

Accountability, autonomy and the issue of opposing identities in a context of organisational professionalism

1 Introduction

The prevalence of organisational professionalism within the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) industry, my own context included, has resulted in many practitioners being deprofessionalised and demotivated by the control exerted upon them through the top down requirements of senior management. This contrasts sharply with the occupational professionalism displayed by, for example, the chartered surveying profession. In my teaching context, organisational professionalism extends into content development, a method of surveillance aimed at teaching staff to control the level of quality of teaching through standardised materials. In terms of my identity, this has created a rift between my substantive and situated identities. Nevertheless, activist professionalism leading to empowered professionalism offers an opportunity to redistribute some managerial control while also bringing towards alignment my substantive and situated identities that were in opposition as a result of my context's discourse of control.

2 Context

I have been involved in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching for around 12 years and have worked in Japan, Spain and now China. My work has involved teaching general English to adults and children, teacher training, school management and content development. However, prior to my teaching career, I worked as a Chartered Surveyor for around seven years working for private companies as well as a government organisation.

I currently work for a large, multinational organisation that provides English language instruction to students of all ages through the slogan of 'opening the world through education'. My principle responsibility lies within the product development department based in the Asia Pacific headquarters in Shanghai, China. I am a part of a small in-house publishing team that produces online and offline materials for our students in China, Russia and Indonesia. These materials include printed textbooks (and soon e-textbooks), online study materials, audio-visual materials along with teacher's notes and handouts. The same materials are prepared and produced for each of our three regions and are only available to our registered students – they are not commercially available. As a publishing team, we produce materials specifically for the 3-17 year age range, this being divided into specific age bands for product production purposes. All our products are either currently aligned or in the process of being aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR). Within the publishing team, I have specific responsibility for content development and writing with other team members being focused on editorial matters.

One of the main user groups for our products is the teaching staff. Our teachers are a combination of native speakers and near-native local teachers of English. The local teachers tend to be well qualified with the native speaker teachers having CELTA level qualifications or lower. Generally, native speaker teachers are not public/state-school teachers and typically have two years or less experience in a teaching environment (not necessarily teaching English as a Foreign Language). Teachers will usually fall between 25 and 35 years of age. Classes will have from 8 to 16 students and will meet once or twice a week for lessons between 80 minutes and 2 hours.

My experience to date has taken me along two very different career paths, which have presented equally different professional perspectives. This has had a profound effect on

both my professionalism and identity, something that I will explore further throughout this essay.

3 Approaches to professionalism

3.1 DEFINITION OF PROFESSIONALISM

Higgs and Titchen (2001:5) define professionalism as:

“people-centred and interactive processes, accountability and professional standards, practice wisdom, professional artistry, openness to knowledge growth and practice development, and engagement in professional journeys towards expertise.”

This particular definition resonates with me as I can identify with many of these traits both in my experience as a Chartered Surveyor and, to an extent, as an EFL teacher. Typically, when one thinks of a profession, the likes of law and medicine are considered. Indeed, Torstendahl (2005:950) describes these as, *“the paradigms of professions.”* These professions, Sciulli (2005:937) argues, *“provide expert services in structured situations”* whereas there are those occupations that certainly provide expert service but are unable to do so from a structured standpoint. I would suggest that Chartered Surveying is more structured according to Sciulli's (2005) definition whereas EFL teaching, depending on the context, would be more of an unstructured expert service. This indicates that Chartered Surveying is much more specific in the service it provides whereas EFL teaching is a far more varied pursuit making it more difficult to standardise.

3.2 OCCUPATIONAL PROFESSIONALISM

My choice of university course was influential in my initial career path as it was a degree course that was accredited by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).

This accreditation was attractive as it enabled fast track entry into a professional institution. This fast track process involved the completion of the Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) a two year period of on the job training, continuous professional development and mentoring culminating in a formal presentation and interview in front of a panel of qualified peers. Successful completion of the APC resulted in my being admitted as a professional Member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (MRICS). The RICS is a global institution and, like other professional bodies, has globally standard entry requirements, a universal code of ethics and disciplinary procedures that are applied to all members regardless of location. My entry into the RICS as a professional member gave me the ability to make judgements and decisions on a daily basis concerning the work I was tasked with; sound decision-making that had the trust and backing of the institution. This was further supported by a continuous professional development program that was compulsory for all members, reflecting the importance of such activities and ensuring that all members were up to date with key events.

These ideas of trust, decision-making and professional development are reminiscent of the model of occupational professionalism outlined by Evetts (2006). Occupational professionalism enables practitioners to participate in a collegial environment, provides decision-making powers while also engendering trust - trust between members but also between members and clients. These "*aspects of professionalism*" as described by Evetts (2012:14) are also there to protect. The RICS monopolises the property industry in the UK and worldwide. Not only do these professionalism traits protect the elite status built up by the RICS to date (Evetts, 2003), they also protect the quality of service provided to clients. Henkel (2000) draws similar parallels with the academic profession, whereby entry and progression is available only to a select few and there is strong control over the profession by the members themselves. On this basis, Shattock (2014) outlines a definition of the

academic profession that distinctly coincides with the professionalism traits proposed by Evetts (2012). Consequently, I believe it is possible to see both the RICS and academia as professions, conforming to Evetts's (2012) traits as well as the structured nature of a profession outlined by Sciulli (2005). However, there are arguments that academia is suffering a destabilisation in its professional status, something that is quite evident in other areas of the education world with the rise of performativity.

3.3 ORGANISATIONAL PROFESSIONALISM

My move into the EFL teaching industry after seven years as a surveyor exposed me to a very different model of professionalism being practiced. I very deliberately use the word 'industry' in reference to EFL as it does not subscribe to the same, "*aspects of professionalism*" (Evetts, 2012:14) as does surveying. Chirciu (2014) agrees by stating that EFL has not been considered a profession until relatively recently although I believe that would depend on the specific context. Parts of the EFL world exhibit some traits of professionalism; for example, when I first undertook the Certificate of English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) course in the UK, this presented as something of an entry standard for EFL teaching in Europe. While in Europe there will be well-qualified teachers who are consistently engaged in professional development and possibly even classroom research, this is not consistent across the industry. In the context of private EFL schools and organisations, there are no globally standardised entry requirements, nor is there a single regulatory institution for EFL. While there are the likes of the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL) and the TESOL Organisation, membership is optional and via paid subscription rather than being dependent on specific qualifications, a scenario quite different from the RICS. These would

represent the, “*fluid sites that lack entrenched positions*” (Sciulli, 2005:937) that preclude the likes of EFL teaching from being described as a profession.

It was during my first teaching position in Japan with a national English language chain that it became clear that there was a large variation in the levels of experience within the teaching staff. This was during what I would describe as the pre-performative stage of this particular company where teachers were given the freedom to plan their lessons around a particular textbook topic (similar to my experience on the CELTA course) and a great deal of autonomy as to how this was delivered in class. However, this very quickly changed to prescriptive lesson plans that were prepared in-house that teachers were not to deviate from so as to achieve a minimum acceptable level of teaching quality in the classroom. In fact, the word ‘teacher’ was not used at this particular organisation, ‘instructor’ being the preferred term. This was my first experience of organisational professionalism, a lack of trust between employer and employee although perhaps justifiable considering some of the instructors hired simply did not have enough experience. Nevertheless, there was a pervading lack of trust that would not have necessarily been evident in professions such as the RICS. This culminates in something of a discourse of control as outlined by Evetts (2006), which ran quite deeply through this larger corporation as a form of organisational professionalism. Senior management sought to control and guarantee levels of teaching quality through training on the methodologies of applied linguistics as well as through standardised teaching materials. Currently, as a publishing team we provide standardised classroom materials for each of our three regions and they can be considered a form of Service Level Agreement that Evans (2006) sees as being imposed by managers looking to maximise levels of quality for their customers. Nevertheless, these managers are also being influenced externally through market forces and customer demands. Consequently, this

drives the need for them to have a quality control framework in place, a form of demanded professionalism (Evans, 2006).

Demanded professionalism has been a regular part of my teaching whereby teachers are subject to specific levels of service quality. This relates to the emergence of the performative era and EFL, in my context at least, is no exception. The rise of organisational professionalism in my experience has seen teachers being more focused on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and other performance measures; those more measurable elements such as student satisfaction (according to regular quarterly questionnaires), teacher punctuality, class grades and performance appraisals. While such KPIs and performance measures are useful in tracking teacher and school performance and identifying under performance, they are unable to fully measure more subjective aspects of teaching such as lesson planning, classroom management, academic quality and teacher attitude. This performativity is very much the, "*occupational control of teachers*" as described by Ozga (1995:35). Fitzgerald (2008) adds that the likes of KPIs can add to the mistrust between management and teachers. This goes against the whole concept of occupational professionalism, which sees trust as a cornerstone of the relationship between employer and practitioner.

This organisational control and bureaucratic oversight does, according to Freidson (1994), lead to the demotivation of the teaching staff - they are deprofessionalised and essentially stripped of their autonomy. Ironically, he continues by suggesting that this very situation leads to the service being impoverished, the very thing senior management was trying to avoid in the first place, although it is difficult to determine whether the service to students and their parents has been impoverished in my particular context. Such policies that dictate how and what a teacher should deliver in the classroom can be very restrictive, limiting the possibility of teachers using their good judgement and decision-making (Biesta,

2009). Granted that teachers require a level of experience in the classroom to be able to make sound decisions, but if control is never relinquished then the teaching staff is never going to be able to develop. Biesta (2009) sees this as not only a limitation of the technical aspects of teacher judgement but also limiting their value judgements. My work in education has a distinct moral and ethical approach, which contrasts with my initial work as a surveyor, something that Chirciu (2014:53) describes as a, "*moral grounding*". Although surveying has definite ethical guidelines on member behaviour, the ethical aspect of education is somewhat different in that it can change people and their way of thinking. My organisation's slogan of 'opening the world through education' would appear to allude to that difference. In his studies of the UK's National Health Service (NHS), Cribb (2001) discusses this marriage of technical and value judgements as a form of technical professionalism that has resulted in those professionals becoming, "*technical rationalities*" (p.115). It seems that parallels can be drawn with EFL in my context and the NHS since both have experienced an increase in, "*results oriented management*" at the expense of professional autonomy (Cribb, 2001:114).

3.4 ACCOUNTABILITY

The control and focus on results that is very much in favour in my context has accountability as its driving force. Although the push for the fulfillment of performance measures and KPIs is seen as a form of professionalism (Evetts, 2012), it has the effect of creating an individualised and competitive environment, one which has little space for collegiality. Due to this individualisation, underperformance is readily identified and dealt with, thus contributing to the overall efficiency of the company. However, why do we evaluate in such a manner? According to Freire (1998:7), "*we evaluate to punish and not to educate*" with teachers being nothing more than, "*knowledge surrogates*" (Taylor Webb,

2005:189). The performance management system in place in my context is based around increasing the visibility of what teachers are doing, a form of surveillance (Taylor Webb, 2005). This can include regular formal and informal class observations, school audits, quarterly student surveys and net promoter scores, and specific training on the products to be used in the classroom, linking to the prescriptive nature of the course syllabus and associated materials. While I am not advocating for the complete removal of accountability as a system, I would align with Lortie's (1975) view of accountability systems being in place for the benefit of educators and not the senior managers.

Senior management may already believe that the accountability system currently in place is there for the benefit of our teachers. However, in order for it to be of benefit to the educators, there needs to be a greater understanding on the part of senior management as to what teachers do in the classroom along with their reasons for doing so. Less experienced teachers may feel that a discourse of control along with classroom materials that are more prescriptive would be more supportive for them in their career development. Since teachers in my context stay on average for 13 months, this would certainly lend weight to Ozga's (1995:35) statement regarding the, "*occupational control of teachers*" but with understandable justification from senior management for doing so.

Interestingly, this situation does not extend across the whole of the organisation's global business units. It is possible to see a correlation between the teacher requirements and the corresponding textbook materials subsequently used. Schools in the UK offering ELT services to international students can participate in the English UK Accreditation Scheme (The British Council, 2014), a quality assurance system considering, among other things, school management, teaching quality and teacher qualifications. The organisation I work for currently has a number of international language schools throughout the UK and successfully participates in this accreditation scheme. However, such a system does not

exist for our schools in, for instance, China. As a result, the quality of the foreign, native English speaking teaching staff can be extremely varied in China with those practitioners in the UK generally being considered better qualified. This, I believe, subsequently influences the materials produced and provided for each location. For example, 'Go' is a textbook series produced by our Zurich product development department for our international language schools in the UK and Europe and, like the materials produced by my publishing team, this series is aligned with the CEFR, there are printed student and teacher's books as well as support materials like handouts and online materials. Go's ancillary materials like the procedural notes in the teacher's books are presented as a resource for teachers to build into their classroom practice, with there being an expectation that the teacher exercises good judgement in their application. However, this is quite different from the style adopted for materials produced for our markets, such as China. It seems that since our teachers recruited for China are perceived as less qualified in EFL teaching, they require a lot more support from the materials. Consequently, that scenario lends weight and a valid rationale to the argument for generally more prescriptive materials that script what the teacher should do at each point of the lesson. As mentioned above, our less experienced teachers may well feel a greater sense of support through these more prescriptive classroom materials. However, teachers such as those in our UK international language schools may feel greater constraints, a potentially demotivating and deprofessionalising experience for them. What is also interesting about this situation is that it shows that the discourse of control is not universally applied across our global business units suggesting that there may be some flexibility in the degree to which it is and can be applied.

4 The issue of opposing identities

When I became an EFL teacher, I developed an educational philosophy (or ethic) that looked at assisting students in their language development through focusing on their specific needs (not dissimilar to meeting client needs as a member of the RICS), this being done to high academic standards but also recognising the importance of student and teacher engagement and motivation in the classroom. Both students and teachers are mentioned, as they are end users of our products, albeit in slightly different ways. Assisting in students' language development and needs based lessons suggest a degree of freedom and judgement, corresponding to Biesta's (2009) view of teaching as sensitive and involving decision-making in situations that are ever changing. This shows the complexity of situations that teachers have to deal with on a regular basis, with Kuhn (2008) viewing education as non-linear, unpredictable and complex - all the more reason to enable teachers to make sound decisions in their classrooms with their students.

Day et al. (2006) may see my educational philosophy as part of an ethical-professional identity complete with, "*core moral purposes*" (p.173), which corresponds with Campbell's (2003:103) promotion of the teacher as an ethical being when she discusses the, "*essence of professionalism.*" Although I am now involved directly in content and materials development for the same organisation, my educational philosophy has remained constant. I am still focused on the needs of our students and their language development through high academic standards that take motivation and engagement fully into consideration, both for the teachers and students as end users. The fact that my educational philosophy has remained steadfast suggests that it is firmly a part of my substantive identity. According to Chirciu (2014), one's substantive identity will not change as this has been shaped and solidified, in my case, by my educational beliefs and my view of the world. I see my substantive identity strongly linked to my core moral purpose as an educator, which links to

Edge's (1996) view of behaving in a manner that is consistent with one's ethics and values. Conversely, it is my situated identity, the part of myself that is open to change and is dependent on the situation and context I am currently experiencing, that is the issue. My situated identity is more fluid but over time has contributed to my substantive identity, shaping it and helping make it what it is today (Chirciu, 2014). I see my substantive and situated identity as being two sides of the same coin. They push and pull against each other depending on what is being experienced, giving rise to the possibility of them sometimes merging and being in harmony but at other times potentially separating and, therefore, being in conflict (Chirciu, 2014). Currently, it is my content development role that is causing a separation between my situated and substantive identities. My work involves the production of online and offline materials that meet corporate specifications in terms of academic rigour, quality, originality and engagement. Although there are crossovers with my educational philosophy, the fact that everything has to meet corporate specifications moves towards a rationale firmly focused on quality, consistency and control; control over what happens in the classroom. This contributes to the surveillance culture outlined by Taylor Webb (2005) in that it is providing corporate justification for the production of more prescriptive materials for less experienced teachers. This surveillance and control seeks to ensure that our products contribute to the levels of service quality expected by our customers - the students and their parents. Although the intention of more prescriptive materials is to guide less experienced teachers towards providing such high quality lessons, they have been almost universally described as condescending, an indication of the deprofessionalising effect this is having on our teaching staff. Having experienced such a surveillance culture as an inexperienced teacher in Japan, I believe it to be a double-edged sword - the materials provide support and guidance but they and the surveillance systems prevent and restrict further development as a teaching practitioner.

This situation actually highlights one of the main problems - the fact that senior management is treating education as a service, just as you would with Chartered Surveying. With the surveying profession this is not an issue as you contract a qualified surveyor to value a property and this is completed according to the rules and regulations of the RICS. This ensures the consistency of the valuation technique as well as the service outcome - the provision of, "*expert services consistently with prevailing standards of truth*" (Sciulli, 2005:937). However, for education, we return to its moral purpose - the fact that education changes people. Education is transformative and should enable people to question the world in which they operate, a strong link to critical theory. While not wanting to diminish surveying in any way, it does not have the same moral element as does education. Nevertheless, it is precisely this moral element, this need to help students question the world through the materials they experience in the classroom, which gets denied as part of the gatekeeping function of my content development role. Consequently, materials that are used in the classroom should provide the opportunity for transformation (Thornbury, 2012) by enabling students to engage with the social issues of the present time. However, this is precisely what Pennycook (2001) believes is missing from EFL classrooms with gatekeeping functions such as within my publishing team exacerbating the situation.

The gatekeeping function of my role passes content that meets our corporate guidelines and rejects that which is considered more controversial, inappropriate or critical - very much along the lines of no PARSNIP's (Politics, Alcohol, Religion, Sex, Narcotics, Isms and Pork). By way of an example, a group of teachers recently independently developed science-based lessons for a summer course, one lesson being based on recreational drugs. One scenario included what to do if your parents found drugs in your bedroom. I felt compelled to step in and have this content removed from the course in order

to protect business interests, as this may not have met parental expectations in terms of appropriacy. However, this shielded the students from discussing and becoming more aware of a widespread social issue. On the one hand, I prevent such a discussion taking place due to corporate concerns but, on the other, I have argued in the past for greater inclusion of controversial and critical issues to increase social awareness among students. Although this lesson on drugs could well have been presented differently, there is a sense of hypocrisy and contradiction between my substantive and situated identities.

Consequently, I feel that my substantive identity - my moral educational purpose and ethical-professional identity - is being challenged by my situated identity. My situated identity represents the entrepreneurial-competitive aspect of the business within which I currently work (Day et al., 2006) and it is constantly challenging my professionalism in the eyes of management, parents and students, and teachers. The materials produced conform to corporate specifications and act as a form of control and surveillance under organisational professionalism, a situation that has already been shown to be demotivating and deprofessionalising for teachers due to the reduction in decision-making power they have in the classroom. Furthermore, I believe this situation also limits the learning potential of students since they are being shielded from discussing and questioning social issues in the classroom. Although care needs to be taken when encouraging questioning of the status quo in contexts that may not be overly receptive to such transformations, I believe that a situation can be reached whereby teachers can be more than just, "*knowledge surrogates*" (Taylor Webb, 2005:189) with students evolving beyond being passive recipients of that knowledge. Nevertheless, there are limits as to how far that can be pushed. However, it does present a dilemma - should the demands of my content development role be embraced even though they can be seen as incompatible with what Cribb (2009:35) describes as one's, "*vocational vision*"?

Consequently, is there an alternative vision of professionalism that would bring more of a balance to the disparity between accountability and autonomy, enabling my substantive and situated identities to be brought back into alignment particularly in this current context of performativity? Accountability and performance measures are certainly important but should not be in place to dictate what happens in the classroom. In fact, accountability is very much a part of the definition of professionalism put forward by Higgs and Titchen (2001). As I consider my content development role and the part it has played in defining organisational professionalism in my context, I believe it is extremely important to aim to reduce this tension.

5 Moving forward

5.1 ACTIVIST PROFESSIONALISM

In order to address this disparity, it is necessary to consider two alternative approaches to professionalism, the first of which is activist professionalism (Sachs (2003) and Avis (2005)). Activist professionalism sees the practitioner being heavily involved in collaborative and participative activities while also building networks within and beyond the bureaucracy. A further fundamental aspect is that responsibility is taken for professional and continuous learning. Nevertheless, new and inexperienced teachers would need to be supported and mentored through such a process. Activist professionalism is not intended to be a static concept, instead being reviewed and reformulated in response to the potentially ever-changing nature of the problem being considered (Sachs, 2003). This is particularly useful for my issue since while my substantive and situated identities are currently in opposition, my situated identity is similarly not a static concept. Consequently, this form of activism could help move these identities closer together.

To date, there have been significant changes within the product development department - a change in departmental leadership as well as team restructuring and revised workflows. A large driver of this change has been the vision of usability, "*an approach to product development that incorporates direct user feedback throughout the development cycle in order to reduce costs and create products and tools that meet user needs*" ("What is usability?," 2010). As a result, there has been a move towards greater collaboration and participation within the department as well as with our key stakeholders, a situation that is reflective of activist professionalism. Furthermore, product development has undertaken a significant amount of research relating to our students and their parents, a continuing learning process that is influencing our new product offering for 10-13 year olds. This research has involved students and parents in the early stages of our product conceptualisation, a participatory approach that has proved highly influential in the direction taken by our new product. Shortly we will start content prototyping and piloting sample materials with selected schools, further evidence of the desire to collaborate and participate. Teachers are an important stakeholder in our processes to ensure the product we produce is, "*efficient, effective and satisfying*" ("What is usability?," 2010). Through greater involvement of teachers and schools, we can ensure their voices are heard during the product development process. Elements that have caused problems in the past, such as the prescriptive nature of the teacher's notes, are currently being prepared more as a resource than a script to follow. It is hoped that teachers see this as an opportunity for them to have some of their own control over what happens in the classroom; able to exercise some good judgement and decision-making in the best interests of their students. However, care does need to be taken here. Passing control over to our teachers needs to take place within an environment of support and professional development. Some teachers may need to gain more experience in order that they can exercise good judgement, and professional

development programs should be in place to assist in that process. That said, this change in leadership within the product development department has sparked a sense of activist professionalism (although possibly unconsciously in some), which is bringing in more collegiality and a less top down approach to the development of our materials.

Although Sachs (2003) considers activist professionalism from the perspective of the teacher, it would appear that this approach has infused our departmental practices. The fact that I have identified a need to balance accountability and autonomy and am also now working more collaboratively and participatively suggests that the activism now within me has been building gradually. I would argue that for me personally, the degree of my activism should be proportional to the degree of opposition between my substantive and situated identities. Therefore, I am suggesting that I certainly maintain if not increase my personal stance of activist professionalism in relation to my content development role.

5.2 EMPOWERED PROFESSIONALISM

While the change in product development's leadership and subsequent reorganisation has resulted in greater degrees of collaboration and participation, both between product development teams as well as with our schools, a move that aligns with activist professionalism, there remains the issue of the discourse of control. The leadership change only affected the product development department. Other business units and senior management are unchanged and there is still the discourse of control running through the organisation. Southworth (2005) indicates that there are those senior managers who may tend to implement policies in a particularly top down manner but that there are alternative opportunities. This apparent move towards activist professionalism in my department is happening within the overall discourse of control and may well represent such an opportunity. Although the reduction of organisational professionalism and associated levels

of control could possibly occur as a result of a complete change in senior management or their business strategy, that at the current time is unlikely. It is more likely that my department's recent activist professionalism is affecting the discourse of control in that it is creating a sense of empowered professionalism.

Wilkins (2011) discusses empowered professionalism within an environment where accountability and autonomy are more balanced. Accountability is still seen as necessary and effective not only by management but also by the teachers. Teachers tend to be more comfortable with accountability so long as they are able to maintain their autonomy within the classroom (Wilkins, 2011). This may well represent a significant step forward since activism on the part of product development is altering the discourse of control, passing some of those controls onto the teachers - specifically related to autonomy and decision-making in the classroom. At the present time, our senior management has been comfortable with this approach as it is able to maintain aspects of control such as KPIs and performance management which it sees as being important from a customer and market perspective. The teacher, on the other hand, is able to regain a level of autonomy in their classroom through the materials produced by product development. If our teachers are appropriately supported through professional development and mentored by more experienced teachers and academic staff, then more of a balance between accountability and autonomy may be achieved.

The fact that there has been greater collaboration and participation recently as a result of activist professionalism indicates a willingness on the part of senior management to at least be flexible with the control they maintain, possibly even relinquishing some of it. Perhaps they are becoming more aware of the needs of our teachers through the extensive research that was recently conducted by product development team members. This potential awareness of teacher as well as student needs aligns well with my educational

philosophy. Furthermore, Biesta's (2009) view of teaching as sensitive and involving decision-making can, at least in part, be realised thus helping to move my substantive and situated identities closer together. However, they are not yet in complete alignment. There are still constraints in place that will likely not change - the fact that the publishing team produces materials for three very conservative and politically sensitive regions means that there will always be some things we cannot do. We will continue to necessarily be wary of more controversial and critical topics in our materials.

6 Conclusion

For almost 20 years I have been working in environments that have presented different approaches to professionalism. From the RICS with its occupational professionalism to EFL teaching and education and its more controlled organisational professionalism, the transition has been an interesting but at times difficult one. The constraints that are placed on practitioners through the discourse of control are clear, potential deprofessionalisation and demotivation. This discourse of control has moved beyond the teaching staff in my context and can be seen in the materials that have been published for use in our school network. Personally, this led to a rift forming between my substantive and situated identities, which I only now feel are becoming more aligned. The changes that have gone on within my department can be likened to activist professionalism although I suspect for many in the department this was something that they were unaware of but felt was appropriate. Nevertheless, I believe it has impacted the discourse of control in a positive way, enabling some control to be handed over to teachers in a move that could be reminiscent of empowered professionalism - activism providing the catalyst for empowerment. What is important now is to ensure that this situation is maintained. Providing professional development opportunities for our teachers will be critical in ensuring

that they are ready and able to be more autonomous in their classrooms, able to make sound and justifiable pedagogical decisions to meet the language development needs of their students. Furthermore, the project that has been spearheading this change is very much in its infancy and will be developed over the following 18 months, making the situation somewhat fragile albeit positive.

The fact that I can see a closer alignment between my substantive and situated identities is similarly positive. Researching this essay has very much helped me make sense of the issues that have been presented recently and to an extent enabled me to move forward. However, a more negative way of looking at this would be to see that these identities are still in opposition, just less so. Can one's substantive and situated identities ever be perfectly aligned? Working in China and producing materials for China, Russia and Indonesia, I would have to say that perfect alignment may not be achievable. There is a distinct level of negotiation and compromise necessary due to the push-pull effect these identities have on each other. The question is, to what extent do you compromise or allow yourself to be compromised? Would working at a global textbook publishing house based in the UK be any different? Perhaps there would be greater levels of compromise for a content developer in such a publishing house since there are many more markets and potentially unfavourable contexts to produce for - something that could be investigated through further research. Nevertheless, what is encouraging at the present time is that our activist professionalism has sparked a desire to balance accountability and autonomy within my context, a greater sense of empowered professionalism.

7 References

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