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**EDA 3026**

**Teachers and Teaching in Context**

**Assignment II**

**Selected theme: Teacher lives and professional development**

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Submission Date: -05-2017

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**1. Introduction**

It seems that at the age of postmodern professionalism, some dilemmas of professionalism exists when commitment-sustaining teachers intend to gain an in-depth understanding and empathy towards students’ education needs. This essay will mainly discuss how current teacher lives and professional development affect the state of professionalism.

**2. Literature reviews**

2.1. Professionalism

Definition of professionalism and its fate in teacher profession will be discussed.

* Professionalism is the way to be professional, which can be divided into three aspects, in terms of acquisition of professional knowledge and skills, the autonomy and responsibility to make a self-regulation and an ethical act, and a solid moral commitment to the demands of clients (Larson, 1977; Eraut, 1994; Morris, 2008).
* For the majority of specific professions, professionalism helps facilitate the trusting economic relationship in globalized market through the reinforcement of the attitude of being client-centered (Evetts, 2014)
* Referring to the teaching profession specifically, the outcome of teacher professionalism tends to be uncertain. On one hand, since the age of postmodern professionalism experiencing in teaching industry seems to be a discourse combining the public value and practitioner interest, there is an increasing influence of social groups who produce an inclusively democratic social movement that will cultivate a learning platform for teacher profession under mutual cooperation between teachers and different social parties (Touraine, 1995; Evetts, 2014). On the other hand, it is possibly that “de-professionalism” will occur under manifold pressures from increasing workload, reducing time for collegial communication, and the atmosphere of disagreement (Hargreaves, 2010).

2.2. Teacher lives and professional development

Some keywords of selected theme will be explained in detail.

* *Teacher lives* refers to the teacher commitment (Choi & Tang, 2009). A committed teacher will have a strong confidence in and sincerely aspiration for having a close association with the vision and mission of the school, followed by the voluntary and substantial effort for contributing student development (Firestone & Pennell, 1993). Moreover, *Love for students*, the affection in and moral purpose for the students, plays a central role in enhancing commitment in teachers, which helps teachers cope with non-anticipatable challenges, such as career stagnation, unstably long working hours regardless of disadvantageous external conditions (Tsui, 2009; Goodson, 1995; Huberman, 1989).

There are two concepts under “professional development”.

* The first concept is *teacher career cycle*. According to the model by Fessler (1992), the teacher career cycle develops through eight dynamic stages namely *preservice*, *induction*, *competency building*, *enthusiasm and growth*, *career frustration*, *career stability*, *career wind-down*, and *career exit*, under the influence of *personal factors*, including family factors, life events etc., and *organizational environmental factors* covering school systems and regulations, social expectations for educational system, cohesive atmosphere etc.
* The second concept is “teacher expertise”. *An expert teacher* contains three main characteristics. First, he/she is supposed to have a potential to see and exploit ‘situated possibilities’, which is the knowledge of how one can recognize the specific contexts of work, understand and respond to their own contexts effectively (Benner, Tanner & Chesla, 1996; Ericsson, 2002). Second, he/she will be considered as displaying continuous reflection and conscious deliberation. It includes the process of *theorizing practical knowledge*, which is making explicit the implicit knowledge gained from own teaching experience, as well as *theorizing practical knowledge*, which is to practice the theoretical knowledge out, followed by interpreting them (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986). Third, regarding the attitude towards challenges, he/she will *problematize those unproblematic*, which tends to extend teachers’ competence in dealing with the complexities and re-energizes commitment to teaching (Gossman, 2008).

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| *Teacher lives* | professional development |
| teacher expertise | *teacher career cycle* |



