A STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF INSTRUCTORS' PROFESSIONALISM IN THAI PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

Mohammad Ariful Islam[1]
Poonpilas Asavisanu[2]
Matthew Reed Merritt[3]

Abstract: This study aimed to develop a strategy for the development of instructors' professionalism in Thai private universities. The study was based on the following research objectives: 1) To explore the desired components that constitute instructors' professionalism in Thai private universities, 2) To examine the current level of instructors' professionalism in Thai private universities, 3) To determine the components that impact the development of professionalism for instructors' professionalism in Thai private universities, and 4) To propose a strategy for the development of instructors' professionalism in Thai private universities. The methods applied during the study included content analysis, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and a focus group. Participants in the study were 364 instructors and administrative staff from ten Thai private universities. Content analysis, descriptive statistics, multiple regression, and correlational analysis were used to analyze the data. The desired components that constitute instructor professionalism obtained from the content analysis and expert interviews were: Content Knowledge, Instructional Knowledge, Self-Efficacy and Self-Confidence, Ethics and Care, and Transformational Leadership. The current overall level of instructors' professionalism was high. The multiple regression analysis found that four variables were statistically significant at the .01 level of confidence: Self-Efficacy and Self-Confidence, Instructional Knowledge, Content Knowledge, and Ethics and Care, $p<.01$, $R^2 = .525$. From this data, a strategy was developed as a recommendation for the enhancement of professionalism for instructors at Thai private universities.

[1] Faculty Member, School of General Education & School of Business Administration, Kasem Bundit University, Thailand. mohammad.isl@kbu.ac.th

[2] Assistant Professor, Ph.D., Program Director, School of Human Sciences, Assumption University, Thailand. poonpilasa@gmail.com

[3] Ph.D., Lecturer, Graduate School of Human Sciences, Assumption University, Thailand. mmerritt@au.edu

Keywords: Instructor Professionalism; Private University

Introduction
In regards to professionalism, a universal definition that applies to all professions has yet to be developed. This is due to the differences in the type of work and expectations of behavior for the various professions. Nonetheless, the instructors can gain a semblance of understanding of the concept of professionalism by perusing various definitions of professionalism as elucidated by others. Professionalism is an individual's conduct to demonstrate a high level of excellence in their career choice. The ideology of professionalism represents statements made by members of the group of professionals, including educators, maintenance or acquisition of a) the monopoly of the market for its services as "experts," and b) obtaining a higher salary) and autonomy in their work; in other words, professionalism cannot be regarded as an objective point of view but as the ideological publicity designed to promote the occupation's interests (Ginsburg and Yeom, 2007).

Teaching in education institutions has been regarded similarly to other occupations within modern society, requiring specialized knowledge such as medical and law practices. While medical, law and engineer professions are engaged in practical applications of knowledge, the teaching profession covers the methodology of imparting knowledge and enhancing the human mind and spirit. The most challenging part of the teaching profession is the transmission, acquisition, and contribution of knowledge to learners (Parhizgar, D. K., & Parhizgar, P. F., 2005). Professionalism in terms of education is described as the quality of the profession. To be professional, it is required to have an approach and adopt best practices to become a professional. Demirkasimoglu (2010) viewed professionalism in terms of how an instructor could be a professional in the work field with its sociological, ideological, and educational dimensions aimed at achieving the highest standards in the teaching profession based on professional formation knowledge, skill, and values. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2009) stated that instructors must include professional development efforts as part of the teaching and learning system that includes a standard set of skills, curriculum, instruction, and assessments, to ensure that instructors can integrate those characteristics into their teaching.

Globalization has required the necessity to approach the development of professionalism in higher education in Thailand. This will impact universities in regard to developing the quality of graduates according to the higher education framework. Snoek (2010) stated that the characteristics of teacher professionalism should be based on professional autonomy through a

professional monopoly and control over their work, such as participation in the profession; control the core values and good behavior in the profession by using ethical codes. Insufficient professionalism can be the cause of teaching and educational issues. Some studies show that insufficient professional skills can lead to a breakdown of work in a group that hampers successful programs and interventions, reduces collaboration and organizational effectiveness, and damages relationships. Professionalism in instructors in Thailand can be likened to the idea, expectations, and standards of excellence of ongoing professional aspects, which seek to strengthen instructors' abilities, understanding, and performance (Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization, 2006). Instructors are expected to be enthusiastic about professionalism improvement its term of knowledge in subject material, pedagogy competency, and core value to maintain professional practice and ethics (Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2015).

This study aimed to explore the desired components that constitute instructors' professionalism in Thai private universities, to examine the current level of instructors' professionalism, to determine the components that enhance the development of professionalism, and to propose a strategy for the development of instructors' professionalism in Thai private universities.

Research Objectives
The following research objectives form the basis of this study:

1. To explore the desired components those, constitute instructors' professionalism in Thai universities.
2. To examine the current level of instructors' professionalism in Thai private universities.
3. To determine the significant components that impact the development of professionalism for instructors' professionalism in Thai private universities.
4. To propose a strategy for the development of instructors' professionalism in Thai private universities.

Literature Review
This study is based on the following theories utilized in the development of a theoretical framework of the study: Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977); The Ethics of Care (Noddings, 1992); Professional Development Strategy (Earley and Bubb, 2004); and Transformational Leadership (Bass, 1985).

Social Learning Theory (SLT)

Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory posits that people learn by observing other people's behavior, attitudes. This learning takes place by observation, and through this observation, people form the basis of behaviors. Social learning theory explains human behavior in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences. According to Watson (2013), SLT can offer a useful framework for explaining professionalism. In this regard, the components of 1) Instructor knowledge, 2) Self-confidence, Self-efficacy of teachers, and 3) Social, context, and environmental impact can be related to SLT. Instructor's skills relate to aspects of data, in which teachers rely on knowledge and impact on their knowledge in the context of their teaching. In terms of treatment, knowledge is created as a psychological model of potential behavior and an explanation of viable professional learning as a perception of the instructor's knowledge and beliefs underlying aspects of the profession.

The Ethics of Care (EC)

The Ethics of Care is a moral theory proposed by Noddings (1992). Noddings describes how teachers can use the notion of "care" to develop an alternative approach to education that focuses more carefully on individual students, on their moral responsibility and unique abilities. Noddings (1999) states that education in terms of care has four main components:

1. *Modelling*: As teachers are interested in the growth of people as caregivers, teachers must show in their own behavior what it means to take care of others.
2. *Dialogue*: the intention is to involve people in a dialogue of care since dialogue is essential. It is also important to speak directly and give attention, which allows others to appreciate our attempts at care, and in addition, dialogue contributes to the growth of care.
3. *Practice*: the experience we will bring; if we want to create people interested in others, then it makes sense for students to practice and reflect on these practices.
4. *Confirmation*: by confirming someone and encouraging them to be better and encouraging their development. To do this, we need to know the others well and have high expectations for all.

Nodding's ethics of care shows that care is a moral attitude informed by the complex capacities of interpersonal reasoning. The Ethics of Care Theory was used in this study to provide a framework of how instructors can guide their practice and interaction with students.

Professional Development Strategy (PDS)

Professional Development strategy is referred to as continuing professional development according to Earley and Bubb (2004) as they stated continuing professional development is fundamental to professional development to provide the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to perform effectively and competently in a professional role and to meet the expectations of the organization and fundamental of professional development to improve knowledge and skills and develop the personal qualities needs of an organization. Continuing professional development (CPD) activities can be categorized within the following nine models:

1. The training model: for teachers, the prevailing form of CPD the training model is comprehensively recognized. By an expert, this model is taught to the teachers who play an inactive role to gain knowledge.
2. The award-bearing model: the completion of the award-bearing programs is the base of this model of CPD, and the universities usually validate the whole program.
3. The deficit model: CPD is used to make reparations of the apparent weaknesses in individual teachers in the deficit model.
4. The cascade model: In this model, every teacher needs to join training events and share their experiences with their co-workers. A group of teachers here apply the cascade model so that attendees can exchange their own learning with their colleagues.
5. The standards-based model: CPD in the standards-based model includes a 'desire to create a teaching system and teacher education. The purpose is to do 'experimental or practical validation' which is, in fact, related to both student learning and teacher effectiveness
6. The coaching/mentoring model: This model provides an environment where a 'one to one relationship' is focused. Here a new learner joins with a more experienced one to continue the process.
7. The community of practice model: This model is based on collaboration where more than two people work together. Practicing teachers and teacher educators join to form a formal and direct relationship for the successful community of practice.
8. The action research model: This model provides an opportunity for the individuals to develop the quality of action by studying as investigators.
9. The transformative model: This model of CPD is the combination of numerous processes and conditions. Various models are followed and adapted to select the required ones. This model is more effective than any other model from which it is made. Besides, 'a real sense of awareness of issues of power' is another key characteristic of the transformative model.

This study was used to develop a professional to determine whether planned activities contribute to increasing or maintaining knowledge, skills, and personalities related to learning and teaching and learning practices, wider leadership, management, administering education, and professional support for instructors. They understand the instructors' feelings about what influences their perceptions, attitudes, and behavior for their professional development.

Transformational Leadership (TL)

Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass, 1985) forms the basis for the administrative perspective to implement the strategy proposed in this study. Transformational leadership is involved in improving the follower's performance and developing their full potential followers to have a way in which followers will follow their expectations. Often people exhibiting transformational leadership possess a robust set of values and ideals intrinsically. They can effectively motivate the followers to act for the greater good rather than their own self-interests. According to Bass, the following factors are involved in Transformational Leadership:

Factor 1: followers profoundly trust and respect these leaders who do their best to do "the right thing" since they foster and maintain a high standard of morality and ethics in their minds and work. Besides, followers learn to advance with a vision and a mission as per their leaders' instruction.

Factor 2: Idealized Influence, an emotional component of leadership, identifies strong and distinctive role models from the leaders for the followers who later choose one from them and emulate the chosen one for advancement. Inspirational Motivation or inspiration is the key quality the leaders possess. They basically pursue the followers to meet "high expectations" and inspire the followers to instill the vision in mind and have the dedication to fulfill the commitment. The leaders give the effort to boost the team spirit.

Factor 3: Intellectual Stimulation-To make followers think and act creatively and innovatively, leaders use intellectual stimulation that enables them to dare to challenge their own beliefs and values and their leaders and the organizations. This type of leadership inspires followers to develop innovative and 'new approaches' to deal with organizational issues and think carefully to solve the problems.

Factor 4: Individualized Consideration- the leaders create a supportive environment and pay careful attention to the 'individual needs of followers. As coach and adviser, leaders support the followers to be more realistic. The

leaders also apply various assignments that make the followers grow through personal challenges.

Conceptual Framework

This study aimed to propose a strategy for the development of instructors' professionalism in Thai private universities. The conceptual framework is as follows:
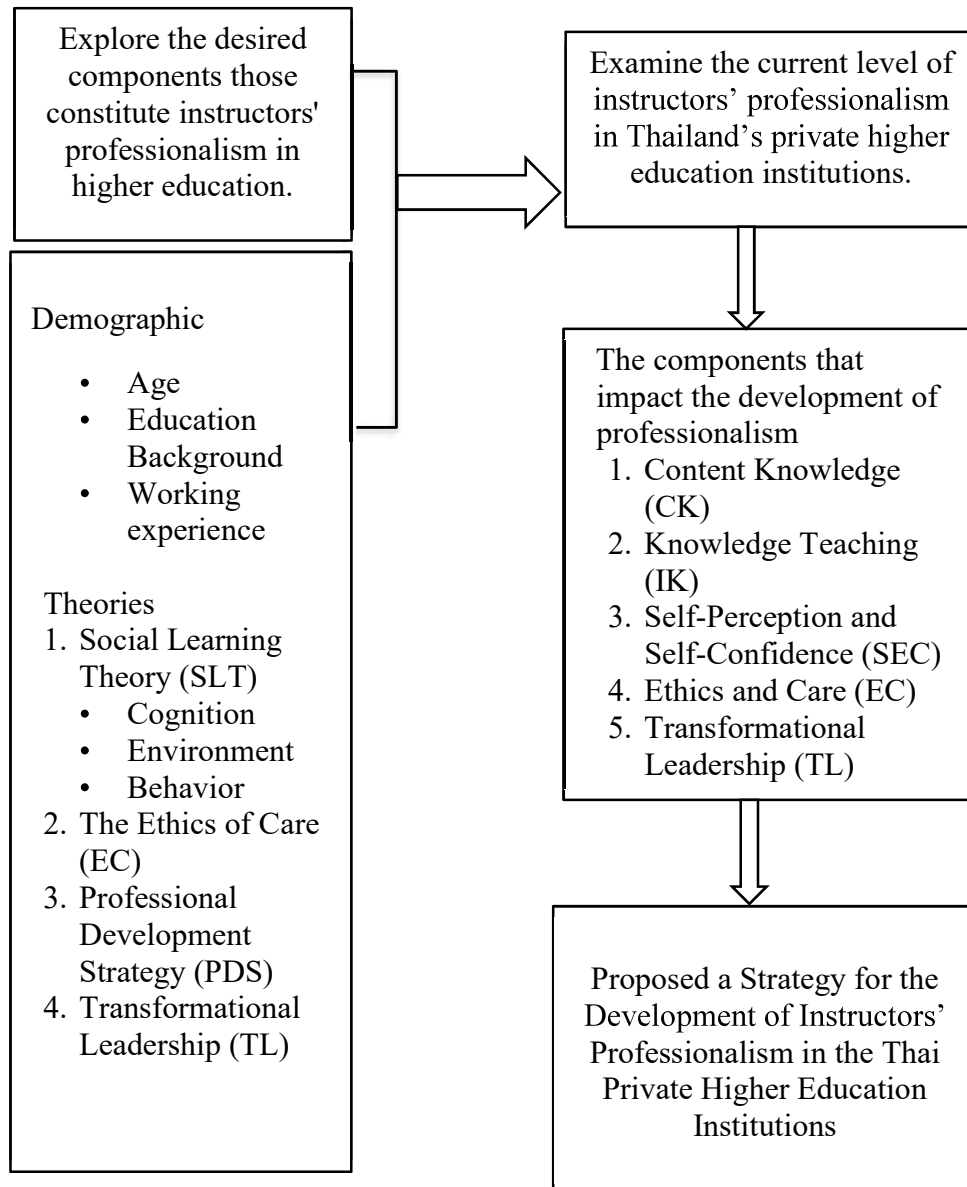

Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework*

Research Method
The study applied both qualitative and quantitative methods based on the following research objectives: 1) to explore the desired components that constitute instructors' professionalism in Thai universities, 2) to examine the current level of instructors' professionalism in Thai private universities, 3) to determine the significant components that impact the development of instructors' professionalism and 4) to propose a strategy for the development of instructors' professionalism in Thai private universities. Using content analysis as a qualitative research method, the desired factors that constitute instructors' professionalism in Thai private universities were obtained. A survey was developed and distributed to a random sample of 364 instructors from ten Thai private universities in Thailand. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analyses were performed to yield quantitative results. The following is a summary of the findings for each research objective.

Findings
Research Objective One
The researcher used a coding sheet as a research instrument to achieve the research objective, the desired components that constitute the instructors' professionalism in Thai universities. The researcher collected the data by extracting the keyword related to components that constitute instructors' professionalism in private universities from academic literature. The desired components that constitute instructor professionalism obtained from the content analysis and expert interviews were: *Content Knowledge*, *Instructional Knowledge*, *Self-Efficacy and Self-Confidence*, and *Ethics and Care*. Additional interviews with senior administrators yielded an additional leadership component, *Transformation Leadership*.

Research Objective Two
To achieve this research objective, the study collected data from the instructors and administrative staff using a questionnaire to determine the current state of instructors' professionalism in Thai private universities. The demographic data of the respondents were as follows: 235 (65%) were male; 129 (35%) were female. The average age of respondents was between 31- 40 years of age (62%). The average number of years of teaching experience was between 6- 15 years (54%). As for the educational level, 166 (45%) held Masters degrees, while 198 (56%) held Doctorates. Overall results of the current level of professionalism were 'high' with means in the ranges of 4.50 to 4.80 out a 5.00 scale in all categories. The overall level of professionalism was 4.54. See the following Table:

Table 1. *Overall Level of Professionalism*

No	Items	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
1	Content Knowledge	4.62	0.55	High
2	Instructional Knowledge	4.35	0.64	High
3	Self-Efficacy and Self-Confidence	4.49	0.59	High
4	Ethics and Care	4.68	0.53	High
	Overall Professionalism	4.54	0.56	High

Research Objective Three

To achieve this objective, the researcher used multiple regression to determine the significant components that impact the development of professionalism for instructors' professionalism Thai private universities. It was found that all four components, Content Knowledge (CK), Instructional Knowledge (IK), Self-efficacy and Self-confidence (SEC), and Ethics and Care (EC), were significant. From table 2, it is found that the multiple correlation coefficient is .730 and the square of the multiple correlation coefficient is .532, indicating that all four predictive variables together predict the development of instructors' professionalism is .525 and is significant at the $p<.01$ level. The standard prediction value of forecasting is 52.50 percent. The following table shows the results of the multiple regression.

Table 2. *Results of the multiple regression analysis*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Enter	.730	.532	.525	.33646

a. Predictors (Constant): EC, IK, CK, SEC

Research Objective Four

To achieve this objective, the findings from the previous three objectives were incorporated and developed into a strategy to enhance instructors' professionalism. The proposed strategy for the development of instructors' professionalism aims at eliminating the gap between the current and ideal practices of instructors' professionalism. A draft strategy was developed and sent out for expert validation for their comments and suggestions to improve the strategy. The following figure depicts the finalized strategy after validation by experts.
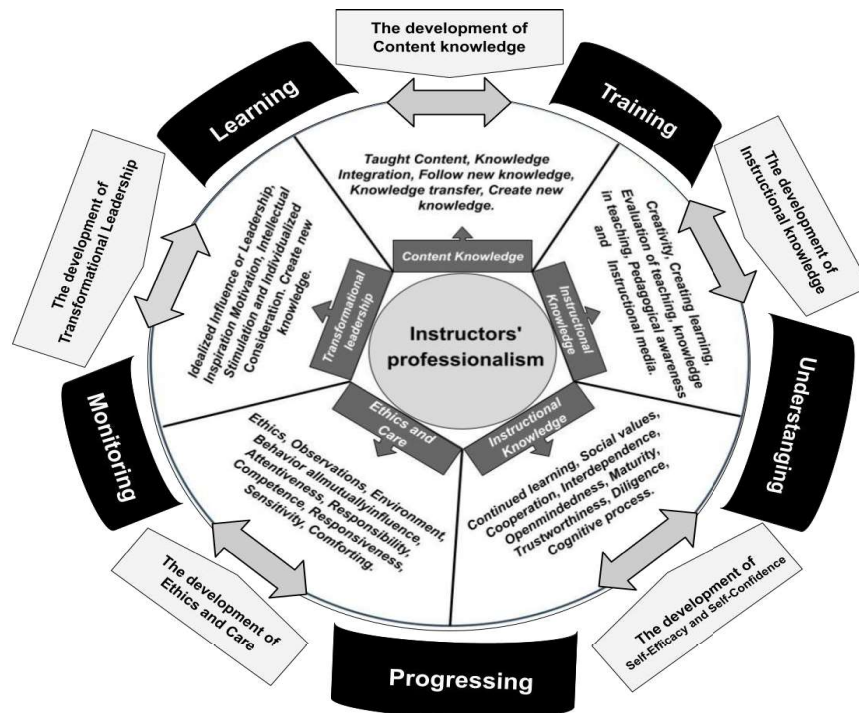
Figure 2. *A Proposed Strategy for the Development of Instructors'*
Professionalism in Thai Private Universities.

Vision: Instructors' professionalism in Thai private universities, is shown in the inner circle of Figure 2. **Strategic Issues:** The development of instructors' professionalism in Thai private higher education institutions is shown in the outer circle of the figure. **Strategic Goals:** As they are shown in the outer circle of the figure, there are five pillars as follows: The development of Content Knowledge; The development Instructional knowledge; The development of Self-Efficacy and Self-Confidence; The development of Ethics and care; and the development of Transformational Leadership. The **Strategic interconnected tools and Activities** of *Understanding, Training, Learning, Progressing, Monitoring, and Evaluating* are shown as connecting factors to the outer circle to make a relationship among the pillars and run the strategy to reach the goal.

This strategy was developed after identifying the ideal practices of instructors' professionalism and the current practices of instructors' professionalism in Thai private higher education institutions. The researcher also made use of the key components of instructors' professionalism theories in this strategy development.

Discussion and Recommendations
In this study, the findings of the research found that the professionalism of the instructors was very important to the development of teaching and learning. Professional development of instructors needs to develop the five pillars of professionalism: content knowledge (CK), instructional knowledge (IK), self-efficacy and self-confidence (SEC), Ethics and Care (EC) and transformational leadership. (TL) The results of this study are consistent with the results of previous studies. The professional development of instructors is necessary to develop morality and ethics with Ethics and Care (EC). This point is consistent with the results of Hutching, (2016). The teaching profession has developed a code of ethics and professional ethics to guide professionals as they cross many grey areas. Some instructors consider themselves "professional" in order to attract individual responsibility for professional development. At the same time, "professional" is a status recognized by an accreditation body that requires a code of ethics or ethics that affects professional conduct and professional practice.

In addition, in the professional development of instructors, it is also necessary to develop the professionalism of the instructors in leadership. This leadership is very important to professional development and is consistent with the study results of Lee & Peak (2008), who stated that in regards to professionalism for instructors, most studies related to the development of professionalism are carried out with description of professional development (PD) and not many studies focused on PD in higher education with a needs assessment for the program/ faculty and no studies have been done on the impact of faculty for their own staff.

This strategy can benefit by involving personnel in Thai private universities such as senior administrators, administrative staff, instructors in the development, and those that benefit the most will be students. Therefore, after the instructors' professionalism is developed under the services and activities of the strategy, the quality of instructors and their teaching as well as the quality of Thai private universities can be improved, moreover, students and stakeholders will also be satisfied. Educational leaders need to keep in mind that the development of professionalism of a person is a lifelong process, and at a particular point in time, we may not be able to assess it. However, administrators of universities should be concerned about instructors' professionalism as a priority of improvement and established that all instructors should be support with resources such as financial support, individual development, professional training, and needs based training, teamwork, working environment, and teaching and learning so that universities can have instructors with high levels of professionalism. As a

point of limitation of this study, students were not asked their perceptions of the levels of the instructors' professionalism. Therefore, as a suggestion for further research, it is suggested that students' perceptions should also be included in order to provide a complete picture.

REFERENCES

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. Psychological Review, 84(2), 191-215.

Bass, B. M. (1985). Leadership and performance beyond expectation. New York: The Free Press.

Demirkasimoglu, N. (2010). Defining "Teacher Professionalism" from different perspectives. Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, 9 (2010) 2047–2051.

Earley, P. & Bubb, Sara. (2004). Leading and managing Continuing professional development: Development People, development schools. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE.

Ginsburg, M. & Yeom, M. (2007). Professionalism and the Reform of Teachers and Teacher Education in the Republic of Korea & the United States of America.

Hutchings, Y. T. (2016). Navigating the Gray Areas of Teacher Behavior. Retrieved from https://www.ets.org/s/proethica/pdf/real-clear-articles.pdf

Krejcie, R.V., & Morgan, D.W. (1970). Determining Sample Size for Research Activities. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 30, 607-610

Lee, C., & Paek, J. (2008). Exploring Strategic Staff Development in Higher Education Institutions. Retrieved from www.ufhrd.co.uk/.../exploring-strategic-staff-development-in-higher-education-in.do

Noddings, N. (1992). The Challenge to care in schools: An Alternative Approach to Education. New York: Teachers College Press. Noddings, N. (1999). Two concepts of caring. Philosophy of Education, http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/EPS/PES-yearbook/1999/noddings.asp. Accessed 6th December 2004.

Office of Higher Education Commission. (2015). List of Thai Higher Education Institutions. Retrieved from http://inter2.mua.go.th/other-information-2/

Parhizgar, D. K. & Parhizgar, P. F. (2005). Analysis of the Teacher's Professional Ethical Responsibilities in Educational Institutions. Journal of Border Educational Research, Vol. 4 No.1.

Partnership for 21st Century Skills. (2009). Professional Development: A 21st Century Skills Implementation Guide. Retrieved from

http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/p21stateimp_professional_development.pdf

Snoek, M. (2010). Theories on and concepts of professionalism of teachers and their consequences for the curriculum in teacher education. Paper published in a publication of the Teacher Education Policy in Europe Network TEPE.

Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization. (2006). Country report. Retrieved from http://www.seameo.org/vl/library/dlwelcome/publications/report/thematic/09forum44.pf

Watson, S. (2013). Understanding Professional Development from the Perspective of

Social Learning Theory. Centre for Research in Mathematics Education, University of Nottingham. Retrieved from https://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/people/staff/watson/Watson_CERME8_2013_Proceedings.pdf

Zepeda, S. J. (2012). Professional Development: What works. New York: Freelance Editor Services