991 p.37 cited in Runte 1995) that the real issue that needs to be confronted is for all concerned is to be more alert to “the realities as distinct from the ideologies and mythologies of the occupation of school-teaching”.

Both Lortie (1975) and Etzioni (1969) have advanced the view that teaching is not a full profession, suggesting instead, that it should be regarded a semi-profession because it does not measure up to the characteristics exhibited by such professions as medicine and law. Specifically, Etzioni cited the limited body of knowledge and reduced autonomy from supervision or external control as key characteristics that disqualified teaching from being considered a profession or at least a “full profession”. So-called “professional knowledge” has taken on a major role in the debate about the professions although it is in itself a contested notion. As Lyons and Luboskey have noted “what counts as teacher knowledge has consistently been challenged in the history of teaching as a profession” (Lyons and Luboskey 2002 p.4).

Shulman’s (1986) categorization of teacher professional knowledge is often used as a starting point in the discussion of teacher professional knowledge. According to him, teacher professional knowledge consists of *content knowledge*, *curricular knowledge*,

pedagogical knowledge, and *pedagogical content knowledge*. It has been argued that the technical basis for teaching lies not in the acquisition of technical or disciplinary knowledge *per se* but in *pedagogical knowledge* or knowledge of how to teach; thus, it is tacit “pedagogical knowledge that constitutes the identity of the teaching profession and which differentiates teachers from other professionals, transforming them into autonomous intellectuals” (deTezanos 2005). This tacit knowledge - Carr (1989) calls it “artistic” knowledge - is acquired, as de Tezanos suggests, by the dialectical interplay of disciplinary or content knowledge (e.g. Mathematics) and practice (the act of teaching Mathematics) an idea that finds elegant expression in Schon’s concept of the “reflective practitioner” (Schon 1987).

Not only is the delineation of a specific body of knowledge an issue but the ability of teachers to assert an “exclusive jurisdiction” over this knowledge, if indeed it does exist, appears to be one of the fundamental problems inhibiting the recognition of teaching as a profession for, as deTezanos (2005) has suggested, the production of this pedagogical knowledge has been hijacked by other disciplines such as psychology and sociology. The importance of a knowledge base in teaching, however, cannot be underestimated:

What the public believes about the knowledge base of a profession does affect the power, status, and economic rewards of its practitioners. While several professions have succeeded in cloaking its [sic] work in perceptions of great worth, the public has been less willing to believe any comparable saga about teachers.

Grant and Murray, 1999, p. 7 cited in Lyons and Luboskey 2002 p. 5

But the notion of a semi-profession raised by Etzioni (1969) is indicative of a more fundamental ontological issue: viz. are there degrees of, shall we say, “professionness” (as distinct from “professionalization”)? In other words is “professionness” a continuum or is it a bipolar concept? If it is a continuum, a key question that might be asked is: what factors determine where on the continuum a given profession resides at any point in time and what factors account for this position? Thus, “Is medicine more of a profession than law?” becomes a valid question to ask. The matter becomes more complex than it appears if one attempts to probe the concept of ‘continuum’. Is the continuum an “analogic” concept or is it a “digital” concept? Here I am borrowing and juxtaposing the concepts of analogue and digital from the field of electronics. In an analogue electronic

application, there is an infinite number of values a signal can take; for example, a sound can have a volume of any value between the effective range available. Thus the volume can be a real number such as 1, 2.789 or 0.423. In contrast to this is a digital application in which the signal (in this case volume) can take on only integral values such as 1, 2, 3 or even -1, -2, -3. The conceptual difference is important. If “professionness” is analogic in nature then theoretically, there is an infinite number of states in which an occupation can find itself en route to being a profession, if such a “final” state exists. In contrast, if it is conceived as a “digital continuum” this implies that the continuum is made up of several ‘discrete’ points each defining / describing a different state of “professionness” and which can perhaps be defined by undertaking the appropriate conceptual work. The inconclusiveness of this brief ontological analysis of the concept of profession merely serves to underscore its contested nature and in my view, makes Whitty’s (2000) conception cited earlier, “A profession is whatever people think it is at any particular time”, more conceptually attractive.

But, even if we were to follow Whitty and accept that teaching is a profession, the issue of how teaching and teachers compare to other professions and professionals arises. As might be expected, such comparisons have been made especially between teaching and medicine. For example, Colnerud (1997) citing Fenstermacher (1990), suggests that teachers compare and contrast with doctors in a least three ways: mystification of knowledge, social distance and reciprocity of effort.

Mystification of knowledge refers to the fact that the knowledge base of the profession is often esoteric or is made to appear so. Fenstermacher (1990 cited in Colnerud, 1997), for example, has made the observation that physicians “do not offer their knowledge to the patients” whereas, on the other hand, one of the major responsibilities of teachers is the transmitting of knowledge to their clients. In other words, unlike doctors, teachers as professionals have to acquire both disciplinary (content) knowledge as well as pedagogical knowledge, a point which was discussed earlier.

Social distance has been defined in several ways, (See for example, Singh 2005). For the purposes of this analysis, the definition offered by Kahanec (2006) is particularly pertinent. The author defines social distance as “the measure of subjective and objective dissimilarities between social groups that hinders social interaction between the members of these social groups”. Doctors and most patients are two very dissimilar entities in

several ways. A key dissimilarity lies in social status - by dint of their profession, physicians are seen both by the patient and the general society as occupying a higher social rank than most of their clients. This is exacerbated by the mode of interaction between the physician and the client - at its best, is a periodic one - whereas the interaction between a teacher and a student is usually of a long-term and continuous nature.

The third point of difference noted by Fenstermacher is that, in learning, both student and teacher must actively participate and co-operate in order for the learning process to succeed whereas in other professions, clients must "commit themselves to the care of the professional" with a relatively high degree of trust. Among the "professions" therefore, teaching appears to exhibit a uniqueness that has perhaps contributed in some ways to its low position on the totem pole of social status. But does all of this mean that teaching is incapable of being professionalized? I think not.

In referring to the process of development of the older professions as brands earlier in this chapter, I used the term "natural" to capture the idea that modern branding techniques were absent from that process especially considering that brand marketing as we know it today is of relatively recent origin (Shaw and Jones 2005). It is, therefore, not a coincidence that in some jurisdictions, the older professions such as medicine do not advertise and in some cases are prohibited by law from advertising (Vanier and Sciglimpaglia 1981; Moser 2008). Advertising is a core branding technique. In some cases economic reasons are given for prohibition of advertising or "marketing" (using the term in a loose, layman manner), for example, the fact that it would result in the reduction of fees charged by professionals (Dyer 1985), a view that reinforces the concept of a profession as a market shelter as suggested by Friedson (1982). From an activist, 'profession-as-brand' perspective, however, I wish to suggest that the brand identity of an occupation/profession, as is true of any other brand identity, is capable of deliberate construction and manipulation. In fact, it has been suggested that many non-traditional, contemporary professional firms are perhaps more sophisticated at marketing than might be imagined in that they focus on reputation management which is recognized a form of marketing (Hodges and Young 2009). The implication of this is that teachers can take steps to effect the recognition of teaching as a profession, quite apart from agitating for specific benefits such as pay and conditions of service. Issues of recognition of teaching as a profession, include how the occupation is seen by government which is usually the largest employer of

teachers in many countries as well as how it is seen by the wider society, in particular, by parents who are the indirect clients of teaching in most cases. This does not set aside the fact that major issues of "professional" training, credentialing and service quality have to be addressed; on the contrary, these should be understood to be included in the entire process which I refer to as "strategic professionalization", a phrase that is intended to capture the deliberate efforts to professionalize an occupation.

Despite the logic of the foregoing argument, I hypothesize that several factors may militate against the adoption of the activist approach in the teaching service in many countries. First, is the perception that the state is the "owner" of the teaching service and therefore, teachers are merely employees who react only when actions taken by the state threaten their perceived welfare. Second, a general sense of powerlessness or vulnerability on the part of teachers (Kelchtermans 2005) tends to restrict any proactivity in the direction suggested. Third, a complacency with the status quo in the sense that economic gains made by teachers' unions often have established teachers firmly as an element of the middle class (Barbados, a case in point) and, therefore, many teachers may not want to engage in a level of activism that they perceive might have potentially deleterious effects on their economic well-being. A fourth reason, I hypothesize, is some degree of ignorance as to how to use the tools of strategic branding to accomplish a desired state of professionalization. It is really not the case, therefore, that teaching cannot be professionalized; rather, the issues that must be addressed on a case by case basis are: to what extent has it been professionalized? To what extent can it be further professionalized?

Professionalization of teaching

There is no simple answer to these questions. In the first instance it depends on how one understands "professionalization". As indicated earlier, professionalization is often thought of as the process whereby an occupation attempts to match up to the criteria of a profession or to meet those criteria to a greater extent. This perspective tends to treat professionalization as an occupation-wide process, or at least a process that might be pursued by a stratum of teachers (e.g. Quddus 2007), rather than a process pursued independently by individual teachers, although it is understood that any occupation-wide professionalization efforts would have to be met by commensurate efforts at the individual level often subsumed under the general rubric of "teacher professional development".

In different countries, different approaches have been taken to professionalization of the teaching service. In the UK a more centralized approach is pursued in contrast to the decentralized approach in the USA (Hildebrandt and Eom 2011). Different criteria may also be used in the approach to professionalization. These criteria, which are generally related to the traits associated with the classic professions such as law and medicine, include training and credentialing (licensing), induction and mentoring programmes for entrants, professional development opportunities, specialization, autonomy, compensation levels and licensing (Ingersoll 2011). Take for example, the case of the teaching service in Barbados, the setting chosen for this study.

The educational system in Barbados is modelled fundamentally on the British system of education and, therefore, management of the teaching service exhibits a high level of centralization. For the most part teachers are and see themselves primarily as employees of the state. Teacher recruitment, training, credentialing, remuneration and promotion are, therefore, handled by central government in association with Boards of Management and Erdiston Teachers' College. The exception to this arrangement is the University of the West Indies which is fashioned after the British university model and, therefore, has its own traditions and forms of governance. The teachers' unions, the BUT (Barbados Union of Teachers) and the BSTU (Barbados Secondary Teachers Union) have been the main catalysts in professionalization of some aspects of the teaching service to date. Separately and collectively, they have fought for and obtained favourable changes in the general terms and conditions of teachers, in compensation specifically and in the training and promotion of teachers.

An extended period of training is one of the major characteristics of the so-called classical professions and in many professions, particularly the classical professions, individuals cannot engage in "professional" practice without undergoing an approved course of training which often culminates in a recognized credential. In contrast to what occurs in these professions, individuals can engage in teaching in public and private institutions before receiving such "professional training". It is common practice, especially in the developing world, where such persons who are not only untrained but are often under-qualified are termed "barefoot teachers" or labelled by less pejorative terms (Pandey 2005). In the Caribbean, barefoot teachers were the norm rather than exception from the beginning of public education; indeed the one of the salient issues in the teaching service from

earliest times was the low level of preparation and the poor quality of teaching (Fergus 2003). In the more recent history of the Barbados teaching service this has been remedied to some extent by the provision of an initial training experience commonly referred to as the "Induction Course" but more formally known as the *Teachers' Introductory Programme*. This course is conducted by Erdiston Teachers College during the month of August. Participants cover modules related to classroom management techniques, lesson planning within the context of constructivism as well aspects of the Education Act and its Regulations (Parris 2002).

A two tier system of teacher certification has existed in the Barbadian teaching service for some time. Untrained undergraduate teachers who are employed mostly in the Primary schools are required to complete a two year full-time course at Erdiston Teachers College. The programme consists of both theoretical and practical components. Teachers who completed the programme of study were awarded the Erdiston Teachers Certificate. This qualification has been replaced by the Associate Degree in Education which is aimed at non-graduate teachers in both primary and secondary schools and members of the public (ETTC online 2012). Graduate teachers who work primarily in Secondary Schools complete the diploma in education (Dip.Ed) a one year programme that also embraces both theoretical and practical component. Both the Erdiston Teachers Certificate and the Diploma in Education are vetted by the Faculty of Education of the University of the West Indies.

Within and complementing the training programmes described above there exist several specialist teacher certification programmes which are executed in collaboration with the Barbados Community College, Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and the University of the West Indies. The Technical Vocational Programme is part of the Secondary Schools programme. It is aimed at teachers who work in the technical subjects such as Technical Drawing, Woodwork, Metalwork and Technical Drawing and is conducted in collaboration with the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic. Art education, part of the Secondary Schools programme, is conducted in collaboration with the Barbados Community College's Division of Fine Arts. Teachers who work with children with special learning needs are prepared in the Special Education programme and those who wish to work with preschool children can participate in the Early Childhood Education programme. Opportunities also exist for continuous professional development and retraining. Foremost

among these is training for ICT, counselling, Mathematics and Reading. Altogether, Barbados Teaching Service is supported by a range of generalist and specialist teacher training programmes aimed at meeting the different learning needs of Barbadian children.

The foregoing description of the Barbados Teaching Service does not include a discussion of more subtle issues such as teacher autonomy, a major criterion used to characterize professions. Thus, the degree of professionalization of the Barbados Teaching Service is still an open question which needs to be empirically investigated and from multiple perspectives. A limited attempt will be made to pursue this empirical perspective in this study whose primary aim is to examine the professional identity of Barbadian teachers. Specifically, I will seek to find out whether Barbadian teachers see teaching in Barbados as a profession, or an occupation or for that matter, something else. In addressing this, it is hoped that some rudimentary assessment of the extent of the professionalization of the Barbadian Teaching Service will emerge.

Teacher Professional Behaviour

An analysis of teaching as a profession would be incomplete without some reference to the question of teacher professional behaviour although the earlier discussion of professionalism makes some references to the notion. In what might be regarded as an extension of the pre-occupation with the trait theory of the professions, attention has turned to defining professionalism in terms of specific measurable behaviours with efforts being aimed at deriving these behaviours empirically rather than through armchair theorizing. The medical profession appears to be leading this thrust and perhaps this is understandable given the relatively high risk attached to professional failures in the medical domain. Arnold (2002) notes that:

The concept of professionalism in medical education today is clearly circumscribed with specific elements. Definitions, empirically and prospectively derived, abound. A variety of methods has yielded empirical definitions of professionalism. For example, a survey of over 1,500 respondents identified 87 positive and 29 negative physician qualities, many involving professionalism.

Arnold 2002 p.503

Attention is also being paid to understanding professionalism not only in the older professions— medicine and law – but also as some of the so-called “newer professions” e.g. journalism and accountancy. To illustrate the point, a simple search of the term “professional behaviour” on Google Scholar elicited titles such as “Factors Behind Journalists' Professional Behavior”, “Social Work Professional Standards: An Exploratory Study”, “Personality as a Predictor of Professional Behavior in Dental School” and “The Role of Professionalism in Determining Job Satisfaction in Professional Services”. In the past, many of the studies seem to have been substantially theoretical / speculative / prescriptive but an increasing number are becoming empirical as the title of some studies suggest. For example, “How parents view professional behaviors: A cross-professional analysis” (Friesen, Barbara, Koren, Paul and Koroloff 1992).

Studies such as the above raise some very intriguing questions: Are there discernible behavioural characteristics common to all professionals? Do clients of different professional services have similar conceptualizations of professional behaviour? For that matter, do professionals themselves have similar conceptualizations of what it means to behave professionally? And, to return to an issue raised in the introduction of this study: What is the link between teacher professional behaviour and teacher professional identity?

Studies have been conducted on the themes of teacher professionalism, teachers' professional lives and similar themes using mostly qualitative methodologies such as life histories (for example, Hargreaves and Goodson 1996). It has been suggested that it is important to conduct “in-depth research into teacher perspectives” on professionalism because it will help to provide teachers with a voice in the ongoing professionalism debate (Webb et. al. 2004). A number of these studies tend to focus on teacher autonomy in relation to various state interventions or reforms such as curriculum change or teacher accreditation reforms (e.g. Reynolds 1999; Webb et.al 2004; Hypolito 2004; Evans 2011). Perhaps this is to be expected, since “educational reforms result in changing roles and responsibilities for schoolteachers” and, of course, this has implications for teachers' perceptions of themselves as professionals (Webb et. al. 2004).

Specific aspects of teacher professional behaviour for example, efficacy (Dembo and Gibson 1985) and collegiality (Smyth 1991) have also been undertaken. Few investigations, however, seem to have been dedicated to studying multiple aspects of teacher professional behaviour simultaneously. A logical question to ask here, therefore,

is: what have we learnt from research about teacher professional behaviour up to this point? Without attempting in any way to be exhaustive, I wish to address this question by briefly reviewing the findings of two studies which have devoted a significant amount of space to dealing with general teacher professional behaviour - *Teachers' Construction of Professionalism in England in the 1990s* (Helsby 1995) and *A Comparative Analysis of Primary Teacher Professionalism in England and Finland* (Webb et.al 2004).

In *Teachers' Construction of Professionalism in England in the 1990s*, Helsby sought to detangle teachers' understanding of professionalism and professional behaviour. She points out that teachers described professional behaviour in terms of their own experience of teaching rather than in terms of some set of ideal standards, a finding that seems to support the view espoused by Evans (2008) and to which I alluded in the discussion under professionalism. The professional behaviours identified are listed below in Table 1. In *A Comparative Analysis of Primary Teacher Professionalism in England and Finland*, Webb and colleagues examined English and Finnish teachers' responses to national policy changes in primary schooling during the middle of the 1990s with particular emphasis on addressing the teacher professionalism theme in order to provide an "in-depth research into teacher perspectives" and give them a voice in the reforms in these two countries. Their findings regarding professional behaviour - as defined in this paper- are shown in the right hand column of Table 1. It can easily be seen that apart from differences in semantics, the behaviours in respective domains are almost identical. This superficial similarity masks the fact that the importance or emphasis placed on different professional behaviours is contextually conditioned. In the case of the Finnish-English comparative study, Webb et.al (2004) note that the idea that educational reforms reduce the level of autonomy of teachers is not always perceived by teachers as undesirable:

They [Finnish teachers] appeared to equate the resulting loss of autonomy with enhanced rather than reduced professionalism because they anticipated that the proposed reforms would reduce uncertainty about their role and redress the increasing inequity and inconsistencies within the system that were of direct concern to them. ... Listening to teachers' voices...also reveals evidence to challenge the technicist thesis. Compliance with the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, that deliberately targeted pedagogy-

arguably the last preserve of teacher professionalism- led teachers to a claim of enhanced professionalism.

Webb et.al 2004 p. 102

The conclusion drawn by Webb et.al runs counter to the view espoused by others that a loss in autonomy equates to a reduction in professionalism, the so-called deprofessionalization thesis that was examined earlier in this chapter. This supports the contention that it is important “to ground analyses of teachers and other occupational groups in specific historical and contemporary, political, economic, and ideological contexts” (Ginsburg, Chaturvedi, Agrawal and Nora 1988 p.476).

While this list is useful in showing the range of behaviours associated with being professional, it is much more important, from a theoretical perspective, to seek to classify these behaviours. An attempt has been made to do this in the medical profession. In *Professionalism in general practice: development of an instrument to assess professional behaviour in general practitioner trainees*, van de Camp, Vernooij-Dassen, Grol and Bottem (2006), using as their data the literature on professionalism, elements of professionalism derived from competency models and the “overall objectives of postgraduate training” constructed a model of professional behaviour consisting of four dimensions: (1) professional behaviour towards the patient (2) professional behaviour towards other professionals (3) professional behaviour towards the public; and (4) professional behaviour towards oneself. Table 2 illustrates the relationship between this scheme of classification and some of the behaviours assembled from the sample of teacher professional behaviour research by Helsby (1995) and Webb et.al (2004).

Figure 1: Two Teacher Professional Behaviour Classifications

Helsby 1995	Webb et.al 2004
1 Strong commitment and maximum effort	1. Playing different roles, those of a social worker, father and mother' (94).
2 Doing the best that you can	2. Continual learning and the constant upgrading of skills
3 Reaching, or exceeding, particular standards, both external and internal	3. Collaboration with children and their parents.
4 Ability to create and maintain appropriate relationships with various client groups	
5 Treating people with respect	

- 6 Acting in *loco parentis*
- 7 Caring – meeting individual needs
- 8 Working well with colleagues, treating them with respect, 'showing due consideration'
- 9 Respecting somebody else's professionalism'
- 10 Relate professionally to people outside of the school, including parents, other professionals
- 11 Skilful practice
- 12 Willingness 'to analyze and evaluate what they' re doing in order to improve
- 13 Confidence
- 14 Autonomy
- 15 Providing discipline

Figure 2: Comparing Medical and Teacher Professional Behaviours

Medical Professional Behaviour	Teacher Professional Behaviour
Professional behaviour towards the patient	Ability to create and maintain appropriate relationships with various client groups
Professional behaviour towards other professionals	Working well with colleagues, treating them with respect, 'showing due consideration'
Professional behaviour towards the public; and	Relate professionally to people outside of the school, including parents, other professionals
Professional behaviour towards oneself	Continual learning and the constant upgrading of skills

What these studies underscore is that professionalism and being a professional are very complex interrelated notions. The contrasting approaches taken by the two studies suggest that professionalism is capable of being investigated from both positivist and qualitative/interpretivist perspectives. As it relates to the theme of professional identity, these findings raise two further questions which will be explored to some extent in this study: First, what is the link, if any, between how teachers conceptualize professionalism and their "professional" behaviour? Second, to what extent do any of the behaviours identified above constitute part of the construction of their notion of professionalism? The answers to these questions may hold important implications not only for how teaching is conceptualized as a profession but also for how professions are understood altogether.

A Synthesis of Terms

Given their centrality to this study and their contestability, the discussion in this chapter sought to explore such concepts as profession, professionalism, professional and professionalism. Despite the fact that these terms retain a degree of contestability, it is important to make explicit how they are conceptualized in this study, notwithstanding the fact they represent but one facet of the phenomenon being investigated. Accordingly, the following definitions are adopted.

Whitty's (2000) definition: "a profession is whatever people think it is and that can vary" is adopted as the guiding definition of *profession* for this study. Following Ingersoll and Merrill (2011) the term *professionalization* is defined as "the degree to which occupations exhibit the structural or sociological attributes, characteristics, and criteria identified with the professional model" (p.186). Following Hoyle (1982) the term is also used to signify *process* by which an occupation seeks to meet more of the criteria associated with a profession as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Synthesizing Evans (2008, 2011) and the ABIM (1995) the definition for *professionalism* to be used in this study holds that *professionalism is the intellectual, attitudinal and behavioural characteristics expected or enacted by members of profession in carrying out their occupational roles as perceived by themselves or other stakeholders*. The inclusion of both "expected" and "enacted" in the definition reflects the notion that the professionalism expected of members of a profession or an occupation is not necessarily what is displayed by a given practitioner, as pointed out by Evans (2008). Implicitly, it also accounts for a another type of professionalism dubbed "deduced or assumed professionalism" by Evans (2011). Stakeholders here include such entities as clients (e.g. students), policy makers (e.g. educational administrators) and regulators (e.g. a teacher's licensing authority). The complementary term *professionalism*, used by Hoyle and Evans and referred to in this chapter, is employed in this study to mean *the professionalism of an individual member of a profession*. It is invoked to take account of the fact that the enacted professionalism of an individual (in the meaning ascribed by Evans 2008) may differ from that of the "collective professionalism" of the profession as explained above. Nonetheless, it is recognized that some degree of overlap can occur in the use of the terms *professionalism* and *professionalism*. For example, should one say that "a group of teachers described their professionalism in terms of..." or that "a group of teachers described their

professionalism in terms of ...”? As previously discussed, Evans (2008) sought to clarify these two terms by treating professionalism as an amalgam of the professionalities of individuals. I suggest that the context will offer a useful clue to which meaning is intended.

The term "professional" holds critical importance in this study. Within the context of this study, it will have two interrelated meanings. First, as a noun, it may be used to refer to *anyone one who is a member or is perceived to be a member of a profession*. This approach allows for an individual to be treated as a member of a profession simply on the grounds that the individual believes that his or her occupation is a profession even though that occupation may not be "recognized" as a profession by the wider society. Second, within the appropriate context, *professional* may also be used as a qualifier to describe quality of the attitudes, values and behaviours expected of practitioners of a profession. Consistent with the first usage above the expression "practitioners of a profession" is indifferent as to whether the occupation is a "recognized" profession or a "perceived profession". This operationalization of "professional" allows for the investigation of the concept from multiple viewpoints including that of a professional body, stakeholders such as clients, educational administrators, the individual professional actor or groups of such actors. More importantly, this operationalization does not take for granted that an occupation is seen as a profession by its practitioners or for that matter other stakeholders; rather it implies that the ascertainment of this – whether or not an occupation is being treated a profession in the specific contest – should be treated as an empirical question.

Summary

This section of the literature review examined the concept of profession, professionalism, professional and allied terms and how they relate to teaching. Without exception, these are all contested concepts that have to be construed within the specific historical, socio-economic, political and occupational contexts as well as the purposes of the analyst. From a brief historical sketch of the professions I moved to mainstream sociological analyses which portray professions primarily as way of organizing work and professionalism as an ideology of work. As a complement to these perspectives, however, professions and professionalism were also treated as brands in this chapter. It was thus argued, from the perspective of practitioners, that the drive to professionalize an occupation has more to do with the desire to secure the differential social and economic advantages connoted by the

terms "profession" and "professional" than with seeing professions as superior ways of organizing the work of certain occupations. Furthermore it was noted that the mantra of professionalism, when sung by administrators and government officials, is often more about gaining control over the professionals or would-be professionals than a genuine desire to achieve efficiencies and obtain the best for the clients of professional services. Finally, I drew heavily on the work of Evans, Hoyle and Whitty to arrive at tentative working definitions of profession and associated terms.

Chapter 3

Identity Theory and Professional Identity

Introduction

This is the second of two chapters designed to provide the theoretical framework for this research project and lay the basic foundation for assessing the contribution of this study to existing scholarly work. The first chapter reviewed the concept of "profession" primarily through the disciplinary lens of the sociology of the professions. This chapter completes the substantive portion of the conceptual framework by attempting to integrate the literature on identity and teacher professional identity with the literature on the professions considered in the previous chapter. Subsequently, I attempt to formulate a working definition of the construct 'teacher professional identity' which is the main theme being investigated in this study.

In order to gain a clear understanding of the concept, the chapter begins with an overview of the conceptualization of teacher professional identity from both existing empirical and conceptual studies. It then proceeds to a survey of the self and identity literature in an effort to assemble the concepts vital to the formulation of a working definition of teacher professional identity. Three major issues inform this approach. First, as articulated in the previous chapter, professional identity is seen as a fusion of two conceptual categories – "professionalism" on the one hand and "identity" on the other. Second, and related to the first issue, it is not assumed in this study that teaching in Barbados is regarded by teachers as a profession, therefore, in my view the concept of "professional" should be explicitly accounted for in any definition of teacher professional identity. Third, the idea that identity and self are highly related as suggested by Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) and others, requires some acknowledgment in any conception of professional identity. Accordingly, reference is made to existing studies of teacher professional identity as well as the literature on the self and identity. With respect to the latter, some attention is paid to the relation between self and identity, whether people have a single identity or multiple identities and how they are organized. A distinction is also made between identity processes and identity structure. In pursuance of the above, the review borrows from three main disciplines: sociology, psychology and social psychology.

Importance of Identity Definitions

Identity is one of the most frequently investigated concepts in the social sciences (Schwartz, Luyckx and Vignoles 2011). Citing as evidence keyword hits and the increase in journals dedicated to the pursuit of identity research, Cote and Levine (2002) noted the marked increase in interest in identity-related matters since the 1980s. This rise in interest is attributed to “recent cultural changes” which, they argue, have made the formation and maintenance of a sense of identity more challenging for most people, especially those affected by Western culture. The importance of identity to teachers and teaching is underscored by Beijaard, Verloop and Vermunt (2000) who claim that, “Teachers perceptions of their own professional identity affect their efficacy and professional development” (p 749).

Despite the importance attached to the term and the volume of research undertaken in the area there is no single agreed definition of identity, a state of affairs further complicated by overlapping or unclear use of the terms "identity" and "self "(Schwartz et. al. 2011; Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop 2004). This state of affairs stems primarily from the fact that identity is a very complex and highly contested notion. One scholar described it as an “under-explained” concept (Ibarra 1999). Beijaard, Verloop and Vermunt (2004) reviewed over twenty two studies on teacher professional identity and found that many did not bother to define teacher professional identity or defined it in very different ways. Moreover, they concluded that “different concepts were used to indicate the same thing, or it was not clarified how they are related”. According to these authors, this was particularly true of the concepts of ‘self’ and ‘identity’.

Definitions play a crucial role in scholarly work for two major reasons. First, definitions help both the researcher and the reader of work understand in fundamental ways what is to be included in the study in contrast to what is to be excluded. This is crucial because it influences the type of data to be collected, the methodology, the type of analyses expected and, potentially, the general trajectory of the conclusion to be drawn. Second, definitions facilitate the making of comparisons and contrasts across contexts not only at the level of definition itself but also on the four dimensions indicated above: data collection, methodology, data analysis and conclusion. In turn, these comparisons and contrasts assist

in building a wider understanding of the construct and in theory building. It is acknowledged, however, that in some areas of study a catchall definition may not be possible.

Defining a concept and explaining it are not necessarily the same. Brubaker and Cooper (2000), whom I cited earlier, critically assessed the concept of identity and argued that as a concept "identity" is called upon to do "conceptual and theoretical work" that might better be addressed by "other terms, less ambiguous, and unencumbered by the reifying connotations of 'identity'" (p.1). Without defining identity per se, the authors subsequently offered three groups of alternative terms that might be used as substitutes for identity: identification and categorization, self-understanding and social location, commonality, connectedness and groupness. Significantly, Beijaard et. al in their 2004 study, while calling for better conceptualization of teacher identity, did not offer a definition themselves but concluded that a teachers' professional identity can be construed as consisting of sub-identities relating to teachers' different contexts and relationships.

Similarly, Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) in their review, "Understanding teacher identity: an overview of issues in the literature and implications for teacher education", while admitting that theirs was not a comprehensive examination of the literature, reviewed both the study done by Beijaard et al. (2004) and others but did not offer their own definition of teacher professional identity. Instead, after acknowledging the difficulties in clarifying the concept, they offered a summary of what they thought to be the main features of teacher professional identity namely, its embeddedness in self, multidimensionality, dynamism, and relation to context. Each of these will be addressed at some length later in this chapter.

As the review of Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) cited above suggests, studies on the theme of teacher professional identity published since that of Beijaard et.al have not clarified our understanding of the concept of professional identity. Therefore, rather than attempt to replicate a cross-sectional analysis of teacher / teacher professional identity studies as undertaken by Beijaard et al., I attempt rather to "drill down" into a few studies to get a deeper sense of how concepts such as teacher identity and professional identity are handled. Additionally, by way of extending the work of Beijaard et. al. I include the notion of *implied definitions* in the analysis of studies of teacher professional identity. Although Beijaard et. al. do not indicate whether such definitions were taken into account in the

studies they reviewed, it does not invalidate their main conclusion that points to the wide variation in definitions provided for teacher professional identity because as I suggested above, studies published since still seem to exhibit the same shortcomings. For example, whereas Urza and Vasquez (2008) define a teacher's professional identity as "constituted in any utterances which include first person reference to one's activities, knowledge, beliefs and attitudes related to teaching", Leuhmann (2007) defines teacher professional identity "as being recognized by self or others as a certain kind of teacher". It is clear that the definitions employed in these two latter studies are markedly different, the difference having largely to do with how researchers believe professional identity is constructed.

In the study, *Contexts which shape and reshape new teachers' identities: A multi-perspective study*, Flores and Day (2006) indicate that their central purpose was to explore how "the identities of a cohort of new teachers were shaped and reshaped over the first 2 years of teaching". The authors further indicated their intent to explore teachers' "beliefs, their values and their learning experiences...as well as their views of the challenges of teaching, learning and being an effective teacher in different school settings" (p. 219). However, along the way, the authors subtly rope into the teacher identity construct additional concepts such as "attitudes", "images", "meanings" and "ideals". More importantly, the authors shift into using the terms "professional identity" or "professional identities" on at least five occasions. On one of those instances, in the abstract, the authors declare *inter alia* that the study "presents the major findings of a longitudinal study of teachers' professional identities" notwithstanding the fact that the title contains "teacher identity". Further perusal of the paper suggests that the authors have in fact made the assumption that teaching is a profession; hence a study of teacher identity is in effect a study of teacher professional identity. This is tenable only if the authors and /or the subjects of the research see teaching as a profession; in either case this ought to be rendered explicit so that the "professional" in professional identity can be accounted for as suggested by Beijaard et.al (2004). Notwithstanding the conceptual drifts, the authors have provided a useful model aimed at delineating the contextual forces that shape teacher identity. Reference is made to that model later in this chapter.

Teaching is not the only occupation/profession where the conceptual issues noted by Beijaard et. al (2004) appear. In a recently published study entitled *Making sense of professional identities: Stories of medical professionals and new technologies*, Korica and

Molloy (2010) fall victim to this practice highlighted by Beijaard et.al. The primary purpose of the Korica and Molloy study is embodied in the question: "How do surgeons interpret and enact their professional identities in relation to new technologies?" The authors do not offer a definition of professional identity or make reference to other definitions of professional identity. One is alerted to this possibility when they intimate that their literature review will focus on a selection of works "on professions, professional change, the sociology of technology, and the co-construction of professions and technology"; absent from this list are works on professional identity, identity or even the self. As Brubaker and Cooper (2000) would argue, they have taken the existence of identity as axiomatic. A deeper reading of the study, however, reveals a rudimentary notion of identity as "role". However, Castells (2010) has suggested that roles and identities should be distinguished from each other: identities are the "meanings constructed by individual actors themselves" whereas roles are functions assigned by institutions and organizations of society and undertaken by individuals (Castells 2010 p. 7).

Despite this deficiency in their conceptual overview, Korica and Molloy offered the following as one of two conclusions drawn from the study:

Second, we provided further support to the idea of the dynamic, constantly evolving nature of professional identities in relation to new technologies, with particular emphasis on the surgeons' roles as active agents in this change process.

Korica and Molloy (2010) p. 1894

The basic question one is forced to ask is: how can one conclude that something is "dynamic and constantly evolving" without ever explicitly indicating what that something is?

This approach to studying professional identity brings into sharp focus the view that the concept of "identity" is being asked to do too much analytical work for which it may not be suited (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). Arguing that the social sciences and humanities have surrendered to the word "identity" Brubaker and Cooper maintain that:

"Identity"...tends to mean too much (when understood in a strong sense), too little (when understood in a weak sense), or nothing at all (because of its sheer ambiguity). [In this study] We take stock of the conceptual and

theoretical work “identity” is supposed to do and suggest that this work might be done better by other terms, less ambiguous, and unencumbered by the reifying connotations of “identity”.

Brubaker and Cooper 2000 p. 1

Korica and Molloy (2010) have offered what Brubaker and Cooper would label a “weak” or “soft” conception of identity which for them (Brubaker and Cooper), is a conception that is, “routinely packaged with standard qualifiers indicating that identity is multiple, unstable, in flux, contingent, fragmented, constructed, negotiated, and so on” (p. 11). In contrast, my study seeks to formulate what Brubaker and Cooper would refer to as a “strong” conception of identity which, according to them, is a conception of identity that “preserve[s] the common-sense meaning of the term” and entails an emphasis on “sameness over time or across persons”.

Teacher Identity versus Teacher Professional Identity

Another problem that besets conceptualization of teacher professional identity and which seems to have been largely ignored in reviews of the identity literature, is the assumption that studies of teacher professional identity are equivalent to studies of teacher identity. This was noted in the study by Flores and Day (2006) examined earlier. The perspective taken in my study is that teacher professional identity is not synonymous with teacher identity but is a subset of it as Leuhman (2007) suggests, although both terms will be used in this chapter as the context requires. Clearly, therefore, the challenge of conceptualizing teacher professional identity is also linked to the challenge of conceptualizing teacher identity (Akkerman and Meijer 2011). Moreover, as I have suggested in chapter 2, it is also linked to the challenge of deciding whether teaching is a profession and what meaning should be ascribed to “professional”. It would appear that some authors writing about teacher professional identity may not only be assuming the substitutability of the two expressions alluded to above but may also be assuming that teaching is a profession. The position adopted in this study is that a profession is whatever people think it is (Whitty 2000), the implication of this being that what people think it is can vary from context to context. The issue therefore, is whether researchers are justified in treating teaching as a profession without reference to the views of those who are the subject of the research.

As discussed in chapter 2, the term "professional" is also contestable: it can refer to a member of a profession or to an ideology or level of service. Therefore, it ought to be accounted for in studies of professional identity in the context in which that research is being undertaken. Beijaard et. al. (2004), referring to the features of teacher professional identity they had found in the studies reviewed, make the point that "it remains unclear what counts as 'professional' in these features" (p. 125), a point apparently overlooked by others when referring to this study. The point made by Beijaard et. al. suggests that in undertaking a study of teacher professional identity it should be established whether the researcher and/or the teachers in question regard teaching as a profession, whether the teachers regard themselves as "professionals" or, alternatively, what the researchers consider to be "professional". Which combination of these is appropriate would depend, of course, on the nature and scope of the study as well as the researcher's positionality.

Nature of Identity

The discussion so far has been predicated on the assumption that identity does "exist" and therefore, that teachers can "have" an identity. However, some scholars do not, in fact, subscribe to the notion that individuals "have" an identity. According to this line of thinking, identity is thought of, not as something that people can *have* but something that they *use* to make sense of their situation (Marcia 1980; Gee 1990; MacLure 1993; Coldron and Smith 1999; Beijaard et.al 2004). For example, Gee (1990, cited in Akkerman and Meijer 2011), defined identity as:

The "kind of person" one is recognized as "being," at a given time and place, can change from moment to moment in the interaction, can change from context to context, and, of course, can be ambiguous or unstable...all people have multiple identities connected not to their "internal state" but to their performances in society. (p. 99)

Akkerman and Meijer (2011), while espousing this post-modern view, acknowledge two major theoretical problems arising from it. First, the view conflicts with the commonsense notion that we can recognize a person (in terms of personality characteristics) as one and the same over time and second, it raises questions about how persons can "act as 'unique' individuals and show ...agency...beyond the given context" (p. 310). With respect to the first point, Gee's argument would be internally consistent, provided that the author had prefaced the word identity with another term such as "perceived". In other words, what

Gee is defining is a “perceived identity”; that is, an identity as perceived by an external “other”. Consequently, the idea that identities are not connected to their “internal state” does not follow from the premise laid down in Gee’s statements; it is a separate assertion for which no warrant is provided. Furthermore, while he does not use the term “self”, Gee’s assertion seems to assume away any connection between identity and “self” which is how I construe the phrase “internal state”. Commonsense, however, suggests that from day to day we ‘remember’ who we were yesterday and that other people remember us too. Moreover, as one author has pointed out, even when we are engaged in solitary activities, for example, reading, jogging, “important selves are invoked” (Marks and MacDermid 1996). Thus identity, perceived or otherwise, is something which has a degree of sameness and persistence over time and that shapes one’s behaviour (Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Chrysochou 2003). The solution to this conceptual problem, according to Gee (1990), is the postulation of a “core identity” that persists beyond different contexts (Akkerman and Meijer 2011) a notion that is consistent with the current conceptions of identity that treat it as being partly stable and partly variable, a view to be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

As previously indicated, neither the review of Beijaard et al. (2004) nor that of Thomas and Beauchamp (2009) has provided a satisfactory working definition of teacher professional identity. In addition, as I illustrated earlier, empirical studies published after 2004 and as recently as 2010 exhibit little progress away from the practice of poorly defining teacher professional identity, not defining it at all or more specifically, not accounting for the “professional” in teacher professional identity. It seems more fruitful to attempt to deconstruct the term by decomposing it into its substantive components, namely, “professional” and “identity”. Chapter 2 discussed the concept of profession and associated terms such as “professional” and “professionalism” at some length: in effect, half of this deconstruction task has been completed. In the remainder of this chapter (Chapter 3), I attempt to deconstruct the other half of the term by discussing it in relation to the self. I draw support in pursuing this approach from the acknowledgement given to the notion that identity is intimately bound up with notions of the self (e.g. Maclure 1993; Day, Kington, Stobart, and Sammons 2006). Additional impetus comes from the observation that many qualitative studies of teacher professional identity employ or attempt to employ a phenomenological/grounded theory approach (Lopes 2009) and, in so doing, gloss over providing initial conceptions of professional identity. Such an approach, however, does not

necessarily find support among grounded theory scholars; Goulding (2005) suggests it is a misconception:

A common misconception is that the researcher is expected to enter the field ignorant of any theory or associated literature relating to the phenomenon and wait for the theory to emerge purely from the data.

Goulding 2005, p. 296.

In support of her contention, Goulding cites Glaser and Strauss (1967), originators of the grounded theory methodology:

The core categories can emerge in the sociologist's mind from his reading, life experiences, research and scholarship; [furthermore] no sociologist can possibly erase from his mind all the theory he knows before he begins his research. Indeed the trick is to line up what one takes as theoretically possible or probable with what one is finding in the field.

Glaser and Strauss 1967, p. 253 cited in Goulding 2005, p. 296

The citation from Glaser and Strauss above embodies and sums up the rationale for the approach I have taken in this literature review. It should also be borne in mind that although this piece of research employs some basic grounded theory tools, it is NOT a purely grounded theory piece of research because the entire grounded theory process will not be employed. This is explained in detail in Chapter 4 which addresses the methodology deployed in the empirical phase of my project.

Professional Identity and the Self-System

The relationship between self and identity is one of the key issues in understanding teacher professional identity (Beijaard et. al. 2004; Day, Kington, Stobart, and Sammons 2006; Beauchamp and Thomas 2009; Akkerman and Meijer 2011). Several attempts have been made to survey and integrate the literature on the self, identity and associated terms in order to understand this relationship (Schwartz, Luyckx and Vignoles 2011; Leary and Tangney 2005; Epstein 1973). In the introductory chapter of *A Handbook of Self and Identity* the editors, Leary and Tangney (2005), undertook a wide-ranging historical analysis of the term 'self'. They credited William James with being the first in modern

times to point to the importance of self in understanding human behaviour and for introducing the concept of the dualism of self. Dualism of self is the idea that self consists of two elements, the “I-Self” or “Self-as-knower” and the “Me-self” or “Self-as-Known”. Since then there has been a proliferation of “selves” (Tangney and Leary 2005). These authors catalogued some sixty-six “self” and concluded that there is no one single definition of self that could possibly be used to subsume the different “self” terms found. Their synoptic view of the self as “the human capacity for reflexive thinking-the ability to take oneself as the object of one’s attention and thought” (p. 8) is echoed by Owens (2006) who offers the following definition that reinforces the basic theme of reflexivity:

[The self is] an organized and interactive system of thoughts, feelings, identities, and motives that (1) is born of reflexivity and language, (2) people attribute to themselves and (3) characterize specific human beings.

Owens 2006, p. 206

Because self is such a complex phenomenon it can be conceptualized in different ways. Treating it as a system, as suggested by Owens above, is a common way of conceptualizing the self; Mischel and Morf (2003) think of the self as a complex, psycho-social dynamic processing system. The basic notion of a system as a set of interdependent elements forming a collective entity that work together to achieve a common goal or set of goals has been in use for a long time in the physical and social sciences (Radcliffe-Brown 1935). From the perspective of a system, the self can be divided into two main elements or sub-systems: the self-concept and self-esteem (Campbell 1990; Leary and Tangney 2003; Tangney and Leary 2005).

Demo (1992) treats the self-concept as “a multifaceted structure of thoughts, attitudes, images, schemas, or theories regarding the self as an object” (p.2). Epstein (1973) regards the self-concept as a “self-theory” by which he means a conceptual system. According to Epstein this self-theory is “a subsystem of internally consistent, hierarchically organized concepts”, that contains “different empirical selves such as a body self and a social self” that develops out of social interaction with others (p. 407). The self-esteem, on the other hand, is viewed as the affective aspect that holds the individual’s negatively or positively charged evaluations about self (Gecas 1982; Campbell, 1990; Schwalbe 1993; Smith and Mackie 1995; Brown, Dutton and Cook 2001; Tangney and Leary 2005). Emotional

qualities such as pride, shame and embarrassment (Stets and Burke 2005, Leary 2007) are thought to play a key role in the construction and functioning of the self although the exact relationship between emotions, the self-concept and self-esteem is not clear (Phelps 2006; Pessoa 2008). The two aspects of self, self-concept and self-esteem, are believed to be closely interrelated in that self-evaluations are typically founded on essential aspects of self-concept and the self-concept in turn is implicated in evaluations people make of themselves (Gecas 1982).

Mead believed that a person had a “self” for every meaningful social interaction in which he or she was involved:

We divide ourselves up in all sorts of different selves with reference to our acquaintances. We discuss politics with one and religion with another. There are all sorts of different selves answering to all sorts of different social reactions.

Mead 1934 p. 142

Mead’s view, according to Stets and Burke (2005), has informed modern conceptions of the self since then. Stets and Burke themselves hold that the overall self is “organized into multiple parts (identities), each of which is tied to aspects of the social structure” (p.8). This is echoed by Cote and Levine (2005) who suggested that, on the basis of their review of the available literature, it is quite feasible to think of an individual as having a single identity but with multiple facets.

Nature and Organization of identities

Identities are conceptualized by some as categories that people utilize to define who they are and to situate themselves relative to others (MacLure 1993, Ellemers, Spears and Doosje 2002; Owens 2006). A teacher, therefore, has an occupational identity that situates him or her relative to other occupations as well as his colleagues. At the same time, that teacher may have a “father (mother) identity”, “a (male) female identity”, a “churchgoer identity” and so on. Some post-modern conceptions of identity hold that even a single role identity e.g. teacher identity can be treated as both a unitary as well as a multi-dimensional concept. Thus, Akkerman and Meijer (2011) based on a dialogical approach to psychology, argue that teacher identity may be treated as consisting of multiple sub-identities. Theoretically, this means that a teacher’s identity can be partitioned into different sub-

identities such as a pedagogical identity, a parent-surrogate identity, mentor identity and the like. Thomas and Beauchamp (2011) have experimented with a similar conceptualization using identity metaphors as an analytical tool and reported a number of “sub-identities” such as "Guide", "Captain" and "Survivor".

In recognition of this complex of identities, the terms “identity system” (or “identity subsystem”) is used in this study as appropriate. However, whether people have a single identity with multiple aspects or whether there are simply multiple identities, in my view, may have more to do with the semantic and metaphorical problems associated with applying the terms "unitary" and "multiple" to a phenomenon as complex as the mind than with the nature of "self" per se. In any event, the usefulness of either conceptualization in explicating identity dynamics is perhaps more important than which particular view is "correct".

While it is accepted that people do have multiple identities, how these identities are organized and how they function in relation to each other is a key question. A researcher may want to know, for example, how personal aspects of the identity of a teacher interface with his or her professional identity. Some scholars believe that these multiple identities exist in a hierarchy in the identity system and the understanding is that one or more identities may become dominant or salient at any point in time (Stryker and Burke 2000; Owens 2006). To illustrate the notion of salience, Stryker and Burke recount the story of a mayor who refused to stand for reelection even when pressed to do so. The authors interpreted this to mean that the Mayor thought it more important to spend time with his family, suggesting that the role of father was more dominant than that of Mayor at that point in time. The identity salience view has implications for teacher identity and teacher professional identity seen particularly from the post-modern identity-system view. For example, how does the mother or father identity interact with the teacher identity? a theme taken up by Sikes (1997) in *Parents Who Teach: Stories From Home and From School*. Or how would a theorized teacher "moral sub-identity" interact with a "pedagogical sub-identity" in the classroom?

Given the foregoing line of reasoning I conclude that self and identity are "structurally" inseparable even though they may be conceptually disaggregated for analytical purposes (Rosenberg 1997; Misra 2009). Moreover, as will be discussed shortly, identity is also integrated into the *functioning* of the overall self.

Self-System Dynamics

The functioning of the self is one of those complex topics that sociologists, psychologists and other scientists still struggle to understand. What seems clear is that the functioning of the system is geared toward achieving the goals of the self-concept. As a system, the self-concept has a purpose or set of purposes. Smith and Mackie (1995) suggest that its primary goal is to maintain satisfaction and the coherence of the self. According to Epstein, the overall purpose of the self-concept is to “optimize the pain-pleasure balance of the individual over time”; additionally, it maintains self-esteem and acts to “organize the data of experience in a manner that can be coped with effectively” (Epstein 1973 p. 407). The goals of the self-concept are closely associated with what are termed the “self-motives”. Leary (2007 p. 391) defines a self-motive as “an inclination that is focused on establishing or maintaining a particular state of self-awareness, self-representation, or self-evaluation”. Self-motives such as self-enhancement, mood-maintenance, self-protection, uncertainty reduction and image maintenance (Sanna, Chang and Meir 2001; Anseel, Lievens and Levy 2007) have been postulated and investigated. Researchers, however, have differing views as to the theoretical viability of self-motives and how to determine which self-motives are at work in a given situation (Leary 2007).

To achieve its goals the self-system is postulated to engage in a multiplicity of interacting self-processes prominent among which are self-evaluation (e.g. Tesser 2003), self-awareness, self-enhancement, and self-verification (e.g. Leary 2007) as well as self-regulation and self-control (Cote and Levine 2002). Perhaps the most important of the self-processes is self-regulation. Cote and Levine (2002) consider the terms, “self-regulation” and “self-control”, often used interchangeably, to be subcomponents of the executive function or executive self which help an individual to pursue his or her self-interests. Vohs and Baumeister (2004) describe the executive self as the “active, intentional aspect of the self” which is responsible for actions of the individual and the regulatory self as “the many processes by which the human psyche gains control over its functions, states and inner processes”. The study of self-regulation is thought by Vohs and Baumeister to be important because it helps us understand how the self exercises control over and maintains accord with its physical and social environment which is a key function of a person’s identity. Self-regulation is achieved, according to Bandura (1991), through four principal sub-functions: (1) self-monitoring of one’s behaviour; (2) evaluation of one’s

behaviour in terms of personal standards and environmental conditions (3) affective self-reaction and (4) self-efficacy which is thought to play a central role in the exercise of personal agency.

Baumeister and Vohs (2004) link self-regulation and identity arguing that modern society, in particular Western society, with its increasing individualization and mobility, has made identity a shifting sand and placed more responsibility on identity formation on the individual. Additionally, individuals have to constantly remake their identities:

Identity in contemporary society is very much a product of self-regulation, especially in relation to people of pre-modern cultures. Looking back to pre-modern cultures, we see that people's identities were formed in relation to a group with which they were intimately associated ...In contrast, the increasing individualization and mobility of Western societies have shifted the burden of responsibility for creating and sustaining identity to the individual.

Baumeister and Vohs 2004 p. 198

Early notions about the self treated it as a stable entity unaffected by the time or the context in which it was embedded (Day, Kington, Stobart and Sammons 2006). Markus and Kunda (1986) after reviewing the work of several authors such as Greenwald, Tesser, Campbell and Rosenberg were moved to remark that their findings suggested that the self-concept is "anything but malleable and mutable" but rather that the findings "imply a stable sense of self that is quite unresponsive to variations in the social situation" that individuals work to maintain. (p. 858). However, contemporary notions about the self and the self-concept treat them as stable yet fluid (Demo 1992; Cote and Levine 2002; Day, Kington, Stobart and Sammons 2006; Owens 2006). The answer to the paradox is found in the notion that one's self-concept and, by extension, one's identity consists of an element that is relatively stable and one that is constantly changing (Markus and Knda 1986). According to this view, self can be decomposed into two components that exist simultaneously. Turner 1968, (cited in Demo 1992), distinguished between the *self-conception*, the stable part of self or "one's relatively enduring and stable sense of 'the real me'" and the *self-image* which refers to the individual's "picture of himself / herself at a given moment". The "self-conception" is comparable to Gee's (1990) concept of "core

identity”. Markus and Kunda (1986) refer to the second element as the ‘working self-concept’ which is regarded as the current working copy of the identity that is subject to amendment and updating in response to changing situational demands (Demo 1992). As Demo puts it, the self-concept and, by extension identity, is a “moving baseline with fluctuations across situations” (p. 303) or to use another metaphor, identity is like the sand on a beach; the top layer of identity is constantly being reshaped by the waves leaving the lower layers relatively undisturbed.

Professional Self-Concept

In the light of what has been said above, I posit that conceptualizing an individual’s identity as part of the self means, in effect, treating it as part of both the individual’s self-concept and self-esteem. Therefore, a teacher’s professional identity is intimately connected with his or her self-concept and self-esteem. I argue further that one’s professional identity can be conceptualized as consisting of one’s “professional self-concept” and one’s “professional self-esteem”. Consequently, we can also talk about one’s “occupational self-concept” and one’s “occupational self-esteem”. These terms, I suggest, should form an integral part of the discourse on the professional identity or the occupational identity construct. Further, I suggest that the professional self-concept functions in the same manner as the self-concept: it extracts meaning from social interaction, monitors its environment, evaluates its status and undertakes “actions” that serve to maintain its satisfaction, coherence and equilibrium as well as that of the entire self. In so doing, the professional self-concept maintains both a stable core and a current copy which allows the individual to adapt to its ever changing professional environment.

Identity Construction and Identity Structure

The discussion so far has employed a systems metaphor to elucidate aspects of the self and identity. Scholars and researchers often employ metaphors because, as Kearns has pointed out, “except for facts about the structure and function of the nervous system and the sensory apparatus, nothing having to do with the mind can be described literally” (Kearns, 1987 p.21). Sternberg (1990) warns, however, that these “metaphors of the mind’ can sometimes generate limited set of questions or lead to the development of partial theories if a single metaphor is used to the exclusion of other metaphors (p 4). The construction metaphor is frequently invoked in discussing self and identity giving rise to such

expressions as “construction of self” and the “construction of identity”. Conceptually, it interfaces easily with social constructionism which is a theoretical perspective often used in analyzing the development of identity (Potter 1996). Bearing Kearns’ warning in mind, but without abandoning the systems metaphor, I further develop my line of argument about professional identity around the construction metaphor because it points to the kinds of theoretical questions that need to be asked about identity (Castells 2010).

Questions such as: “How is teacher professional identity constructed?” and “What is the product of the identity construction process?” are fundamental questions which lend themselves more easily to a construction metaphor. Accordingly, a major issue in the identity literature has been whether identity is personally or socially constituted (Onorato and Turner 2004). Irrespective of whether "social" refers to the wider society or the social institution of teaching, this issue is clearly of relevance to teacher professional identity. The debate is associated with two schools of thought known respectively as “personal identity theory” and “social identity theory” (Stets and Burke 2000; Stryker and Burke 2000, Tajfel 1972) and concerns the issue of which element plays a more dominant role in identity construction - society or the individual. In sociology this controversy is often referred to as the "structure-agency debate" and is presented as the degree to which behavior is an effect of “external, social, political, and economic forces” or the outcome of deliberate internal, individual choice (Cote and Levine 2002). Personal identity is thought to differ from social identity with regard to the mechanism by which identity is believed to be formed. Proponents of personal identity focus on “the internal dynamics within the self that influence behavior” (Stets and Burke 2005). According to this view, individuals take on an active role in the construction of their identity by making appropriate choices from among available "alternatives" in the social environment. Consistent with this view, a person’s identity is not primarily the product of interaction with others; rather, it is the product of "internal" factors.

Social identity theory differs from personal identity theory in that it reflects the notion that identity is socially grounded in the sense that external, predominantly social structures such as groups, institutions and significant others play the decisive role in defining the identity of an individual. This perspective owes its origin to the theory of symbolic interaction as elaborated by Mead (1934). According to this view, a sense of self develops through

transactions between the person and the world, through the personal, cultural and historical aspects of shared lives.

From a postmodern perspective, both perspectives may be equally valid; perhaps, the "truth" of the matter lies somewhere between these two extremes at a point where the influence of the social structure on the individual can be thought of as being tempered by deliberate individual choice or vice versa (Oyserman 2001; Leary and Tangney 2003). Both perspectives, however, can serve to shed some light on teacher (professional) identity. As a unique individual, a teacher is presumed to be able to exercise deliberate choice in deciding who he or she wants to be and even exert some influence (agency) over his or her environment. As a member of an occupation/profession, a teacher's identity may, however, be influenced by several forces ranging from the demands of the occupation of teaching per se to the vicissitudes of the local school organization. At the same time, the teacher is a member of a particular society and can be influenced by factors such as the role expectations of "teacher" as well as regulatory and other influences of the particular society or culture. Indeed, studies suggest that a teacher's identity is partly the result of his or her understanding of the role of teacher from his or her experience as a student (Lortie 1975; Flores and Day 2006). The salient point to all of this is that teacher identity and by extension, teacher professional identity cannot be understood completely without reference to either the social context or the working of the individual's mind.

The construction metaphor points not only to the theoretical necessity of investigating the *process* of professional identity but also to the need to study its *structure* especially since identity is thought to exhibit a level of stability. Schwartz (2001) argues that "understanding the structure of identity is of paramount importance if theorists and researchers are to study identity and intervene to promote its development". The author further suggests that this will entail developing "a more uniform system of domains that are studied across theoretical orientations and measurement instruments" (p. 50). As used in this context, therefore, the term "structure" deserves some exploration.

Chambers 21st Century Dictionary online (2010) defines structure as "the way in which the parts of a thing are arranged or organized" or "a thing built or constructed from many smaller parts". Both of these meanings help to provide insight into the concept of structure as used in this context. To illustrate, I address the second meaning first. Virtually any person can recognize a computer system ("thing built") ; despite the fact that they have

different shapes and sizes (a.k.a “footprints”) computers tend to carry a common configuration which consists essentially of a CPU (Central Processing Unit) and peripherals such as keyboards, drives, printers and modems. I refer to these here as “meta-components”.

With respect to the first meaning of structure (“the way in which the parts of a thing are arranged or organized”) and using the computer system as an analogy, each meta-component of a system consists of a number of components most of which have the same basic functionalities. The CPU meta-component consists of a number of components, for example, a hard drive and power source. Hard drives store the instructions (“software”) that allow the computer’s “operating system” to function. Hard drives can also hold user files. All hard drives do not have the same storage capacity or operate at the same speeds; they are not of the same physical size and are not physically positioned in the same manner in every computer system. Additionally, both desktops and laptops carry hard drives yet there is a substantial difference in size between these two types of computer system. What is more, considerably fewer persons would recognize the hard drive let alone any of the other components if allowed to look into a CPU. Thus, this aspect of structure is not as visible as the external configuration and therefore, much more difficult to understand.

The computer system analogy illustrates the complexity of identity structure and provides some insight into possible alternative interpretations of that structure. At one level an identity has a configuration that can be recognized by the individual himself and by others through its “observable” meta-components. This identity configuration is what makes the individual unique but yet similar to others. In terms of the analogy used here, the observable configuration is what makes a computer system appear different from a microwave or even a sound system. However, each of the meta-components of identity consists of several components (analogous to hard drives, power source etc) which in turn consist of a number of smaller parts (for example, screws, cables, lasers etc). These smaller parts are more or less generic in nature and might be regarded as analogous to a possible third level of identity structure. In essence, this analogy is consistent with the hierarchical structure postulated by some to be a major characteristic of identity (e.g. Epstein 1973; Kihlstrom and Cantor 1984; Burke 2006).

The expression, “the devil is in the details” could not be more appropriate here; it is these different levels of detail that seem to constitute the relatively uncharted and contested

ground in the theorizing on identity structure. Furthermore, “different components of identity have their roots in different theories and sources, each of which has inspired a separate line of literature” (Schwartz, Zamboanga and Weisskirch 2008 p. 635). Consequently, much of the research and theorizing has focused on the “software” of identity structure, that is, the processes that link the pieces of identity together and allow the “identity system” to undertake its functions. The overarching and consistent finding from this line of research is that identity is multi-faceted, complex and fluid in character. However, the nature of this “thing” that is “multi-faceted, complex and fluid” has been left relatively unexplored.

The study of identity structure has been traced by Schwartz (2001) to the early writings of Freud and Erickson’s extrapolations from his (Erickson’s) psychoanalytic practice. According to Schwartz, Marcia was one of the first researchers to attempt to build a robust theory of identity structure by operationalizing Erickson’s ideas on identity status. Marcia developed a fourfold measure of identity status consisting of identity diffusion, identity foreclosure, identity moratorium, and identity achievement with each status representing a different level of exploration and commitment (Schwarz 2001; Marcia 1980). Marcia’s identity status categories constituted a sizeable leap for identity structure research and have demonstrated consistency over different domains (Schwartz 2001). However, his research, while it helps to underscore the changing nature of identity over time, had a longitudinal focus and hence differs significantly from the emphasis of my research.

The understanding of identity structure that Schwartz (2001) pleaded for can be decomposed into at least two major tasks aimed at different levels of understanding: (1) an understanding of the configuration or “meta-components” of identity and (2) an understanding of the sub-components that constitute the configuration. As outlined in the analogy above, a third level of understanding at the level of individual parts is possible. The search for an understanding of identity structure is, therefore, a search for, in Schwartz’s words, a “uniform system of domains”. By "domains" is meant spheres of human activity and choice (“content areas”) such as politics, occupation, religion (Marcia 1980, Schwartz 2001). With respect to the foregoing computer system analogy, “domains” corresponds roughly to “components”. Furthermore, contends Schwartz, these domains must also be capable of transcending different theoretical and methodological approaches. In parallel with this proposal, I suggest that a conceptualization of professional identity

should be easily ported from one type of identity to another, for example, from medical professional identity, to teacher professional identity or to the professional identity of lawyers so that it becomes feasible to compare and contrast professional identities across different contexts.

Modelling Professional Identity and Its Context

One way of clarifying what has been said about the features of self/ identity/teacher professional identity explored so far in this chapter and pointing the way forward to a definition of teacher professional identity is to present them in a visual model. Figure 1 represents such a model. The entire model represents a macro-level view of the identity of a teacher set in the environment of the occupation of teaching which in turn is set in the context of the wider society. The two concentric circles at the centre of the diagram represent the fundamental beliefs about teacher professional identity, that is, the fact that it consists of core, stable element and a fluid changeable element (“current identity”) that responds to the vagaries of the occupational environment and the influences of the wider environment of the society in which the occupation is embedded. Arrows show that “identity influences” flow in both directions; from the occupational environment to the teacher and vice versa. Thus this model attempts to incorporate the concept of individual agency.

Not shown but understood to be part of the model are the influences arising from the wider social environment and influences from the occupation to the society, suggesting the potential for the occupation or profession to exert influence on the society. Also deliberately omitted for simplicity are the occupational sub-environments such as the individual school enterprise, the classroom and the central educational authorities. These occupational sub-environments generate a variety of forces that impact on the identity of the teacher. It is understood, however, that the teacher can exert an agentic influence on these entities either directly or indirectly.

Flores and Day (2006) have published a model which can be interfaced with Figure 3. The model is shown in Figure 4 and is self-explanatory. Used in conjunction with Figure 3, Flores and Day’s model serves as a means of delineating some of the key variables that influence teacher identity. What is now required, however, is a construct or constructs that can provide a link between the assortment of notions about teacher identity dilated so

far and the environment within which that identity moves and has its being. Such a link should also point the way to the development of an operational definition of professional identity. This link, I suggest, is to be found in the constructs of "meaning" and "social representation".

Figure 3: A Model of Teacher Identity

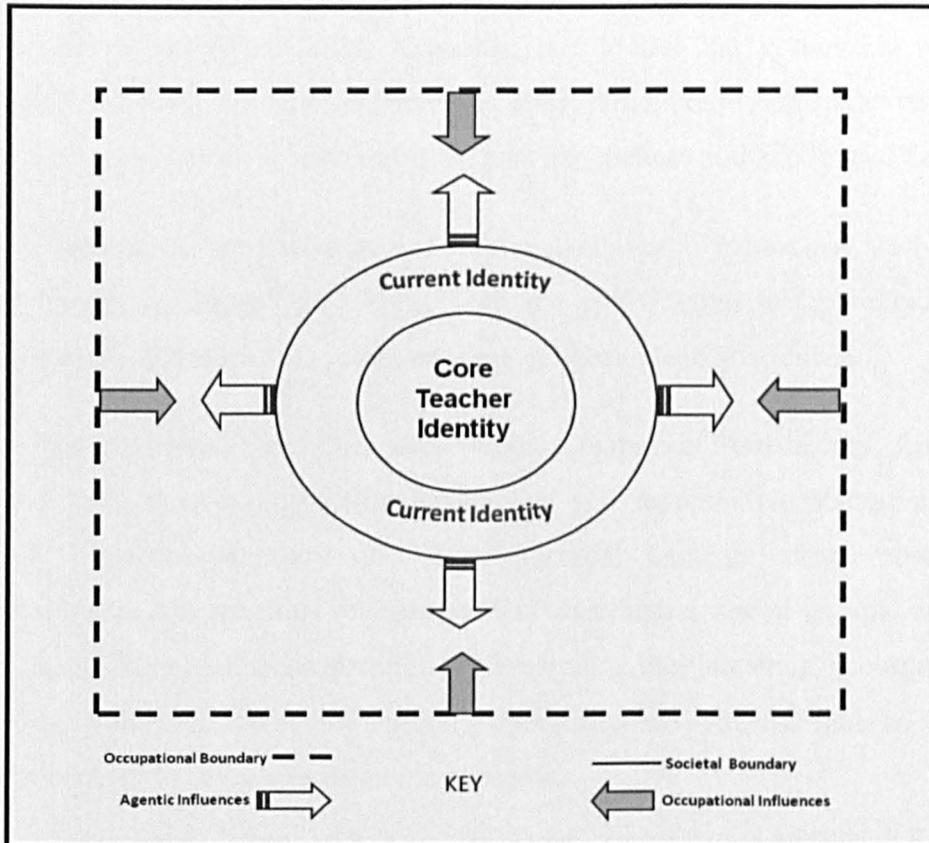
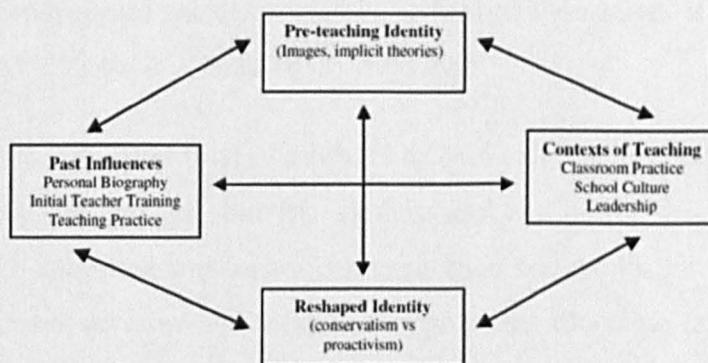


Figure 4: Flores and Day's Identity Context Model



Key mediating influences on the formation of teacher identity

Source: Flores and Day (2006 p. 230)

Meaning, Identity and Social Representation

The idea that identity is a set of meanings constructed by an individual is a fundamental tenet of both sociology and psychology (Stets and Burke 2000; House 1977); meaning-making is often invoked as a central feature of teacher identity (MacLure 1993; Bullough 1997; Kostogriz and Peeler 2007). According to the theory of social constructionism, the meanings that constitute identity are formed and refashioned through dialogue in interaction with others (Allen 2005; Akkerman and Meijer 2011); they are historically, culturally and politically constituted (Hermans 2003; Abes, Jones and McEwen 2007) and are shaped not only by current settings but by past experiences and anticipated futures.

Meaning is constructed from a variety of resources (Potter 1996). In my study I refer to these as "identity resources" in keeping with the construction metaphor or simply as "forces". Castells (2010) provides a list of some of these identity resources:

The construction of identities uses building materials from history, from geography, from biology, from productive and reproductive institutions, from collective memory and from personal fantasies, from power apparatuses and religious revelations. But individuals, social groups, and societies process all these materials, and rearrange their meaning, according to social determinations and cultural projects that are rooted in their social structure, and in their space-time framework.

Castells 2010 p. 7

People also derive meaning from or identify with treasured material possessions (Kleine, Kleine and Allen 1995) and where they belong in geographical space (Gieryn 2000). The idea that some people regard their possessions as part of themselves is not new. William James (1890, pp.291-292 cited in Belk 1988), held that:

a man's Self is the sum total of all that he CAN call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his lands, and yacht and bank-account. All these things give him the same emotions. If they wax and prosper, he feels triumphant; if they dwindle and die away, he feels cast down, not necessarily in the same degree for each thing, but in much the same way for all.'

While James' statement may not hold true of all cultures it underscores the currently held notion that identity is a highly complex and multi-faceted phenomenon susceptible to swings and changes. Kleine, Kleine and Allen (1995) contend that material possessions are part of the life stories of individuals. For example, photographs, jewellery, furniture and clothing can signify important others, reflect family heritage, individuality and self-worth. Similarly, people identify with or are alienated by the places in which they live. Geographical spaces are often rich with landmarks and symbols that serve to reify for individuals "national narratives, shared values and putative hopes for the future" (Osborne 2001). Thus classroom space, teaching resources, school atmosphere and other elements of the workaday life of a teacher can generate meanings for teachers' identities.

Cote (1996) offers an alternative perspective on identity resources in the form of the identity capital model. According to this model, individuals possess various "internal" resources that help them to negotiate the external social structure. These resources vary with respect to degree of tangibility. Tangible resources are related to the possessions of individuals, for example, financial resources, educational credentials, organizational memberships. In contrast, intangible resources are essentially attributes of self and might perhaps be described as "self-resources". Cote's list of intangible resources includes capabilities such as ego strength, an internal locus of control, self-monitoring, self-esteem, critical thinking abilities, and moral reasoning abilities. The identity capital model offers concepts that are easily integrated with Castell's inventory of resources. Further, it supports the notion that identity construction is not a wholly socially determined process as espoused by Stryker and Burke (2000) but an active, dynamic, individual choice process mediated through what Cote terms "self-resources".

Chrysochoou (2003) proposed a view of identity that provides some insight into how meaning is derived from the array of resources discussed above and incorporated into identity. The author suggests that identity "is a particular form of social representation" that is, a mental representation of the relationship between self and society that serves to "mediate the relationship between the individual and the social world" (p.225).

Social representation theory is based on Serge Moscovi's work (Chrysochoou 2003). According to Moscovi (1984) social representation is based on three observations of human behaviour: (1) the pre-eminence of beliefs in human thought and action (2) the social genesis of perceptions and beliefs and (3) the causal role that representations and

beliefs play in human action (Moscovi 1984). Social representations are 'concepts, statements and explanations originating in daily life in the course of inter-individual communications' (Moscovi 1981, p. 181). Potter and Litton (1985), paraphrasing Moscovi, describe social representation as being "essentially collective", serving "to orient people in the world and provide a code for social exchange" and "transforming the 'unfamiliar' into the 'familiar'; social representations, they argue, can be treated as "a linguistically based apparatus for actively making sense of the social world" (p. 82). The essence of social representation theory then is that human beings create images of social reality, that these images then act as substitutes for reality and thereby determine how actors behave in different situations. According to Chrysochoou this representation is constituted as follows:

It [identity] includes an element of cognition (self-knowledge), answering the question "what do I know about me?", an element of self-action pertaining to the claims I want to/can make about myself and an element of Other(s) actions that recognize me and allow me to make the claims I wish to make about myself and to be who I want/think myself to be.

Chrysochoou 2003, p.228

Recognitions or others' actions (Chrysochoou 2003, p.228) include but are not limited to how others categorize the individual (Macrae and Bodenhausen 2000) and their "reflected appraisals" or valuation of the individual. Reflected appraisals represent one of the key sources of feedback an individual receives about himself or herself that help to construct the individual's self-concept and self-esteem (Schwalbe 1993).

The notion of identity claims is a familiar concept in the social science. It is invoked in discussions on ethnic identity, political identity, gender identity and racial identity (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). In this context it can be understood to have two meanings: "an assertion of something as true or factual" or "a right or just title to something" (Collins 21st Century Dictionary). Both senses can be used in discussions of identity. For example, an "identity claim" can be an answer to the question: "Who am I?" or can be used to indicate the right to be categorized in a certain manner for example, Canadian, Barbadian, senior citizen. According to Erickson (1959) "Who am I?" is a fundamental question that individuals must continuously ask and answer successfully if they are to develop a healthy

sense of identity throughout their lifespan. By simple extension, the “identity claim” question is easily applied to teacher identity: “Who am I as a teacher?” The answer to this teacher identity question is an assertion of something as true or factual about oneself as teacher or the assertion of the right or just title to label oneself in a particular way as a teacher.

Self-knowledge is a key construct of cognitive personality theory (Markus 1983) although it has not been a central research topic in psychology (Wilson and Dunn 2004). Two of the issues associated with the concept are its content and the question of access to it. With respect to its content, which is the more pertinent issue at this point, Markus argues for an expanded view of self-knowledge that transcends the features of one’s social identity such as “demographics, roles, and characteristic behaviors”. She thus suggests that one’s self-knowledge should also include aspects of the "dynamic" self such as elements as “preferences and values...goals and motives... rules and strategies for regulating and controlling behavior” (p. 544). Some scholars have equated self-knowledge with definitions of the self-concept. Thus, Coopersmith and Feldman (1974 cited in Pajares and Schunk 2001) described the self-concept as consisting of "beliefs, hypotheses, and assumptions that the individual has about himself [and] includes the person's ideas of the kind of person he is, the characteristics that he possesses, and his most important and striking traits" (p. 199). From this perspective, self-knowledge for all practical intents and purposes, represents claims about oneself in the first sense defined above, that is, “an assertion of something as true or factual”. For simplicity and clarity the elements of self-knowledge detailed above will be referred to alternatively as “self-attributes”.

With reference to the computer analogy developed earlier, Chrysochoou’s tripartite schema of "self-knowledge" (self-attributes), "claims" and “recognitions” offers an approach to understanding the overall architecture or configuration of identity structure. It is also capable of incorporating, in several ways, the elements of material possessions and location in geographical space attributed to identity by Schwartz, Luyckx and Vignoles (2011). Material possessions, in the wide sense outlined by James in an earlier reference, can be the subject of recognitions by others and therefore, lead to the generation of claims. For example: “X has a doctoral degree from a prestigious university” (possession); “degrees from this university are regarded as superior by others” (recognition), “therefore, X can claim to have a superior doctoral degree” (claim). Similarly, location in geographical

space, regardless to whether that space is a country, city town, street or an institution in a particular geographical locale, can give rise to individual meanings in terms of recognitions, claims and self-knowledge. For example, persons who live in so-called 'red light' districts are the object of negative moral attributions or negative stereotyping. This can prevent individuals from such locales making positive moral claims about themselves and therefore, lead to negative beliefs about self. On the other hand, a teacher working in a school acknowledged for excellence in academic work, can internalize the recognition accredited to that school thus leading to positive beliefs about self and claims of personal excellence.

Emotions and Identity

Identity is a very complex concept and therefore, although Chrysochoou's analysis is insightful, it does not account for the role of emotions or affect in identity structure. Some scholars maintain that emotion and cognition are inextricably linked and are, therefore, difficult to separate (Veen, Slegers and Ven 2005; Leary 2003). Phelps (2006), for example, has examined neurological studies which suggest that emotion and cognition are jointly implicated in a range of mental activities such as emotional learning, emotion and memory, attention and perception, processing emotion in social stimuli and changing emotional responses.

James' concept of self, cited earlier in Belk (1988), indicates that emotions are associated with self and, by extension, identity. Zembylas (2003) believes that any investigation into the formation of teacher identity requires an acknowledgment of the role of emotion. The role of emotions has figured in a number of studies of teacher professional identity (for example, Nias 1989, Nias 1996; Hargreaves 2001; Zembylas 2003; Day 2004; Hargreaves 2005; Kelchtermans 2005; Reio 2005, Veen, Slegers and Ven 2005; Kono 2008). The literature cited represents studies that range from those dedicated to teachers' emotions to studies where emotions were not a primary theme of the research but were expressed and noted by the researchers. Although not tied to teacher identity per se, some relatively recent work (Leary 2007) has focused on the "self-conscious emotions". According to Leary these are:

Emotions such as guilt, shame, embarrassment, social anxiety, and pride that arise from people's inferences about others' evaluations of them, particularly with respect to their social acceptability.

Leary 2007 p. 329

The research in this area suggests that teachers' emotions are implicated and expressed with regard to their work, with regard to their relations with their students as well as in connection with events within the educational enterprise such as educational reforms. I shall refer to this notion as *emotional involvement*. Emotions noted in the literature range from frustration (Aleong 2005) to fear (Ogawa and Smith 1985), guilt and shame (Keltermans 2005; Rolheiser and Hogaboam-Gray 1998) to pride (Pasternak 2007; Kono 2008) to joy (Keltermans 2005). The salient conclusion of this stream of research is that teachers' work is a highly emotional business (Jeffrey and Woods 1996) and that, furthermore, "the emotional reactions of individual teachers to their work are intimately connected to the view that they have of themselves and others" (Nias 1996 p. 294). Taken together, therefore, the available literature suggests a definite role for emotion in the construction of identity.

Occupations and Identity

According to Hulin (2002) the number of surnames in English and other languages denoting occupations (e.g. Taylor, Hunter, Paige, Chandler) is indicative of the significance of occupations to identity. The job a person holds is often the most important economic and social role played by that person outside his or her immediate family or household (Hauser, Warren, Huang and Carter 2000). According to these authors, the occupation in which a person is engaged dictates how a sizeable amount of his or her time is spent and provides clues about the activities and circumstances entailed in that time period. It can indicate the technical and social skills that are required as well as the type and level of training required. More particularly, from the perspective of my study, it indicates the number and range of social interactions the job-holder is likely to engage in over the period of a work day. This range of interactions begins with preparation for the occupation and continues for the duration of time spent in the occupation. Naturally, not all occupations afford the same level of interaction. Given that identity is a socially constructed process, a person's occupation becomes an important site for the development

of his or her identity on at least two counts. First, one's occupation can provide significant opportunities for social interaction which is the core process of identity formation. Second, the whole complex of activities, events, norms and physical possessions associated with the preparation for and progression in an occupation, provide a range of identity construction resources or forces which have the potential to create the type of mental representations or meanings that constitute the core of one's identity. Furthermore, since identities are tied to the social context in which they are enacted - as discussed earlier in this chapter - one can invoke the concept of an "occupational identity". Additionally, because identities are also future oriented (Kelchtermans 2005), one's occupation can have a significant impact on one's ability to actualize oneself over time.

A person's job also has implications for his or her self-esteem. The economic value of an occupation, its social status and its importance to the job-holder are three obvious factors that can tie a person's job his or her job-related self-esteem and therefore, to his or her identity. The economic value of an occupation is tied to the ability of the individual to provide for the material requirements of himself or herself and significant others. Persons who cannot fend for themselves and their family may suffer from low self-esteem. Generally, this may be more accurate with respect to males who may still see their role as the provider in the home although this role may not apply in all situations or cultures. The physical and psychological deterioration experienced by persons who have become unemployed (see McKee-Ryan, Song and Wanberg 2005 for a synthesis of over one hundred studies on this theme) is a strong indicator of the importance of an occupation to an individual's self-concept and self-esteem.

Societies do not accord equal status to all occupations; occupations are usually accorded differential status based on different factors at different times in history. For example, there was time when being a doctor was regarded as a relatively low status occupation. However, today in many countries, persons in the medical profession are highly regarded and paid accordingly. This may have much to do with the critical importance of health to individuals and government alike as well as the advances made in medical research. On the other hand, refuse collecting is not a "high status" occupation in most societies although it is important to society in one way or another. This does not mean that a refuse collector cannot display pride in his or her job; on the contrary. What it does suggest is

that the analysis of the status of most occupations may have to be done on a case by case basis.

The importance of job is a major contributor to the individual's occupational self-esteem and by extension, the individual's occupational self-concept. "Importance" here excludes the economic significance described earlier and refers rather to the extent that the job-holder sees himself or herself as performing a job that is worthwhile from the point of view, for example, of contributing to society in general or care-giving in particular. Teaching is often described as a care-giving occupation and research suggests that teachers see care-giving as an important motivation for being in the occupation of teaching (O'Connor 2008).

Autonomy is another factor that ties work to self-esteem. Schwalbe (1985) has shown that work impacts on self-esteem through the intervening variable of autonomy. The author's proposition is based on a hierarchical model of self-esteem formation consisting of three major stages: (1) sources of self-evaluative information, (2) primary dimensions of cognitive self-evaluation and (3) affective response to self as object (self-esteem). Schwalbe theorizes that there can be different levels or types of autonomy in the workplace and that these can provide input data to the three sources of self-evaluative information thus impacting on self-esteem. Three types of autonomy are identified by the author: (1) autonomy as a reward for competence and responsibility (2) autonomy as a status indicator in workplace culture and (3) autonomy as freedom to act and take responsibility for success. Self-evaluative information is derived from the reflected appraisals of others, social comparisons and perceptions of the efficacy of one's own behaviour. These serve to construct the primary dimensions of cognitive self-evaluation identified by Schwalbe as "competence" and "morality" although the author points out that these are not the only dimensions. These, in turn, lead to the global affective response to self, that is, self-esteem. Thus, the concept of occupational autonomy provides a link to identity in that it can be viewed as an identity resource. In this capacity, it provides self-evaluative information which is part of the self-knowledge that individuals are theorized to have as part of their identity structure.

Conceptualizing Teacher Professional Identity: A Synthesis

From the literature reviewed in this chapter, several salient points can be made about identity and teacher professional identity in particular. First, teacher identity, in common with all identities, represents an aspect of the individual's self-system in that it consists of both self-concept and self-esteem elements. In fact, I argued earlier for the viability of two derived constructs viz. the professional self-concept and professional self-esteem. Specifically, I advanced the notion that an individual's professional identity can be seen as his or her professional self and, furthermore, that the professional self functions in the same way as the overall self. Second, professional identity is constructed from both personal and social resources at the disposal of the individual. These resources are both external and contextual to the individual as well as internal and "personal". In the context of work, "social" resources are largely those associated with the occupation or profession. Third, following Chrysochou (2003), identity can be conceptualized as the representation of the relationship between the individual and society. With respect to teaching, that representation, according to Chrysochou (2003), consists of self-knowledge, claims and recognitions linked to a teacher's role. Emotions or feelings are also associated with this tripartite structure in one way or another as outlined earlier. Fourth, teacher professional identity, like the self-concept, is both stable and changing or in Demo's (1992) terms, "a moving baseline".

I now address the problem of formulating a working conception of teacher professional identity. The synthesized definition adopted here takes into account the concepts of self and identity, the self-concept and self-esteem, meaning, identity structure, the importance of one's occupation as a source of identity resources as summarized above as well as the peculiar nature of the term "professional" discussed in Chapter 2. In addition, for conceptual completeness, conceptualizations are offered for occupational identity and teacher identity.

Occupational Identity

Building on the basic concepts above, *occupational identity* is treated as the representation of the relationship between an individual and his or her occupation and is defined as follows:

Occupational identity is an individual's occupational self-concept and occupational self-esteem as constituted by the claims, self-knowledge (self-

attributes), recognitions and feelings the individual has about his or her occupational role.

The self-knowledge construct consists of the individual's beliefs, attitudes motives and values as they relate to his or her occupational role. It is understood that the content or structure of the occupational identity, that is, the claims, self-knowledge (self-attributes), recognitions and feelings are shaped by the individual's interactions with the contextual forces of the occupation, past influences as well as the individual's pre-teaching identity as proposed by Flores and Day (2006). These are understood to be included in the identity resources arising from the complex of people (colleagues, students, parents), practices, location, history and status accorded the occupation by the society as well as occupationally relevant possessions e.g. qualifications. This is by no means an exhaustive list.

Professional identity

As explained in Chapter 2, the term "professional" can have two simultaneous meanings. It can refer to a holder of any occupation regarded as a profession or it can serve to designate a level of service or performance that might be expected from the performance of the duties of the professional-as-job-holder. This is the ideological dimension of "professional" or its "brand identity" as argued in Chapter 2. In this study, I treat professional identity as a special case of occupational identity in that it represents the relationship between an individual and any occupation regarded as profession either by the individual or by members of the occupation itself. Thus, in order to account for the "professional" in professional identity, as suggested by Beijaard et. al (2004), professional identity is defined as follows:

Professional identity is an individual's occupational self-concept and self-esteem as constituted by the claims, self-knowledge (self-attributes), recognitions and feelings the individual has about his or her occupational role in relation to his or her understanding of the term "professional".

As with occupational identity, self-knowledge consists of the individual's beliefs, attitudes motives and values as they relate to his or her professional role. Furthermore it is to be understood that the same forces that shape occupational identity as outlined above act to shape professional identity. This definition effectively makes professional identity a

"filtered" concept from the point of view that the individual's understanding of the term "professional" acts as a filter of his or her occupational role in much the same way as an individual's understanding of "parent" acts to filter his or her parental role.

Teacher Professional Identity

Based on the definitions offered so far, teacher professional identity can be interpreted as a special case of occupational identity and is defined as follows:

Teacher professional identity is a *teacher's* occupational self-concept and self-esteem as constituted by the claims, self-knowledge (self-attributes), recognitions and feelings the individual has about his or her role *as a teacher* in relation to his or her understanding of the term "professional".

This definition represents a deliberate attempt to account for the notion of "professional" in teacher professional identity. Consistent with the definition of professional identity, self-knowledge includes beliefs, attitudes, motives and values relevant to the profession. *Viewed from this perspective, teacher professional identity has little, if anything, to do with whether the occupation of teaching possesses the characteristics of a profession or is even regarded as being a profession.* Rather it has to do with whether an individual perceives himself or herself to be a "professional". A logical implication of this is that it is entirely possible for policy makers or society in general to see teaching as a profession whereas individual teachers may not see themselves as professionals or vice versa. Therefore, a linear relationship does not necessarily hold between regarding an occupation as a profession and considering oneself as a professional in that occupation. This conceptual complexity, as explained before, may partly explain why teacher professional identity and professional identity per se remain highly contested conceptual territory.

Teacher identity

Earlier in this chapter, attention was drawn to the synonymous use of teacher identity and teacher professional identity in many published studies. Having offered a definition for the latter, an attempt now is made to define the former for the sake of conceptual completeness. Given the earlier definition of teacher professional identity, teacher identity can be delineated as follows:

Teacher identity is a teacher's self-concept and self-esteem as constituted by the claims, self-knowledge (self-attributes), recognitions and feelings the individual has about his or her role as a teacher.

This definition is essentially the same as that for occupational identity except that it is irrelevant whether the teacher regards his or her job as a profession, an occupation or for that matter, a vocation. Based on the conceptual scheme devised here, teacher identity is much broader in scope than teacher professional identity. Therefore, studies in teacher identity construction could conceivably be extended to encompass teachers' activities outside the confines of the teacher's job, for example, their leisure activities, family life, religious life etc. This is not to suggest that either of the variables just mentioned cannot influence a teacher's *professional* identity. On the contrary, if the teacher sees himself or herself as a professional but indicates that his or her religious beliefs, for example, influence how he or she sees himself as a professional then, according to the overall conceptual scheme suggested here, this can be easily incorporated into the teacher's professional identity structure as an aspect of self-knowledge or an attribute.

Looked at from a broader perspective, the construction of teacher identity offered above can also accommodate studies whose focus is on the teacher as a person rather than the person as a teacher; in other words, the conceptualization can speak to the research question: *How does the identity of a teacher influence his or her identity as a person?* as well as the contrasting question: *How does the identity of the person influence his or her identity as a teacher?*

Summary

This chapter reviewed aspects of self and identity and sought to integrate them with the main issues examined in the previous chapter which dealt primarily with professionalism. The key theoretical point advanced in this chapter is that professional identity can be treated as an aspect of the self-concept and therefore, current knowledge of the self-concept can be fruitfully employed to conceptualize professional identity in general and teacher professional identity specifically. Thus the working definition proposed for teacher professional identity synthesizes the notions of identity, the self-concept and self-esteem as well as the notion of "professional" discussed in the previous chapter. Additionally, for the sake of conceptual completeness, working definitions were also offered for occupational identity, professional identity and teacher identity.

Chapter 4

Research Design

Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design for my study of teacher professional identity. Specifically, it addresses the methodological decisions that were made and the rationale for those decisions. At the same time it integrates the methodological decisions with the theoretical framework related to the theme of professional identity which was examined in the two preceding chapters.

In summary, three major methodological decisions were made. First interpretivism was chosen as the overall philosophic perspective; interpretivism is an established research paradigm within the qualitative philosophy that contrasts in key ways to positivism, its older rival. The second decision was to use the focus group method. Focus groups are closely associated with marketing research but also enjoy wide use in social research (Rabiee 2004). The third decision was to use a deductive thematic framework as an interpretive lens through which to elicit meaning from the findings and thereby address the research question.

The chapter is divided into four major sections. In the first section I briefly discuss the concept of methodology and provide some working definitions of key terms. In the second section I address philosophical issues and layout my positionality. In the third section I detail the technical/methodological decisions made with regard to sampling, data collection and data analysis for the focus group method employed. Finally I discuss the quality of the research in terms of validity, reliability and generalizability.

Methodology: An Overview

"Methodology" and "research design" are terms often used interchangeably (Kerlinger 1986, Kinnear and Taylor 1985; Kothari 2004). Research design may be described as the strategy by which an investigation is carried out (Petrie 1968) or the overall plan for conducting a piece of research in order to achieve the research objectives (Kinnear and Taylor 1985; Jacob 1987, Kothari 2004). In its broadest sense, research design covers all

the decisions starting with specification of the research question or hypothesis to the method of data analysis (Kerlinger 1986; Kothari 2004).

In their glossary of terms, Somekh and Lewin (2005) offer two definitions of methodology: "the collection of methods or rules by which a particular piece of research is undertaken" and the "principles, theories and values that underpin a particular approach to research" (p.346). As the definitions offered by Somekh and Lewin imply, discussions over methodology can occur on two dimensions: the *philosophical* and the *technical*; the philosophical level deals primarily with epistemological assumptions, that is, the nature of knowledge and how it can be attained whereas the technical dimension deals with debates over terms such as procedure, technique and method (McGregor and Murnane 2010; Howe 1992; Smith and Heshusius 1986; Bryman 1984).

Philosophy and Methodology

Philosophical aspects of methodology are usually discussed under the concept of "paradigm"; however, the philosophical and technical dimensions of research are often confused (McGregor and Murnane 2010; Smith and Heshusius 1986; Bryman 1984). This confusion, it is argued, has led to a premature closing down of the debate between the two major philosophical or paradigmatic approaches to conducting research (Smith and Heshusius 1986). In his seminal work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Kuhn defined "paradigm" as an "entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by members of a given community" (Bryant 1975 p.1). According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), paradigms are "sets of basic beliefs" which are "not open to proof in any conventional sense" but must be accepted as articles of faith; they are human constructions, are subject to error and must therefore, rely on "*persuasiveness* and *utility* rather than *proof*" (their italics) in justifying their positions (p. 107-108). Hathaway (1995) offers what, in effect, is an operational definition of paradigm:

..Paradigms act as lenses through which scientists or researchers are able to perceive and understand the problems in their field and the scientific answers to those problems. Paradigms dictate what researchers consider data, what their role in the investigation will be, what they consider knowledge, how they view reality, and how they can access that reality.

Hathaway's conceptualization of paradigm invokes several dimensions that offer a useful framework for discussing the philosophical approach which undergirds the methodology I use in this project. The researcher's view of reality constitutes his or her ontological beliefs and is perhaps the most important philosophical issue that must be confronted. Ontological beliefs have some influence on the researcher's epistemological beliefs, that is, the researcher's understanding of what is knowledge, how it may be generated and how one validates that knowledge. In turn, the researcher's epistemological beliefs will influence how the researcher believes he or she can gain access to that knowledge. Together, the researchers' ontological and epistemological stances influence the *technical* decisions they have to make with regard to data collection in terms of what is collected, from whom or what it is collected and the means by which it is collected.

The so-called "paradigm wars" was a phrase used by Gage (1989) to capture the polarization between two broad ontological and epistemological approaches to research: the qualitative versus the quantitative or alternatively, positivism and interpretivism. Bryman (1984) suggests that the terms "quantitative" and "qualitative" represent "symbols or reference points" for underlying philosophical assumptions so that "the presence or absence of quantitative data is but a superficial manifestation of the underlying epistemological issues" (p.80).

Positivism and interpretivism can, however, be thought of as two extremes of a philosophical/paradigmatic continuum. Some scholars have, in fact, sought to make finer distinctions between the positivistic and interpretivistic positions. For example, Guba and Lincoln (1994) distinguished among four alternative paradigms: positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and constructivism. Creswell (2003) offered postpositivism, constructivism, advocacy/participatory and pragmatism. Jacob (1987), in discussing qualitative methodology from an educational research perspective, distinguished among ecological psychology, holistic ethnography, cognitive anthropology, ethnography of communication, and symbolic interactionism offering extensive coverage of the ontological, epistemological, research foci and methodological approaches of each tradition.

Smith and Heshusius (1986), while suggesting that the qualitative-quantitative debate had successively evolved from conflict to détente to compatibility and cooperation, held that the transition had been partly occasioned by the confusion between "method as technique

and method as logic of justification” (p. 4) where the phrase ‘method as logic of justification’ is roughly synonymous with the philosophical dimension alluded earlier in this chapter. Therefore, in summing up the ongoing debate between two mainstream methodological camps, Howe posited that:

The quantitative-qualitative debate has been unfolding for several decades now and has evolved from one about the incompatibility of quantitative and qualitative techniques and procedures to one about the incompatibility of the more fundamental epistemological assumptions of quantitative and qualitative (positivist and interpretivist) "paradigms."

Howe 1992. p. 2.

Howe was referring to the accommodation between quantitative and qualitative techniques to the point at which the use of mixed methods had become widely accepted whereas previously it had been eschewed by some. As the current literature suggests, the mixing of methods is still recognized as the basis for the integration of qualitative and quantitative research. The *Journal of Mixed Methods* which has been in publication since 2007 is the single most telling piece of evidence of this approach which is also being thought of as “new paradigm” (Denscombe 2008).

Point of Departure

Notwithstanding the foregoing, some scholars (for example, Bryman 1984, Smith and Heshusius 1986) contend that the positivistic and interpretivist paradigms represent irreconcilable philosophical positions and therefore, as Smith and Heshusius (1986) had suggested, the accommodation achieved at the level of methods and technique would at best be an uneasy one. While positivism and interpretivism can be contrasted along several different dimensions (see for example, Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe 1995), Howe (1992) suggested that the fundamental cause of the “paradigm war” was the difference in perception between positivists and interpretivists with respect to the nature of causation: positivists adopt a mechanistic explanation of causation whereas interpretivists argue that intentionality is a prime causal factor in social behaviour. According to Howe, an intentionalist stance requires:

making sense out of how explanations of human behavior in terms of beliefs, hopes, fears - that is, states of mind in general- can count as genuinely causal explanations.

Howe 1992, p. 240

The acceptance of qualitative/ interpretivist research as an equally legitimate and valid way to conduct research has been given impetus by the postmodernist movement (Kroeze 2012). Although there is no agreed body of concepts that describe post-modernism (Cheek and Gough 2005), the essence of this world-view is that it rejects the notion that objective knowledge of the world is possible, asserts that there is no absolute truth and that the way people perceive the world is subjective (Rosenau 1992). Apparent realities, according to postmodernism, are social constructs mediated by language (Marsonet 1995), power relations and human agency (Davies and Gannon 2005). Thus reality is regarded as subject to change and, therefore, postmodernism stresses constructivism, relativism, pluralism and skepticism in its approaches to knowledge and understanding. Interpretivism is closely associated with (methodological) constructivism and thus the two terms may at times be used interchangeably in this study.

Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge (2007) provide a succinct overview of qualitative/interpretive research:

1. Tends to focus on how people or groups of people can have (somewhat) different ways of looking at reality (usually social or psychological reality).
2. Takes account of complexity by incorporating the real-world context - can take different perspectives on board.
3. Studies behaviour in natural settings or uses people's accounts as data; usually no manipulation of variables.
4. Focuses on reports of experience or on data which cannot be adequately expressed numerically.
5. Focuses on description and interpretation and might lead to development of new concepts or theory or to an evaluation of an organisational process.
6. Employs a flexible, emergent but systematic research process.

Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge 2007 p. 6

Teacher professional identity, as discussed in the preceding chapter, is bound up in the intentional, motivational and valuational nature of the self-concept. Primarily for this reason, I have chosen to conduct this study under a phenomenological/ interpretivist/ qualitative paradigm. According to Rosenberg (1989) “phenomenology offers an alternative paradigm that focuses on the subjective worlds of actors placing the self-concept ‘at the center of the individual's phenomenal field’ rather than being irrelevant to it”. Titchen and Hobson (2005) describe a phenomenon as anything that a human being can live or experience and phenomenology as the study this lived experience “within the everyday social contexts in which the phenomena occur from the perspective of those who experience them” (p 121).

Interpretivism

Although I have used the terms qualitative, interpretivist and phenomenological interchangeably, interpretivism is a variety of the qualitative approach to research that seeks to develop understanding of a phenomenon by acquiring data about the phenomenon in a holistic, situated manner (Kelliher 2005). Mertens (2005) suggests that interpretivism developed out of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology and the hermeneutics of Wilhelm Diltheys and other German philosophers. While Husserl treated phenomenology as a descriptive, quasi-scientific method of arriving at the truth about human phenomena, Heidegger, a student and critic of Husserl developed a strain of phenomenology that stresses the importance of interpretation of the phenomena. For this reason, this strain of phenomenology is often referred to as interpretive or hermeneutic phenomenology (Bradbury-Jones 2009). This study is cast in the hermeneutic vein because it seeks to interpret rather than just describe the views of a group of teachers on matters related to their occupational/professional identity.

Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions

An interpretivist approach rests on several ontological and epistemological assumptions which should be made explicit. Ontologically, interpretivism is predicated on the notion that reality is subjective. Brummet (1976) suggests that there are three types of reality: objective reality, subjectivity and intersubjective reality. Objective reality, according to Brummet, is the notion that reality is “out there”; that is it “exists absolutely and apart from

mind, the observer's intentions, or tools of observation, and [that] this objective reality is mechanical, causal, and necessary" (p.22). This position characterizes what is generally termed "positivism". Subjectivity is the notion that the only true picture we can obtain of reality is from oneself and oneself alone, a view which, in its pure form, is described as "solipsism" (Tuomela 1989). On the other hand, inter-subjectivity according to Brummer, holds that reality is the product of the shared meaning individuals attach to both objects and events; it differs from subjectivity in that whereas in the latter, meaning is derived from oneself alone, in the former, meaning is constructed in interaction with others (Brummet 1976; Prus 1996). Teacher professional identity is defined in this study in terms of the self-knowledge, claims and recognitions derived from the teacher's understanding of "professional" and what this means by extension to the occupation of teaching. As conceptualized, teacher professional identity is treated in this study as an inter-subjective reality because although, self-knowledge, claims and recognitions are essentially cognitive in nature, these cognitions are socially constructed by interaction with others and shared by teachers through what Schatzki (1988) calls "interrelated ongoing lives". Therefore, interpretivists focus on explaining and understanding what is unique to individuals or sets of individuals, rather than what is general or universal. They reject positivistic assumptions that reality is separate from the individual, that the social world can be understood by reducing it to a few measurable components and that there is only one type of approach that can be used to get at the truth about social reality.

Epistemologically, interpretivism holds that knowledge is socially constructed (Gergen 1985; Kuhn 1970). In fact, what counts as knowledge of given phenomenon in any discipline at any point in time is often a matter of consensus within that discipline (Fish 1991). Conceptions of knowledge, therefore, can and do change; often those changes are quite dramatic. Examples exist both in the natural sciences as well as in the social sciences. For instance, Newton's classical particle physics has been superseded by quantum mechanics (Stapp 2006). Similarly, in the social sciences, the dominance of behaviourism has been checked by the ascendance of cognitivism in the psychology of learning (Sperry 1993; Harzem 2004).

Interpretivist/ constructivist research, therefore, places emphasis on methods that require the researcher to immerse himself or herself as deeply as possible in the situation of those being studied because it is out of this that meaning is constructed (Patton 2002). It is

associated with several different methods, that is, collections of techniques for sampling, collecting data, analyzing and presenting data. Data collection methods include participant observation, in depth interviews and focus interviews (focus groups). Analytical techniques include content analysis, discourse analysis, grounded theory and thematic framework analysis. In some cases, a particular technique may actually consist of a combination of methods for addressing two or more of these stages. For example, grounded theory utilizes the collection of qualitative data, the employment of an array of analytical procedures such as coding, constant comparison, theoretical saturation and categorization (Glaser 1965; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe 1995; Soulliere, Britt and Maines 2001). At the same time, interpretivists acknowledge the role of the researcher's subjectivity in interpreting phenomenological data.

Rationale for Interpretivist Approach

The use of a qualitative/interpretivist approach in this study is predicated on three main points of justification. First, it is consistent with my reading of the inter-subjective nature of teacher professional identity which I outlined earlier. Second, a qualitative/interpretivist approach has the ability to yield rich insights about complex realities (Peshkin 1988; Flick, Flick, Kardorff and Steinke 2004). Professional identity is, without doubt, a complex reality. Third, interpretivist/qualitative methods are more appropriate in research situations where theories are underdeveloped and concepts are vague (Powell and Single 1996;Quddus 2007). This is particularly relevant to this study because, as explained in the preceding chapter, there is little agreement on what constitutes teacher professional identity or, for that matter, teacher professionalism. Accordingly, my study seeks to develop the notion of teacher professional identity from its fuzzy state to a more precise concept as called for by a number of scholars and as discussed in Chapter 3. It is an exercise in conceptualization and, therefore, an exercise in basic theory development. However, it is not an exercise in pure grounded theory. Grounded theory attempts to develop a theory of a phenomenon by developing a set of categories from themes lifted from the data; ostensibly, reference to any *a priori* knowledge is avoided (Glaser 1965; Glaser and Houlton 2004). In contrast, this study uses *a priori* categories as its starting point in the development of a conceptualization of teacher professional identity. Some explanation for this approach is warranted.

Steinke (2004) studied the issue of prior or *ex-ante* hypotheses in qualitative research and made several suggestions. She suggested that such qualitative hypotheses should be seen as a specific case of the general concept of “prior knowledge”. While recognizing the possibility that prior knowledge can influence the researcher’s sensitivity to the data, she asserts that qualitative researchers inevitably bring their prior knowledge to their research even in “setting up the field”. In support of this, she cites Glaser and Strauss’ admission that their 1965 work, *Awareness of Dying*, was assisted by their prior knowledge of the subject. Steinke further argues that, “the very openness of...[qualitative] methods” raises the possibility that inappropriate prior knowledge “would be exposed as such in the course of the study” (p. 155). The author concludes that opposition to *ex-ante* hypotheses is “epistemologically untenable and has restricted the applicability of qualitative research”; qualitative methodologies, she suggests, should be flexible enough to allow researchers to represent the categories used by the subjects of a piece of research while explicitly accounting for their prior knowledge because “it is only possible, in all cases, to understand the categories of others on the basis of one’s own categories” (p.156)

Steinke’s line of argument is very pertinent to the design of this piece of research. Most of the studies on teacher professional identity have been modelled on the qualitative/grounded theory approach although several quantitative studies and mixed studies (see for example, Flores and Day 2006) have also been carried out (Beijaard et al. 2004). In my view, the current state of understanding of teacher professional identity warrants some departure from previous approaches; hence the explicit conceptual and interpretive framework worked out in advance in Chapter 3. My conceptualization of teacher professional identity is essentially a statement of preliminary categories that will be compared to the categories that emerge from the empirical data to be generated and analyzed. At the same time, I recognize the importance of being theoretically sensitive by not forcing the *a priori* categories onto the themes that will emerge from this data.

Methodological Decisions and Their Alignment

Besides issues such as prior knowledge, the variety of approaches and methods by which interpretivist/constructivist research can be pursued have the potential to strain the level of alignment between and among the objectives of the research, the philosophical underpinnings of the research, the paradigm under which it is conducted and the methods used to execute the research. Securing methodological alignment in qualitative research is

potentially more challenging than in quantitative research because of the linear, hypothetico-deductive approach taken in the latter as against the iterative, inductive approach used in qualitative research. The technical and methodological challenge in this study was to find a method that would be: (a) consistent with the nature of professional identity as described in Chapter 3 (b) able to generate the phenomenological data on which to ground teachers' conceptions of occupational/professional identity (c) consistent with the qualitative paradigm and my positionality as well as (d) meet certain standards of research quality.

The terms "method" and "technique" are often used interchangeably (Ambert, Adler, Adler and Detzner 1995; Bryman 1984) and are frequently ill-defined (Mackensie and Knipe 2006). Long, White, Friedman and Brazeal (2000) raise the issue of the difference between the two stating that, "method refers to an approach to or general type of investigation, while technique refers to investigative tools employed" (p. 194). For the purposes of clarity, "method" is used in this study to refer to specific combinations of techniques for accomplishing various tasks at different stages of the research such as sampling, data collection, data analysis and interpretation of data. Contrastingly, "technique" is reserved for specific procedures used to accomplish a particular research task. Thus, in this conceptual scheme, in-depth interviews, case studies, focus groups and surveys are classified as methods.

The focus group method is particularly appropriate to this piece of research for several reasons. First, it is a qualitative method and, therefore, it is consistent with the qualitative paradigm which undergirds this study. Second, focus groups are compatible with a phenomenological approach; according to McLafferty (2004) focus groups give access to "people's common sense conceptions and everyday explanations". Bradbury-Jones, Sambrook and Irvine (2009) argue that focus groups are consistent with the interpretive or hermeneutic phenomenological approach discussed earlier. Citing various sources for support, the authors suggest that it might actually be advantageous to blend focus groups and phenomenology. Among the advantages they list for this combination are: the opportunity for reflection, the enrichment of data by the interaction of participants (see also Rabiee 2004), the opportunity for cross-checking of experiences and the enrichment of stories as participants add their own perspectives. In this way, focus groups serve to

“validate the points being raised as shared experiences” (p.5). Morgan (1996) reinforces this point:

Until they interact with others on a topic, individuals are often simply unaware of their own implicit perspectives. Moreover, the interaction in the group may present the need to explain or defend one’s perspective to someone who thinks about the world differently. Using focus groups to create such interactions gives the researcher a set of observations that is difficult to obtain through other methods.

Morgan 1996, p. 46

Third, the use of focus groups has the potential to provide some access to individual perspectives on professional identity as well as to the level of consensus among participants. Consensus is a distinctive property of focus groups (Morgan 1996) and is the product of focus group interaction (Kitzinger 1994; Sim 1998). Consequently, focus groups are consistent with the ontological assumption that professional identity is inter-subjective and the epistemological supposition that knowledge is socially constructed. Fourth, focus groups generate data that are amenable to thematic analysis (Rabiee 2004; Thomas, MacMillan, McColl, Hale and Bond 1995). Given the overall research logic being employed in this study, it is important that the data generation method chosen provides the opportunity to develop themes grounded on empirical data in contrast to those developed from the literature. Finally, focus groups are thought to have a high level of face validity because “what participants say can be confirmed, reinforced or contradicted within the group discussion” (Webb and Kevurn 2000 p. 800).

Nature of Focus Groups

Despite their widespread use by marketing researchers, focus groups did not enjoy the same level of acceptance in academia in general as individual in-depth interviews and surveys until the 1990s (Williams and Katz 2001). However, they have found use in several segments of academia: communication studies, political science, public health, education and sociology (Morgan 1996).

Various definitions have been suggested for focus groups (Morgan 1997). For the purposes of this study the following definition was adopted:

[A focus group is] a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research.

Powell, Single and Lloyd 1996 p. 499

It has been suggested that it is important to distinguish between a focus group and other group interviewing processes (Gibbs 1997). According to Gibbs, Merton and Kendall's 1946 influential article on the "focused" interview "set the parameters for focus group development". Gibbs reports Merton and Kendall as advocating three characteristics that should distinguish focus group interviews from other forms of interviews: (1) participants have a specific experience of or opinion about the topic being investigated (2) an explicit moderation guide is used; and (3) "the subjective experiences of participants are explored in relation to predetermined research questions".

In my view, it is not helpful to think of a focus group as a set of simultaneous in-depth interviews because this tends to privilege in-depth interviews against focus groups by associating "depth" with the individual interviews at the expense of focus groups. In this study, I refer to this method simply as "focus groups" unless I am citing a particular author that uses an alternative term. A focus group is best thought of as an interactive discussion (Smithson 2000) facilitated by a moderator where the main purpose is to have a small group of persons talk about a topic (Kitzinger 1994). The role of the moderator is to help the group focus on the topic by describing what the topic is about and by ensuring that subsequent discussion stays focused on the topic. The latter is accomplished by use of a short list of pre-determined questions as well as questions generated as the discussion proceeds. Additionally, the moderator, like the interviewer in an in-depth interview, can probe the responses of participants. Participants are also free to question or respond to each other so that the opportunity for interaction among participants distinguishes focus groups from both in-depth interviews and surveys.

Focus Groups versus Other Methods

Focus groups are often compared to other research methods such as individual (in-depth) interviews and surveys (Kitzinger 1995; Morgan 1996). The focus group has an advantage over individual interviews in that it generates individual responses as well as interactive

data which can be analyzed for levels of consensus or disagreement. This is accomplished by analyzing not only what individual participants say, but also the response to other participants statements –for example, whether they appear agree or disagree with particular participants - the perceived emotional strength of participants contributions as well as other non-verbal behaviour.

The focus group method offers more depth than possible with surveys (Morgan 1996) which often consist of a relatively large number of questions with pre-determined answers referred to as “closed questions”. Unlike most survey questions, focus group questions are "open", meaning that the answers are not pre-determined; additionally, the moderator can probe the answers given thus going beyond the core questions being asked. They allow researchers to elicit information in ways which permit them to find out why an issue is salient, as well as what is salient about it (Morgan 1988 in Gibbs 1997). But this advantage of focus groups comes at the expense of breadth; most focus groups guides consist of about six to eight questions on average.

Focus Group Data

Related to the above is the issue of volume of data collected in a single focus group (Morgan 1996). Typically, an assumption is made that an in-depth interview generates more data than a focus group. Rabiee (2004) asserts that focus groups are usually able to generate a large volume of data in a short space of time and Morgan (1996), in a critical reviews of focus groups as a method, cites studies by Fern (1982) which suggest that a single focus group of eight persons is able to generate as much data as five individual interviews. However, this does not account for the data generated from focus group dynamics such as the degree of consensus or dissent which cannot be obtained from individual interviews (Rabiee 2004). It must acknowledged, though, that the depth of individual detail in a focus group may not be as great as in an individual interview although it is accepted that is greater than that from a survey (Morgan 1996). The tentative conclusion that can be drawn from this is that even a single focus group can generate an acceptable amount of data. However, this point should not be overplayed because it is effectively pitting quantity against quality of data. What is more important is that the data generated must be capable of yielding answers to the research questions being pursued; therefore, both quantity and quality must be balanced.

It should also be noted that interaction among participants, regarded as distinctive feature of focus groups, serves to generate an additional amount of data. In focus groups, participants express their ideas not only verbally but via several non-verbal methods e.g. nodding of heads, laughing, raising of the voice, censoring other participants, etc. (Wellings, Braniga and Mitchell 2000). Consequently, the data generated from a focus group consists of two types: (1) the oral responses of individual participants and (2) the interaction or group dynamics.

Focus Group Limitations

Like any other research method, focus groups have their limitations. In contrast to an individual interview, it is less feasible to engage in detailed probing of individual participants' responses in a focus group because of the need to "focus" on the topic at hand, the risk of loss of interest by other participants while probing individuals and the average two hour limit (Kitzinger 1995) on the length of a typical focus group discussion. Second, although focus groups are compatible with a phenomenological approach, it is acknowledged that a focus group is not a substitute for a naturalistic setting:

The focus group is not a natural social setting even when groups of friends or colleagues are convened in a 'natural' setting such as one of the participant's homes or a workplace cafeteria. Nor is the discussion in a focus group a 'natural' conversation since few 'natural' conversations focus on a single topic for such a sustained period of time under the direction, active or passive, of a moderator.

Catterall and Maclaran 1997, unpaginated [online]

However, as Kitzinger implies, moderation plays a key role in mitigating this supposed weakness:

Rather than assuming the group session unproblematically and inevitably reflects 'everyday interactions'...the group should be used to encourage people to engage with one another, verbally formulate their ideas and draw out the cognitive structures which previously have been unarticulated.

Kitzinger 1994 p.106

Other perceived drawbacks of focus groups include the potential for convergence of opinion over time in the focus group (Sim 1998), the potential dominance of one person in the groups as well as the interaction effects between the moderator and the group (Morgan 1996). These and other issues can be addressed directly and indirectly by the attention paid to the overall design of a focus group study.

Focus Group Design

According to Morgan (1996), in order to optimize the benefits of a study utilizing focus groups, it is important to apply an appropriate design; the author suggests that “an emphasis on research design...would generate explicit principles that would replace the “rules of thumb” that have guided past practice” (p. 41). Whether this state of the art has been achieved is doubtful. According to one scholar, “while there are many statements of ‘good practice’ in the application of focus groups in social research settings, some of the advice is conflicting” (Freeman 2006).

Morgan decomposes the focus group design issue into two major sets of decisions: project level decisions and group-level design issues. The author identifies three project-level decisions: (1) number of groups (2) sampling which is tied to group composition and (3) standardization. Two group level decisions were also identified: (1) group size and (2) moderator control. In the following sections these issues are dealt with under the headings of multiple focus groups and focus group composition respectively rather than as listed.

Single versus Multiple Focus Groups

There is little agreement over how many focus groups should be used in a piece of research. Powell and Single (1996) suggest one to ten groups, Kitzinger (1995) Morgan (1996) suggests a minimum number of three to four groups per project; Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech and Zoran 2009 suggest a minimum of three. However, this dimension of focus group design depends on several factors such as the aim of the research complexity of the topic, the existence of naturally occurring groups and the importance of the decisions arising from the research (Powell and Single 1996). In my view, the use of single or multiple focus groups is intimately related to the collateral issue of the composition of the group, that is, whether it is to be homogeneous or heterogeneous. I examine this issue next.

Homogeneous Vs Heterogeneous Groups

Some focus group researchers, for example, Khan, Anker, Patel, Barge, Sadhwani and Kehle (1991) advocate the use of homogeneous groups, a design in which a focus group is composed of similar persons, for example, similar gender or similar occupations. Other scholars, for example, Kitzinger (1995) and Powell and Single (1996) suggest heterogeneous focus groups which is a design that puts participants of mixed characteristics, for example, different genders or social strata, into one group.

Whether to use homogeneous or heterogeneous groups is an important design factor that is predicated primarily on purpose of the study, the researcher's prior knowledge of the characteristics of the population from which the focus group sample is to be drawn and other logistical matters such as data analysis and reporting. For example, if the purpose of the research is to study views on a topic where gender is thought to be a factor likely to influence participants' views, then the principle of homogeneous grouping suggests that at least two focus groups should be formed: one consisting of males and one of females. On the other hand, the principle of heterogeneous grouping would call for at least one group consisting of males and females.

There are relative advantages to using multiple homogeneous focus groups as well as using heterogeneous groups as in the type of scenario described above. The use of two separate homogeneous groups would probably make participants in either group feel less inhibited to contribute to the discussion. In some cultures, females might be more inhibited in the presence of males whereas in others, women may be more assertive or may simply be accorded more deference by men in the context of a group. On the other hand, the use of one heterogeneous group consisting of both genders has the potential of providing richer interaction between the two sub-groups especially if it turns out that the two genders have markedly different views. More importantly, it would allow the researcher to "observe" the active construction of consensus or dissent between different sub-groups such as gender, occupation or status. However, this strategy could potentially make the analysis more complex in that more effort may have to be exerted to assess the degree of consensus or dissent in the focus group.

Additionally, it might be logistically easier to report the views of two different groups – males versus females - than it is to report the views of one large group consisting of both genders where interaction between the genders would have to be accounted for; on the

other hand, producing an integrated report out of separate focus groups may also present problems. As Barbour and Schostak (2005) have pointed out, “treating focus group data as if they can simply be aggregated and ‘multiplied up’ is to overlook the importance of group dynamics”.

The use of multiple focus groups can be justified on several grounds: where theory building is the objective, where the researcher has identified different characteristics that can lead to markedly different views and the researcher wants those views to have a voice and finally, where ease of reporting is desired. However, where different characteristics are non-existent or unimportant to the research question or alternatively, where the researcher wants to obtain richer interaction or where there is need to focus on consensus development, the use of heterogeneous focus groups, carefully chosen, may be a more appropriate design.

The number of focus groups and the composition of individual focus groups are, in part, reciprocal decisions: if homogeneous groupings are desired then multiple focus groups will be required if the population consists of multiple characteristics. On the other hand, if heterogeneous groups are used then one or more focus groups can be used depending on the complexity of the population and other factors such as overall objective of the study. The use of a single focus group in a research study is not without precedent. For example, Howard, Hubelbank and Moore (1989) employed a single focus group to evaluate student performance after graduation.

Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech and Zoran (2009) have suggested that the use of multiple focus groups can be considered a proxy in achieving saturation in grounded theory development. In this methodological arrangement three focus groups are suggested as being adequate to achieve the data saturation requirement of grounded studies. According to these authors, the first group will be used for developing preliminary themes and the other two for testing. However, they do not explain how they arrived at the number "three" or cite any studies that demonstrate that saturation is achieved on average with the use of three focus groups. This is another one of those rules of thumb to which Morgan (1996) has alluded. It should also be borne in mind that the original grounded theory procedures outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967) called for the collection of data *until* (emphasis mine) saturation had been achieved. Onwuegbuzie and colleagues are also silent on the matter of how many focus groups should be used where the objective is not to build a

grounded theory but where, for example, the researcher may want to validate preliminary categories developed outside of the focus group as is the case with this study.

Focus Group Composition and Sampling Considerations

From the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that the choice of number of focus groups and the composition of focus groups are intimately interrelated and highly dependent on whether homogeneous or heterogeneous grouping is being used. Naturally, the aim of the study and the overall research logic should figure prominently in making these decisions. Once the homogeneity/ heterogeneity decision has been taken, it determines the overall character of the composition of the focus group. The remaining task is to select the specific participants for the focus group. Given the overall logic of this research I chose a single heterogeneous group. As I explained earlier, this is not without precedent. The next decision was to determine the actual composition of the group. This involved addressing the concept of sampling and the collateral issue of representativeness. Both of these are linked to generalizability; therefore, I examine this topic next.

Generalizability of Focus Group Data

A perceived issue with focus groups, and one thought to be common to all qualitative research, is the difficulty of generalizing their findings. With respect to focus groups, this is believed to be attributable to the small sample sizes used and the probability that the participants will not be a representative sample on account of the purposive sampling design typically used (Gibbs 1999). In essence, this is a circular argument which proceeds as follows: qualitative research is not meant to be generalizable, therefore, small samples are chosen; however, since small samples are chosen one cannot generalize from qualitative research. Some scholars, in contrast, suggest that it quite possible to generalize from qualitative data (Williams 2000; Gibbert, Ruigrok, and Wicki 2008) and, therefore, this presumed limitation of focus groups needs to be subjected to critical analysis.

Generalizability is typically treated as the extent that findings from the sample can be applied to the population from which it is drawn or similar populations. It is “grounded in the intuitive belief that theories must be shown to account for phenomena not only in the setting in which they are studied, but also in other settings” (Gibbert, Ruigrok, and Wicki 2008 p.1468). In *Interpretivism and Generalization*, Williams (2000) argues that interpretivists do generalize, although they may deny or ignore this, and that it is not only

possible to generalize in interpretivist research but it is often desirable to do so. The author argues that it is pointless for qualitative researchers to expend the time, effort and other resources they do if the findings of the research cannot be used outside of the setting in which they are conceived. Using two pieces of ethnographic research, Williams demonstrates that even when qualitative researchers do not explicitly claim any kind of generalization, good research findings are able to “say something” beyond the immediate setting in which they were generated.

Statistical Versus Analytical Generalization

Nevertheless, a distinction is made between statistical generalization and analytical generalization (Gibbert, Ruigrok, and Wicki 2008). Statistical generalization is generalization from the sample to the population from which it is drawn. In theory, at least, statistical generalization requires that the sample from which the findings are derived be statistically representative of the entire population. This concept will be explored later. Analytical generalization differs from statistical generalization in that it refers to generalization from empirical observations to theory, (Gibbert, Ruigrok and Wicki 2008). This type of generalization is consistent with grounded theory. However, in contrast to a pure grounded theory in which the researcher is supposed to free himself or herself from any preconceptions prior to entering the field, my research starts off with *a priori* categories, the aim being to compare such categories with those that emerge from the analysis of empirical data and in so doing validate or modify the theoretical categories derived from the literature. But given that generalization involves a sample and a population, any discussion of generalization must make reference to the principles of sampling.

Sampling and Representativeness

Sample size and sampling procedure are the two major issues in sampling. Sampling procedure deals with the method by which respondents or participants are selected. Together with sample size and representativeness, sampling procedure helps to determine the actual composition of a sample. Whereas sample sizes in quantitative research can be determined with the aid of mathematical formulae (see for example, Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe 1995 and Kinnear and Taylor 1985), no such facility obtains in qualitative research. Sample sizes used in qualitative research tend to be small. Some scholars recommend that a focus group should consist of a minimum of eight persons and a

maximum of twelve persons (Kinnear and Taylor 1985); others suggest six to ten persons (Rabiee 2004) and others (Wilson 1997) consider six to eight participants as ideal. In giving effect to these guidelines, I decided to limit my focus group to about nine persons because I felt that this would allow reasonable interaction among participants but, at that same time, allow each participant enough time to effectively participate.

As discussed earlier, when heterogeneous groups are used, the researcher has to ensure that characteristics likely to influence the views of participants on the topic to be discussed are represented in the focus group. This is consistent with the requirements of a phenomenological approach:

With regard to the process of enquiry, the phenomenologist has only one legitimate source of data, and that is the views and experiences of the participants themselves...Furthermore, participants are selected only if they have lived the experience under study. Sampling is therefore purposive and prescribed from the start...

Goulding 2005 p 302

The Collins Concise Dictionary (2001) defines "represent" as "to stand as an equivalent of" or "to exhibit the characteristics of". The same source defines a "representative" as "a typical example of" (p.1272). From a lexical point of view, therefore, representativeness can be taken to mean the extent to which someone exhibits the characteristics of a group or other collective and, therefore, is a typical example of such a group. Consequently, when a sample of respondents is drawn from a population, it is expected that the sample members will be typical of the members of the population.

It is important to stress that "typical" does not necessarily mean "identical" or "exactly alike. Gobo (2004) makes the point that it is necessary to distinguish between a "sample" and a "representative sample". To make this distinction, the author uses two contrasting examples: drawing a single macaroni from a pot and using an examination written by a student as a sample. Gobo argues that a single macaroni is likely to be representative in the sense that it mirrors or is identical to all the macaroni in the pot. I assume he means with regard to the degree to which they are cooked. In contrast, a candidate's knowledge of a syllabus, as evidenced by the candidate's performance on an examination script, is unlikely to be representative of his or her knowledge of the entire syllabus. This second

example is much more complex and revealing than the first one for, although Gobo does not point this out, it is unlikely that the examination itself is composed of a "census" or complete set of all the knowledge in the syllabus. Therefore, the net effect is that the candidate's performance is a sample of his or her knowledge of a sample of the entire syllabus.

Randomness and Sampling

In mainstream positivistic research, efforts are usually made to select a representative sample by ensuring randomness in the selection process (Gobo 2004; Guba and Lincoln 1994). Consequently, consideration has to be given to both the procedures used to select a sample and knowledge of the population from which the sample is drawn. However, randomness is often confused with convenience; a random sample is one where each member of the population of interest has an equal chance of being selected in the sample; a convenience sample, on the other hand, is one where the researcher selects sample members on the basis of judgement, availability or some other subjective criterion (Teddle and Yue 2007) so that each member of the population does not have an equal chance of being selected.

Another subtle issue which needs to be addressed is the fact that a random sample is not necessarily a representative sample. This can be illustrated by the following scenario in which one has to select a representative sample size of five from a population of twenty females and five males. Some of the possible random sample compositions are as follows:

1. Five males;
2. Five females;
3. Three males and two females;
4. Four males and one female
5. Four females and one male.

The reader will probably agree that, of the five samples listed above, only the last sample could in any way be deemed representative, even though the samples might have been selected at random. In one sense, such a sample is "statistically representative" because the number of males and females in the sample are proportional to those in the population. However, does this mean that the views expressed in the data collected from this random and "representative" sample will be typical of both the males and females in the population? Gobo (2004) argues in the negative and goes on to show how standard

statistical sampling in positivistic research hardly ever produces a representative sample. For true representativeness, Gobo argues that the characteristics of interest in the population must be represented in the sample. However, he indicates that this calls for knowledge of the population which, more often than not, is impossible to obtain, especially in social research.

As we do not know how characteristics concerning emotions, attitudes, opinions and behaviour are distributed in the population, aiming at statistical representativeness of samples is technically groundless. Is there a population list on authoritative or unselfish behaviour?

Gobo 2004 p.440.

Surrogacy and Representativeness

Given the weaknesses inherent in statistical representativeness and its corollary, statistical sampling, recourse is often made to purposive sampling. This is a type of sampling where respondents are selected on the basis of their ability to provide the kind of data necessary to address the research question (Teddlie and Yu 2007). However, the basis or bases the researcher uses to determine the ability of members of a population to provide the required data, is an issue that must be addressed. Teddlie and Yu examined several different approaches to purposive sampling and showed they can be combined to achieve representativeness. For the purposes of my study, I used a variant of purposive sampling which I refer to as “surrogate sampling”.

A surrogate is “a person or thing acting as a substitute” (Collins Contemporary Dictionary 2001). Therefore, a surrogate variable is one that is used in place of the true variable or characteristic. The notion of surrogacy is used extensively in the real world. We refer to surrogate mothers, teachers are regarded as surrogate parents and there are slightly different forms of surrogacy such as deputies. Surrogacy is also used extensively in various types of analyses. For example, in forecasting it occurs in the form of “leading indicators”; housing approvals, for instance, are used as such an indicator to gauge the demand for mortgages. In chemistry, surrogate materials are sometimes used in experiments in place of human tissue such as the skin (Soutar, Semple, Aitken and Robertson 2000). Demographics constitute another frequent set of surrogate variables and are used very often in positivistic as well as qualitative research. Traditional consumer behaviour analysis, for example, employs the idea that demographics such as age, gender

or social class can provide insight into market requirements or purchase behaviour. Yet, except in obvious cases, for example, babies needing particular types of clothing or food, the use of demographics is effectively the use of surrogacy since they (demographics) stand in place of and, to some extent, are indicative of the real behaviour which marketing researchers want to study.

Sampling and Recruitment Procedures Used

Since there is no exiting list of professional identity characteristics anywhere in Barbados that might be used as a basis for sampling, a variant of purposive sampling employing surrogate characteristics was used to select focus group members. Gender, training and level at which potential participants taught- primary, secondary or tertiary- were thought to be surrogate characteristics likely to be important in influencing an individual teacher's views of professional identity. Consequently, I used these as criteria for choosing focus group participants.

Gender

Teaching has been shown to be a highly feminized occupation in several countries (Griffiths 2006; Fischman 2007); in Barbados this is no exception. Part of this revolves around the notion that teaching is a caring occupation and the feminine identity is projected as constituted primarily as caring and emotional. Some studies suggest that the professional concerns of male teachers differ from those of females (see for example, Cushman 2005). For this reason, it is important to include the perspective of both genders in a focus group design. In Barbados the proportion of females to males varies from primary to secondary schools. In primary schools it is 80%:20% whereas in secondary schools it is more evenly distributed 59%: 41%. The overall the ratio is approximately 70:30 (Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, *Miniature Digest 2009 – 2010* available online).

Figure 5: Public School Teachers by Gender

School Type	Male	%	Female	%	TOTAL
Pre-primary & Primary	349	20%	1,421	80%	1,770
Secondary	564	41%	814	59%	1,378
Total	913	29%	2,235	71%	3,148

SOURCE: Adapted from Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development, *Miniature Digest 2009 – 2010*

Therefore, I designed my selection process with the intention that the focus group would contain males and females in roughly the same proportion as the teaching population.

Educational Level

Flores and Day (2006) has suggested that teachers' professional identity is shaped by the contingencies of the different contexts in which they function, for example, school leadership, student behaviour and school culture. Primary, secondary and tertiary institutions represent different teaching contexts and therefore, representation was sought from all of these levels. Attempts were made to solicit teachers from private schools but this was unsuccessful. This was not considered a major drawback because of the very small percentage of private schools that remain in the island. According to the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (2009) there are nine private schools on the island offering a mix of primary and secondary education as against 100 public primary and secondary schools. In any event, private schools are expected to follow the national curriculum and their method of organization is similar to that in public schools.

Training and Experience

Teacher training has been shown to be an important factor in developing the identity of teachers because it contributes to the development of self-efficacy, commitment and professional orientation (see, for example, Schepens, Aelterman and Vlerick 2009). With respect to training, therefore, it was stipulated that eligible participants must have had at least four years of teaching experience and that each must possess either the Erdiston Teachers Certificate or the Diploma in Education, the former being the traditional qualification acquired by primary teachers and the latter by secondary school teachers. These two conditions were stipulated to ensure that participants would have sufficient teaching experience on which to draw in the discussion. However, given that teachers tend to specialize in primary or secondary education it was not thought necessary to establish any criteria, for example, years in primary vs. secondary vs. tertiary to determine who should be considered as representing these different levels. It should also be noted, however, that some teachers may have experience at more than one school and sometimes at more than one level. For example, teachers at the Barbados Community College are usually recruited from either directly from the professional areas in which they work or from secondary schools.

Focus Group Recruitment

Focus group recruiting is notoriously difficult (Rabiee, 2004), however, I attempted to approach the task in as systematic a manner as possible. A two level sampling frame was designed with the schools divided into districts according to the MOE (Ministry of Education) territorialization scheme. Using the RANDBETWEEN function in Excel a number of schools were chosen from each district. RANDBETWEEN is a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet function that allows a user to draw a set of random digits between two specified numbers. On the second level, a number of male or female teachers were chosen from each school. The intention was to select the required quota from each identified school on the basis of interest in participating as well as the ability to meet the training and experience criteria. This was done for both primary and secondary schools. The assistance of the Principal was sought in forwarding invitations to interested teachers. In those cases where the assistance of Principals was not forthcoming or Principals were uncooperative, another school was selected from the district. However, the specific participants from tertiary institutions including the Barbados Community College, University of the West Indies and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic were selected purely on a convenience basis.

Ethical Issues

The primary ethical issues in social research revolve around informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity (Piper and Simons 2005). To achieve informed consent, prospective participants were sent an email invitation which had attached a description of the research as required (Appendix A) and a consent form (Appendix B). The description of the research outlined its purpose, explained how participant data would be collected, the appropriate length of time the interviews would last and the limitations of the use to which that data would be put. Prospective participants were assured of anonymity in reporting of the data and the security of the data captured from the focus group. All of these steps were documented in accordance with Sheffield University's ethical procedures. Potential participants were asked to submit an online Expression of Interest form which served the dual purpose of providing basic information about themselves and vetting their eligibility to participate in the focus group. Consent forms were returned by email but participants signed them in person at the beginning of the focus group session.

Focus Group Composition

The actual focus group comprised of five males and three females. The initial number recruited to the focus group was eleven persons. One female (secondary school) and one female (primary school) indicated that they would be unavailable just before the date of the focus group and could not be replaced at such short notice. Another female (secondary school) simply did not show on the date of the focus group resulting in a final group size of eight persons. Three participants were from primary schools, three were members of staff of secondary schools and the others were from tertiary institutions.

Figure 6: Actual Focus Group Composition

Demographic	Participant Code							
	D	M	C	W	H	T	N	A
Gender	M	M	M	M	M	F	F	F
Institution	S	T	T	P	S	P	S	P
Training	DE	DE	EC	EC	EC	EC	ME	AD
Experience (Years)	10 -19	10 -19	20 -29	10 - 19	>30	20-29	10 -19	4 - 9

KEY: S= Secondary P = Primary School T = Tertiary DE= Diploma in Education EC = Erdiston Certificate
ME= Master of Education AD= Associate Degree in Education

One of the teachers included in primary belongs to a grade officially referred as a special education school. This is a school for the physically challenged where the ages of students range from 5 years to 14. Focus group members possessed either an Erdiston Teachers' Certificate, the Associate Degree in Education, the one year Diploma in Education or Master of Education and four or more years of teaching experience. The Erdiston Teachers' Certificate is the main teacher credential held by primary school teachers whereas the Diploma in Education is the main credential held by secondary school teachers. The Associate Degree in Education which commenced in 2003 is a two year full-time programme that replaces the former Erdiston Teachers' Certificate. Altogether the sample had a combined experience in excess of one hundred and fifty years.

Focus Group Conditions

In order to provide a comfortable atmosphere for participants, the focus group meeting was held in an air-conditioned room in the Language Centre of the Barbados Community College which is a relatively new wing of the campus. This area is set off some distance from the main concourse of the campus and therefore, reduced the possibility of noise interference.

Furniture was arranged horseshoe style so that participants were able to see each other easily as well as the moderator. The focus group discussion was audio recorded and the recording transcribed. An assistant was employed to welcome participants, have them sign their participation agreements as required. The meeting lasted approximately 2 hours.

Questions and Moderation

The research questions to be answered were as follows:

Do Barbadian teachers regard teaching as a profession? Do they regard themselves as "professionals"? Can their perception of themselves as teachers be described in terms of the categories of *claims, recognitions, self-knowledge and emotional involvement*?

In order to address these questions, an indirect data collection approach was used. Kinnear and Taylor (1995) describe indirect data collection as, "an indirect form of questioning in which an environment is created which encourages the respondent to freely project beliefs and feelings regarding the topic of interest." (p. 316). With respect to the execution of this study, this meant that participants were not asked "direct" questions about the major concept investigated, that is, "professional identity". The presentation of the topic as "teaching as an occupation" (See Research Description, Appendix B) facilitated this indirect approach in that it allowed me to pose the type of questions thought necessary to elicit the kind of data required. For example, it was not assumed that participants regarded teaching as a profession; whether or not that was so was to be established by responses to a line of questioning and discussion. For data generation purposes, therefore, the research questions were decomposed into the following subsidiary questions which formed the basis of the moderation guide (see Appendix D):

1. Is teaching a profession, just an occupation or something else?

2. What in, your view, distinguishes a profession from an occupation?
3. Do you as a teacher feel you have any level of autonomy in the classroom?
4. What part do your colleagues play in how you see yourself as a professional?
5. Will the implementation of licensing for teachers make a difference in how you see teaching or see yourself as a teacher?
6. What do you understand by the term professionalism?
7. Has your understanding of teaching as an occupation / profession changed during this focus group. If so in what way?

In addition, the moderator probed answers as necessary; the focus group was moderated by the researcher. Prior to the start of the discussion, participants were given a one page handout the purpose of which was to familiarize them with the nature of focus groups and to encourage them to give their opinion freely. This handout is reproduced in Appendix C. The key purpose for this handout was to encourage participation and diffuse any potential pressure toward 'forced' consensus.

Focus Group Data Analysis

The importance of a practical framework for conducting focus group analysis has been emphasized (Krueger and Casey 2009; Rabiee 2004). At the basic level, some scholars suggest that focus group analysis is amenable to quantitative (viz. statistical) analytical techniques for example, Easterby, Thorpe and Lowe (1995) who argue that qualitative data can be counted and frequencies determined. Others oppose this approach because they regard focus groups as a qualitative methodology and therefore, reason that focus group data must be approached by qualitative analytical techniques. O'Leary (2004) argues that:

["Qualitative" and "quantitative" are] adjectives for types of data and their corresponding modes of analysis, i.e. qualitative data - data represented through words, pictures, or icons analyzed using thematic exploration; and quantitative data - data that is represented through numbers and analyzed using statistics"

O'Leary 2004 cited in Mackensie and Knipe 2006 (unpaginated)

Thus Van Maanen characterizes qualitative data analysis as:

...an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world.

Van Maanen 1983, p. 9 cited in Easterby, Thorpe and Lowe 1995.

In the middle ground are those of the mixed methodology school represented for example, by Schulze (2003) who contend that both approaches can be used even on the same focus group data. LeCompte (2000) acknowledges the special challenge faced in the analysis of qualitative data by juxtaposing it against quantitative analysis methods:

Countable data, such as test scores or the number of males and females or persons of different ethnic affiliation in a group, are relatively easy to analyze by feeding them into a computer program for "analysis." Computers manipulate data mathematically to count items, display variance, and identify relationships between characteristics. Unfortunately, qualitative data sets are more complex and ambiguous than test scores.

LeCompte 2000 p.147

Krueger and Casey also suggest that qualitative data analysis must be sequential in the sense that it must be an "evolving process of enlightenment". However, Rabiee (2004) cautions that the analysis is not linear and that the different parts of the process may intersect each other.

Easterby et.al (1995) suggest a twofold classification of qualitative data analysis methods: content analysis and grounded theory. The former is characterized as method that relies on counting of frequencies and therefore, entails some level of quantitative analysis. The latter is described as a "more open approach to data analysis which is particularly good for working with transcripts" (p.108); it is a set of tools for extracting meaning from qualitative data where the aim is to produce a theory as an end product. The key insight Easterby, Thorpe and Lowe provide and which helps to bring some order to what to the debate on qualitative data analysis methods, is the concept that analytical methods may be differentiated by the *source* of the structure brought to bear on the data. They state that:

In quantitative data analysis an *external* [emphasis mine] structure is brought to bear on the data [whereas]...with qualitative data the structure first has to be derived *from the data* (emphasis mine).

Easterby, Thorpe and Lowe 1995 p. 108.

Lacey and Luff (2007) introduce an alternative approach to the analysis of qualitative data by suggesting that such techniques can be divided into *grounded theory* and *framework analysis*. In contrast to Easterby et al. (1995) Lacey and Luff describe Grounded Theory “as an approach to research as a whole and as such can use a range of different methods”.

Framework Analysis

Srivastava and Thomson (2009) describe framework analysis as a method of qualitative data analysis in which “data is sifted, charted and sorted in accordance with key issues and themes using five steps: familiarization; identifying a thematic framework; indexing; charting; and mapping and interpretation”. They suggest that it is a method that is most appropriate where the research has “specific questions, a limited time frame, a pre-designed sample and a priori issues” (p.72). This is the case with this piece of research. As a method of analysis it intersects with grounded theory in that it uses the technique of thematic analysis where themes or patterns in the data can be unearthed using either an inductive (“bottom up”) approach or a theoretical or deductive approach (top-down) (Braun and Clarke, 2006). These same authors provide a comprehensive description of thematic analysis:

Themes or patterns within data can be identified in one of two primary ways in thematic analysis: in an inductive or “bottom up” way...or in a theoretical or deductive or “top down” way. An inductive approach means the themes identified are strongly linked to the data themselves (as such, this form of thematic analysis bears some similarity to grounded theory). In this approach, if the data have been collected specifically for the research (e.g. via interview or focus group) the themes identified may bear little relationship to the specific question that were asked of the participants.... Inductive analysis is therefore a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame, or the researcher’s analytic preconceptions. In this sense, this form of thematic analysis is data driven...In contrast, a theoretical thematic analysis would tend to be driven

by the researcher's theoretical or analytic interest in the area, and is thus more explicitly analyst-driven.

Braun and Clarke 2006 p. 12

The foregoing provides a definitive statement of the basis of the approach used to analyze the focus group data in this study. In this study, it can be argued that both inductive and deductive approaches were used simultaneously. Whereas techniques such as trawling, and coding were used to lift themes initially from the focus group data (bottom up), these themes were reinterpreted not by further categorizing the initial themes as is expected in a grounded theory study but by comparing them to a pre-determined set of categories developed independently of the data from a review of the identity and professionalism literature. The thematic framework was composed of four main categories: *identity claims*, *recognitions*, *self-knowledge (self-attributes)* and *emotional involvement*

Spradley's Semantic Relationships

In addition to the basic thematic approach used in analyzing the focus group data, Spradley's Semantic Relationships (Figure 7) was employed as an additional underlying framework to elicit meaning from the data. It is a model for facilitating the analysis and interpretation of qualitative data by pre-defining possible relationships between concepts. In Figure 7, X and Y represent different variables or concepts or categories. This grid is able to show relationships of different kinds such as: generalization-specification, cause and effect, processes and sub-processes, whole and part relationships.

Figure 7: Spradley's Semantic Relationships

1	Relationship	X is a kind of Y
2		X is a place in Y
3		X is a part of Y
4	Cause & Effect	X is a result of Y
5		X is a cause of Y
6		X is a reason for Y
7		X is a place for doing Y
8	Procedure	X is used for Y
9		X is a way to do Y
10		X is a stage or step in Y
11	Other	X is a characteristic of Y

Source: Adapted from LeCompte, 2000, p.149

This grid was particularly useful in helping to map concepts to each other. For example, “lack of consistency of credential requirements” was construed as a reason why “teaching was not regarded as a profession”. In some cases, a chain relationship could be identified. For example, “lack of consistency of credential requirements” was a reason why “teaching was not regarded as a profession” which was further reason why “teachers currently have low social status”.

Additionally, the grid was instrumental in helping to map the dialogic data that emanated from the focus group onto the thematic framework. For example, “low social status” was interpreted as a kind of recognition or more appropriately, a "negative" recognition. Similarly, “how I see myself” was offered as a warrant to the claim “I can consider myself to be a professional”.

Analyzing and Integrating Focus Group Dynamics

Whereas much has been written on how to conduct focus groups, very little ink has been expended on how to analyze focus group data (Wilkinson 2004) and much less has been written about how to analyze the dynamics in a focus group compared to how to analyze the verbal responses of participants (Kitzinger 1994). Additionally, the fact that a focus group is a discussion means that there are at least two different types of dynamics possible in such a group: interactions between the moderator and individual participants as well as interactions among participants themselves. There is no agreed definition of focus group dynamics; recommendations for inclusion as dynamics are as diverse as the intonation of a speaker, the speaker’s body language, the interaction between participants and the degree of consensus. Stevens 1996 (cited in Webb and Kevern 2000 p.7) suggests a range of observations that can be made on focus groups.

1. Why, how and when were related issues brought up?
2. What statements seemed to evoke conflict?
3. What were the contradictions in the discussion?
4. What common experiences were expressed?
5. Were alliances formed among group members?
6. Was a particular member or viewpoint silenced?
7. Was a particular view dominant?

8. How did the group resolve disagreements?
9. What topics produced consensus?
10. Whose interests were being represented in the group?
11. How were emotions handled?

Not all of the observations mentioned by Stevens may be appropriate for all focus group studies. It must be borne in mind that the author's suggestions were based on her studies of lesbianism which is a controversial topic likely to generate conflict and provoke contradictions. In addition, it should be noted that neither Stevens nor Webb and Kevern offer any systematic procedures for recording these potential events in a focus group.

Whether individual participants were dominant or acquiescent and whether there was consensus or dissent are prime pieces of data that can also be noted and which can help to shed some light on the dynamics in the discussion (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech and Zoran 2009). However, as Kitzinger (2005) points out, the type of dynamics to which a researcher pays attention depends on his or her background.

Equally as important and problematic as the *nature* of focus group dynamics, is their *role* in analyzing the oral data which, undeniably, is the main data sought from a focus group discussion. Again, there is no definitive guide as to how such dynamics, however conceptualized, should be incorporated into the analysis. The position adopted in this study is that consensus is perhaps one of the key dynamics because it raises issues about what Maxwell (1992) calls the *internal generalizability* of claims from the data. However, the approach to assessing the degree of consensus is not unproblematic.

Micro-Interlocutor Analysis

Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech and Zoran (2009) have proposed micro-interlocutor analysis as a method of analyzing focus group dynamics/interaction data. The authors do not provide a definition of this proposed technique but their discussion indicates that it is aimed at addressing the individual contribution in a focus group and mapping the development of consensus or dissent in the focus group. The principal techniques proposed by the authors for accomplishing this are quasi-statistics and Venn diagrams. They characterize quasi-statistics as the use of descriptive statistics that can be extracted from qualitative data. In justification of the use of this analytical technique, the authors posit that:

..Just as using counts by themselves can be problematic, mainly reporting and describing the themes that emerge from an analysis of focus groups also can be misleading because, to the extent that any themes that might stem from dissenters are ignored, it can lead to unwarranted analytical generalizations...

Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson and Zoran 2009, p.9

Their view is supported by Maxwell (2010) who argues that “numbers give precision to statements about the frequency, amount, or typicality of particular phenomena”. Thus, instead of stating, “The majority of persons agreed that...” these scholars are suggesting that it is better to incorporate quasi-statistics into the interpretation so that more precise statements such as “Ten of twelve persons agreed that...” can be made. I will refer to this approach as “statistical consensus”.

Figure 8: Layout of Consensus Matrix

Focus group Question	Participants							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H

Adapted from Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson and Zoran (2009)

Consistent with their recommendation, Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009) suggested the use of a matrix that shows the responses of individual focus group participants to each question as illustrated in Figure 8. They state that the cells of the matrix should indicate whether the participant agreed/disagreed and whether the participant made a “significant statement” suggesting agreement or dissent.

Statistical versus Implied Consensus

While this recommendation seems theoretically sound, in practice, this statistical approach to consensus, entailing an explicit count of how many persons stated agreement on discrete points, is hindered by several conditions peculiar to focus groups. First, focus group questions are typically not posed in a form to elicit agreement or disagreement but as open questions. Consequently, consensus is related not to questions per se but to the themes or propositions that emerge from these questions. Since the substantive distillation of themes occurs after the focus group discussion is completed, it is extremely difficult, in all but the simplest of discussions, to check for consensus during a focus group exercise. Second, if a

moderator is to make frequent checks for consensus it is likely that the level of spontaneity of the discussion will be retarded and the focus group will be driven in the direction of an *in situ* survey. Third, in developing their answers, participants typically tend to rope in or invoke other concepts or themes. Tracking consensus during a focus group is, therefore, fraught with difficulties.

An alternative to statistical consensus is what I refer to as, "implied consensus". This occurs when a participant, without directly agreeing to a position or statement, appears to accept that position or statements by extending it in some way. This is consistent with Smithson's (2000) concept of collective voice:

A possible way of analysing group processes is by considering opinions in focus groups as being constructed collectively. By 'collective voice', in the way the term is used here, I mean a group process of collaboratively constructing a joint perspective, or argument, which emerges very much as a collective procedure which leads to consensus, rather than as any individual's view.

Smithson 2000 p.109

Therefore, instead of using the approach suggested by Onwuegbuzie et.al (2009), I used the linkages participants made between themes or concepts as a means of assessing the degree of consensus. When a participant linked one theme or proposition to another, I considered this to be, a "significant statement" (in the terms of Onwuegbuzie et al.) that not only enhances the quality of the participant's contribution but acts as an indicator of his or her agreement with the first, if not with both themes or propositions.

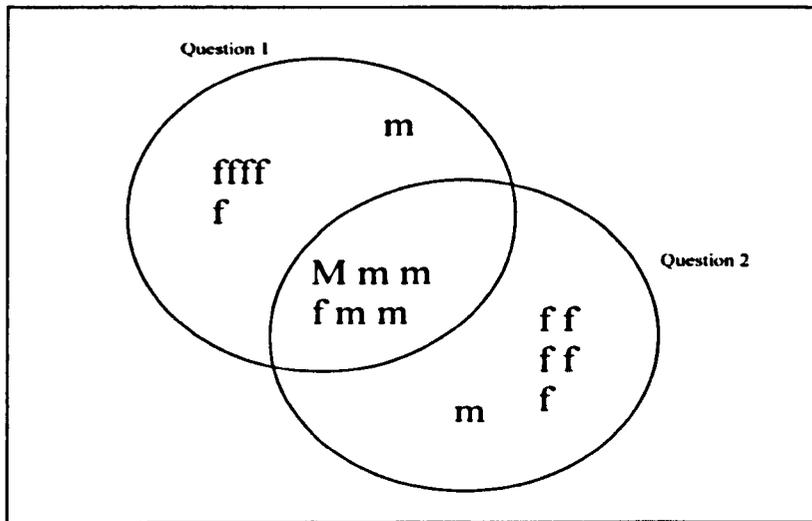
Response Patterns and Spontaneity

The purpose of using Venn diagrams, according to Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009), is to reveal the response pattern of the focus group. Figure 9 is a reproduction of one provided by the authors to illustrate how a Venn diagram can reveal the response pattern between genders in a discussion; the upper case letter shows who was the first speaker on the question. According to the authors, the diagram can be interpreted as showing that males were denominating the discussion pertaining to the first two questions.

While this suggestion is useful, it does not capture a key characteristic of focus group discussion, that is, spontaneity. Since a focus group is not a multiple interview per se it

should achieve some level of spontaneity. There are undoubtedly different ways of conceptualizing spontaneity but, in this study, I define it as whether or not respondents contributed without prompting from the moderator. Therefore, instead of using a Venn diagram to capture the response pattern as suggested by Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009), I constructed a table that not only shows pattern of responses but also whether the contribution was spontaneous or promoted. That table, its interpretation and limitations are shown in the findings chapter which follows.

Figure 9: Venn Diagram of Focus Group Response Patterns



Source: Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson and Zoran (2009) p.12

In keeping with the spirit of the suggestions made by Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009), I developed a table to capture another dimension of the focus group dynamics which I refer to as involvement. Involvement indicates the importance a participant attached to a particular theme and is measured primarily by the number of times the participant dealt with the theme. This was counted by using the SEARCH function of the word processor on the discussion transcript and requesting the programme to highlight occurrences of the word. Given that the transcript was set out in tabular form, it was relatively easy to determine which participant spoke on which theme. The resulting table is shown and discussed in the findings chapter which follows.

Integrating Dynamics and Oral Data

There is no agreed method for incorporating focus group dynamics into the analysis of the oral focus group data but there are at least three logical approaches that might be adopted. The first option is to discuss the dynamics in the focus group separately from the oral responses. While this thematic approach is logical, it is debatable whether this will help

the reader of the research get a sense of how individual strands of the discussion were impacted by the dynamics. The second approach entails interweaving the dynamics into the discussion as it unfolds. This is a more natural approach than the first option, but requires a higher level of presentational skill on the part of the researcher. The third option is to do both: offer a separate preliminary account of the dynamics, or at least some of them, as well as interlace the discussion with dynamics as the discussion unfolds. In this third option, the separate account of the dynamics might be restricted to overarching matters such as the degree of spontaneity, the sequence of responses and the degree of involvement; all other dynamics such as body language or tone of voice, degree of emotionality and the like are interwoven into the report of the discussion as they occur. This is the approach used in analyzing and reporting the findings of this research.

Research Quality

In this final section I discuss the matter of the quality of this research. Research quality is typically conceived as the extent to which a piece of research meets accepted criteria; alternatively it may be construed as the degree to which the research is free from bias (Wortman 1994), is credible (Golafshani 2003) or trustworthy (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Research quality is important to both quantitative and qualitative research but whether the sorts of criteria originating in quantitative research are applicable to qualitative enquiry has been fiercely debated. In this regard, three different positions on quality in qualitative research are apparent (Steinke 2004).

The first and oldest position is that the quality criteria of quantitative research such as objectivity, validity and reliability are applicable to qualitative research (Seale 1999). This is a legacy from the early days of qualitative research where those who adopted this approach had to adhere to quantitative quality criteria in order to gain credibility and acceptance. The second, post-modern position is that quality criteria are irrelevant to qualitative research. The principal objection of those who hold this position is that qualitative research represents a radically different paradigm which should not be constrained by the demands of positivistic research (for example, Smith and Heshusius 1986) and therefore, this school of thought rejects outright the need for any quality criteria at all. The third position is that quantitative criteria such as validity and reliability are binding on qualitative research but that they have to be reformulated to suit the peculiarities of this type of research (Golafshani 2003). I concur with Steinke (2004) that

rejection of the need for quality criteria in qualitative research is an invitation to “randomness and arbitrariness”. The issue that remains, therefore, is what quality criteria should be applied to qualitative research.

Depending on which source one cites, one comes up with different lists of criteria for judging qualitative research quality. To simplify this discussion, I begin with the short list offered by Anfara, Browne and Mangione (2002): validity, reliability and generalizability. The validity of a piece of research is the extent to which it "measures" what is intended to (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe 1995). Reliability is the extent to which a piece of research can be duplicated with the same results (Merriam 1995) and generalizability, discussed earlier as an assumed limitation of focus groups, is the degree to which findings can be applied to contexts and situations other than the one in which they were developed. These simple definitions belie the complexity of the individual quality concepts and their interrelatedness. For example, Maxwell (1992) provides a list of five types of validity; generalizability is often treated as external validity (Mays and Pope 1995); reliability does not make sense without validity (Lincoln and Guba 1985) and logically, generalization cannot be obtained without validity or reliability. These complexities and interrelationships have led qualitative researchers to pay more attention to validity.

Validity

Validity is a concept that is described by a wide range of terms in qualitative studies and there are different views about how to approach validity in qualitative research. Golafshani (2003) notes that “the concept of validity is not a single, fixed or universal concept” and Winter (2000 cited in Golafshani 2003) states that it is “a contingent construct, inescapably grounded in the processes and intentions of particular research methodologies and projects” (Winter 2000, p.1). An issue that often gets obscured in the discussion on validity is whether it is a property of the data or the entire research process; in other words, does it apply only to data collection and analysis? From the volume of literature on the subject it is clear that validity in qualitative research, unlike its counterpart in quantitative research where it is linked predominantly to measuring instruments, is a property of the entire research process and, therefore, the validity of a piece of research it can be traced as far back as its literature review and conceptual framework. Primarily for this reason, scholars such as Lincoln and Guba (1985) think of validity as "trustworthiness" which means that even the integrity of the researcher could be considered a factor in the assessment.

A dominant view in the literature is that research quality, and by extension validity, can be obtained by adhering to various techniques, for example, coding, triangulation or member checking. However, some scholars, for example Phillips (1987), are of the view that there are no procedures that will always guarantee sound data or true conclusions. Consequently, an alternative view of validity is suggested:

Validity is not a commodity that can be purchased with techniques....Rather, validity is like integrity, character and quality [and is] to be assessed relative to purposes and circumstances.

Brinberg and McGrath 1985 p. 13

Figure 10: Research Documentation Summary

	Research Dimension	Documentation
1	My prior understanding of professional identity	Documented in Chapter 3 and summarized as four conceptual categories: claims, recognitions, self-knowledge and emotions.
2	Individual methodological decisions	Documented fully in this chapter and where appropriate in the Chapter 5 (Findings). Emphasis placed on demonstrating philosophical/ methodological alignment/ consistency.
3	Documentation and rationalization of the data collection method and the collection-context.	Documentation of the focus group method and its rationale as well as a full description of the focus group design and participant selection process.
4	Documentation of data analysis and interpretation procedures.	Discussed in this chapter. The actual data analysis occurs in Chapter 5 and interpretation in carried out in Chapter 6 using the conceptual categories listed at No.1 in this table.
5	Description of thesis statement and evaluation of conceptual categories; Recommendations made with regard to the appropriateness of the four <i>a priori</i> categories.	Chapter 7

I subscribe to a middle ground which advocates that adherence to techniques and the integrity of the research, as alluded to by Brinberg and McGrath above, are not necessarily mutually exclusive. This might be considered a fourth approach to quality in qualitative

research which finds expression in the notion that the reader should be left to judge the quality of a piece of qualitative research by whatever criteria he or she chooses. However, in pursuit of this, the researcher needs to disclose as much as possible about the research process. Anfara et al. (2002) refer to this process as "deprivatization"; Steinke (2004) describes it simply as "documentation of the research process". I have adopted this approach to the quality of this piece of research. Consequently, I have attempted to document in Figure 10, as clearly as possible, several of the key aspects of this project as suggested by Steinke (2004).

Summary

This chapter described and justified the key methodological decisions that were made in undertaking this project. Methodology was decomposed into two main elements: a philosophical and a technical element. Philosophically the chapter offered a rationale for using an interpretivist paradigm. From a technical perspective, the choice of focus group was justified on the grounds that teacher professional identity was an intersubjective phenomenon constructed out of the shared meanings which could be accessed via dialogic intercourse generated among teachers in the setting of a focus group. Thematic analysis was the core analytical method employed. Two levels of analysis were employed: the first was a "bottom up" approach in which themes were extracted from the data through the process of coding similar to that employed in grounded theory. Spradley's Semantic Relationships was used to help in relating concepts to each other. The second level of analysis entailed the comparison of those "grounded themes" with a framework consisting of themes developed from synthesis of the professionalism and identity literature. In keeping with the practice of phenomenological analysis, those answers were contextualized by reference to the historical and cultural legacy of the teaching profession in Barbados. To account for focus group interaction, several tables were developed. These were designed to show the level of spontaneity and involvement in the group discussion. Finally, this chapter discussed the extent to which this research might meet quality criteria.

Chapter 5

Analysis and Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and findings of the focus group discussion. Views differ as to how focus group data should be analyzed and reported but it is clearly important that the analysis and presentation of findings should be grounded on the research problem. The overall research logic alluded to in the preceding chapter also plays a key, if not equal, role in organizing the findings: an *a priori* thematic framework logic, such as is employed in this study, is markedly different from a grounded theory logic that eschews prior knowledge or theorizing. Another factor to be considered in focus group data analysis and reporting is the role of focus group interaction. This matter was discussed in the preceding chapter and attempts are made to report some of this interaction here.

Data Analysis Organization

A transcription of the focus group discussion resulted in approximately thousand words organized for analysis as shown in Figure 11. This tabular arrangement allowed for quick searches by column or for sorting by column for example, by participant column.

Figure 11: Data Analysis Layout

RESP #	QUESTION OR RESPONSE	SPEAKER		CODE/THEME
1	<i>Do you see teaching as a profession, just an occupation or something else?</i>	R	Moderator	
2	I see it as an occupation because at the end of the month I receive a salary. However, etc.	M	Male, Tertiary	Occupation

Spontaneity

A good focus group discussion should be spontaneous without being unfocused. Figure 12 is designed to help visualize the level of spontaneity in the discussion. Some probe questions are included but the table is not an exhaustive list of the questions asked in the focus group. A spontaneous response refers to a situation where a participant responded to a question without prompting from the moderator. These are coded "S". Probe questions are shown in italics.

Figure 12: Response Spontaneity

	Question	Participants							
		Males					Females		
		D	M	C	W	H	T	N	A
1	Is teaching a profession?	2S	1S	7S	8S	3S	4S	5S	6S
2	<i>What makes an occupation a profession?</i>	1S		2S			4S	3S	
3	<i>Who gives the status to which you refer?</i>	3S		2S		2S		1S	2S
4	<i>How important is the opinion of other persons with regard to whether you think your job is a profession?</i>		4S		3S	1S		2S	
5	<i>Can one occupation be more or less of a profession than another occupation?</i>	2S	4S	1S	5S	3S	5S	5S	5S
6	Would licensing make a difference in how you see yourself as a teacher/professional”?	5S	3S		4S	1S	2S	6S	
7	Do you as a teacher feel you have any level of autonomy in the classroom?	1S		4S	3S				2S
8	What part do your colleagues play in how you see yourself?	5S	1S	2S		3S		4S	
9	What do you understand by the term professionalism?	1S		2S		4S		3S	

A prompted response indicates a situation where the moderator intervened to obtain a response from a participant who seemed unwilling to respond to a question. These responses are coded "P". Numerals indicate the sequence of response: the numeral 1 stands for the first respondent and 8 the last respondent. There were eight persons in the focus group. For the sake of simplicity, simultaneous replies from several participants are omitted. This table achieves the same effect of the Venn diagrams suggested by Onwuegbuzie et al (2009) in that it reveals the pattern of responses to questions by gender.

Overall, males tended to respond earlier than females; typically female responses started at 2, 3 or 4. It is important to understand that the responses shown relate to initial responses to the question; they do not account, for example, for rebuttals. This table reflects the general observation, made during the session, that the focus group had achieved a high degree of spontaneity. This does not mean that there were no pauses or still moments in the discussion. Moments of silence in a focus group are not necessarily a problem

(Smithson 2000). There were only two instances where any noticeable pause occurred in the discussion: at the beginning, which is very understandable, and after the probe question, *“Can one occupation be more or less of a profession than another occupation; in other words, are there degrees of “professionness?”* In these cases, as moderator, I simply repeated or rephrased the question. However, the responses obtained on these occasions are not coded as a “prompted” because I did not ask a specific participant to respond.

Figure 12 also shows that not all persons seem to have responded to every question. This can be accounted for by the spontaneous exchanges between participants that led into different avenues or by the probe questions interjected by the moderator. For example, in response to a contribution from M on the relationship between status, training and pay, the following exchange occurred:

Who gives the status to which you refer?	Moderator
Government	N: Female, Secondary:
Chorus of agreement	Several participants
It’s silly.	N :Female, Secondary
To add some fuel to that; within the technical and vocational arena it [status] has nothing to do with a degree...	C: Male, Tertiary
How do you mean?	N: Female, Secondary
You have the level of the licentiateship and [you] get the same salary. If you go and get the degree on top that it in something else... it ain’t saying a pang.	
	C: Male, Tertiary

Despite its usefulness, Figure 12 cannot fully capture the interaction in a focus group. For example, it does not capture the number of times a respondent may have spoken on the topic, the length of the contribution of a participant or the quality of a response. To attempt to capture more of the dynamics of the situation I constructed the degree of involvement in themes table. Since this table is designed to deal with themes rather than questions, I first describe the themes and how they were constructed.

Theme Construction

Figure 13 shows the major themes constructed from the focus group discussion. In addition to the ten major themes shown in Figure 13, participants raised such issues as individual competence, mentoring, teaching standards, nepotism and attitude to the job. These were

Figure 13: Major Themes and their Basic Meanings

	Theme	Explanation or Equivalent
1	Training	Includes both initial and ongoing training (continuous professional development) as well as mentoring "Qualifications" subsumed under this theme but a distinction made between academic qualifications and pedagogical training.
2	Autonomy	Level of freedom to act as a professional. Subdivided into financial, pedagogical and disciplinary (ability to administer punishment) autonomy. Also includes the concept of "standards".
3	Perceived Role	How an individual sees his or her role as a teacher; includes the concept of attitude
4	Professional Behaviour	Subsumes collective and individual professionalism (professionalism). Constituent concepts listed by participants include attitude, punctuality, deportment, dress, competence, quality of instruction, modelling behaviour, competence.
5	Status	Refers largely to social acceptance/recognition but also subsumes recognition from government.
6	Pay	Remuneration or salaries earned by teachers
7	Licensing	Scheme for official registration of teachers; includes the concept of standards.
8	Collegiality	The extent to which teachers actively cooperate with each other to carry out their duties
9	Emotional involvement	Degree to which emotions are associated with being a professional.
10	Professionalization	Refers to the extent to which teaching is considered a profession

treated as sub-themes and subsumed under the major themes. For example, competence and attitude to the job were subsumed under professional behaviour; "mentoring" was subsumed under training; "discipline" and "standards" were subsumed under "autonomy" because they were raised in the context of autonomy to administer discipline in the classroom. Collegiality was left as an independent theme primarily because it was raised by the moderator and is has been treated as a major research theme in the literature.

However, it can be subsumed under professional behaviour. Finally, issues such as teacher shortages, nepotism and Government which essentially help to link the major themes were treated as “intervening themes”, a concept that parallels the notion of “intervening variables” in quantitative research. They might also be treated as contextual variables (see Flores and Day 2006)

Involvement

Figure 14 attempts to capture the degree of participant involvement with different themes. In this context, involvement refers to the oral investment made by a participant in a particular theme. This is measured by the number of times a participant spoke on that particular theme. A slash (/) represents each occasion a participant visits or comments on a particular theme in a substantive way.

Figure 14 Involvement with Different Themes

	Theme	Participants								COUNT
		Males					Females			
		D	M	C	W	H	T	N	A	
1	<i>Training</i>	////////	///	/	///	/	//	///	/	22
2	<i>Autonomy</i>	////	//	//				//	////	14
3	<i>Perceived Role</i>	/		//	///	///	///	//	/	15
4	<i>Professional Behaviour</i>	/		///	///	///	//	////		16
5	<i>Status</i>	//	//	//	////	/	/	/	//	15
6	<i>Pay</i>	////////		///				/	/	12
7	Licensing (M)	/	//	/	/	/	//			8
8	Collegiality (M)		/	/		/	/	/	/	6
9	Emotional Involvement	/		/			//	/		5
10	Professionalization	////	//	///	///	//	///	/	/	19

Some double-counting is inevitable here given the fact that themes themselves are a complex of related concepts and their isolation is often a matter of pure interpretation. For example, some visits to the theme of professionalization were accompanied by references to professional behaviour or perceived role. What is more important in interpreting this

table, therefore, is not the absolute frequency of visits but the *relative involvement* of a participant in different themes and the *relative incidence* of different themes.

Figure 14 indicates that participant D was highly involved in the themes of training, autonomy and pay. Participant W was almost equally involved in training, perceived role, professional behaviour and status. Participant N had high levels of involvement in training and professional behaviour, participant W in status and C in pay. While participant D's involvement profile might seem to indicate dominance in the focus group, it should be noted that he did not attempt in any way to monopolize the discussion. For example, he was not the first respondent to the first question asked in the focus group and although his responses tended to be lengthy, on one occasion, he explicitly terminated his response to defer to other speakers without any censorship from either the moderator or other participants:

What makes an occupation a profession?

Moderator

I will use one word here and rest my case: independence.

D: Male, Secondary

Involvement analysis is also an indirect indicator of the salience of a concept across focus group participants. The highest degree of involvement was with training (22 visits), professionalization (19 visits) and professional behaviour (16 visits). These were followed by perceived role and status with 15 visits each. Collegiality (6 visits) and emotional involvement (5 visits) experienced the lowest level of involvement. Evidently, training, professionalization, professional behaviour, perceived role and status appear to be key themes. This is corroborated by the analysis of the oral data which follows.

Although involvement analysis is useful, it has two main limitations. First, it does not indicate the quality of the response of the participant and second, it does not show the degree of consensus among participants, both of which are important in assessing the overall quality of the focus group data. However, as these features cannot easily be represented graphically, they are best accomplished by examining the actual discourse of the participants through thematic analysis.

Thematic Analysis

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is the core technique used to analyze qualitative data. In addition to the interaction which they provide, focus groups generate talk or discourse which can be subjected to this technique. Braun and Clarke define thematic analysis as “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” and define a theme as “something important about the data in relation to the research question” (2006 p.6). This definition of "theme" raises issues about the unit of analysis but, according to them, it makes thematic analysis pliant to the researcher's judgement.

Thematic Analysis Scheme

This research has been driven by specific questions, therefore, the search for "themes" was relatively unproblematic; organizing them was more challenging. Part of that challenge emanates from the predominantly "descriptive" connotation associated with the word "theme". Because this research is fundamentally "interpretive" in its orientation, this connotation of the word initially led to some semantic and organizational issues. I resolved the matter by using a two-tier thematic scheme consisting of (1) themes and (2) propositions. These are roughly equivalent to concepts and categories in grounded theory.

Themes

In this analysis, a theme (sometimes referred to as "concept") is simply an idea or notion; it is generally captured in single word or short phrase used by participants or moderator. The concepts: professionalism, collegiality and licensing were introduced to the discussants by the moderator via questions posed by the moderator. Other concepts such a perceived role were raised by the participants themselves. The list of themes and how they were constructed was discussed earlier and exhibited in Figure 10.

Propositions

In contrast to themes or concepts, a proposition is a statement that makes a claim or summarizes an argument. Propositions are statements that link together or relate two or more themes; in effect, a proposition is a statement that lends interpretation to a set of themes or concepts. In my view, propositions “say something important about the data in relation to the research question” (Braun and Clarke 2006). By focusing the analysis on the propositions at this point, I avoid repeating the discourse which generated the themes

and which, at the same time, underpins the propositions. The research questions informing this study are reiterated here:

Do Barbadian teachers regard teaching as profession? Do Barbadian teachers categorize themselves as professionals? To what extent are the *a priori* categories of claims, recognitions, self-knowledge and emotional involvement consistent with those along which Barbadians appear to organize their occupational/professional identity?

The propositions of interest at this point are those related to the first two of the three research questions:

Do participants see teaching as a profession? Do they categorize themselves as professionals?

Discussion of the extent to which the *a priori* categories are consistent with how teachers construct their identity is a secondary interpretive exercise undertaken in the following chapter.

In discussing each of the two propositions alluded to earlier, reference is made to the contribution of specific focus group members by using a notation consisting of a code letter together with the participant's gender and educational level taught, for example, "R: Male, Secondary". Where appropriate, I indicate any dynamics that might help the reader come to an "accurate interpretation" of the speaker's words. Additionally, I make use of the concept of *implied consensus* or collective voice (Smithson 2000) as against *statistical consensus* by attempting to show how the contributions made by different participants lend to the construction of the proposition.

Proposition #1:

The gist of this first major proposition is that teaching in Barbados should not be regarded a "full profession" because it does not meet the criteria ascribed to the older professions to the same extent, these criteria being *mandatory initial training, autonomy, social status and licensing*. This proposition was constructed primarily from the first question posed to participants: *Is teaching an occupation, profession or something else?*

Figure 13 summarizes the initial views of participants to the question. Three persons thought that teaching was a profession outright; one opined that it was a “calling”; one person thought it was an occupation and three of the eight persons thought it was an individual interpretation.

Figure 15: Is Teaching an Occupation, Profession or Something Else?

Perspective	Count
Teaching is an occupation	1
Teaching is a calling	1
This is a profession	3
Depends on the individual’s perception	3
Total	8

I see it as an occupation because at the end of the month I receive a salary. However, I know that there is a thought around that teaching is the noble profession; I am lost as far as that is concerned and I can’t get it understand (sic) and if someone can help me I would be most obliged.

M: Male, Tertiary [with a touch of sarcasm]

To me it depends on where you sit or rather where you teach...not so much in terms of school but where you are in the job: are you a newcomer to the job ? are you a new teacher? What are your levels of qualification? What is your state of mind...so it is a whole lot of things...it is not necessarily clear cut a profession when we compare it with other so-called professions.

D: Male, Secondary

I see teaching as more a way of life rather than even an occupation or profession. It is what is inside of you; it is your calling; I see it as a calling on your life.

A: Female, Primary

I see teaching as a profession irrespective as to what discipline one is teaching especially in terms of modeling behavior.

N: Female, Secondary

To me it is really how you see yourself in the field of teaching...For example, as M said if you see yourself as a person being paid then to you it is an occupation but if you see yourself as more than that, you are delivering a quality service...you can see yourself as...being a professional in the teaching service.

H: Male, Secondary

Personally I do not see hairdressing as an profession ... see it as a job...I saw (sic) teaching more than an occupation; I saw teaching going past the job now and as my friend (H) here said, your attitude towards it and what you bring to the table helps you to determine in your mind if you see teaching as a profession or just a mere occupation.

T: Female, Primary

If the lawyer is a profession and a teacher has to teach him then the teacher becomes profession; if the doctor is a profession and a teacher has to teach him then the teacher must be profession. Because I can't the person preparing a professional and him (sic) not being a profession [al].

C: Male, Tertiary [said with great passion]

Before C started to talk I had similar opinions over here; that a lawyer has to be taught by a teacher, a doctor has to be taught by a teacher and yet we are saying that lawyers, clergymen these people are viewed as professional and teacher as not.

W: Male, Primary

As the conversation proceeded, however, movement toward Proposition #1 began to take shape. The following conversational threads demonstrate the ways in which themes/concepts were linked to each other and trace the development of consensus. Since a particular piece of conversation might include references to different themes, I accompany the threads with a short narration to provide contextualization for the reader. In the first thread, participants discuss the notion that training and qualifications as well as lack of social status are the main factors that militate against teaching being regarded as a full profession.

Training, Status and Pay

Without doing research, my gut feeling is that majority of the teachers today are far more qualified today than the teachers of the past in terms of paper qualifications...But, to my mind today we are less revered in the society than those teachers of twenty, thirty, forty years ago when the teacher stood tall. The teacher in the community was respected by one and all even though he was carrying home four or five dollars a week, you know, he was respected

D: Male, Secondary

Participant W initially indicated that he regarded teaching to be an outright profession. However, his contribution below shows a drift towards the view that teaching is not a profession because of the lack of status or social acceptance.

There is certain status accorded to certain groups of occupations and that takes them into the realm of a profession. There is a certain level of status accorded to lawyers. There is a certain level of status accorded doctors; there is a certain level of status accorded clergymen, okay. I think to some extent to be deemed a profession you must be accorded status from the wider public.

W: Male, Primary

D extends his contribution by suggesting that recognition of teaching as a profession by society has to do with competence and training.

Could it be that the community's acceptance of your profession will have to do with the level of competence that you showcase and that will depend largely in part on your training and the intensity of your training?

D: Male, Tertiary

Perceived discrepancies between different levels of training and categories of teachers are cited as an issue:

Look! as long as you have these long categories of teacher... principal, deputy principal, senior teacher, department head; after that is trained graduate teacher, untrained graduate teacher, special grade teacher, qualified teacher, teacher (laughter here)...All of those things frustrate.. when people outside can see that and sense that these different levels of persons can find themselves into a school doing the same work... but we have different levels

of qualification and training – some of us untrained, some of us are graduates, some of us are non-graduates but at the end of the day we [are] doing basically the same job...

D: Male, Secondary

Several participants took up the issue of status of different types of training and pay with specific reference to the Erdiston Certificate and a bachelors' degree. It was suggested that such discrepancies influenced the status accorded to teachers and the way people saw teaching:

Funny enough, a person who is Erdiston trained is accorded a lower status than somebody who comes out of Cave Hill with a degree...

M: Male, Primary

I actually found it to be the reverse... The reason why I didn't want to be [Erdiston] trained is because I did the Master's in education and I figured that would be enough. But Erdiston is saying no. That is why I see it as the reverse; that the training was accorded a higher status than the degree.

N: Female, Secondary

But you will get paid better; you are paid better!

W: Male, Tertiary

No! I am not getting paid trained teacher pay at all.

N: Female, Secondary

A teacher with a degree coming from University [and] never went into the classroom to teach is paid more than a teacher who goes [in] without a degree. This status thing...is my question here; who gives this status? Because your Board and everybody else would have been pushing for you to get this thing [training] and you would have a feeling I am under here [hand raised at neck level to indicate status] when in truth and in fact you are under here [hand raised to breast level] but your pay is over the trained teacher [chorus of agreement here].

A: Female, Primary

Later I posed Participant A's question - about who gives status - to the focus group. Their unanimous response was "Government". This discussion subsequently led to the issue of licensing.

Licensing and Government

In many countries, including Barbados, there exist regimes of licensing for various professions. These include both the older professions such as medicine, law and clergy as well as "newer" professions such as engineering, accounting and pharmacy. Government is the single largest employer of teachers in Barbados and a major stakeholder in the educational system. Participant M, who originally suggested that teaching was an occupation, thought that official recognition from Government in the form of a separate teachers' commission would be a key factor in moving teaching to the status of a profession.

If the state does not recognize teaching as a profession we can sit down here and talk all of these things...In 1974 part of the constitutional amendment...was this proposed teaching service commission; it is still there... having a separate service commission like the police and the prison officers gives you a semblance of recognition as far as the governance and administration system is concerned.

M: Male, Tertiary

Participant C appears to support this view in noting the importance of "organizing" for the other professions:

There was a time in Barbados when engineers had no pedigree, but they formulated among themselves and created what it would be to reach a certain status. There was a time in Barbados when accountants had no pedigree... I think it is time for the teachers to do a similar thing.

C: Male, Tertiary [said with passion]

Participant H pointed out the importance of licensing for the architectural profession. He noted the impact it was having on draughtsmen and suggested that licensing of teachers would bring about "turf protection" by creating a barrier to entry of persons to the profession.

For example...if you want to be a professional architect you register in that society to an extent now that if you are a draughtsman you can't draw to the extent that an architect can draw.

H: Male, Secondary

Participant D reinforces M's contribution noting the importance of Government in teacher training and licensing. He implicates Government in the continued low status of teaching:

It goes back to the point I was making about training. Preparation for the job, for the occupation, for the profession is critical and it is going to link back to what M was talking about in terms of recognition by the state, by the Government...Governments over the years have not treated the teaching profession as serious one otherwise they would have moved with greater haste in regularizing the whole aspect of teacher training.

D: Male, Secondary

Participant A notes that lack of respect from Government was seen as a force militating against recognition of teaching as a profession.

I don't think every doctor or lawyer toes the line but you don't see it the front page of the *Sunday Sun* as the Minister [of Education] did some year back. So the students were able to tell me, "You can't beat us, it in the papers", you understand me. So we can deal with certain issues behind closed doors if you respect the profession. So they [Government] look at us as- [Shrug of shoulders] nothing! So then that kind of filters down.... and it goes back to: 'who gives status?'

A: Female, Primary

Demand, Nepotism and Training

Participant M introduces the notion that demand for some disciplines relative to supply often impacts the hiring persons of untrained teachers:

This week a school was interviewing candidates for a teaching post in Mathematics. Now, that area is heavily in demand in some schools in Barbados. At the Board meeting it was stated as long as this person has a

degree in Mathematics we want him or her...nothing about Erdiston...We need a Mathematics teacher right now.

M: Male, Tertiary

A culture of nepotism was also seen as playing an active role in by-passing the requirement for initial teacher training.

I will give you my experience...when I left Cave Hill years ago, I went to a school for an interview and I was told "Oh you have experience but no qualifications". I asked the [interviewer] after the meeting: "How do you expect that I will get this experience if you don't employ me".

M: Male, Tertiary

M recounted how later, after "making some calls", someone approached him and sent him to a school at the beginning of the next week. M implies that a culture of nepotism makes a mockery of enforcing initial training:

Now training is important but...we have a culture in Barbados [which] we have to find a way to break, that...to all intents and purposes, a phone call, you go to a school tomorrow and start teaching.

M: Male, Tertiary

Autonomy, Training and Government

The issue of autonomy or independence was first raised when participants were asked what they thought made the difference between an occupation and a profession.

What makes an occupation a profession?

Moderator

I will use one word here and rest my case: independence.

D: Male, Secondary

But one participant expressed doubt about independence as a hallmark of a profession:

...Lawyers and the doctors....are having their own troubles. We just heard the Minister [of Health] say the other day that there are problems now in getting jobs for doctors when they come out. You can't even get [them] the

two year stint in the hospital now...they are an independent profession so why are they lobbying government to get jobs?

C: Male, Tertiary

While noting that training opportunities for teachers has increased over the years, the fact that access to training was under the control of Principals and the Ministry of Education was cited as a case of limited professional autonomy and the main reason why lack of training was still is an issue for teachers in Barbados.

...In general to get teacher training up to ten years ago was a lottery event. First of all you had to go through the Principal of your school to recommend you and then the bosses at Ministry of Education, the University and Erdiston would sit down in a room and decide who among this large batch of applicants are going to be chosen. And therefore, sometimes you had to apply multiple times to get training, okay. I myself went into Erdiston after six years almost, yes, after six years of teaching and then I got in, I got in on my second try.

D: Male, Secondary

Participant T implies that the lack of autonomous control of teaching is a factor militating against seeing teaching as a profession, a view that tacitly supports the position taken by D:

I think simply in the Caribbean because...we are still under the Civil Service, we don't yet see it as a total profession here in Barbados. But I see lawyers as a professionals and I think someone mentioned before – because of what they have to do [training] before they get into the court.

T: Female, Primary

It was thought that the level of autonomy teachers could attain was limited by their special relationship to the Government.

The fact that the majority of us are employed by the government ...is going to be a slight hindrance to the level we can reach in calling ourselves a profession because at the end of the day, the government as the employer is going to set certain standards and certain ideas that don't care what we do at the end of the day, we have to follow. To what extent can we have a level of

independence in establishing our own practice? To what extent do we see giving lessons as private practice; do we really see it as that?

D: Male, Secondary

The focus on autonomy was also related to the classroom. Participants acknowledged that they did not have any autonomy over the writing of the formal curriculum but felt they had some level of autonomy over the taught curriculum and classroom discipline. These dimensions of autonomy surfaced in response a question posed by the moderator on this theme:

You are talking about autonomy; you don't have autonomy in terms of the curriculum; [but] what is taught.

W: Male, Primary

You mean you were not consulted when the curriculum was written.

D: Male, Secondary [Laughing]

In terms of the principal gives (sic) a direction to teaching a particular area, I think as long as you understand the topic you are teaching you can start at any topic and teach to the point that you need to teach.

C: Male, Tertiary

[It] comes down to your level of creativity. That is a personal thing now, too. Yes, you can tell me what I have to teach but I have to come now and take it from just dry black and white and bring it alive in the classroom for the student...You tell me these are the three topics that I have to teach this term; I can decide that, you know what, topic 3 should really be the first topic and build and then to [topic] 1 and then to [topic] 2 rather than saying I must rigidly come at [topic] 1 although there are some department heads and some principals would tell you have to start at [topic] 1 and don't you dare jump to [topic] 3 first...Nobody points a gun at you and tell you, "Do this technique and do that one".

D: (Male, Secondary)

However, participants did not think that they had the same level of autonomy with respect to discipline:

Yes, for teaching methods but not for discipline...at least where I am at. If the student skips the class or does something deviant, that is where the autonomy is kind of stifled because we can't punish them as, you know.

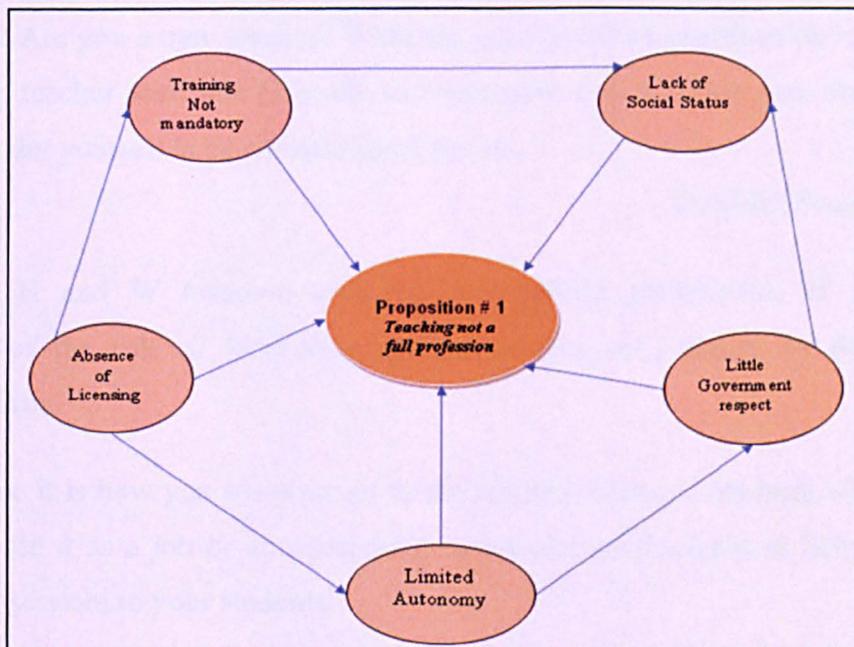
N: (Female, Secondary)

That is dependent on the head because I've had a principal [who] actually left her office and came [to my classroom] and said, "You don't beat? You don't beat?" I said, "Well M'am as far as I know...". That was four years ago before I went into Erdiston. Then [I went] to another school and the Principal said to me, "You have the authority to do so and so". My [current] principal now will say: "Miss, what part of 'Don't hit the people's children' you don't understand?"

A: Female, Primary

Figure 16 summarizes the conceptual relationships constructed by the focus group in relation to Proposition 1, that is, that teaching is not a full profession. Five factors are seen to be responsible: (1) lack of mandatory teacher training (2) lack of recognition/respect from Government, (3) limited autonomy held by teachers on account of their employee status (4) the absence of the kind of social status accorded the older professions (5) absence of a regime of licensing.

Figure 16: Concept Map of Proposition #1:



Proposition #2

This second proposition holds that a teacher can claim to be a professional even though teaching is not recognized as a profession. It can be broken down into two complementary propositions:

- (a) A teacher can claim to be a professional based on his or her professionalism.
- (b) A teacher's professionalism is a matter of his or her perception and may be based on factors such perception of one's role, attitude to the job, performance/behaviour and passion.

The conversation threads which follow trace the construction of this position. Some of the themes or concepts involved in constructing proposition #1 were also influential in constructing proposition #2. Some repetition of the discourse will, therefore, occur.

Self-Perception and Perceived Role

Participant D was the first to suggest that seeing oneself as a professional is an individual matter and that it may depend on factors such as qualifications and experience. This was his initial contribution in response to the question: Is teaching an occupation, a profession or something else?

To me it depends on where you sit or rather where you teach...not so much in terms of school but where you are in the job: are you a newcomer to the job ? Are you a new teacher? What are your levels of qualification? If you are a teacher with just O'levels and you now start to teach you may not consider yourself to be a professional per se.

D: Male, Secondary

Participants H and W resonate with the individualist perspective; H indicates the importance of the role of individual service delivery as a means of defining one's professionalism.

To me it is how you see yourself in the whole scheme of teaching whether you see it as a job or an occupation or are you professional in delivering your services to your students.

H: Male, Secondary

....And I would add to that, like everybody has been saying all along, you need to perceive yourself in a certain way and perceive what you are doing as important. I perceive that teaching is a very technical, scientific, systematic kind of thing just like any other profession.

W: Male, Primary

Participants D and W saw the role of the teacher as serious, important and having implications for national development:

...from all of what we said here...even just having the degree is not enough....you still have to dig deep within yourself because you are performing a very serious role...

D: Male, Secondary

...But to some extent we add tremendous value and....education adds significant value to a country's development. When a country is looking to develop, the first place you go is within (sic) the realm of education.

W: Male, Primary

Continuous Professional Development

Participant N continued to build on the theme of individual perception. A chorus of agreement greeted her suggestion that continuous professional development (CPD) should also be seen as an element of professionalism:

I also want to make that point that seeing yourself as a professional, and being a profession... goes past just having the degree, the Erdiston teacher's certificate and all that because you could have had your degree or your associate degree in 1970 but is all that information still relevant now? So I want to make the point that we have to be constantly upgrading ourselves and taking responsibility for our own training.

N: Female, Secondary

Chorus of agreement

Dress and Professional Behaviour

Participant T reinforced the importance of self-perception and related it to the issue of dress:

I think though the way you see the occupation can help you in your mind to decide whether you see the job as a profession or not whether the people outside you think so or not.

T: Female, Primary

T's position was supported by participants H and W:

For me it is more important to be a professional than what people think of the teaching service, whether it is a profession or occupation. I think that at the end of the day our professionalism in what we do – in the classroom, out of the classroom, how we deliver our particular discipline to the students - and how effective we are in teaching them and molding them not only academically but as model citizens - is more important than how we compare ourselves to doctors and lawyers.

H: Male, Secondary

At the end of the day I see myself as a professional in terms of how approach my occupation, okay. I want to go in there being well equipped with the information, having strategies and having a sensitivity towards the clients that I am going to be serving.

W: Male, Primary

Participant T weighed in again to reinforce the importance of dress to professionalism:

For example, I went to work a day teaching and another teacher said to me: "Why do you have to dress like that to come to work?" I said, "Because of how I feel about my job". I feel that my job is very important job and I am a model to my students and the way that I think about my job will be passed on to my students to help model behaviour too. So I think when I come to work I should look a certain kind a way, alright. So I feel in my heart that this job or occupation or whatever, is really a profession for me whether somebody outside accepts it as a profession or not that's up to them.

T: Female, Primary

H supported the importance of dress drawing from his recent experience:

Your behaviour, how you carry yourself how professional you act basically [to] reflect how a person will see you as a professional or not. For example, last term a teacher was not dressed “professionally”. A parent came to the school and called the teacher and lambasted him about his dress. If you look at the teacher you can see why the parent would have done it...not that she should have done it. So I do not believe that parent would look at her as a professional. If the teacher is properly and professionally dressed then the same professional view will be seen by the parent...if you behave professionally you will be viewed as a professional as well.

H: Male, Secondary

However, the importance of dress as an element of professionalism was questioned:

And as for that scenario of the parent chastising the teacher about dressing...all of that comes with it; doctors don't dress all that well either, some lawyers don't dress all that well and what do we call 'dress well' for that matter? We must be careful with that; dress can fool.

D: Male, Secondary

Passion

N, responding to participant T, added the importance of having a passion for or emotional involvement in the job:

I also want to add my voice to T's to say that it is important to have a passion. My friend here A, alluded to the fact that one should have a calling. But even if you do not have a calling you are given a job so you need to exhibit some kind of passion in the classroom.

N: Female, Secondary

Interestingly, while no other participants explicitly mentioned passion as a feature of their claim to being a professional, it is clear from their tone and discourse that several of them too felt a passion for their job. For example, in T's earlier response, both her tone of voice and choice of words, “So I feel in my heart that this job or occupation or whatever, is really a profession for me”, reveal a depth of feeling and a high level of enthusiasm for teaching. Similar comments can be made about D for although appearing to push an agenda centred

on financial autonomy and pay, it is evident from the repetition in the excerpt below that he too has a strong enthusiasm for teaching:

I would have had teachers who would have told me “Don’t do this” [don’t get into teaching] and I agreed with them to a point because I wanted to teach; when I was at secondary school I wanted to teach.

D: Male, Secondary

C is another participant who exhibited a high degree of passion. His vigorous rebuttal of D’s financial autonomy and pay agenda, presented later under financial autonomy, said much about his passion.

Collegiality and Standards

H felt that as a teacher had to present consistent standards to students because it assisted in enhancing one’s image as a professional. He was supported by N and W:

[At] my school for example, we work basically as a team when it comes to setting standards for a particular discipline. If teachers work together and set a standard [and] all teachers reach that standard as a team, I believe that the professionalism will come out across the board in the eyes of the student.

H: Male, Secondary

I also want to say that it has a lot to do with what you stand for in your class room. So for example ...you are teaching English so a particular session [and] it is dialect. If you speak broken English in front of your students and you allow your students to speak broken English all of the time; that impacts on how the students see you and how the parents see you as well.

N: Female, Secondary

That is what I was saying; there don’t seem to be standards that go right across the board. People do what they like, when they feel like... The other professions: don’t they have standards of operation...codes of conduct?

W: Male, Primary

Attitude and Professionalism

Attitude was introduced as important to the categorization of oneself as a professional:

...As my friend (H) here said, your attitude towards it and what you bring to the table helps you to determine in your mind if you see teaching as a profession or just a mere occupation.

T: Female, Primary

As a teacher I think it is important to model the behaviour you expect your students to exhibit in the classroom and although a teacher may be a teacher who is teaching vocational studies who might not need to be as qualified as somebody else who is teaching science, I still think it is the perception and what contribution you have to make to the teaching profession.

N: Female, Secondary

Financial Autonomy

Participant D felt that financial independence was important in perceiving oneself as a professional. However, participant C took exception to this and was supported by participant N.

Your ability to earn outside of government employ; the majority of the teachers are in the government service [and]...make their money in the government service...with the exception of the few lucky teachers that can charge more than \$30 per hour for tuition...We get tied up with thinking that if you operate in a certain way, present certain attributes, that that is professional...But it has to go beyond that because, as I say, the shop assistant down town can have on a nice tie and shirt or even a full suit and speak well and very professional and so on but at the end of the day he walks home with very little pay, he has no control over company policy or anything but the doctor can walk down the street in his polo shirt and he doesn't have to give two hoots about what the minister of health says or anything because he is in private practice. That is why I say independence is a critical part of being a professional.

D: Male, Secondary

I am going to go different from D here. I am saying that professionalism does not have to be financially based.

C: Male, Tertiary

That's right!

N: Female, Secondary

It has to do with how you perceive what you do; I understand that money will part a part; I am not making light of this. But professionalism has to come back to what you do.

C: Male, Tertiary [said with emphasis]

Professional Behaviour

N spelt out behaviours which she considered important to being a professional:

Actually I have a list here and I will be brief: quality of output - so it means quality of delivery of instruction- being punctilious (*sic*) for school, meeting your deadlines, respect given to your students, psychological distance between you and your students, modelling positive behaviours and integrity....[also] respect for your colleagues.

N: Female, Secondary

Participant T supported this list but retreated somewhat from her earlier position that teaching is a profession "whether somebody outside accepts it as a profession or not".

I would add to that it is how people perceive you too because you can have a perception of yourself as how you are doing but that must lead into how people are receiving what you are doing as well

T: Female, Primary

The importance participants seemed to attach to professional behaviour was summed up by Participant H:

For me it is more important to be a professional than what people think of the teaching service, whether it is a profession or occupation. I think that at the end of the day our professionalism in what we do – in the classroom, out of the classroom, how we deliver our particular discipline to the students

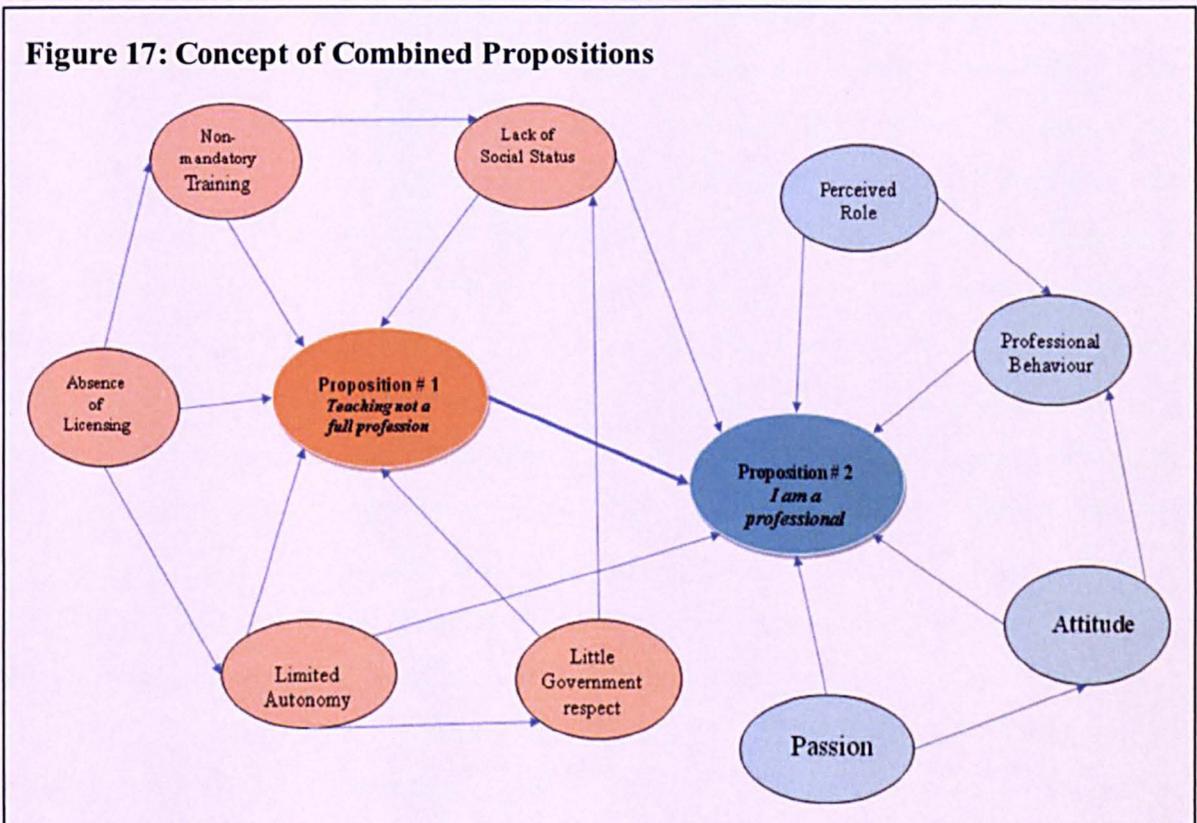
and how effective we are in teaching them and molding them not only academically but as model citizens - is more important than how we compare ourselves to doctors and lawyers.

H: Male, Secondary

Conclusions

As can be gleaned from the foregoing discussion excerpts, participants attempted to make out a case that they were professionals (proposition #2) despite recognizing that teaching was not recognized as a profession (proposition #1). Figure 15 summarizes these two propositions. As explained before, proposition #1 holds that lack of recognition and respect from Government, the absence of a regime of mandatory training and licensing, lack of social status as well as the limited autonomy accorded to teachers (primarily because of their employee status), make teaching less than a full profession and therefore, limit the extent to which these teachers can claim to be professionals. However, the discussion reveals a strong “argument for self” (MacLure 1993); in this case, an argument for a “professional self-concept” as discussed in Chapter 3. Proposition #2 embodies this argument. As constructed by the discussants, it consists of several elements: *their* training, perceived role, autonomy (though limited), attitude to teaching, professional behaviour and passion or emotional involvement.

Figure 17: Concept of Combined Propositions



Summary

This chapter analyzed the focus group data and presented the basic findings arising from that analysis. The analysis indicates that interaction was highly spontaneous and that participants were highly involved in the discussion. Ten major themes were isolated from the discussion: training, autonomy, perceived role, status, pay, professional behaviour, professionalization, collegiality, licensing and emotional involvement. These themes were shown to cluster around two propositions which represent the two major findings: participants do not regard teaching in Barbados as a full profession (proposition #1) and proposition #2, the second principal finding, is that teachers' claim to be professionals despite the non-recognition of teaching as a profession.

Chapter 6

Interpretation of Findings

Introduction

This chapter revisits the findings outlined in the previous chapter with the aim of addressing the third research question, that is: To what extent are the *a priori* categories of claims, recognitions, self-knowledge and emotional involvement consistent with those along which Barbadians appear to organize their occupational/professional identity? In contrast to much of the research on teacher professional identity that focuses on the *process* of identity construction, this study focuses on the *structure* or *condition* (Brubaker and Cooper 2000) of teacher identity. In so doing, it seeks to counterbalance the emphasis placed on the fluid and changing nature of professional identity by demonstrating that it exhibits a measure of organization which is the main sense in which the term "structure" is used in this context. However, as will become evident, this piece of research also allows one to get a glimpse of the *process* by which a group of teachers have constructed their current professional identity.

Fundamentally, qualitative research is a labour of interpretation. The interpretation placed on research findings is a function of the theoretical or interpretive framework which, as one scholar suggests, is "a point of view that legitimizes the manner in which the interpretations are justified or warranted" (Kilbourn, 2006 p. 529). It is suggested that qualitative data can be analyzed in two phases: a descriptive phase and an interpretive phase (Sagoe 2012). This study employs such a two tier approach: a first level that simply provides a descriptive account of the focus group data and a second, interpretive level that may be thought of as "translating" the first level findings into an alternative meaning system. The preceding chapter addressed the first level of analysis in that it sought to describe the thoughts of the participants on teaching as an occupation and whether they saw themselves as professionals. This chapter undertakes the second level of analysis through the use of an interpretive framework or "meaning system" predicated on a pre-conceptualization of teacher professional identity developed in Chapter 3. The fundamental issue to be discussed in this chapter, therefore, is the extent to which these *a priori* categories: *claims*, *recognitions*, *self-knowledge* (self-attributes) and *emotional*

involvement, can be held in the light of the analysis of the empirical data undertaken in the previous chapter. The meanings of these categories are reiterated below.

The term "claim" is defined as "an assertion of something as true or factual; a right or just title to something" (Collins 21st Century Dictionary). An identity claim then, is an answer to the question: "Who am I?" or "What right or just title do I to be labelled in a particular way as a teacher?" As discussed in Chapter 3, recognitions consist of the categorizations and reflected appraisals (valuations) of others. Self-knowledge is construed as the set of attributes one assigns to oneself (self-attributes) and may consist of elements such as preferences, values, goals, motives, rules and strategies for regulating one's behavior, beliefs, characteristics and traits. Emotional involvement refers to the extent to which an individual's feelings are evoked in thinking about or performing his or her occupational/professional role.

Applying the Identity Structure Categories

In the same way that a claim of national or ethnic identity, racial identity or paternity is expected to be accompanied by evidence, identity claims have to be justified or warranted. In this context, such justification can come from outside or inside the self or from both simultaneously. From this perspective, a "recognition" (how other people see me) is treated as a justification that originates outside of self whereas self-knowledge (self-attributions) and emotions arise from within the self. This is consistent with the general notion that identity is an "argument for self" (MacLure 1993) in the sense that self makes claims that have to be warranted or justified.

In addition to the main framework outlined above, other frameworks are integrated into this interpretive exercise where these appear theoretically relevant or useful. I also make use of my experience as an "insider" to provide insight where this is appropriate. As a teacher myself, I have had about forty years experience working at all three levels of the educational system but particularly at the primary and tertiary levels which together account for about thirty seven of those years. I have also worked as a Chief Examiner with the Caribbean Examinations Council for about ten years, an experience that has brought with it opportunities to work with persons operating at different levels of the educational system from officials in Ministries of Education to teachers from more than

thirteen countries of the Caribbean. My background has provided me with a wealth of professional and cultural data which is brought to bear on this interpretive task.

“I am a professional” Claim

While use of the term was generally avoided in the previous chapter, it can now be stated that teachers in this study group can be said to have a “professional identity” because they have accounted for the “professional” in that expression; their claim to being a professional is one of the principal findings emanating from this piece of research. For convenience it will be referred to alternatively as the “professionalism claim” or “claim to professionalism” where professionalism is construed in the sense used by Evans (2008). The claim was made repeatedly by teachers throughout the focus group discussion but initially manifested itself in discussion on the first question posed to the focus group, that is: “Is teaching an occupation, a profession or something else?” However, this claim of being a professional is complex, paradoxical and provisional especially when one examines the basis on which it is predicated. Moreover, it is intimately interrelated with the resources available to teachers, recognitions teachers accord others and those recognitions which are accorded to teachers by others.

Reference has been made several times to the suggestion by Beijaard et al. (2004); namely, that researchers need to account for the “professional” in teacher professional identity studies. In this section I adduce arguments to do just that. The complexity of the claim to being a professional made by this group of teachers is due partly to the fact that it does not rest on the assumption that teaching is a profession. Simplistically, all other things being equal, one would assume that if teaching is perceived to be a profession then it would follow that its members should be regraded as professionals. It is the conclusion one is likely to draw when it is observed that participants in the study categorized medicine, law, the clergy, engineering and architecture as professions and accorded their practitioners the status of “professionals”. However, while the focus group excluded some occupations from the category of profession e.g. hairdressing, the salient point made by the group was that even if an occupation was not a profession, members could still display professionalism. As indicated in Chapter 5, the teachers in this study are of the opinion that teaching cannot claim to be a full profession because it does not possess, at least to the same extent, the characteristics of the older professions: namely, law, medicine and the clergy. These are identified by participants in the previous chapter as: controlled entry to the profession,

autonomy and social status. Notwithstanding this, the opinion of the group was that an individual teacher could stake a claim to being a professional primarily by virtue of his or her attitude to the job and his or her "professional" behaviour as a teacher. The implication of this is that collectively teachers can stake a claim to be professionals even though the occupation of teaching itself may not be recognized as a profession, a notion that is consistent with Evans' suggestion that professionalism may be construed as "as an amalgam of the 'professionalities' of the individual practitioners" (Evans 2008, p.10).

Put differently, these teachers are suggesting that even though one's occupation may possess the trappings of a profession (social status, body of knowledge, autonomy etc) it does not follow that the adherents of the occupation are "professionals"; rather, it is essential, from their point of view, for the individual to display professionalism or professional behaviour. As one participant stated:

You may not be in a profession but you can deliver your services professionally.

H: Male, Secondary

According to the participant who made the statement above, the expression "deliver services professionally" means, "Delivering your service to a high standard" so that "the customer is satisfied with the service offered". Paradoxically, however, according to these teachers, a display of unprofessionalism does not disqualify a member of an "accepted" profession (meaning law, medicine, the clergy) from being deemed a professional; as they readily admitted, doctors and lawyers, for example, can and do display unprofessionalism but such acts do not preclude their right to be regarded as professionals.

The perspective of this study group seems to run counter to that advanced by one scholar:

Whether we think of teaching as a profession or think of it as a vocation does make a difference in how we deal with students, what we do in the classroom and beyond, how we interact with colleagues, what commitments we are willing to make, what expectations can be reasonably imposed, what career goals we might set, by what standards we should measure success, and how we view our relationship with the institution in which we work.

Buijs 2005 p. 326

What makes the fine difference, according to my research, is not what one thinks of the occupation or profession itself but what one thinks of "professionalism". This has significance for the development of the teaching service in Barbados but this will be taken up in some detail in the next chapter where some attention is focused on the practical implications of this research.

Accounting for the "I am a Professional" Claim

So how can one account for this paradoxical identity claim? The paradoxical and complex nature of the "I am a professional" claim held by teachers can partially be explained by duality of meaning inherent in the term "professional". The term "professional" can refer to a member of a profession or to someone who displays a particular form of expertise and behaviour; moreover, these two meanings can be invoked separately or simultaneously. This dual deconstruction of professionalism is analogous to the theory of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction advanced by Herzberg and his associates (Herzberg, Mausner and Synderman 1959, 1993). According to the Two Factor or Motivation-Hygiene Theory, satisfaction and dissatisfaction do not exist on a continuum; satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not polar opposites of each other (Miner 2005) therefore, the same factors that account for satisfaction do not necessarily account for job satisfaction. The presence of intrinsic factors such as job complexity, variety and interest can generate satisfaction because they seem capable of fulfilling such needs as achievement, competency, status, personal worth, and self-realization, thus making an individual happy and satisfied. However, the absence of such gratifying job characteristics does not seem to lead to discontent and dissatisfaction. Instead, dissatisfaction results from the employee's unfavorable evaluations of what Herzberg et. al. refer to as "extrinsic factors" which are job-related factors such as company policies, supervision, working conditions, technical problems, salary and on-the-job interpersonal relations. Thus the presence of extrinsic factors can prevent job dissatisfaction but only intrinsic factors can generate job satisfaction.

The insight that this analogy offers is that the factors which lead to the designation of an occupation as a profession are, in the view of these Barbadian teachers, not the same as those which validate the appellation "professional". From the participants' perspective, while length of training, social acceptance and financial autonomy mark some occupations as "professions" - medicine and law in particular - different characteristics serve to define professionalism and by extension, the state of being a professional.

The Two Factor or Motivation-Hygiene Theory analogy offers an additional insight: as the existence of both sets of conditions— extrinsic and intrinsic – in adequate amounts is an obviously desirable preference for an employee, so too the existence of conditions that define teaching as a profession in the classical sense as well as the facility for individual construction of professionalism represent a highly desirable combination from the perspective of teachers. Thus, despite claiming to be professionals on the basis of their individual professionalism, the trajectory of their discourse suggests that public recognition is still much desired and that their professional identity would be enhanced by further professionalization efforts, for example, the planned establishment of a system of teacher licensing.

Identity Coherence

The act of rating themselves as professionals can also be understood as an attempt by teachers to manage their identities so as to maintain a degree of coherence among the various facets of self and preserve self-esteem (Epstein 1973; Smith and Mackie 1995). Their alternative construal of professionalism is a case of “identity action’ and is consistent with the notion that identity claims are used strategically by individuals (Chrysochoou 2003) to justify the actions they take. It can be explained by the psychological processes of self-regulation and self-esteem. People regulate their self-knowledge in order to avoid potential psychological contradictions and maintain a level of coherence and equilibrium (Smith and Mackie 1995; Bandura 1991; Epstein 1973). As they pointed out very forcefully in the focus group discussion, teachers found difficulty in accepting that they were not perceived as professionals by the society and governmental authorities; this did not appear logical to them especially in view of the importance they attached to their role:

I perceive that teaching is a very technical, scientific , systematic kind of thing just like any other profession.... education adds significant value to a country’s development. When a country is looking to develop...the first place ...iseducation.

D: Male, Secondary

This contextual knowledge and their implied knowledge of themselves as caring, serious, ethical persons represents an apparent contradiction, a devaluation of self and a potential inconsistency among the different facets of their self meanings. This parallels the prediction of Herzberg’s Two Factor theory that potential motivational problems will occur

when extrinsic and intrinsic factors are not present in adequate amounts in the workplace resulting in dysfunctional employee behaviour or the enactment of compensating behaviours. By attributing to themselves the status of "professional" based on their individual estimation of themselves, the teachers in this study have effectively enhanced their self-esteem and achieved a measure of consistency between the importance they attach to their role as teachers and the current social status of the teaching profession.

Recognitions and the Professionalism Claim

In this section I discuss several recognitions that moderate the claim "I am a professional" and thereby account for potential nuances in how individuals might construct their professional identity. Chrysochoou conceptualizes recognitions as "*other(s) actions* that recognize me and allow me to make the claims I wish to make about myself and to be who I want/think myself to be"; in this context "actions" includes any process or acts carried out by self and in this sense, therefore, *claiming*, *knowing* and *recognizing* are also actions themselves (Chrysochoou 2003 p. 225). With regard to their impact, recognitions are essentially analogous, if not identical in nature to, the "reflected appraisals of others" as used in Schwalbe's model of autonomy and self-esteem outlined earlier.

Status as a Recognition

From the data analyzed, status emerged as the main recognition that can be associated with the "I am a professional" claim. Teachers tended to equate "status" with "importance to society" and "respect"; they identified three aspects of status that were of concern to them: social status, official status and the status of teacher training. Participants asserted that they were not accorded the recognition of "professional", the respect of parents or the respect of the Ministry of Education. From their perspective, social status and official status are interrelated from the point of view that failure of the government to recognize and /or treat teaching as a profession is seen as a partial cause for the lack of wider social recognition. Furthermore, participants made the case that the status of teaching had declined over the years so that, according to one participant, teaching is "less revered than thirty or forty years ago" (D: Male, Secondary). To understand this assertion, reference must be made to historical development of teaching in Barbados and the English speaking Caribbean because "identities are also social [and] they are resourced and constrained by larger understandings which prevail in the speaker's social and cultural context. (Taylor, and Littleton 2006, p.14)

Status of Teaching in Barbados

The status of the teachers in Barbados over the years has been shaped by socio-economic forces which have their genesis in the colonial and post-colonial experience of Barbados most of which is shared with the islands of the Caribbean archipelago. According to Bacchus these included:

...colonization by different European powers, their experience of slavery, the domination of their economies by a single export crop, i.e., sugar, the introduction of indentured labourers following the abolition of slavery, and the development of a stratification system based on race, colour, and caste.

Bacchus 1994, p. 1

The colonial period started in the fifteenth century and continued in the Caribbean for about three hundred years. With the colonial period came black slavery which persisted from around 1630 to 1833 when it was formally abolished by an act of the British parliament. Associated with slavery was the sugar plantation and the so-called plantation society (Beckford 1972), the socioeconomic institution which, in partnership with the existing political system, the plantocracy, provided the political and socio-economic environment in which education in the Caribbean had its origin.

In the early days of colonization, planters and well-to-do merchants sent their children to England to be educated while the poorer whites folk attended private schools maintained by the clergy (Ministry of Education 2000, p. 4). No colonial provision was made for the slaves or their children. The earliest attempts at formal education in Barbados occurred about 1686 with the donation of land and £1000 for the opening of the first charity school for the education of poor white children by two St. George planters, John Elliot and Rowland Bulkeley. As Fergus (2003) has pointed out, the planters had no interest in the education of the slaves, because schools were seen as “inimical to the imperatives of plantation society” (Fergus 2003, p.10).

From the very beginning therefore, the educational initiatives undertaken with the slaves in mind in the Caribbean were by religious and humanitarian organizations (Wesley 1932) However, as is pointed out, these organizations had to be careful not to offend or incur the wrath of the planters which resulted in their pursuing policies that supported or at least did

not run counter to the social order predicated on the plantation system (Blouet 1980). For this reason historians have roundly castigated the church in the Caribbean (See for example, Lamming 2004). The objective of this early denominational schooling, not surprising therefore, was to “produce Bible-reading converts who were contented with their supposedly divinely ordered lot as slave labourers” (Fergus 2003, p.11).

Though similar in its objective, education in Barbados was underpinned by a more sophisticated ideological rationale. This is the view of Sandiford and Newton (1995) who, writing in *Combermere School and the Barbadian Society*, noted that Lord Combermere and Bishop Coleridge felt that “society as a whole could profit enormously from the spread of literacy and that the slaves could be made into more efficient workers as well as better Christians by being taught to read and write” (p. 6). This attitude persisted even after emancipation as Bacchus has observed:

During the immediate post-emancipation period, especially prior to 1846, the major focus of the primary education provided by West Indian schools was to develop in the young the values, beliefs, attitudes and dispositions considered necessary for the maintenance and reproduction of the social order that existed in pre-emancipation times.

Bacchus 1994, p.14

In Barbados, the Anglican Church or Church of England was the foremost denomination followed by the Methodists and Moravians. Their dominance of the religious landscape is evident in the heritage of denominational church buildings still intact in the country. Together these employed the majority of teachers in the country. The relatively high status accorded teachers in this early period of education in Barbados and which continued for some time, can be attributed principally to the association of educational initiatives and institutions with the extant religious organizations. In the first instance, the prerequisites to become a teacher were closely tied to religious participation. Fergus notes that “the qualification for teaching were, in many cases, dedication to Christ and the church and a modicum of literacy” but that teachers were “long in zeal and commitment and deficient in education” (Fergus 2003, p.13). The status or high level of respect that teachers in the study group referred to derived partially from the moral overtones associated with being a faithful churchgoer. Otherwise, teaching was to a great extent a low-paying occupation for which there was very little systematic professional training until relatively recently.

Education was notoriously under-funded for several reasons, the most important of which was the decline in revenues from a failing sugar industry (Bacchus 1994). Some idea of the financial challenge facing education and by extension teacher can be gleaned from noted colonial historian Schomburgk:

An annual sum of £512 was formerly the only legislative aid granted for purposes of education in Barbados...The average number of pupils in each school amounted to 34.4, and the ratio of amount paid in 1845 for the salaries of teachers for the pupils of the parochial schools exclusively amounted per annum to £17. 10d. for each child.

Schomburgk 1848, p. 108

Erdiston Teachers College was established just over six decades ago in 1948. This was preceded by the establishment of the Rawle Training Institute in Barbados in 1910 (Richardson 2005) . Prior to this, Proctor (1980) notes that:

Efforts were made after 1845 to upgrade the quality of education with the establishment of a teacher training course at Codrington, the provision for a system of school inspections, and the selection of local education committees to oversee a teacher's performance.

Proctor 1980, p. 192

The 1858 Education Act in Barbados provided for an Education Committee whose duty was “to provide annually, if practicable, in some portion of the school vacations for the teachers of the schools, a course of instruction on subjects which they ought to be acquainted” (Proctor 1980, p.192)

The status of teaching, and by extension, the status of teachers in the immediate post-emancipation era, was predicated almost exclusively on the population’s perception of them as role models. Lawrence T. Gay, a black Barbadian teacher who lived from 1894 – 1942 and who rose from a ‘pupil-teacher’ to the rank of Education Officer, captures this quintessential characteristic of the Barbadian teacher in a paper in which he reviewed the development of education in Barbados in the nineteenth century. Gay wrote that:

The village schoolmaster in those days was much like Goldsmith’s schoolmaster. The schoolmaster of the village, next to the minister of

religion, were [sic] the people to whom the masses looked for advice and help concerning all sorts of affairs. They looked to them to help them write their letters when they couldn't read or write. They looked to them for advice in domestic matters. The elementary schoolmaster, though he was poorly paid, was highly respected by high and low, rich and poor. He was really the model to which the community looked for guidance.

Carter 2005, p. 27

The decline in the status of teachers can be attributed in part to the secularization of education that occurred in the Caribbean as well as to the persistence of low pay. The secularization movement, the first phase of which occurred in Antigua (Thomas 2011), was resisted by the Barbadian government at the time but eventually was formally embraced although there have always been religious schools in Barbados as in other Caribbean islands (Mackenzie 1991). The status of teachers continued to decline at least in relative terms due to the persistently low wages paid to them. It would take the creation of the teachers unions: the Barbados Secondary Teachers' Union in 1946 (BSTU online 2006) and the Barbados Union of Teachers in 1974 (Mayers 1995), whose genesis has been traced back to 1895 with the formation of (BESTA) the Barbados Elementary School Teachers Association, to push for the better pay and conditions of service to stem further decline in status.

Status and Professionalism

From the perspective of the interpretive framework employed here, social status is an identity resource which acts as a recognition and can therefore influence professional identity. All other things being equal, positive social status would be expected to strengthen an individual's identity by bolstering his or her sense of self-esteem; conversely, low status should generate a lower degree of self-esteem and militate against a strong sense of identity. However, although participants believed that "to some extent to be deemed a profession you must be accorded status from the wider public" the absence of this status did not appear to diminish the strength of participants' claim to the title of "professional"; in fact participants strongly affirmed their right to be viewed as professionals despite acknowledging the low social status accorded the occupation:

For me it is more important to be a professional than what people think of the teaching service, whether it is a profession or occupation...at the end of the day our professionalism in what we do...is more important than how we compare ourselves to doctors and lawyers.

H: Male, Secondary

This finding can also be explained by Schwalbe's (1993) model of professional identity. In this case, teachers' perceptions of the efficacy of their own behavior in terms of how they see themselves as performing an important role, "modelling behaviours" and teaching their discipline effectively, are in themselves positive self-cognitions of their competence and morality which, following the path theorized by Schwalbe will lead to positive feelings of self-esteem and thus an affirmation of professional identity thereby neutralizing the expected effect of low status on that identity.

Self-Knowledge and the "I am a professional" Claim

While the major concepts of the interpretive framework used in this study borrow mainly from Chyrsochoou's (2003) work on identity, her exposition of the self-knowledge element is relatively undeveloped; her summary proposition that this knowledge is "fundamentally social in the sense that it constitutes a particular form of social thinking concerning the self" (p.227) falls short of providing an analytical framework which can be applied to this piece of research. It must be conceded, though, that self-knowledge is a nebulous concept that poses serious conceptual problems for scholars, especially philosophers (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy online 2011).

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2011) defines self-knowledge as "knowledge of one's particular mental states, including one's beliefs, desires, and sensations". Following Smith and Mackie (1995) self-knowledge is defined, for the purposes of this study, as the beliefs one has about one's personal qualities.

Philosophers have carried on a lively debate over issues such as the nature of self-knowledge, the sources of self-knowledge and the differences between self-knowledge and other forms of knowledge (Wilson and Dunn 2004; Boghossian 2003). The extent to which people have insight into their own feelings, attitudes, motives, behaviours, traits, etc. has implications for their ability to exercise capacities such as agency, self-regulation, decision making and moral responsibility (Vazire and Wilson 2012; Bandura 1991). Individuals are

thought to be able to call upon several main sources to obtain their self-knowledge: the reflected appraisals of others, comparisons with others and self-perceptions (Schwalbe 1993; Smith and Mackie 1995). In this study, I am more concerned with how "outsiders" like researchers gain access to an individual's self-knowledge. More specifically, I want to describe the self-knowledge which Chrysochoou posits as being associated with the identity claims and recognitions that have been unearthed in this study.

One way to identify self-knowledge is to see it as consisting essentially of answers to the question: *What am I like?* the corresponding answers to which are fundamentally claims about oneself, for example, "I am organized", "I think I am a fair person" and "I believe I am a very disciplined person" (Smith and Mackie 1995). These claims differ from the "I am a professional" claim in that they are claims primarily about one's character or intentions. While self-knowledge statements may appear to be descriptive of enduring traits of character that operate in all situations, since they are aspect of the self-concept system, they are more often than not, partly associated with some context (for example, "when I am at home") or some role (for example, "as a teacher"). In other words, an individual's self-knowledge is contextualized to the multiple roles/situations in which that individual operates (Smith and Mackie 1995; Markus and Zunda 1986).

To accomplish the objective of unearthing this self-knowledge, I have taken an "interpretive discursive approach". This is an approach that infers a speaker's self-knowledge by grasping the mental attitude or intention the speaker wished to express (Stueber 2002). The rationale for this approach is that, since the mental states of individuals are not directly accessible, reliance is placed on eliciting the self-knowledge of an individual from the individual's discourse. However, the following caveat is invoked:

To allow for the possibility of insincerity in the performance of a genuine speech act implies that one has to understand the speech act not as being caused by the mental state it is expressing. One has to conceive of it as being caused by the intention to express a certain mental state, since one can form such an intention, even if one does not actually possess the mental state one intends to express.

Therefore, participants' self-knowledge is inferred from their responses and interaction in the focus group in accord with the interpretive principle of "implicature" (Brown and Yule 1983). The following, therefore, are a few of the insights into the self-knowledge of some of the participants in the study in terms of beliefs.

Participants' Self-knowledge as Beliefs

One participant expressed the belief that dressing is an important aspect of her professional being. Below, she describes an incident in which her attire was questioned:

For example, I went to work a day....and another teacher said to me, "Why do you have to dress like that to come to work?" I said, "Because of how I feel about my job. I feel that my job is very important job and I am a model to my students and the way that I think about my job will be passed on to my students to help model behaviour too. So I think when I come to work I should look a certain kind a way, alright".

T: Female, Primary

Another participant reinforced the belief in the importance of dress as sign of professionalism:

...The way you dress in classroom; outside is hot but the students still have to wear shirts and sleeves so that's no excuse [for not dressing properly].

N: Female, Secondary

The way humans think about themselves is derived in large measure from how others think about them or are perceived to think about them. This is known as "reflected appraisals" (Schwalbe 1993, Smith and Mackie 1995). So in contrast to the above, where a challenge was issued vis-à-vis dress, the participant reported another incident in which she was complimented by a student on her appearance:

[When] I went into the classroom the little boy came to me and said; "But M'am you look so beautiful today!" And I said, "Thank you very much, it was really very nice of you to say that".

T: Female, Primary

As the narratives above reveal, however, there are number of constituent beliefs which support this implied assertion about oneself as teacher such as “I feel my job is important” and “the way that I think about my job will be passed on to my students”. The *I feel my job is important* belief was expressed by other participants in a number of ways, for example, :

You still have to dig deep within yourself because you are performing a very serious role.

D: Male, Secondary

At the end of the day we have to be careful with what we do. Because if we don't do it right we could end up doing more damage than anything else.

W : Male, Primary

Another aspect of the self-knowledge expressed by participants is a belief in their efficacy. “The way that I think about my job will be passed on to my students” (T: Female, Primary) is indicative of that efficacy. Another teacher expressed that efficacy in slightly different terms:

As a teacher I think it is important to model the behaviour you expect your students to exhibit in the classroom.

N: Female, Secondary

Closely associated with this is the need to have self-confidence; “As long as you know you are doing the right thing...” opined W (Male, Primary). The meaning of this statement, given the question being discussed, was that as long as you were confident about what you were doing in the classroom, it was not important whether people thought you were a professional or not.

Another trait some participants thought was important in relation to the being a professional was being proactive in terms of staying current with continuous professional development was. N believed that this was one of her qualities:

We don't have to wait until Erdiston has courses; we can attend ASCD [Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development] and any other conferences that are around. So I think we have a responsibility for that.

N: Female, Secondary

Later in the discussion this participant, in responding to a query about the organization mentioned in her statement above, indicated that she was an active member of the ASCD and, therefore, hers was not just an intentional statement. The same participant conceived of herself as being punctual and efficient:

When we mark students' scripts, as much as we have other admin work to do, we need to return the script in a timely manner and not only return them but give feedback.

N: Female, Secondary

Emotional Involvement and the "I am a professional" Claim

In addition to the trio of claims, recognitions and self-knowledge, this study also sought to examine the emotional involvement associated with teachers' notions of professionalism. One cannot observe emotions "directly" yet common sense notions of reality (Chrysochou 2006) tell us that emotions are very much a part and parcel of the human self and identity. Several researchers have noted the importance of emotions in the development of teachers' lives and the role they play in the construction of their professional identities (Nias 1996; Zembylas 2003; Kelchtermans 2005; Hargreaves 2005). But what emotions are exactly, how they arise and how they relate to cognition are still highly debatable matters; psychologists and neuroscientists working in the positivistic, experimental tradition still have only a relatively limited understanding of emotions (Pessoa 2008). Current neurological and psychological research suggests that emotions are associated with certain areas of the brain e.g. the amygdala an almond-shaped structure on the medial temporal lobe that sits adjacent and in front of the hippocampus. On the basis of this research it is believed that cognition and emotions are highly intertwined although the causal relationship between the two is however, unclear (Pessoa 2008; Phelps 2006).

In contrast to this psycho-biological approach, social psychology, the general theoretical framework within which my study is cast, treats emotions as socially constructed, in other words, one can only "observe" or infer another's emotions based on a social interaction. One stream within this framework, "linguistic constructivism" (Bamberg 1997), regards emotions as discursively constructed, that is, it is only in conversation or talk that one can gain some access to the "emotional data" of an individual and through the notion of inter-

subjectivity we can gain some understanding of that data because of our “interrelated ongoing lives”.

In my study it was observed that teachers displayed some strong emotions when they referred to their professionalism. Expressions such as “how I feel about myself”, “passion” and “your vibrations” betray the affective nature of professional identity of this group of teachers. When N (Female, Secondary) stated that teachers ought to be “passionate about their work” she was reflecting a general finding about the extent to which teachers care their work and that this care is an integral part of their professional identity (Hargreaves 2005; Nias 1996).

..It is important to have a passion. My friend here, A, alluded to the fact that one should have a calling. But even if you do not have a calling you are given a job so you need to exhibit some kind of passion in the classroom.

N: Female, Secondary

Two other emotions that surfaced in this study were frustration and anger. These were exhibited with respect to training. When D (Male, Secondary) related how he was eventually selected to undergo training, the sarcasm evident in his choice of words and tone communicated the sense of frustration that was experienced not only on his behalf but also on the behalf of untrained teachers affected by the policies at that period of time.

We had situations, for example, for years [where] getting into Erdiston Training College, up to ten years ago, was a lottery event.

D: Male, Secondary

A mixture of anger and shame was also expressed in relation to the behaviour of educational authorities viz. the Minister of Education with respect to what the teachers considered the unprofessional way in which the Minister had dragged the matter into the public domain.

So we can deal with certain issues behind closed doors if you respect the profession...; but then how they look at us...they look at us as even less than children... they look at us as...nothing.

A: Female, Primary

Additional Categories Uncovered

While the foregoing discussion indicates that there is support for the four pre-determined categories, the findings suggest that there are several other categories that matter to participants and, therefore, play a key role in organization of their professional identity. Earlier discussion in this chapter covered issues of social status and recognition from Government under the category of "Recognitions". It also accounted for passion and attitude by subsuming them under emotional involvement and self-knowledge respectively. However, training, autonomy, perceived role and professional behaviour appear to be important factors which participants use to account for whether or not teaching is a profession as well as explain why they regard themselves as professionals. I now discuss these four categories.

Training and the Claim to Professionality

Based on the number of times it was mentioned and the number of other themes with which it was linked, training was perceived to be a major factor influencing professional identity. The position of participants on this matter is informed by their knowledge and understanding of the training situation for several of the professions in Barbados. One participant summarized that understanding as follows:

Everybody cannot get into be a doctor or lawyer because the training comes with a high cost. And even if you have the money, the length of time you have to go through the training, if you are not serious about it, you will drop out along the way.

D: Male, Secondary

To fully appreciate the rationale for the emphasis the study group placed on training, one has to understand something of the system of training for some of the professions in Barbados. In Barbados and some other countries of the English-speaking Caribbean, legal training is evidenced by the possession of a Bachelor of Laws degree, which takes a minimum of three years, and the Sir Hugh Wooding Law School Certificate which takes a minimum of another year. Altogether, potential lawyers will have to undergo a minimum of four years of training. Induction into the Bar Association is the final act of acceptance of the trained lawyer to professional status. In the case of medicine, a minimum of five years of basic training is required to obtain the MBBS for general practice. This includes

clinical practice for a period of two years (UWI Faculty of Medical Sciences prospectus online). Additionally, to become a specialist, potential candidates must undergo post-graduate training in an area of specialism which can average about four years (Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners Online, June 2012). Other professions have to do on average three to four years of formal academic training and become registered members of their respective professional bodies before they can legally practice their profession. Professional engineers, for example, have to be “graduates of an accredited university or school of engineering” and received “not less than four (4) years of post graduate training and experience in the field of engineering” (Barbados Association of Professional Engineers online 2009). As these teachers in the study have clearly articulated, similar training requirements and professional bodies do not exist for the teaching profession.

Training and Professional Identity

Apart from its influence on whether people see teaching as a profession, training has two important implications for professional identity: a status implication and a competence implication. First, the completion of teacher training appears to confer some level of status on teachers. Participants raised the status issue in the context of Erdiston training versus the acquisition of a bachelor’s degree. Discussion of this issue arose from a comment made by one participant:

A person will have gone to Erdiston for two years completed the training so that you know the pedagogy of teaching. And we have somebody who comes out of University with a degree and a greater level of status is accorded the person who possesses the degree than the person who has gone to Erdiston for two years.

W: Male, Primary

However, the experience of another participant appeared to contradict this:

The reason why I didn’t want to be trained is because I did the Master’s in education and I figured that would be enough. But Erdiston is saying no. That is why I see it as the reverse; that the training was accorded a higher status than the degree.

N: Female, Secondary

To understand this concern with the status the two qualifications referred to, it is necessary to understand something of the status consciousness of Barbadians. As far as I am aware, there are no formal studies that have examined this phenomenon. However, an entry in the US Library of Congress, while not necessarily a rigorous source for this purpose, is closer to the truth than most Barbadians might want to admit. That document states, inter alia, that:

Barbados inherited from the British a stratified society with a strong sense of class consciousness; Barbadian aspirations to reach the next rung of the social and economic ladder partially explain the industriousness of the population. Individual pride is clearly associated with economic status and has been cited as a reason for Barbados' early economic success, which surpassed that of the Windward Islands.

Meditz and Hanratty 1987, Barbados page.

As a Barbadian teacher myself, I interpret the issue of the relative status of a degree versus Erdiston training to be related to the social connotations associated with the terms "certificate" and "degree". As the quotation above notes, Barbadians derive some amount of individual pride from their economic status; however, "economic status" is not measured solely by material and monetary possessions. Education is also an important basis on which Barbadians predicate their individual pride and identity. This is partly due to the importance that has been attached to education over time.

In Barbados, "degree" connotes a higher level of learning/attainment than a "certificate". The fact that the Erdiston Certificate course was only of two years duration compared to the four years for the bachelor's degree, merely emphasizes the symbolic difference. Of course, the difference may also be related to the association of "degree" with the lone university, the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill campus which has been enshrouded in an aura of mystique and esotericism from its inception in 1948. Universities are sometimes referred to as "ivory towers"; in Barbados the corresponding soubriquet is "people on the hill" (Cave Hill), a common way of referring to the University and what it does. Consequently, "degree" has developed a strong brand image and social status because of this "ivory tower" image. Other aspects of the university brand image are the relatively high pay enjoyed by academic staff, limited classroom contact hours and media

appearances of some of their more outspoken members such as the current principal, Professor Hilary Beckles, a Caribbean historian who is noted for his controversial publications. "Certificate", on the other hand, is a term associated with a variety of objects of much less status, for example, Ordinary level certificate (so called O'Levels), "CXC's" (Caribbean Examinations Council [ordinary] certificate) and birth certificate. Such is the case that persons who not have obtained "CXC's" are often referred to pejoratively as persons with two qualifications: a birth certificate and a baptismal certificate. While the reasons are slightly different, a diploma carries more weight or status than a certificate. Thus the "Dip. Ed, ("Diploma in Education") would have more status than the "Erdiston Teachers' Certificate" because it leads to initials which can be "put behind your name" as Barbadians are wont to say. It is perhaps recognition of the power of labels or what marketing practitioners call "branding" that has partly led to the replacement of the former Erdiston Teachers Certificate with the Associate Degree in Education and the impending commencement of a Bachelor's Degree in Education at Erdiston Teachers' College (*Barbados Advocate*, 19 March 2010). Teachers' reading of the relative status of these two qualifications in question is, therefore, understandable.

Training and competence

The confusing nature of the status of "degree' versus "certificate" relates to the matter of the role of content or disciplinary knowledge versus pedagogical knowledge in the much broader issue of professional knowledge and by extension professional competence. One participant problematized the matter as follows:

Could it be the....community's acceptance of your profession will have to do with the level of competence that you showcase and that will depend largely in part on your training and the intensity of your training?

D: Male, Secondary

Earlier in this study reference was made to de Tezanos (2005) who has argued that "the technical basis for teaching lies not in the acquisition of technical or disciplinary knowledge *per se* but in *pedagogical knowledge* or knowledge of how to teach" and further it is this "pedagogical knowledge the (sic) constitutes the identity of the teaching profession" (de Tezanos 2005 p.68). The data adduced from this study can be interpreted as suggesting that contradictory valuations have been set on disciplinary knowledge versus pedagogical knowledge by different actors in the educational system. Consequently,

different teachers may have contrasting constructions of teaching and their professional identity based on the claims which they are able to make with respect to their knowledge base. This is consistent with the point made by participant D prior to the one cited above to the effect that whether or not one sees himself or herself as a professional depends on where that individual is in his or her career.

Are you a newcomer to the job ? Are you a new teacher? What are your levels of qualification? What is your state of mind...If you are a teacher with just O'levels and you now start to teach you may not consider yourself to be a professional per se.

D: Male, Secondary

The problem inherent in this “pedagogical knowledge” stems from the fact that it is mostly hidden, tacit and individual (de Tezanos 2005; Freeman 2002; Wilson and Berne 1999). It is knowledge that is embedded in and flows from the teacher’s reflective practice (Schon 1983) or as one participant put it in making reference to the issue of classroom autonomy: “it comes down to your level of creativity” (D: Male, Secondary). This knowledge is not the same as that attained via formal teacher training or content acquisition so that identifying and codifying that knowledge, dubbed “pedagogical content knowledge” (PCK) by Shulman (1987) has proven to be rather elusive (Rowan, Schilling, Ball and Miller 2001; Mishra and Kohler 2006). On the other hand, content, disciplinary or technical knowledge (in de Tezanos’ sense of the word) is explicit, well codified and is readily available “for the taking” if one is willing to spend the time, money and effort to acquire it. The result is that content knowledge, perhaps because it is much more visible and symbolized in the accolade of a “degree”, is much more accessible and financially rewarding than pedagogical knowledge which is symbolized by a Teachers’ Certificate. It is this “over-valuation” of content knowledge that might explain the unrestricted access of non-teachers to teaching. The fact that persons can teach without appropriate teacher credentials (the Erdiston Teachers Certificate or the Associate Degree in Education or the Diploma in Education) serves, therefore, to militate against the “I am a professional” claim as is implied in some participants’ complaints:

..Almost anyone, once they have certain basic qualifications in terms of O'levels they that can call themselves a teacher.

D: Male, Secondary

I think we do ourselves a serious injustice when we allow people to go into the classroom without being prepared with the necessary skills.

W: Male, Primary

In conclusion, the foregoing suggests that pedagogical training is a powerful and complex identity symbol for teachers because it is associated with the status implications of symbols such as "degree", "certificate" and "diploma" as well as professional knowledge and professional competence. Moreover, it would appear, training tends to blur the distinction between social (collective) and personal (individual) identity because it simultaneously influences the way teaching is perceived as an occupation/profession as well as how an individual feels about his or her competence and, by extension, his or her professionalism.

Autonomy and the Professionalism Claim

Part of the complexity of the "I am a professional" claim stems from the fact that it is an overarching claim interwoven with or buttressed by several identity resources, "secondary identity claims" and the presence (or absence) of certain recognitions. In this context, a "secondary identity claim" is a claim that modifies the main identity claim: it can support, amplify or diminish the main identity claim. The level of autonomy enjoyed by teachers can be seen as both an identity resource as well as a "secondary" identity claim. Autonomy or independence has long been regarded as a distinguishing characteristic of the so-called classical professions (Pearson and Moomaw 2005; Pelligrino 2002) but, according to one author:

Teacher autonomy has surfaced as one of those captivating contemporary terms associated with educational quality, innovation and decentralization of schools across different countries.

Wilches 2007 p. 246

There are a variety of definitions of autonomy from different perspectives or in different contexts but for the purposes of this discussion, teacher autonomy can be seen as "a personal sense of freedom to execute the necessary actions and exert control over the school environment" (Wilches 2007 p. 256). Various scholars have called attention to the positive association between autonomy and teacher motivation (e.g. White 1992), autonomy and job satisfaction (e.g. Rhodes, Nevill and Allan 2004) autonomy and self-

esteem (e.g. Staples, Gecas and Schwalbe 1984), autonomy and a sense of teacher professionalism (Pearson and Moomaw 2005). Moreover, it is argued that:

If teachers are to be empowered and exalted as professionals, then like other professionals, teachers must have the freedom to prescribe the best treatment for their students as doctors/lawyers do for their patients/clients.

Pearson and Moomaw 2005 p. 38

On the basis of their responses, autonomy appears to be an important professional identity resource for the teachers in this study. Participants identified three different types of autonomy: pedagogical, disciplinary and financial; “classroom autonomy” usually means “the combination of pedagogical and disciplinary autonomy”.

In this study, the different types of autonomy identified did not appear to be uniform for teachers working at different levels of the educational system. Teachers in the study appear to enjoy a fair degree of classroom autonomy but there are indications that that degree of autonomy can be circumscribed by the teacher’s immediate supervisor, that is, a Head of Department in the secondary school or Senior Teacher in a primary school. This contrasts with the experience of teachers operating at the tertiary level institutions represented. More specifically, the perceived extent of individual pedagogical control appears to be highest at tertiary level and lowest at the primary level. This may be due in part to the fact that teachers at the tertiary level operate in highly specialized fields and are generally regarded as “experts” in those fields; more often than not, there is only one “teacher expert” in a given field. Consequently, there is generally less team work in terms of pedagogical planning at the Tertiary level and more individual pedagogical autonomy. As a tertiary level participant noted:

We don’t interact unless it is something we decide to go into like as I said second-marking or exchanging lectures or topics or whatever.

M: Male, Tertiary

Teachers believe that their ability to discipline students is an important aspect of their claim to professional autonomy. This is consistent with the expression of their role in terms of moral leadership or “modelling behaviours”, as one participant expressed it. However, the same degree of autonomy enjoyed with respect to teaching techniques and

classroom organization does not obtain with the matter of discipline. In point of fact, the distribution of disciplinary autonomy appears to be opposite to that which obtains with regard to pedagogical autonomy; it is lowest at the tertiary level and highest at the primary level, this interpretation being based on the perceived extent to which teachers felt they could administer different forms of punishment. This is explained in part by the fact that students in primary and secondary schools are legally bound to remain in the classroom within school hours. It is also attributable to the fact that principals still retain legal right to flog students in these schools and are able to delegate that right to senior teaching staff.

But objection to flogging has become a controversial matter in the schools particularly in the last five years, fuelled in part by the wider local and regional debate about domestic violence (Nationnews 02 September 2011; Nationnews 30 March, 2011; Le Franc, Samms, Vaughan, Hambleton, Fox and Brown 2008) as well as the UN charter on children's rights. Barbados is a signatory to that charter but, as Vice-Whitman (date unspecified) has noted, "Though Barbados has signed on to that Convention, still very high rates of corporal punishment have been documented in its schools" (p.4).

While the teachers in this study recognize that flogging and discipline are not synonymous, some degree of frustration with the arrangements for discipline have been expressed especially at the tertiary level. Here the majority of students are adults, that is, persons over the age of eighteen who pay tuition and other fees. The situation with students in tertiary institutions is summed up by one participant:

They are free to walk through the gate; they can come into your class anytime and can leave anytime. This is tertiary level...you can't flog anyone.

M: Male, Tertiary

With reference to financial autonomy, there is no clear indication of the extent to which this is related to different educational levels. As was suggested in the focus group, there are doubts as to whether most teachers see offering "private lessons" as an instance of "private practice" although there are many persons in Barbados who conduct such private classes for pay. On the other hand, there are no legal strictures preventing a teacher from setting up a private school. There are several such entities operating in Barbados; all that is required is compliance with the requirements of the Education Act Cap 41. Conceptually,

the pursuit of financial autonomy is, in some measure, a function of entrepreneurial skill which is not necessarily correlated either more or less with one educational level versus another. This could account for the unclear relationship between financial autonomy and educational level. More importantly, though, most of the teachers in this study do not see financial autonomy as critical to their claim of being a professional. When one participant suggested that financial autonomy was crucial to considering teaching as a profession and sought to justify that stance, it was rebutted and that rebuttal received immediate support as the following sequence shows:

We get tied up with thinking that if you operate in a certain way, present certain attributes, that that is professional...But it has to go beyond that because as I say the shop assistant down town can have on a nice tie and shirt or even a full suit and speak well and very professional and so on but at the end of the day he walks home with very little pay, he has no control over company policy or anything...but [it is] your ability to earn outside of government employthe majority of the teachers make their money in the government service.

D: Male, Secondary

I am going to go different from D here. I am saying that professionalism does not have to be financially based.

C: Male, Tertiary

That's right!

N: Female, Secondary

Overall, the claim to autonomy can be summarized as situated and limited, a state of affairs that has direct implications for the "I am a professional claim". Schwalbe (1993) describes a theoretical model that seeks to explain how this situated character of teacher autonomy can influence the *strength* of this claim and in turn the quality of teacher professional identity. The primary way in which Schwalbe believes this occurs is through the process of self-evaluation and the subsequent impact of those self-evaluations on self-esteem. According to Schwalbe's model, individuals construct their self-evaluations from three main sources of information: the reflected appraisals of others as they interact with them, the comparisons they make between themselves and others, and perceptions of the effect of their own behavior. These sources of information provide the individual with self-

evaluative knowledge, particularly, self-evaluations of their competence and morality which are thought to be the two major areas of cognitive evaluation. In turn, these cognitive self-evaluations impact on the individual's self-esteem which is conceptualized as the positive or negative emotion associated with their evaluations of their own competence and morality. In this conceptual scheme "workplace autonomy is seen as providing opportunities primarily for perceiving one's self as responsible for competent performance" which is then thought to furnish a basis for the enhancement of self-esteem via "self-attributions of competence" (Schwalbe 1993 p. 522).

With regard to the specific situation of teachers, Schwalbe's model suggests that, because different teachers experience different levels of pedagogical and disciplinary autonomy in different institutional contexts or workplaces, this will give rise to contrasting levels of self-knowledge particularly in terms of their competence and moral control. In turn, this can attenuate the claim of professional autonomy and consequently, the individual claims of professional identity across different levels in the educational system.

Perceived Role and Professionalism

Flores and Day (2006) and Ben-Peretz, Mendelson and Kron (2003) have demonstrated empirically that teachers conceive of themselves as performing multiple roles such as educator, model, guide and friend. These roles are linked to strongly held images or metaphors (Ben-Peretz, Mendelson and Kron 2003). Furthermore, a teacher's efficacy, in particular, how he or she behaves in the classroom, is closely linked to how he or she perceives his or her role (Dembo and Gibson 1985). In my study, participants described their role as being "important", "very important" or "serious" while others saw themselves as "models" or "molders of model citizens". As the following excerpt illustrates, how a teacher sees himself or herself can have a far reaching effect on his or her behaviour:

I went to work a day teaching and another teacher said to me, "Why do you have to dress like that to come to work?" I said: "Because of how I feel about my job. I feel that my job is very important job and I am a model to my students and the way that I think about my job will be passed on to my students to help model behaviour too".

T: Female, Primary

Professional Behaviour

Professional behaviour, another significant theme that emerged from the empirical data, was invoked by focus group participants to justify their claim to being a professional. Some of the behaviours listed by participants included: “delivering your services professionally”, “quality of delivery of instruction” “being punctual for school”, “respect for colleagues”, “meeting your deadlines”, “respect given to your students”, “psychological distance between you and your students”, “modelling positive behaviours” and “integrity”. The core argument is aptly summed up by the contribution of one of the several participants who spoke on the theme:

For example, as M said, if you see yourself as a person being paid then to you it is an occupation but if you see yourself as more than that, you are delivering a quality service,[then] to me, you can see yourself as being a professional in the teaching service...For me it is more important to be a professional than what people think of the teaching service, whether it is a profession or occupation. I think that at the end of the day our professionalism in what we do – in the classroom, out of the classroom, how we deliver our particular discipline to the students and how effective we are in teaching them and molding them not only academically but as model citizens - is more important than how we compare ourselves to doctors and lawyers.

H: Male, Secondary

Summary

Using Chrysochoou's (2003) model of social representations and Bamberg's (1997) notion of linguistic construction of emotions as interpretive frameworks, this chapter sought to (re)construct the professional identity of a group of Barbadian teachers from the focus group findings in Chapter 5. As a result of this interpretive exercise it was found that the teachers in this study were making a fundamental *claim* to be professionals in the face of the perceived absence of supporting *recognition* of teaching as a profession. This seemingly paradoxical finding is explained by the fact that these teachers characterize the degree of professionalization of an occupation by a different set of criteria from those used to characterize professionalism. As a warrant for their claim, teachers pointed to their perception of the importance of their role as teachers, their implied possession of what they consider to be relevant self-knowledge, professional behaviour, training and level of

autonomy. They also indicated that an emotional commitment or passion for the job was important thus underscoring the notion that teaching is an emotion-intense occupation. Because this study treats professional identity as an aspect of the self-concept, the identity action undertaken by these teachers is attributed to their need for psychological coherence, a coherence threatened by the disparity between the importance of their role as teachers as they see it and the lack of commensurate status accorded the occupation of teaching.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

This main purpose of this final chapter is to outline the theoretical inferences which can be drawn from this exploratory study of teacher professional identity as well as to suggest possible courses of action that flow from those inferences and the study as a whole. I first propose what I see as the thesis that has emerged. Second, I assess the extent to which my *a priori* identity categories are consistent with those that emerged from the empirical data. Third, I relate the thesis to the broader self and identity literature. Finally, I make several recommendations related to further research and the professional development of teaching in Barbados.

Thesis Statement

Faced with the perception that teaching is not a "full" profession and as a consequence, non-recognition of their "right" to be deemed "professionals" by society, teachers in this study, perceiving this as a threat to their professional selves, have "acted in the name of their identity" to protect the integrity of their professional self-concept and professional self-esteem. To justify their claim to be professionals, they have strategically defined the concept of being a professional and elicited psychological support for their claim from their self-knowledge, emotional involvement, perceived role, competence, autonomy and professional behaviour.

The detailed analysis which led to this thesis statement has been reported in the two preceding chapters and will not be repeated here. Up for discussion, however, are two theoretical issues arising from the thesis statement: first, its implications for the hypothesized or *a priori* structure of professional identity and second, its implications for the broader conceptual issues of self and identity in the context of professional identity discourse.

The thesis statement answers the research questions that have guided this study, namely: (1) Do Barbadian teachers see teaching as a profession? (2) Do Barbadian teachers categorize themselves as professionals? (3) To what extent are the *a priori* categories of claims, recognitions, self-knowledge and emotional involvement consistent with those along which Barbadians appear to organize their occupational/professional identity? According to the thesis statement, the teachers have answered first the question in the negative and the second one in affirmative. But to what extent has the third question been answered? To address this issue, I compare the pre-conceptualized and empirical categories in accordance with the research logic laid out in Chapter 4.

Conceptualized vs. Empirical Categories

The primary aim of my research was to develop an empirically "grounded" conceptualization of teacher professional identity. As I argued in Chapter 3, previous research in teacher professional identity, even research pursued from a purely grounded theory approach, has provided little more than a confirmation of what is preciously believed about professional identity. Most of what is believed revolves around the process of professional identity formation and emphasizes its transient and multifaceted nature. On the contrary, I argued that professional identity has an element of structure which has not been accounted for but which has to be conceptualized in order to bring some level of consistency to discussions of professional identity. Having critiqued this entire approach in Chapter 3, I employed a different research logic in my study by starting out with an *a priori* conceptualization, a strategy which runs counter to the approach recommended in a pure grounded theory exercise. Essentially, this conceptualization hypothesized that teachers' description of their professional identity would fall into four categories: claims, recognitions, self-knowledge and emotional involvement, collectively representing what I refer to as "professional identity structure". However, I committed myself to the concept of theoretical sensitivity which meant that preconceived categories would not have preeminence over categories uncovered from the empirical data.

As it turns out, evidence has been found to support the four original categories. However, four additional categories have been uncovered, suggesting that the *a priori* categories are insufficient in number to account for the complexity of their professional identity structure. Sensitivity to the empirical data requires that these four additional categories: training, autonomy, perceived role and professional behaviour be included in the formulation of any

professional identity framework in one form or another. In the next section, I briefly comment on the rationale for and the form each might take in a revised professional identity structure.

Training

As noted in Chapter 5, training emerged from the empirical data as a key theme, attracted the highest level of involvement and recorded the highest number of conceptual linkages. Its inclusion as a key analytical category of professional identity can be supported on both theoretical and additional empirical grounds. As discussed in Chapter 2, initial or induction training has been theorized as a core feature of the professions and professionalism for as long as there have been scholarly discussions on these concepts. Consistent with this, the development of professional identity is often cited as a key goal of initial training: in teaching (Walling and Lewis 2000), in medicine (Monrouxe 2010) and in law (Alexander 2011). Empirically, O'Flynn and Britten (2007) have demonstrated that training can be used as a basis asserting professional identity. In their work: *Does the achievement of medical identity limit the ability of primary care practitioners to be patient-centered? A qualitative study*, the authors showed how medical practitioners used their "superior" training as a basis for asserting their professional identity over ancillary medical staff. It makes sense, therefore, that training should matter to the professional identity of teachers.

However, as explained in the preceding chapter, training has two different connotations each of which address two different aspects of professional identity conceptualization: first, the status conferred by having received "professional training" and second, its implication about the professional knowledge and competence of the individual. The first meaning may be interpreted as representing a potential basis for acceptance of the individual by society and, therefore, can be subsumed under the identity element "Recognitions". The second meaning should stand as an independent category. I label it *competence* because it more truly reflects participants' own thoughts on the matter.

Could it be the....community's acceptance of your profession will have to do with the level of competence that you showcase and that will depend largely in part on your training and the intensity of your training?

D: Male, Secondary

I think that at the end of the day our professionalism in what we do – in the classroom, out of the classroom, how we deliver our particular discipline to the students - and how effective we are in teaching them and molding them not only academically but as model citizens - is more important than how we compare ourselves to doctors and lawyers.

H: Male, Secondary

Autonomy

Autonomy is considered a basic psychological need (Deci and Ryan 1985) and the degree of autonomy perceived by teachers acts as an indicator of their job satisfaction (Pearson and Moomaw 2005). In the preceding chapter, I discussed studies by Shwalbe (1993) and others in relation the matter of autonomy at some length. However, I repeat the core principle that explains the link between the professional self and autonomy: “workplace autonomy is seen as providing opportunities primarily for perceiving one's self as responsible for competent performance” which is then thought to furnish a basis for the enhancement of self-esteem via “self-attributions of competence” (Schwalbe 1993 p. 522). The empirical data generated from this study suggests that participants regard autonomy as a playing a key role, not only in deciding whether teaching is a profession but also, in how they see themselves as teachers. I considered subsuming autonomy under the self-knowledge *a priori* category because the notion of *perceived* autonomy is not unknown (Pearson and Moomaw 2005). However, since autonomy is also a highly situated phenomenon, I abandoned this notion. Therefore, it is included in my expanded list of professional identity categories.

Perceived Role

Perceived role is easily justified as a separate identity category because of the salience of role in identity theory (see for example, Cote 1996; Stets and Burke 2000; Hitlin 2003). Furthermore, Ben-Peretz, Mendelson and Kron (2003) have shown that how teachers behave in their job is closely linked to how they perceive their role. Given the support this analytical category enjoys, “perceived role” should be a major category of professional identity structure.

Professional Behaviour

Most of the behaviours described by the focus group bear a striking similarity to those attributed to medical professional behaviour (van de Camp, Vernooij-Dassen, Grol and Bottem 2006) and teacher professional behaviour (Helsby 1995, Webb et al. 2004) discussed in Chapter 2 (see page 35). Interestingly, Evans (2011) has suggested three components of professionalism. One of them, the behavioural component, is very similar to the professional behaviour category. Her behavioural component includes, “processes that people apply to their work; procedures that they apply to their work; output, productivity and achievement (how much people ‘do’ and what they achieve); and their skills and competences” (Evans 2011, p.856). Of all the identity resources called upon by the teachers in my study, professional behaviour stands out as a major basis on which their claim to being a professional is predicated. In effect, participants treated professional behaviour as a determining influence rather than a consequence. This is in contrast to the previous section where it was suggested that a teacher’s behaviour is an outcome of how he or she perceives his or her role. It would appear, therefore, that professional behaviour plays a pivotal conceptual role in understanding professional identity and therefore, it makes sense to include it as a separate category of professional identity structure.

With the addition of the four other categories above, the structure of teacher professional identity can now be decomposed into the following eight categories:

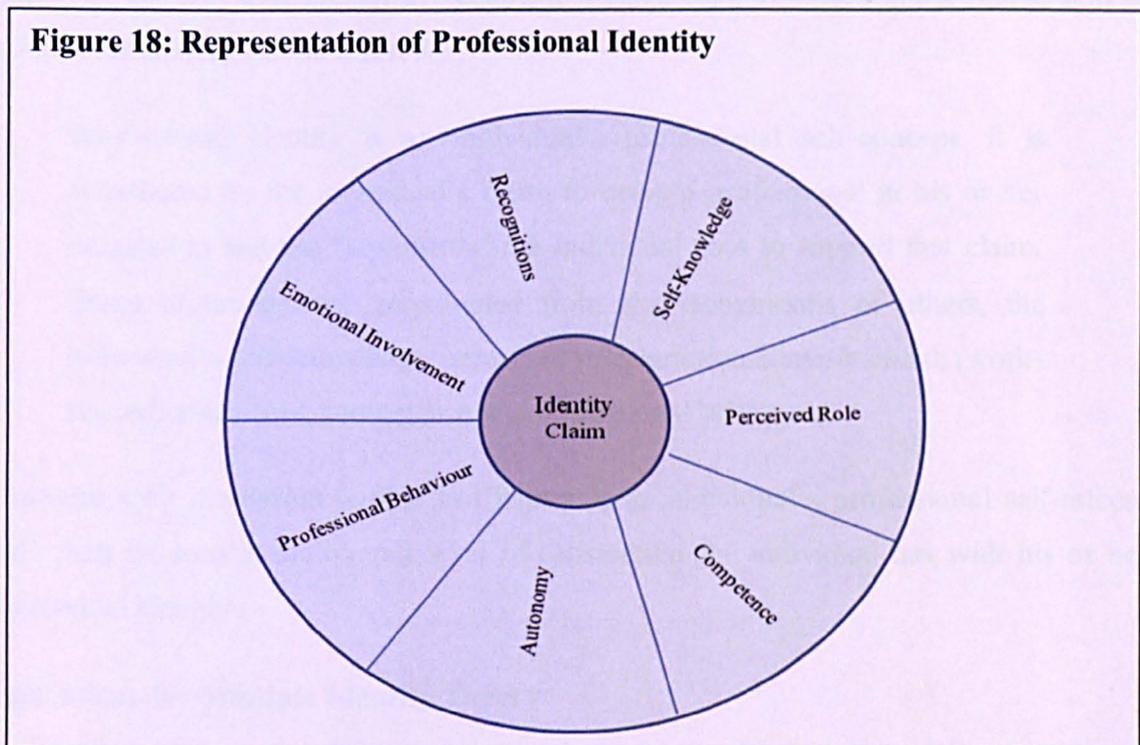
1. Claims
2. Recognitions
3. Self-knowledge
4. Emotional Involvement
5. Competence
6. Autonomy
7. Perceived Role
8. Professional Behaviour

What these categories do is provide meaningful "containers" into which the professional identity of a specific group of teachers under examination might be distilled; the categories by themselves are not statements about the content of the identity itself. For example, the teachers in my study did claim to be professionals; however, there is no guarantee that another focus group or set of teachers might make the same claim. From the perspective espoused here, it would not invalidate the "claims" category if another group claimed not to be professionals. Such an occurrence would force one to enquire about the content of the other categories in order to explain such a claim. Given the supporting contextual evidence provided in chapter 6, namely, the historical and cultural background as well as the

theoretical and other empirical evidence adduced, a certain degree of analytical generalization (as against statistical generalization) can be attributed to these categories. The distinction between these two types of generalization has been discussed in Chapter 4. Perhaps, as Guba and Lincoln have argued, qualitative generalizations are best regarded as “working hypotheses that describe the individual case” because “generalizations are impossible since phenomena are neither time- nor context-free” (Guba and Lincoln 1982, p. 238).

Revising the Conceptualization of Professional Identity

A major part of the challenge in understanding professional identity appears to have been the same challenges that have inhibited the development of an understanding of self, namely, isolation of the various disciplines and researchers engaged in the study of self and identity (Rosenberg 1989; Cote and Levine 2002; Mischel and Morf 2003). After



consulting the wide range of literature available on the self and identity it became clear that treating professional identity as a functioning of the self in a specific context offered the clearest and most logical approach to conceptualizing teacher professional identity. Thus parallels were drawn between the structure and functioning of the self per se and teacher professional identity. This led to my positing the “professional self-concept” and “professional self-esteem” as logical and viable constructs on which to base a

conceptualization of teacher professional identity. These were discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

This construal of professional identity was easily reconciled with existing notions about the self-concept: its ability to exhibit stability and be dynamic; to be the product of the construction of both social context and internal processes; to be both cognitive and emotional in nature and display the potential for development over time (Beauchamp and Thomas 2009). More importantly, it was inferred that teacher professional identity, like the self, acts to preserve or maintain its integrity regardless to whether that integrity is defined in terms such as competence, satisfaction or any of the other criteria alluded to earlier in chapter 3. On this basis, the finding of this study that teachers have acted “in the name of identity” in claiming to be professionals can be understood as tantamount to their acting “in the name of self” (Chrysochoou 2003) or “arguing for self” (MacLure 1993).

As a result of the expansion of the conceptual categories, a revised conceptualization of professional identity can be offered:

Professional identity is an individual’s professional self-concept. It is constituted by the individual’s claim to being a professional in his or her occupation and the “arguments” the individual uses to support that claim. These arguments are constructed from the recognitions of others, the individual’s self-knowledge, perceived role, emotional involvement, (work-related) autonomy, competence and professional behaviour.

Consistent with discussion outline in Chapter 3, an individual’s professional self-esteem might then be seen is the overall level of satisfaction the individual has with his or her professional identity.

Implications for Multiple Identity Theory

For many years, scholars have made distinctions among social, collective and personal aspects of identity (Tajfel and Turner 1979; Stets and Burke 2000; Striker and Burke 2000). A collective identity is “an identity that is shared with a group of others who have (or are believed to have) some characteristic(s) in common” (Ashmore, Deaux and McLaughlin-Volpe 2004, p. 81). For example, Mercedes owners in different parts of the world can be said to have a collective identity by virtue of their ownership of the brand.

This contrasts with Tajfel's often cited conceptualization of social identity as a function of the individual's knowledge of his or her membership of a certain social group "together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership" (Tajfel, 1972 p. 292 in Hogg 2003 p. 462). Examples of social groups are occupational groups (e.g. engineers, teachers), family and religious groups.

One prime difference between collective and social identity is the fact that social identity is associated with groups that are part of the "normal" social fabric or structure of society; furthermore, these social groups pre-exist the individual (Hogg and Abrams 1988) whereas collective identity need not be associated with such groups but with groups that are merely "conceptual" or virtual in nature. Evidently there is some amount of common conceptual ground between social and collective identity although social identity would appear to have a more restricted theoretical meaning.

Teachers can be understood to be members of a collective as well as social group at one and the same time, thus allowing, at least theoretically, both collective identities as well as social identities to be ascribed to them. Interestingly, Nias (1996) has called attention to just this fact. She stated that "sub-groups of teachers in different countries and contexts have a sense of collective professional identity" while in almost the same breath she declares that "the unique sense of self which every teacher has is socially grounded" (p.294). The phrase "socially grounded" is problematic and forms part of the issue now being addressed here.

Given the conceptual similarity between collective and social identity, theorizing, not unexpectedly, has been largely between social identity and personal identity. Personal identity, unlike social identity, is a concept that enjoys less clarity in philosophy (Siderits 2003) and social psychology (Hitlin 2003; Stets and Burke 2000). It is often characterized loosely as consciousness of one's uniqueness or, as Hewitt has suggested:

[Personal identity is] a sense of continuity, integration, identification, and differentiation constructed by the person not in relation to a community and its culture but in relation to the self and its projects.

Hewitt 1989 p.179

In relation to mainstream theorizing, personal identity, in contrast to social identity, is associated with roles, the core of such an identity being "the categorization of the self as an

occupant of a role” and the assimilation of the meanings as well as expectations linked to that role and its performance into the self (Stets and Burke 2000 p. 225). Stets and Burke explain the operation of these two different types of identity:

Having a particular social identity means being at one with a certain group, being like others in the group, and seeing things from the group’s perspective. In contrast, having a particular role identity means acting to fulfill the expectations of the role, coordinating and negotiating interaction with role partners, and manipulating the environment to control the resources for which the role has responsibility. Herein lies an important distinction between group- and role-based identities: the basis of social identity is in the uniformity of perception and action among group members, while the basis of role identity resides in the differences in perceptions and actions that accompany a role as it relates to counter-roles.

Stets and Burke 2000 p. 226

The “uniformity of perception and action among group members” arises out of the process of categorization of oneself as a member of a group in the first place as well as comparisons between one’s group (the “in-group”) and other groups (“out-groups”) (Hogg and Abams 1988; Stets and Burke 2000). Additionally, identity theorists have invented constructs such as identity salience, self-esteem, commitment, and master identities to explain why individuals may veto the socially expected behaviour and act out of a sense of individual identity (Deaux and Burke 2010), a tacit admission of what might be referred to as “the explanatory hegemony of social identity theory”. Much of the debate, therefore, has centered on how either social or personal identity comes to take dominance in determining the behaviour of individuals.

The findings of my study are relevant to that debate because it presents a case where individual teachers have constructed similar individual professional identity structures raising the question of whether identity theory, as currently constituted, can account for this finding. In other words, is the identity action undertaken by these teachers the result of the activation of group (social) identity or the work of personal identity? I argue that it is the latter.

First, the explanatory tools of social identity theory, self-categorization, depersonalization (viewing the self as a group member rather than as a unique individual) and the in-group/out-group effect (Stets and Burke 2000) do not offer much insight into the identity structure adopted by the teachers who participated in this study. This should not be altogether surprising since teachers are not known for their "groupiness" but rather for their individuality (Lortie 1975; Nias 1989). As I noted in Chapter 6, teachers displayed noticeable nuances in their identities at the level of self-knowledge and emotions despite making the same basic claim to professionalism. As a result, the similarity of the professional identities of the participants cannot be construed simply as the work of social identification processes.

Personal identity theory, in my view, offers a more appropriate explanation. As Stets and Burke (2000) quoted above suggest, personal identity entails "having a particular role identity" and "acting to fulfill the expectations of the role". The similarity of the identities uncovered in my study can, therefore, be explained by the emphasis on the categorization of the self as an occupant of the role of teacher, the incorporation of the meanings and expectations of that role into individual performance, together with concept of commitment to that role. Commitment is regarded as common process operating in both types of identities and has become a major factor in explaining the activation of one type of identity over another in newer formulations of identity theory (Deaux and Burke 2010; Stryker and Burke 2000). In effect, what this means is that the similarity of the identity response characterized by "I am a professional" can be seen as due in part to the assimilation or internalization of role expectancies associated with the job of teaching and the fact that individuals are motivated by their commitment to similar values such as caring, integrity and the pursuit of excellence rather than any group allegiance. However, one has to be open to the possibility that these very values or meanings have been partly "incorporated into [their] prototype or identity standard" through the process of socialization in the first place (Deaux and Burke 2010). This would nicely blur the distinction between social and individual identity.

Not only do the findings of my study imply that the boundaries of demarcation that have been drawn between social and personal identity are not as rigid as has been portrayed, but they also imply a level of permeability as has been suggested by some scholars (for example, Hogg 2006) and lend some support to the critique that such sharp distinctions are

at best artificial (Chrysochoou 2003). More importantly, however, the findings can be interpreted as supporting the prominence of personal agency in constructing teacher professional identity, a conclusion often drawn from the teacher professional identity studies (Beijaard et al. 2004).

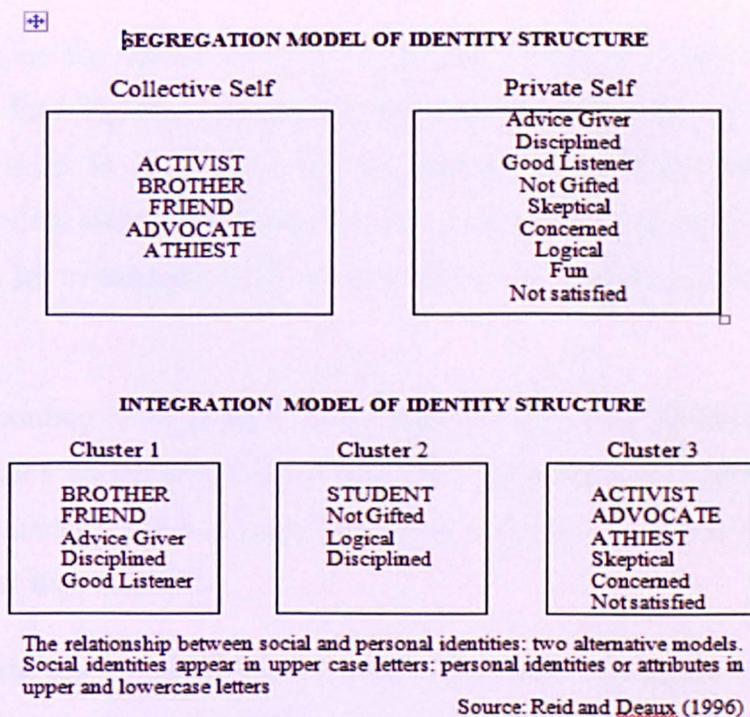
This significance of the conclusions above should be seen in the context of the fact that identity theory has been in state of ongoing revision for some time (Deaux and Burke 2010). Although social identity still appears overall to maintain a measure of “explanatory hegemony” at the expense of personal identity, the reification of the differences between social and personal identity theory have been called into question (Hogg 2006; Ashmore, Deaux and McLaughlin-Volpe 2004). Efforts to bridge the gap between the two theories have been ongoing; thus, Reid and Deaux (1996) pointing to the lack of a consensual vocabulary on group-based versus individual-based aspects of self, argued that the relationship between social and personal identity (the authors call the latter "attributions" in deference to the absence of this “consensual vocabulary”) can be accounted for either by a segregationist (“two baskets”) or an integrationist (“one basket”) approach.

In the segregationist model of identity structure, social aspects of identity are stored in one cognitive structure (“one basket”) and personal identity (attributions) are stored in another cognitive structure (second basket). In the integrationist model, collective and personal identity cognitions exist together in one basket. However, there might be different combinations or baskets of collective and personal identity cognition as shown in Figure 18.

In their 2009 publication, Stets and Burke continue the effort to find areas of similarity between the two theories in an effort to harmonize them. They suggested that regardless of whether identity is based on groups or roles, the identity processes involved should be the same (Burke and Stets 2009). For example, categorization as a member of a group is seen as similar to categorizing oneself as occupying a particular role; similarly "commitment" as discussed above, is regarded as a common process. On the other hand, the authors agree that there will be differences in results and effects of these common processes. Further in the same work (Burke and Stets 2009) they present a model of identity functioning which is an expansion and enhancement of a previous model (Burke 1991). In the following paragraphs I paraphrase this model and show how it complements the findings of my study.

The model of identity functioning described by Burke and Stets basically dispenses with the notion of separate social and personal identities in favour of a system of multiple identities. Thus there can be a male identity, parent identity, an employee identity, college student, churchgoer and so on. However, the concept that an identity is a set of meanings has been retained. Each identity contains a system for the management and control of the meanings within it. The system is composed of four basic components: an input, an identity standard, a comparator, and an output.

Figure 19: Models of Identity Structure



Each of these components is a process dealing with meanings within the environment and within the self. These processes are interconnected in a cyclic arrangement and their purpose is to manage and maintain perceived self-meanings in an identity within a certain range of comfort for the individual. Below, I show how this model offers a complementary way of looking at the professional identity action undertaken by teachers in this study. The bracketed expressions contain summarized thoughts expressed by teachers in my study and captured in Chapter 5. They do not represent actual words spoken.

1. The input to the identity system is the individual's perceptions of the events and symbols in the environment. These can be treated as equivalent to the recognitions in

the conceptualization of professional identity in this study (“teaching is not perceived as a profession”; “low social status of teaching”; “lack of training not preemptive of access to profession”; “other professions e.g. law, accorded social status”).

2. These perceptions are compared in the comparator to the identity standard which is the set of meanings for that identity (“teaching is an important occupation”; “I am passionate about this occupation”; “I have professional training”; “I dress and comport myself as a professional”; “teachers ought to be considered professionals”). These are roughly equivalent to the self-knowledge/attributes defined and discussed in the study.
3. Depending on the outcome of the comparison output (e.g. input perceptions less favourable than identity standard for teaching) self-definitions and behaviours are altered in order to make the input perceptions of meaning correspond with the meanings of the identity standard (“I am a professional because of how I approach and do this job of teaching”). This corresponds to the primary claim teachers made in the study.
4. Finally, according to the model, these identity actions have the efficacy of changing an individual’s perception of the environment by altering the symbolic meaning of the environment (“what society thinks is irrelevant”; “doctors are no more professional than myself”).

As Stets and Burke (1991) point out themselves, the outline of identity functioning above accounts more for behaviour arising from the operation of the identity process and less for changes in identity standards. To account for such changes the authors suggest that when the normal identity-inspired behaviour cycle fails to bring about maintenance of identity balance or is interrupted, stress or disruption occurs. If this cannot be resolved through the normal loop as described above, the individual will act to adopt to change the identity standard. Stets and Burke speculate that this is brought about by the operation of a higher level identity process that leads to the formation of the identity standard in a lower level in the first instance. The input of this higher level is taken from the environment; the output is an identity standard.

This explanation of identity standard change is reasonably consistent with the identity action presumed to have been undertaken by the teachers in this study group in which they

(re)defined the meanings of "profession" and "professionalism". Presumably this was less stressful than seeking to redefine the environmental inputs or recognitions ("low status of teaching" for example). Additionally, this explanation opens scope for the integration of those studies of teacher identity that focus on the development of their identities from their experience as students, those that centre on the influence of mentors as well as those that emphasize the role of teacher training in teacher professional identity; perhaps these can be successfully integrated to produce a sub-theory of how teachers' professional identity standards are developed in the first instance within the context of this model of identity functioning. Above and beyond these two advantages, the identity model of Stets and Burke has the added benefit of virtually eliminating the privileged explanatory hegemony of social identity theory in favour of a more person-centered, agentic approach even though the theory, by its functioning, still implicates and preserves a role for the social context in which identities develop.

Relevance to Teacher Identity Findings

Overall, the thesis statement above and the findings discussed in the previous chapter are consistent with and supportive of some of the more salient findings about teachers' selves and identities. This section briefly discusses a few of these findings, particularly: teacher self-referentialism, teacher vulnerability and the notion of possible selves.

Self-referentialism

Kelchtermans (2005, p.1000), citing Nias (1989 p.5), notes two interesting features about teachers' lives: first, "teachers, when talking about their professional actions and activities, cannot but speak about themselves"; second and paradoxically, "what teachers have in common is their individuality". These features are collectively referred to as "self-referentialism". Both of these features showed up in this study. The first manifested in the expressions used by teachers such as "how I feel about myself", "I do my own thing" and "I see myself as a professional". The second feature is evidenced by the fact that although teachers made a basically similar claim about their professionalism ("I am a professional") their reasons were invariably nuanced; for example, some emphasized dressing professionally, others stressed their effectiveness in teaching while others called attention to the importance they attached to modelling good behaviour to students.

Teacher Vulnerability

In studying primary school teachers' in the 1990s, Keltchtermans (2005) found that teachers' lives could be characterized by a feature he referred to as "vulnerability", a term which describes the extent to which teachers often felt "powerless, threatened, questioned by others (for example, principal, parents) without being able to properly defend themselves, etc". The construct also includes, according to the author, the feeling of "not being in full control of the processes and tasks they felt responsible for as teachers" (Keltchtermans 2005 p. 997). The concept of "vulnerability" captures a sense about teachers I have had for a long time but to which I have been unable to fit an appropriate term. My study reveals a degree of vulnerability on the part of the teachers. For example, participants referred to an incident where a teacher was castigated by parents because of dress:

A parent came to the school and called the teacher and lambasted him about his dress..If you look at the teacher you can see why the parent would have done it...not that she should have done it.

H: Male, Secondary

Another case was what teachers regard as an attack on teachers in the media by the Minister of Education. Teachers felt that the use of the media was an embarrassing, unprofessional way of handling the matter:

I don't think it has to do with levels; it has to do with respect. I don't think every doctor or lawyer toes the line but you don't see it the front page of the *Sunday Sun* as the Minister did some year back.... So we can deal with certain issues behind closed doors if you respect the profession.

A: Female, Primary

As a collective, teachers can deal with this level of vulnerability in several ways: by enhancing the level of professionalization of the occupation by the development of standards, the expansion of professional associations and embracing licensing. These are discussed in some detail in the ensuing section, "Action Implications".

Possible Selves

In contrast to this vulnerability, there is also a sense in which teachers have envisioned what Markus and Nurius (1986) referred to as “possible selves”. Possible selves, according to the authors, are “individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming”; ideas which the authors believe serve as a link between cognition and motivation and which are important “because they provide an evaluative and interpretive context for the current view of self” (Markus and Nurius 1986 p.954). While individual teachers in this study might very well have an array of different possible selves the anticipated changes in the regulatory framework within which they operate, namely the implementation of a system of licensing of teachers, is already seen as having the potential to (re) shape their future identities:

There is a body now that is putting principles in place to say well, this what we do... what we are not going to do; these are the criteria that you must meet before you come in here so that people [teachers] [will] see themselves differently.

T: Female, Primary

Suggestions for Further Research

Future research should attempt to "validate" the dimensions of professional identity structure developed in this study. One of the elements of professional identity used in this study – self-knowledge / self-attributes requires additional theoretical work. The wide range of personality/character concepts used in professional identity studies relating to this element - values, attitudes, beliefs, motives etc - need to be studied and streamlined within the context of professional identity.

Additionally, future research should attempt to substantiate the expanded dimensions of professional identity with different professional groups such as doctors, lawyers, accountants and engineers as well as stakeholders in teaching and for that matter, stakeholders of any of the professions. However, this is with the understanding that in trying to bear out these professional identity dimensions, researchers will try to avoid the intellectual and methodological trap of substituting the ‘reality of the model’ for a ‘model of reality’ which is a possibility noted by Bordieu (1990). For example, new and additional studies could be undertaken to find out whether members of the established and

other professions (for example, medicine, law, engineering, accounting) construct their professional identity claims in the same manner as teachers. One would hypothesize that, in contrast to teachers, such individuals would point to the social status of the profession and their training as key warrants for their professional identity instead of or in conjunction with their own self-referenced justifications. Monrouxe (2010) supports this view arguing with respect to training that “medical education is as much about the development of a professional identity as it is about knowledge learning” (p.40).

The analytical schema developed in this study might also be used to investigate the views of parents, students and other stakeholders in the teaching profession vis-à-vis those of teachers. For example, parents can be asked complementary questions to those employed in this study to determine whether they see teaching as a profession, whether they regard teachers as professionals and the reasons for their answers. Comparisons can then be made between parents’ answers and those of teachers. Such comparisons would reveal any differences in perception between parents’ and teachers’ views with regard to what constitutes a profession and professionalism. I suspect that parents might want to take issue with such issues as training and deportment, the latter with special emphasis on dress, as one participant reported in the study. Teachers and educational authorities might then be motivated to take appropriate action such as adopting appropriate codes of dress or institute appropriate training for teachers.

Another desirable research stream would be to undertake similar studies across comparable post-colonial country settings. One research question that might be investigated for example, is: “Do teachers in post-colonial countries have similar identity claims and social recognition issues?” Barrett’s (2007) study of Tanzanian teachers, despite the fact it was not billed as a study in professional identity, has thrown up some similar findings to my study. For example, Barrett reported that the teachers in her study saw themselves as a role model to their pupils by which they meant:

To display the benefits of education through their own appearance and behaviour, in particular dressing appropriately for work and avoiding alcoholism.

Barrett 2007 p. 8

Claims of varying degrees of commitment to teaching were also reported. In terms of *motivations* some teachers espoused altruistic reasons for entering teaching; some were

more focused on extrinsic rewards such as job security and location flexibility. In terms of attributes, *values* such as faith in education to enhance people's lives, a belief in their efficacy as teachers, patience with children and willingness to develop as teachers were also expressed. These elements of Barrett's findings are easily subsumed under the "self-knowledge" category. In terms of *emotions* or *emotionality*, teachers expressed some distress over their employment conditions and exhibited some tension between "their self-image and their position as a teacher" (p.8). According to the author, some teachers regarded their "professional identity as teachers [as] synonymous with a social identity as respectable citizens" (p.11). This notion can be categorized as a *recognition*. Incidentally, it also reflects the potential overlap of personal and professional identity, the personal and the professional life of teachers or the "person-as-teacher" versus "teacher-as-person" perspectives raised in Chapter 3.

Studies such as Barrett's would allow researchers to make useful comparisons as well as provide an opportunity to extend the theory of professional identity. From the available research (for example, Ingersoll 2007) it is clear that teachers tend to have the same professional problems such as poor training, inadequate facilities and poor pay: but do they make the same identity claims? Nias (1989) has argued in the affirmative but her evidence came from primary schools in two European countries, England and Belgium, secondary schools in the USA, Australia and England and university education departments in the USA and Canada (p. 294), the so-called developed countries. There is, therefore, need to add to the comparatively small body of literature in developing/post-colonial countries (see for example, Welmond 2002; Miric, 2009) since these represent peculiar backdrops of history, culture and economy for teachers. However, appropriate extant research from countries such as Canada and Australia could also be reviewed with the analytical framework advocated in this study in so far as these countries are also post-colonial societies in their own right.

Action and Policy Implications

In this final section I examine the policy implications of this research for teachers' colleges, unions and government, the main stakeholders in the educational system in Barbados.

Teacher Training

The basic finding of this study is that teacher training, in particular, initial teacher training, is perceived as the most critical factor in whether teachers see teaching as an occupation or a profession. The present situation in which individuals can still teach without formal training and teacher credentials, in contradistinction to what obtains in the older professions, is thought to be a major reason for the general lack of recognition of teaching as a profession in Barbados. It is also important to the value trained teachers attribute to their training and how it is implicated in their professional identity. The prescription is quite obvious: educational authorities need to move to a policy position where an individual cannot teach without initial training and a valid teacher credential as obtains in some jurisdictions. Although Erdiston Teachers' College holds an annual induction course for new teachers, participants are often person who may have had some 'barefoot' experience prior to participating in the course. Whether this policy could be imposed on private schools or on tertiary institutions, in particular, the Barbados Community College and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, is open to debate. Perhaps moral suasion might be effective in achieving the adoption of such a policy in such situations. A new Education Act for Barbados as well as a regime of teacher licensing are being contemplated and therefore, this might be the appropriate time to adopt the policy suggested here.

Teacher training institutions may also have to do more to improve teachers' understanding of professionalism. Some elements of teacher professionalism are currently taught in the In-Service Diploma in Education and the Certificate in Educational Administration. Usually this occurs in connection with the completion of specific assignments. However, it is suggested that each course should allocate some significant space to the examination of professionalism and professional identity. In my view this would advance the development of some level of uniformity in the understanding of the nature of professionalism and sensitize teachers to the kinds of improvements that can further the professionalization of teaching as well as provide the "trappings" of professionalism to complement their current individualistic professional identity. However, this recommendation would have to be complemented by the development of professional standards.

Development of Professional Standards

Currently, professionalism as revealed in this study is very much of an individual, private phenomenon; each person, as it were, does what is right in his or her own eyes. As one participant in this study noted, there are no set of standards to which the body of teachers or any one other stakeholder in education in Barbados, can point to as a basis for teacher "professional" behaviour. By "standards" I do not mean curriculum standards but standards for professional conduct, more akin to a code of practice, in contradistinction to a code of ethics. Such a code of practice would deal with issues of classroom management, dealing with parents and educational authorities, general pedagogical best practices and the like. This would not be green-field exercise since there are several models available from which ideas can be borrowed and adapted. The standards I have in mind would not be designed to stifle the creativity that teachers in my study advocated is necessary but to bring to bear the kind of uniformity that is expected of other professionals as well as to prevent teachers from being victims of their own high level of commitment and vulnerability. For example, the latest UK standards indicate that:

All teachers should have a professional responsibility to be engaged in effective, sustained and relevant professional development throughout their careers and all teachers should have a contractual entitlement to effective, sustained and relevant professional development throughout their careers.

Training and Development Agency for Schools 2007 p. 2

Almost without exception, both Barbadians and external monitoring bodies attribute the economic and social performance of the country primarily to its stable system of government and the high level of education that has been enjoyed by Barbadians for many years, especially over the last forty-four years of independence. This study offers some tentative grounds for attributing this desirable state of affairs to a relatively developed sense of professional identity expressed in as elevated sense of commitment to teaching irrespective of whether people think it is a profession or just an occupation.

However, for matters of uniformity and fairness it is most appropriate that a comprehensive set of standards are devised for teachers by teachers. The point about uniformity is raised because those who currently operate with less than desirable standards will feel obligated to "improve their game", a point made, by teachers in this study when

the matter of a Teachers' Commission was raised. "Fairness" is implicated in that those who do exhibit the level of dedication and commitment alluded to by teachers in this would feel less inclined to think of themselves as being taken advantage of by the other, not-so-committed individuals.

Teachers' Service Commission

With respect to the regulatory framework of teaching, it is recommended that the provision of the Barbados Constitutional Commission of 1974 for the establishment of a Teachers' Service Commission be implemented without delay. Teachers in this study are of the view that the implementation of this provision would enhance their professional identity by streamlining the requirements for teaching. This, they believe, would advance their case for social recognition and help to support their claim of being professionals. The constitutional provision paving the way for the Teachers' Service Commission was made some thirty eight years ago and since then there has been sporadic mention of it but no definite steps have been taken to implement it. Of course, in seeking to implement such an innovation, due regard has to be taken of the status and training of those currently in the service so that they are not disadvantaged. This proposal envisages that careful documentation of the numbers of "at-risk" teachers would be made as part of its implementation and that appropriate provisional / transitional arrangements would be made.

Establishment of Professional Associations

Teachers unions have traditionally played a role in the professionalization of teaching by agitating for better conditions of service including pay. In Barbados both unions, the BUT and the BSTU, have been very successful in this respect, especially with regard to the enactment of legislation and agitation for the rights of teachers in the country. However, in order to move teaching to a higher level of "professionalism", it is recommended that unions play a role in helping teachers develop subject associations which would look after matters such as disciplinary (content) research, specialized training and publishing. It should be clear, however, that this proposal does not call for the elimination of teachers' unions; I take the point made by Stanley Mayers, a former General Secretary of the BUT, who, reflecting on the history and achievements of that organization, noted the attitude of the "establishment" to the idea of the BUT in its early days:

It was felt that white collar public servants should belong to an association, not a union. This is an important distinction, because unions and associations were thought to behave differently. Unions were for cane-cutters and dock workers. Associations were for more genteel people, and very importantly, associations did not have the bad manners to become involved in industrial action.

Mayers (undated) p. 3

This proposal, on the contrary, apart from the obvious advantages that it would bring to teachers who become members of such associations, has the added potential benefit of positioning the image of the Unions as sophisticated stakeholders in the business of education in the country, concerned not only with the staple "bread and butter" issues of unionism but the "meatier" issues of educational practice. Interestingly, while I was writing up my research, a proposal was being made by the Registrar of the Caribbean Examinations Council for the establishment of Virtual Subject Associations in English and Mathematics (Kaiteur News Online, 23 August). While the CXC initiative is aimed primarily at assisting that organization in overcoming some of the challenges being experienced by both teachers and candidates with these two subjects, it is an initiative which should be replicated in all significant subject areas and supported, if not initiated, by all teachers' unions in an effort to enhance the professional image and status of teachers.

Summary

This chapter articulated and evaluated the thesis of this study in relation to the research question, discussed the relevance of the overall findings for the conceptualization of the self and identity and made recommendations for the development of teaching in Barbados. As a result of comparing a priori professional identity categories with those elicited from empirical data, the original professional identity categories were extended to eight. It was noted that the findings lend some support to the "grand" theory of identity functioning propounded by Burke (1991) and Burke and Stets (2009) which in effect reduces the explanatory hegemony of social identity theory in favour of a more personal, individualized approach to identity functioning. Some support was also obtained for several of the salient findings about the character of teacher identity namely, its individuality, vulnerability and volatility. It is recommended that further research should be done to refine and extend the conceptualization of teacher professional identity

developed this study. Finally, several recommendations aimed at various several of the stakeholders in the educational system have been advanced. These include the implementation of a training-first approach to entry to the occupation, the enhancement of professionalism training in teacher training curricula, the long-awaited regime of licensing for teachers, the establishment of professional subject associations and the formulation of a code of professional standards equivalent to those that obtain for established professionals such as doctors.

Appendix A: Participant Information Factsheet



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01 April 2011

Dear Prospective Participant

I am a doctoral student of the University of Sheffield, United Kingdom and I am conducting a research project entitled A Qualitative Study of Barbadian Teachers' Views on Teaching as an Occupation. You are being invited to take part in this research project but before you decide to participate, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

Background to the Research

The objective of this research is to understand how Barbadian teachers perceive their occupation in relation to others such as lawyer, doctor or accountant and the reasons for their views. To the best of my knowledge, no research of this kind has ever been attempted in Barbados. Given the pivotal role played by teachers in society and the status often accorded their occupation, it is important that teachers' views on their occupation be explored. This project is not funded or sponsored by any company or organization, local or otherwise. However, it is quite possible that other academic researchers and policy makers may consult this research once it is completed and approved by Sheffield University.

What Participation Entails

Participants in this project will be asked to attend a focus group discussion on the topic. Each group will consist of 8 – 12 teachers. It will last approximately 1½ – 2 hours and the researcher will moderate the discussion. During the focus group, participants will be asked to respond to a number of questions posed by the moderator as well as discuss the answers given by other participants. Personal questions will not be asked. The entire focus group session will be audio recorded. The recordings made during this research will be used only for analysis and illustration in conference presentations and lectures. No one will be able to

identify your individual contribution. No one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings and no other use will be made of the recordings without your written permission.

Why You Been Approached

You have been approached as a result of our sampling process. In total about thirty to forty participants will be recruited. However, you do not have to take part; taking part in the research is entirely voluntary. In addition, if you choose to participate you may discontinue participation at any time.

Should you require further information about the project you may contact the project's supervisor Professor Pat Sikes at the following address: University of Sheffield, School of Education, 388, Glossop Road, Sheffield S10 2JA or at p.j.sikes@sheffield.ac.uk.

Signed Consent Necessary

This project has been ethically approved by the Sheffield University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). However, UREC requires that all researchers, including doctoral candidates, obtain written consent from respondents, where practicable, before they participate in any form of research. If you agree to participate you will, therefore, be asked to sign the consent form attached. I regret that without a signed consent form I cannot allow you to participate. Please read it carefully and respond to ALL the items provided thereon. Should you need any clarification, please contact me at the local address stated at the beginning of this document.

Details regarding the date, time and location of your focus group meeting will be communicated to you as soon as possible.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

.....
Aldon D. Tull
University of Sheffield

Appendix B: Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

To:
 Aldon D. Tull
 'Alpha' Waterwill
 41 Hothersal Crescent
 St. Michael

Participant Identification No.

Title of Research Project

A Qualitative Study of Barbadian Teachers' Views on Teaching as an Occupation

Please
 initial
 boxes
 below


Name of Researcher: *Aldon D. Tull*

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information fact sheet dated 20 April 2011 explaining the above research project and I have had an opportunity to ask questions about the project.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.
3. I understand that my responses will be **audio recorded** but kept strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymized responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.
4. I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research
5. I agree to take part in the above research project

 NAME of PARTICIPANT
(or legal representative)

 Date

 Signature

 Name of Person Taking Consent
(If different from Lead Researcher)

 Date

 Signature

 Lead Researcher
(To be signed and dated in presence of participant)

 Date

 Signature



APPENDIX C: Focus Group Participation Guide

Theme: Teaching as an Occupation

A focus group is “a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher” (Morgan 1996). This brief guide is prepared for those who are new to focus groups or to focus groups in academic research. The following points should be noted in participating in this focus group session:

1. The researcher is asking for your personal views and not those of any other person or any literature you have read.
2. The researcher is not seeking to measure or count the opinions of participants but is more interested in what you think and why and what others think about your views. There is therefore, no pressure on you as a group to seek consensus!
3. Feel free to question others and seek clarification. However, bear in mind that the exercise is not an argument to be won by any person or group!
4. Since we do NOT want to stay any longer than necessary make comments as concisely as you can and by all means, avoid digressions and meandering.
5. When you disagree – as I am sure you will - let it be done with grace. e.g. I beg to differ. Don't take comments personally!
6. When the discussion gets excited – as it will! - try hard to let one person speak at a time. It is important to get a clear recording of every participant's response. So take notes if you want to follow-up on a participant's contribution.
7. As moderator I can ask questions but I cannot give my opinion. You alone have the answers!
8. **All cell phones must be turned off. Sorry, but I insist!**

Aldon D. Tull

University of Sheffield

Appendix D: Moderator's Guide

Main Question	Possible Probes
1. Is teaching a profession, just an occupation or something else?	<i>Check for reason(s)</i>
2. What in, your view, distinguishes a profession from an occupation?	<i>Ask whether some occupations by name (e.g. lawyer, hairdresser) are/are not profession.</i>
3. Do you as a teacher feel you have any level of autonomy in the classroom?	<i>Probe for specifics</i>
4. What part do your colleagues play in how you see yourself as a professional?	<i>How important is that to you?</i>
5. Will the implementation of licensing for teachers make a difference in how you see teaching or yourself as a professional?	<i>Probe for reason</i>
6. What do you understand by the term "professionalism"?	<i>Can a person be a professional without belonging to a profession?</i> <i>Are you a professional?</i>
7. Has your understanding of teaching as an occupation / profession changed during this focus group. If so in what way?	

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