

Are we on the same page? Competing discourses of professionalism in TESOL and their impact on attempts to support the professional development of experienced teachers.

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A common problem faced by in-service teacher educators or school managers in their attempts to promote professional development activities for experienced teachers, is that these are often greeted less than enthusiastically. In my talk I will argue that part of the reason for this lies in the fact that there are some inherent tensions between the discourses of professionalism that teacher educators and managers draw upon to inform their work and the ways in which teachers understand themselves to be professionals. I will suggest that teachers' construction of their professional identity needs to be understood as situated in their working lives and constructed with reference to a range of competing discourses that do not necessarily resonate with the version of professionalism they encounter in initiatives designed to help them. I will go on to propose that our attempts to encourage the professional development of teachers should therefore, first and foremost, be grounded in a responsive dialogic pedagogy that focuses on helping teachers evolve their operational definitions of professionalism and on capacity building for the development of supportive communities of practice in the workplace.