

# Chapter 5

## Teacher Professionalism and Performance Appraisal: A Critical Discussion



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**Abstract** The chapter covers the relationship between concepts of teaching as a professional activity and approaches to teacher performance appraisal. In its first part, the chapter considers perspectives that cross discussions about teacher professionalism. It contrasts performative views of teaching (Ball SJ, *J Educ Pol* 18(2):215–228, 2003) and new public management policies with views of teachers as knowledge and practical professionals. These two approaches are expressed as differences between organizational and occupational professionalism (Evetts J, *Current Sociol Rev* 61(5–6:778–796, 2013). From an international perspective, the chapter deals with challenges to teachers' occupational professionalism in different contexts and examines research about this. More specifically, the chapter moves on to teacher evaluation developments in some national contexts and considers whether these mainly base their assessment criteria on teacher professionalism (formative) or on test-based learning outcomes (summative). The inclusion of teacher evaluation as part of formal career systems is discussed using (Tournier et al, *Teaching career reforms: learning from experience*, International Institute for Educational Planning, 2019)'s analysis of such systems, as well as studies that examine how teachers in different national contexts view their appraisal requirements. It concludes with a rephrasing of the notion of accountability that underlies teacher evaluation, in order to reclaim its meaning as a professional responsibility that teachers owe to those who respect and place trust in their work.

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter has as its focus both the concept of teachers as professionals in the current policy contexts and how this professional character is or not upheld by approaches to teacher appraisal. It draws on sources in different world contexts that center on academic analysis of teacher policies as well as on studies dealing with teacher

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perceptions of the systems to which they are subject. This international focus is considered justified given the form in which teacher-related policies have travelled as have also related practices anchored on new public management and neo-liberal market policies. Specifically, besides examining longstanding analysis of teacher professionalism, the chapter is based on a literature review of recent studies on teacher professionalism and evaluation covering mainly, but not exclusively, from 2015 onward. While most studies occur in Anglophone countries or are published in English, an effort was made to include studies published in Spanish. Other limitations have to do with not having a wider international coverage with studies in Africa and Asia.

In discussing the notion of teachers as professionals and of teacher professionalism, the assumption is that teachers, by nature of their preparation and the complexity of their task, reassemble in their teaching sites their knowledge base—a mix of theory and practice—through analytic and reflective judgment about what students, as individuals and group, require to learn and do. The notion of “occupational professionalism” developed by Evetts (2013) aptly serves to describe this complex task. Further to this, the chapter takes on a discussion of challenges to teacher professional work derived from needing to guard their professionalism, support the quality of its enactment, and respond to what society expects from their teachers. For the task of education, teaching is a social obligation, as it is to ensure that every student has the opportunity to learn and develop. From this angle, the chapter discusses how appraisal or evaluation of teacher performance is researched, examines the procedures that support or narrow the scope of teacher responsibility to student test results, and how teachers respond to difficulties and sometimes threats to their professional occupation. In its concluding section, the article seeks to rephrase the concept of accountability as used to justify why teachers should be evaluated, in order to reclaim its meaning as a professional responsibility owed to those who trust their work.

## 5.2 Teaching—A Professional Occupation

Discussions centered on the nature of teaching have for long attempted to assert its status beyond earlier descriptions as being a quasi-professional activity (Hoyle, 1974; Etzioni, 1969). More recent studies on the nature of professional work have facilitated this analysis (Abbott, 1988; Freidson, 1989; Evetts, 2013), allowing teaching to be properly described as a professional occupation. Teachers can thus be referred to as professionals with a specific sphere of action defined as education and teaching, appropriate preparation, a related specific identity and a code of ethics. Teachers engage in work activities, rely on social recognition and trust, and exercise judgment based on appropriate knowledge and practical capacity (Abbott, 1988; McBeth, 2012; Swan et al., 2010; Yinger, 2005). As in other professional activities, what matters in the case of teachers is the legitimacy and quality of what they do, that is, their professionalism (Demirkasimoglu, 2010; Evetts, 2013; Goodson, 2003).

Teacher professionalism requires not only specific capacity for the job but also work toward its improvement. As with other professional occupations, beyond somewhat abstract definitions, a contested issue is the conditions under which teacher professionalism is monitored and protected: from “within” the occupational group or from “above”, that is, by their educational systems’ managers (Evetts, 2013). As shall be discussed later, this distinction is key in assessing the impact on teachers of New Public Management (NPM) and market-driven teacher policies (Hargreaves, 2000; Tolofari, 2005).

There are different views about what teacher professionalism entails in practice, how it develops through teacher education, and how it is enacted and protected in work situations (Demirkasimoglu, 2010). For example, while teaching is the field of action where teacher professionalism is at play, preparation for teaching may either accentuate its theoretical basis or on the contrary lay emphasis on its reflective pedagogic and practical elements, as illustrated by two contrasting teacher education programs in Germany studied by Dodilet et al. (2019). Teacher professionalism can also be viewed in relation to the historical evolution of teaching and of its tools and practices, as well as on how individual and collective teacher responsibility have played in its strategies and results. Along this process, teachers have engaged in transformative and collaborative forms of professionalism (Hargreaves, 2000; Hargreaves & O’Connor, 2017; Sachs, 2004). Achieved professional status, however, does not always entail professionalism in action (Ozga, 2000) as particular socio-historical conditions may act as restrictive and/or as facilitating factors. To use a contemporary example, the abrupt change in the form of schooling and teaching brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic had two effects on teachers and their “lived” professionalism. The initial one, for many teachers around the world, can be described as an off-putting experience at the least and as a distressing one at its worst. What has followed, however, is an effort among teachers to collaboratively rework how they teach, utilizing instruments and approaches new to them in order to further their students’ learning. These efforts can be aptly described as transformative and even creative expressions of teacher professionalism (Kim & Asbury, 2020; Niemi & Kousa, 2020).

Meanings of professionalism, how it is enacted and what level of control teachers have over its practical definition and monitoring, have evolved as referred to above. For example, Hargreaves (2000) wrote about a sort of “golden age” from the 1960s to the 1980s, mainly in Canada, the United States (USA), and the United Kingdom (UK), when teachers’ working conditions supported “autonomous” and “collaborative” professionalism anchored on teacher continuous education. During this time, teachers were allowed a degree of freedom to implement curricula based on trust in their pedagogical competence to handle the demands of classroom teaching. Teachers were able to exhibit what Evetts’ (2013) describes as “occupational professionalism”, that is, professionalism defined and constructed by teachers and their profession. These conditions, however, were only partly operant in other world locations such as Latin America and Africa where teaching remained a non-graduate activity until well into the 2000s decade. Even where education conditions provided some space for teachers to exert professionalism, such as broad curricular frames and constructivist

teaching approaches, as in Chile, Mexico, and South Africa in the early 2000s, teachers found it difficult to make use of these enabling contexts. This is due to limiting systemic conditions such as long teaching hours, narrow accountability pressures, and overcrowded classrooms (Ávalos, 2002).

### ***5.2.1 Recent Challenges to Teacher Professionalism***

With exceptions, it is difficult to signal out locations with “perfect” conditions that support teachers’ work as professionals, that reward their work with just salaries, and provide sufficient leeway for them to respond to education needs as best as their preparation allows for. However, the emergence and spread of neo-liberal market and new public management (NPM) policies over world political systems have created conditions in the administration of public services affecting the work of teachers associated with them (Anderson, 2017; Ferlie, 2017). These policies have contributed to alter the understanding of education as a public good and foster the view that education services profit from being regulated by market forces. Specifically, regarding teachers, NPM policies advocate control over their competence based more on specifics of performance or “performativity” (Ball, 2003), rather than on a broad understanding of what is involved in teaching. Such policies support the monitoring of teacher performance with emphasis on accountability and standards, flexibility of teacher employment, and use of performance-based pay. In systems, as in Chile, where school funding is subject to student numbers, teachers as professionals find themselves conflicted in how best to handle their work as educators while responding to the external pressure of student examination results (Tolofari, 2005). In NPM contexts, teachers’ voice and needs tend not to be sufficiently addressed, being regarded as objects of intervention rather than as subjects of change and feeling disempowered before families as the state takes over their broad decision-making power (Novaes & Silva, 2020; Van der Tuin & Verger, 2013).

New public management policies have not equally affected education systems. Most such policies originated and developed in Anglophone countries, mainly England, the USA, and New Zealand, but in the context of globalization (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010), these policies have influenced other locations with the market, neo-liberal political, and economic systems needed to sustain them, as is the case of Chile (Bellei & Vanni, 2015). Two recent studies that examine the geography of teacher-related policies illustrate how broad political and economic structures affect conditions for teacher professionalism. The first of these, based on teacher responses to the TALIS 2013 survey (Voisin & Dumay, 2020), reviewed models of teacher regulation covering initial education provisions, labor market structures, and division of labor. The resulting models and countries which fit these categories were classified in four groups that roughly represent the organizational and occupational professionalism types defined by Evetts (2013). Mainly professional models were identified in countries, such as Finland, Denmark, and Norway that place high value on teachers’ professional knowledge and preparation as well as professional autonomy based

on expertise. Market models accentuating standards-based regulation, diversity of teacher education pathways, as well as performance, managerial accountability, and low levels of teacher autonomy located in England, the USA, and Chile. The second study by Aoki and Rawat (2020) examined the extent of teacher performance pay, advocated by NPM policies, in 51 countries using questionnaire responses to the 2012 PISA study. Among, other characteristics, the authors distinguished between more or less “liberal” countries in political terms (i.e., stronger versus less strong democracies) and were able to show that performance-based pay tended to be used in less liberal systems, such as Singapore, Jordan, Thailand, and the Slovak Republic. Despite the origin of NPM policies in more liberal countries such as the USA, England, Australia, and New Zealand, performance-based pay has not been used there as much as the case might have been. The main thrust of NPM policies on teacher professionalism, particularly in England, the USA, and Chile, has derived from test-based school sorting and public funding that follows student numbers (Tolofari, 2005).

The 1988 Education Reform Act in the UK, which modified the school funding system on the basis of weighted per capita, sets the course for policies that impacted on education and teacher professionalism (Gewirtz et al., 1995). The later introduction of school accountability and rankings as well as the use of contextualized value-added measures (VAM) put pressure on teachers to secure a good positioning for their schools on league tables (Acqua, 2013). This policy environment practically obligated teachers to concentrate on the core subjects examined and to engage in teaching-to-the-test practices, thus lessening their professional discretion (Keating, 2015; Pring et al. in Acquah, 2013). In the USA education system, teacher evaluation based on generic performance criteria or standards was established following the A Nation at Risk policy (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Rationale for the system was a broad view of teacher professionalism (Danielson, 2007; Hunter, 1982). However, this approach to teacher evaluation was narrowed with the Federal Race to the Top initiative (RTTT, 2009). This policy introduced both value-added measures of teacher performance based on schools’ test results and a narrower standards system (Danielson, 2016). Since 2015, the system has become less stringent in its accountability focus, as the different states are free to decide on how they evaluate their teachers (ESSA, 2015).

De-professionalizing NPM policies have had an effect in Australia (Sachs, 2004), Sweden (Hult & Edström, 2016) and selected locations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Kapucu, 2006). However, in some of these locations, information technology is altering the classical NPM form of public sector management producing a move toward what may be described as a bi-directional digital era of governance (Dunleavy et al., 2006). This change, which has become more noticeable with the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic, offering new possibilities for teachers to respond professionally as individuals and collaboratively to what government managers require from them. Such responses may include professional interpretations of policy in line with what the teaching contexts require from them. A study of Australian teachers’ response to demands posed by a new Literacy and Numeracy

school testing system (Hardy et al., 2019) provides an example of such policy interpretation. The study focused on teachers who endeavored to assert their professionalism regarding the testing system's focus on data for its own sake and the short-term cycles expected for them to improve student results. They did so by denouncing the accountability system as diminishing their own professional capacity while also working more closely with students in need of attention. In other words, teachers responded to the policy by engaging in "intelligent" or "rich accountability" (Hardy et al., 2019). An example, also, of intelligent resistance to narrow accountability policies surfaced in an interview/questionnaire study with Swedish teachers (Hult & Edström, 2016). Teachers were asked how they perceived the effects of performance evaluations (international, national, and collegial/personal) and the accountability expectations these entailed. Contrary to what might be assumed, these teachers gave low ratings to the impact of such evaluations over their practice and were especially critical about external evaluations that reduced the possibility of being creative in their work. But on the other hand, teachers provided high ratings for their own school assessment results as providing food for reflective assessment about their practices, conducted on their own, with colleagues and with school principals.

Policy and decision-making in Canadian provinces and its education boards have been less influenced by NPM policies, although large-scale assessment is in place all over the country, and education authorities may link results to a diversity of teacher incentives. In this respect, a large survey and interview study by Copp (2017) brought out an effect of large-scale assessment over teachers' teaching to the curriculum and to the test. From a different perspective, Hardy and Melville (2019) conducted an interview study with educator members of the Ontario School Board in Canada on their understanding of teacher professionalism and their role regarding school policy. Throughout the interviews, a tension was observed as participants explained their criteria for assessing teachers' role in implementing a literacy and numeracy policy. This tension reflected competing forms of dealing with issues and demands of the policy, closer to organizational or to occupational forms of professionalism (Evetts, 2013). Thus, one group referred to criteria based on accountability, standardization of work, and student results in literacy and numeracy tests, that is, an organizational view of professionalism. On the other hand, the second group's opinions were closer to favoring teachers' autonomy, collegial authority, and professional ethics, that is, occupational professionalism.

These tensions between views that value teacher occupational professionalism, allowing for well-founded decision-making in teaching and school activities, and views that support organizational professionalism and the role of incentives associated to large-scale assessment results, mark much of the debate about the purposes and forms of teacher evaluation.

### 5.3 Teacher Performance Evaluation and Career Systems

Appraisal of teachers' work to verify its quality and assist in its improvement has for long been the task of school authorities or external inspectors and remains so in many countries. Interviews and direct observation of teaching also are the main instruments used for appraisal purposes. In its early forms, observation systems were simple in what they assessed and tended to approximate checklists of appropriate behaviors rather than respond to coherent views of teaching (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). However, toward the twenty-first century, conceptual work on teaching (Danielson, 1996; Eraut, 1994; Hunter, 1982; Marzano, 2007; Marzano & Toth, 2013)) helped to broaden the concept and assessment of teacher performance, thereby influencing evaluation systems toward establishing more comprehensive systems (Ávalos-Bevan, 2018; Clinton et al., 2016). Among the broad criteria frameworks used for evaluation purposes (Clinton et al., 2016) are adaptations of the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model (Marzano & Toth, 2013), the Framework for Teaching Evaluation instrument (Danielson, 2011), and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System—CLASS (Pianta et al., 2008). The most common instruments for appraising teachers and providing them with feedback include teaching observations and portfolio evidence, although some systems also use student learning results provided by school or standardized tests.

Overtime, both evaluation policy and systems have been crossed by tensions arising from the extent to which they further occupational or organizational forms of teacher professionalism (Evetts, 2013). Thus, evaluation systems may have either mainly formative or accountability purposes and be associated with promotion and career stage allocation as well as demotion or dismissals (Tournier et al., 2019). Teacher evaluation policy in the USA exemplifies some of these tensions as do also teacher career system in various world locations.

The USA early formal teacher evaluation procedures derived from the A Nation at Risk Report (1983) largely rested on broad and generic descriptions of competent teaching performance such as provided by Danielson's (2007) framework. Based on generic descriptors and criteria, teacher assessment could include quality of lesson planning, of care for a classroom environment conducive to learning, of teaching strategies and how these responded both to curriculum orientations as well as students' differences, and finally on how they enacted professional responsibilities related to the school's community and relationships with parents. The introduction of teacher portfolios based on their work products also served to uphold teachers' professional role (Millman & Darling-Hammond, 1990). However, later modifications associated with the *No Child Left Behind Act* (2001) moved the focus of the evaluation system from teaching quality and professional responsibilities to student standardized test results expressed as value-added measures (VAM). Its negative effects on teacher professionalism and erosion of professional responsibility have been widely observed (Close et al., 2020; Jewell, 2017; Smith & Kubacka, 2017) including its effect over teaching to the test practices (Copp, 2017; Mintrop & Sunderman, 2013). The later *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA, 2015) contributed



to ease this focus on test results, leaving it to the different states to enact their own teacher evaluation systems.

Within this changing policy environment in the USA, there also are innovative deviations from narrow approaches to teacher evaluation that merit analysis. A comprehensive school-based approach to teacher performance evaluation not based on student results in the state of Cincinnati was examined in a school study that also observed its long-term effects over student learning (Taylor & Tyler, 2012). All teachers were evaluated every four years over one school year. During this time, teachers were observed three times by one of their peers and a fourth time by a school authority, receiving written feedback each time. Assessment of their work using Danielson's (2011) performance criteria included a summative score at the end of the year covering the four domains of the framework: preparation, classroom environment, teaching, and professional involvement in school and with parents. Teachers needing improvement were provided relevant assistance. To verify effects of the evaluation over student learning, Taylor and Tyler (2012) examined how teachers had impacted on their students' learning over two assessment periods, that is, ten years. Their results brought out a positive effect over student learning immediately after the evaluation year as well as in the following years, thus validating the effect of a well-thought-out form of evaluating teachers based on belief in their professionalism.

The extent to which systems of evaluation in other countries are enacted to further teacher professionalism varies. Over 90% of teachers participating in the TALIS 2013 survey reported that their schools' teacher evaluation included classroom observations as well as evidence from student tests, while a smaller number required evidence of content knowledge (Smith & Kubacka, 2017). In the later TALIS 2018 survey (OECD, 2020), 70% of teachers worked in schools that provided feedback about their performance based on student results (school/classroom) and/or students' external test results (65%). In many systems, head teachers are solely responsible for the appraisal of teachers, although in New Zealand, peers are also part of the teacher assessment system (Perry & Johns, 2018). In Finland, a very different system is in place and is of a clearly participatory and reflective nature (Woo, 2019). Teachers themselves conduct the process in line with their own development plan. School principals interact with teachers, discuss their plan, and support their professional development needs, all with a view of the coming school year rather than the past one. Consultations, of a participatory and reflective nature, also take place with peers.

In relation to systems of teacher performance evaluation, an OECD review in 18 countries (OECD, 2013) brought out a tendency to use performance evaluation with the purpose of holding teachers accountable to stakeholders more than as having formative goals. The review highlighted challenges such as the lack of a shared understanding of what is involved in high-quality teaching and use of appropriate evaluation procedures. Arguably, the report also suggested that country evaluation systems needed to find ways of considering student results in teacher appraisal and of using results to shape incentives for teachers (OECD, 2013). Among ways of addressing the challenges, the report recommended the consolidation of regular teacher developmental appraisal at school level, career-progression appraisal using external evaluators, standards to guide appraisal, and links with advancement decisions (OECD,



2013). While these recommendations might soften the impact of accountability-based evaluation, they do not remove the threats to teacher professionalism and mutual cooperation brought about by the association of performance evaluation to rewards and punishment measures.

### 5.3.1 *Teacher Career Systems*

Besides school-based teacher evaluation, different country systems have associated appraisal procedures with formal career progression stages thus potentially recognizing professional growth as well as teaching diversity. A study by Tournier et al. (2019) examined in ten countries a set of second-generation teacher career systems developed from the early 2000s onward in Colombia, Mexico, and Perú, as well as in Singapore, South Korea, South Africa, Thailand, Scotland, and the state of New York. To a large extent, these systems were influenced by NPM approaches and neo-liberal principles and include performance evaluation, ladders, and merit pay. Analysis of the ten systems as well as in-depth cases studies of three of them allowed the authors to highlight a diversity of issues related to their structure and enactment, while singling out the Scottish system as competent and well supported by teachers. Among recommendations for improvement, Tournier et al. (2019) included the need for clarity in the description of the evaluation criteria used, improvement of wording, and complexity in descriptions of profiles, parameters, and indicators, which seemed not to be the case in the South African and Mexican systems. Also problematic in some of the evaluation systems reviewed was the kind and number of the evaluation tools used. Thus, appropriate practices of classroom observation and interviews contrasted with dubious use of knowledge tests with multiple-choice items that were also highly criticized by teachers. Overall, according to the authors of the review, there is need for a good balance between the accountability and support purposes of teacher evaluation systems (Tournier et al., 2019).

One of Latin America's early systems was developed in Mexico in 1993 experiencing several changes since then (Guzmán, 2018). Initially, it established a voluntary five-level teachers' career together with a system of appraisal that would later include pay incentives. While maintaining the career system, legislation in 2013 made its evaluation compulsory for all teachers with results impacting on salaries and charged the newly created National Institute of Education (INEE) with conducting the process. An external evaluation of the system (Santiago, 2016) found it to be predominantly centered on accountability purposes rather than formative ones, with little attention given to teachers' work in the classroom and with limited participation of school authorities in the appraisal. Evaluator capacity also seemed insufficient. Changes in governmental policy since 2019 appear to diminish the accountability focus of the Mexican teacher evaluation by returning to the earlier more professional forms of career advancement (Santana, 2019; for more information, see Chapter Schmelkes in this same volume).

A more complex 5-stage teacher career and evaluation system is in place in Chile, regulated by legislation passed in 2016 (Ávalos-Bevan, 2018). The system combines professional development with accountability purposes. Progress through the career system, which includes salary increases at each stage, requires teachers to pass one test on school curriculum knowledge and to submit specified portfolio evidence for advance through all stages of the career. The first three career stages are compulsory ones. Failure to pass the evaluation after two tries is a cause for dismissal (for more information, see Sun chapter in this same volume).

### ***5.3.2 Teacher Perception of Performance Appraisal Systems***

The TALIS 2018 survey covering 48 countries (OECD, 2020) questioned teachers on the quality of feedback received from their appraisal experiences and how it affected their self-efficacy perceptions. Being appraised by more than one evaluator was related to teachers holding positive self-efficacy perceptions (in 23 countries). Feedback related to student test scores was associated with positive teacher self-efficacy (24 countries) as well as with job satisfaction (17 countries). Receiving feedback on classroom management affected self-efficacy in 17 countries and job satisfaction in 23 countries. On the other hand, feedback perceived as a mere administrative exercise was associated with lower teacher self-efficacy in 14 countries and lower job satisfaction in all participating countries.

Perhaps, the most contentious element of evaluations is their performative and less professional aspects, and the degree to which the system is high stakes and impacts on teachers' stress and well-being. In this respect, a survey of 1,866 teachers in three USA states (Ryan et al., 2017) found that the accountability systems in use in two of the states and planned for the third one, significantly predicted situations of stress, burnout, and intention to leave the profession on the part of teachers. A similar situation of discomfort was brought out by teachers in the state of Río de Janeiro in Brazil, where school and teacher evaluation established between 2009 and 2014 used VAM scores. Interviews with teachers brought out their apprehensions about having to set aside what they termed as a pedagogic approach to learning in order to respond to the VAM's emphasis on test results: "with all this pressure we stop thinking of students as students, as people with individual needs and concerns. They become metrics to be increased". (Straubhaar, 2017, p. 12)

In Sweden, where teachers are subject to several forms of evaluation, an interview study with 34 teachers from municipal and independent schools recorded their diverse concerns about the system (Hult & Edström, 2016). Compared to school evaluations performed by teachers, those interviewed found that external ones were less pertinent and time-consuming. In their view, these assessments do not allow them to be as creative and independent in their work as do school-based ones and felt that the system was based on mistrust about their capacity. As concluded by Hult and Edström (2016), the interviews reflected a clash between teacher professional responsibility and the

external accountability demands to which teachers felt subjected. In Chile, a similar interview study with 60 primary and secondary public school teachers provided evidence of tensions between their professional identities and having to submit to external evaluation of their work (Sisto, 2011). Teachers believed that those who judged their performance lacked inside or relevant knowledge about their teaching and school circumstances, however, “expert” or “knowledgeable” they might be. On the other hand, the teachers interviewed appreciated the relevance of school appraisals for being conducted by authorities who not only know the school but also value effective forms of teaching and learning. As concluded by Sisto (2011), the Chilean external teacher evaluation clashes somehow both with teachers’ historical identity as collaborative professionals and a developing new identity, as responsible and accountable professionals within their school community. In other words, the teachers studied did accept the need for performance appraisal, but as a school embedded process and not as an externally conducted one.

Another study in Chile (Acuña, 2015) explored teacher views regarding the content knowledge test which was part of the evaluation system until its changes in 2016 and taken voluntarily by those aspiring to a pay incentive for successful performance. By means of focus groups and interviews, the study inquired how teachers perceived this appraisal system and how much sense it made to them to be eligible for economic incentives associated with good performance. Arising from the data, Acuña (2015) distinguished four types in how teachers associated monetary incentives with their perceived roles. The first type was teachers who valued as such the social role of teaching regardless of its possible impact on salary bonuses. The second type identified themselves as part of a knowledge-based profession insufficiently rewarded by their salary scheme and therefore felt bonuses were justified. The third group were “saviors” who saw their role as helping students cope, face, and overcome their liabilities. These teachers did not expect incentives for their work. The fourth type represented professionalism in action, being teachers who were moved by student values’ development, learning, or both and deserved an appropriate salary. However, as a group, these teachers questioned the notion of measuring and rewarding their work with monetary incentives. Though did not object to these incentives, these were accepted as a low-level substitute for a just salary that as professionals they should and were not receiving (Acuña, 2015).

## 5.4 Reflections and Conclusions

An important purpose of this chapter was to bring out and support the notion of school teaching as a professional occupation and of teachers as professionals (Evetts, 2013) in the context of policies associated with performance evaluation. Embracing this position might appear as a repetitive return to arguments over fifty years ago based on definitions of teaching as a “quasi-profession” (Etzioni, 1969) and more recently

as a professional activity or occupation (Evetts, 2014; Yinger, 2005). The discussion, however, is valid and evident in current education policy analysis. The global impact of new public management and neo-liberal market policies have rekindled concerns about teacher professional work and its extent and limits (Anderson, 2017). The “occupational” professionalism of teachers as conceptualized by Evetts (2016) appears contested when claims for ownership and monitoring of teacher work are narrowed to externally measured results (Smith & Kubacka, 2017).

In relation to the above threats, the concept of teacher professionalism is benefiting from recent and more sophisticated analysis that describes teachers as knowledge workers (Price & Weatherby, 2021), affirming their key traits vis-à-vis restrictive views of what is expected of them. The quality of teachers’ work rests on a knowledge base acquired through solid initial preparation and broadened through a variety of professional development activities. This knowledge gives form both to the teaching of curriculum content and to the pedagogy that teachers use to reach and support students and their learning. Enactment of their knowledge base in practice is complex, more so at the beginning stages of a teacher’s career. However, it is not a solitary task, but the joint task of teachers and their school community. Teachers assert this view of the profession when they object to evaluations that value only a limited range of what they do. As knowledge workers charged with a social task, teachers appreciate a wider social recognition of the scope of their work, which is also central to their well-being perceptions (Acuña, 2015).

Accountability is a term with negative connotations in teacher evaluation policy analysis. In part, this perception brings out the “datafication” implications of appraisal systems that reduce the wider scope of teaching activities. This is especially relevant with respect to VAM teacher evaluation. Yet, of itself, the concept of accountability need not be cast aside. To demystify the notion, the recent 2017/2018 Education Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2017) adopted the concept of accountability as its main theme and broadened its meaning. The report describes accountability along three main elements: (a) clearly defined responsibilities; (b) obligation to provide an account of how such responsibilities are met; and (c) legal, political, social, or moral justification for the obligation to account (UNESCO, 2017, p. 4). Extending this concept to teaching as a professional occupation (Evetts, 2013) and to teachers as knowledge workers in schools and classrooms (Price & Weatherby, 2021), the rationale for teacher accountability claims should derive from their mission, their agreed-upon duties, and the legal system under which teachers work. As this chapter brought out, teachers can face threats to their professionalism by enacting “intelligent accountability” that upholds the broad social orientation of the education while individually and collaboratively monitoring the quality of their teaching (Hardy et al., 2019). And do so in schools with well-organized systems of teacher assessment and clear formative feedback (Taylor & Tyler, 2012).

Systems of teacher appraisal centered on how teachers conduct their work in situ validate teacher “accountability” both as an instrument for feedback and improvement, as well as information for career progression. But, narrowing the evidence and procedures by which teacher accountability is claimed attempts against teachers

as responsible knowledge professionals. In that respect, rather than continue to use an arguable word, it might be useful to replace the notion of teacher evaluation as an accountability obligation with the concept of appraisal as a “professional responsibility” (Fenwick, 2016 in Anderson, 2017).

Following on the above, there are many education systems that avoid the most questioned forms of teacher evaluation which are based on narrow standards and student learning scores, while using strategies that further teacher professionalism (Clinton et al., 2016). These systems enact appraisal procedures that include both observation of teacher classroom teaching as well as selected evidence of their work that teachers themselves gather, as in portfolios. In these systems, the location of appraisal is mainly in the school and its conduction is a responsibility of school authorities and may involve teacher peers. These forms of appraisal are guided by systems of standards developed at national or state level that represent an expression of what teachers know and can do in their classrooms and schools. There are good examples of such procedures in different parts of the world. For example, based on a review of six country systems, Perry and Johns (2018) brought out the case of Singapore labelling it as highly sophisticated. While the teacher evaluation system is national and centralized, its foundation rests in the school. Teacher performance appraisal includes classroom observation by a school supervisor, portfolio self-evidence, peer consultation, and student results. Schools foster a strong collaborative culture thus moderating the concept of performance as mainly an individual’s responsibility. Similar examples were included in Tournier et al. (2019) review of teacher career systems.

To conclude, it is difficult to reconcile those views of teacher professionalism discussed in the first part of this article, with accountability demands based on narrow performance appraisal that overlooks the complexity of teaching and inordinately associates student test results with teaching quality. However, responsible accountability as described in the GMR Report (UNESCO, 2017) suggests that teacher appraisal anchored on respect for teachers as knowledge professionals, on student learning as jointly influenced by the school teaching community and conducted where teaching takes place has the potential to improve the quality of teaching and the learning of students. As expressed by a noted English educator (Whitty, 2000) to move in this direction requires demystifying teacher professional work. It requires teaching to be more democratic in its construction and appraisal, with parents, students, and the community as participants, thus, counterbalancing the narrow accountability demands operating in the context of market competitiveness (Whitty, 2000).

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