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Research and professional practice in Scottish Education

Christine Forde
University of Glasgow, UK

Introduction

This chapter explores the relationship between educational research and professional practice in education by examining the place accorded teacher research in current policy and developments in Scottish education. Scottish education is undergoing an extensive period of reform where change to the curriculum and assessment programmes, the Curriculum for Excellence (CfEx) (SE 2004, 2006), is now to be realised through a programme of teacher development (National Implementation Board 2012). The chapter begins by outlining briefly this extensive programme of reform and details the way in which teacher policy is constructed as the means of achieving the aims of the CfEx. A core element in this programme of reform is to ensure a more coherent and sustained approach to career long teacher education and within this, there are emerging forms of professional practice where research and pedagogy are entwined in ideas such as practitioner enquiry/inquiry. However, while there is an increasing focus in Scottish educational policy on teacher research, there is a lack of clarity about what this is and how it relates to the enhancement and sustaining of professional practice. There is a range of terms used to describe teacher research and this chapter outlines some of the key underpinning concepts found in the literature in order to explore the meanings attributed to this term in policy in Scotland. The chapter then analyses the construction of teacher research to be found in the policies teacher development in Scottish education particularly the professional standards.

Teacher Policy in Scotland

Scottish education over the last decade has been in undertaking an extensive period of reform related initially to the curriculum with the introduction of a new curriculum for ages 3-18, the *Curriculum for Excellence* (CfEx) (SE 2004) and more recently to the teaching profession through the publication of two reviews, firstly, on initial and career long teacher education, *Teaching Scotland's Future* (Donaldson 2011) and secondly, on the teacher contract and conditions of service, *Advancing Professionalism*, (McCormac 2011). It was partly out of concern for the pace of change with regard to the implementation of the CfEX, that the reviews of teacher education and the teacher contract were initiated. Donaldson (2011) notes that the CfEx is underpinned by a wider concept of professionalism: "...a teaching profession which, like other major professions, is not driven largely by external forces of change sees its members of the prime agent of change" (Donaldson 2011, p. 14). Similarly the argument for the review of the teacher contract in *Advancing Professionalism* (McCormac 2011, p. 7) is based on a need to re-vision teacher professionalism in order to meet to demands of the CfEx:

Full realization of the potential of Curriculum for Excellence can only be achieved through the professionalism of teachers, working as leaders of the educational process, engaging with others who can contribute to the diverse educational and social needs of children and young people.

Thus teachers are now expected to generate curricular programmes to meet the needs of particular groups of pupils rather than deliver an externally devised curriculum so a central theme in both *Teaching Scotland's Future* and in *Advancing Professionalism* is ongoing teacher learning. It is within this issue that practitioner enquiry has become one of the dominant themes. While the policy focus is on practitioner enquiry, there are significant issues related to the meaning this term and to the associated sets of practices.

Teacher Research: Professionalism and Practice

There are a number of terms related to the broad idea of teacher research which are sometimes used interchangeably but which are also used in a more technical to make distinctions between different modes and sets of practices. Among these are the terms action research, curriculum enquiry, inquiry as stance and practitioner enquiry. The literature in this area is very broad ranging from texts to provide guidance on the technical process of investigation (Baumfield *et al.* 2013, Efron and Ravid 2013) to other works, which explore the relationship between teacher research and different constructions of what it means to be a teacher (Stenhouse 1975, Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009). Lewin's (1946) work on intergroup relations where action research was the means of addressing practical problems is regarded as the founding idea upon which a range of different approaches to teacher research have been derived. Action research is an attractive idea where, given the deeply contextualized nature of teaching, it is a means to examine systematically specific issues and find solutions for that particular setting. The process of action research is equally important as any outcome achieved. Action research has the potential to change the relationship between teachers and research. In one of the first large scale projects in the UK using action research, the Ford Teaching Project on discovery learning in the early 1970s the process of action research reconfigured the relationship between teachers and researchers from a situation where researchers undertook research on teachers to a process whereby the investigative process was the responsibility of both teachers and academic researchers (Elliot and Adelman 1973). There are a number of recent examples of action research being used as a way of bringing about large scale development of teaching and learning where academic researchers and teachers worked in partnership (e.g. Baumfield and Butterworth 2007, Hulme *et al.* 2009) and particularly the Teaching and Learning Research Programme (Campbell, 2007). Here the focus has been on live issues and these projects have provided opportunities for groups of teachers working with university researchers to investigate and generate sets of practices. The university researchers may have a mentoring role providing technical support for teachers but they may also work collaboratively in designing, undertaking investigations and examining the data gathered in order to explore and develop sets of teaching practices to support pupil learning.

The core of action research is a cycle of steps: plan, action, observe and reflect (Townsend 2013). However there is a danger that action research is reduced to an instrumental approach and so the more dynamic, fluid and meaning-making processes essential to the process of investigating and developing practice are overlooked. In Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988, 2014) influential model of action research the importance of discussion among practitioners is as vital as a means of exploring the construction and reconstruction of practice. Elliot (1991) emphasizes the need for flexibility where the starting point is a broad idea or question which becomes refined through successive cycles of reconnaissance. Elliot proposes that through this process of reconnaissance there is the possibility of changing the focus of the investigation. In these approaches to action research we can see the importance of collaboration to bring about change. Glassman *et al.* (2013, p. 283) argues:

AR [action research] attempts to do two things simultaneously: create a more vibrant community capable of non hierarchical, dynamic democratic decision-making processes

and create a change-based intervention that leads to more efficient satisfying and especially lasting problem solving capabilities.

In this Glassman is going back to Lewin's original idea, also evident in Elliot's approach where teachers and researchers both engaged in the process of investigation and generation of solutions is this is a form of activism. This idea of teacher agency as the driver for change underpins Stenhouse's (1975, 1980) approach to teacher research.

Stenhouse (1975) grappled with the issue of the contextualised nature of teaching and the problems created when curriculum design and development are processes conducted externally to that context. He argued that curriculum research is not about defining solutions that can be applied universally but instead "curriculum research must itself be illuminative rather than recommendatory" (p. 122). Thus curriculum design and development has to lie at the level of the school and within this, belong to the teacher. Importantly for Stenhouse, curriculum is not simply a package, set of materials but instead is "a particular form of specification about the practice of teaching" (p. 142). For Stenhouse any development has to be explored in context: "each classroom setting implies that any proposal - even at school level needs to be tested and verified and adapted by each teacher in his (sic) own classroom" (p. 143). However, engaging in teacher research is not just about the development of the curriculum but has a much more profound implication regarding what it means to be a teacher. Thus Stenhouse rejects Hoyle's (1974) classic definition of the extended professional and instead sees teacher research as an essential component: "a capacity for autonomous professional self-development through systematic self study, through the study of the work of other teachers and through the testing of ideas by classroom research procedures" (p. 144). The collaborative dimension is an element of extended professionalism. Stenhouse recognises that this self study can be threatening and a mutually supportive cooperative research is critical.

While action research very much focuses on processes to address particular issues or to trial new practices there are alternative approaches which focus less on the investigative processes and more on a disposition towards the practice of teaching. Here it is not about inquiry on teaching but instead 'inquiry' is a defining feature of the teaching process. There are different approaches but two of the most influential approaches are firstly, McNiff and Whitehead's (2006) living theory and secondly, Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999, 2009) 'inquiry as stance'. For McNiff and Whitehead action research become a process of self-reflection particularly the exploration of the purposes, values and understandings upon which sets of practices are based. Townsend (2013, p. 29) argues that although this "approach seems to be individual the actual application can have more social features" nevertheless the leaning is towards an individual seeking to realise their ideals and values in their educational practice.

Understanding practice is a key aspect of Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (2009, p. 121) proposal about the adoption of inquiry as stance where "the idea of inquiry as a critical habit of mind that informs professional work in all its aspects". Further inquiry as stance has the thread of activism running through: the focus is on practitioner driven transformation and this transformation is not just educational but is about wider social change:

inquiry as stance is grounded in the problems and contexts of practice in the first place and in the ways practitioner colleagues theorize, study and act on those problems in the best life interests of the learning and life chances of students and their communities (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 2009, p. 123).

These various modes of teacher research emphasise that the importance of teachers working to

seek solutions can also reify the place of the teacher in generating innovation. However, other forms have stressed more the process of action research as a rich and meaningful process of professional development. Practitioner enquiry or action research projects are becoming part of the repertoire of continuing professional development programmes. Practitioner enquiry can be conceived of as a challenge to transmissive models of continuing professional development which has been used to drive external reform agendas: routinely teachers attend courses or receive a 'pack' and then are expected to implement the programme. Zeichner (2003) argues that:

teacher research, under certain conditions, seems to develop or rekindle an excitement and enthusiasm about teaching and to provide a validation of the importance of the work that teachers do that seems to be missing from the lives of many teachers" (p. 317).

However, for Zeichner there are certain conditions if teacher research is to provide meaningful professional learning experiences. In particular he argues that there needs to be "respect for the voices of teachers and the knowledge they bring to the research experience" (p. 318) which again, as Stenhouse also argued, points to the importance of teacher agency. However, Zeichner recognizes that there may be risks for teachers in this and so teacher research is not a 'quick fix'. Instead teachers need a safe and supportive collaborative context where they can work together over a sustained period of time. Although teaching and teacher research are complex processes, Zeichner found that "intellectual challenge and stimulation" was a positive aspect of the process for teachers. This is similar to Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) findings that "teachers who engage in self-directed inquiry into their own work in classrooms find the process intellectually satisfying" (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 1993, p. 18-19).

To this point the focus of the discussion has been on variants of teacher research which focuses on the process of engaging in classroom based inquiry and the benefits in terms of developing teaching in order to address practical problems in specific context as well as the process of professional learning. However, there is the question of the place and contribution of the different forms of teacher research beyond the immediate boundaries of the classroom. Furlong and Oancea (2005) put forward four criteria for the assessment of practice-based research relating to methodological considerations, technological issues which relate to the potential impact of a specific research programme, its social robustness "focusing on the enhancement of (ethically) authentic action, rather than on the accumulation of (theoretical) knowledge" (p. 14) and economic robustness where for the effort put into the research process, it provides value for money. Teacher research clearly is strong in relation to social robustness and to some degree, economic robustness in that teacher research only largely requires space and support. However, it is in relation to scientific concerns about trustworthiness, the contribution to knowledge and the epistemological underpinnings of specific approaches that there are significant debates about teacher research. Strong claims have been made for the potential of teacher research in not only contributing educational theory but changing this substantially. Carr and Kemmis (1986) argue that action research is the means to generate an authentic body of knowledge and at the same time reposition the place of teachers in theory generation. Stenhouse (1975) argues that the focus of such research is on the work and development of the individual teacher but this is not to remain a privatized activity. For Stenhouse reporting to other teachers is one aspect but also the cumulative building of case studies from which researchers can begin to build general propositional theory. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) also point to the need for a repositioning of teachers in the development of educational theory, arguing that we should see teacher research:

as a way of generating both local knowledge and public knowledge about teaching, learning and schooling – that is knowledge developed and useful to teachers themselves and their immediate communities as well as knowledge useful to the larger school and university communities (p, 43).

In this Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) are not arguing to privilege this form of knowledge but see “a constructive and productive relationship between this knowledge and knowledge generated through systematic academic research” (p. 63). The task is then to build and disseminate this knowledge and through this process challenge assumptions about relationships between theory and practice, between academic researchers and practitioners.

Across this body of work various ideas and terms are used: enquiry, inquiry and action, teacher research sometimes interchangeably and sometimes to denote a specific aspect. Further the nature and purpose of teacher research varies across the literature.

Figure 1: Teacher Research



Thus, there are competing purposes where teacher research is:

- a form of professional learning and so undertaken largely as part of a programme of study and continued as a way of maintaining ongoing development
- a means of taking policy initiated improvement priorities forward in school
- a pedagogic practice where close enquiry is focused on the needs of the learners within a specific context
- a form of teacher activism where they explore areas that are of significance to them and take action on the basis of the outcomes of the investigation
- a means of generating knowledge to contribute to the wider body of knowledge.

Therefore we need now to turn attention to the use of teacher research in the Scottish educational context.

Legacies: Schools of Ambition; the Chartered Teacher programme

Teachers engaging in small-scale research projects have historically been part of masters degrees. While there have been in the past and currently networks such as the Scottish Education Research Association Teacher Research Network, General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS) Teacher Research Programme and the Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE) Teacher network, there was only limited uptake and up to this point, limited support in national and local policy. However, recently there have been a number of developments which have helped to raise the profile of teachers engaging in research but it is a story of 'stops and starts' with the establishment and then abandonment of schemes which potentially could have a positive systemic impact. In particular there were two schemes where teacher research was a key component. The first was the programme of school-based development, *Schools of Ambition* (SEED 2004b, p. 12) which was a "programme for secondary schools...to bring about a step change in ambition and achievement." This programme was set up in 2005 as part of the *Ambitious Excellent Schools* policy set up by the Labour Government and was discontinued by the Scottish Nationalist Government in 2010. The second was The Chartered *Teacher Scheme* an incentivized professional development scheme to support the development of accomplished teaching and teacher professionalism (Connelly and McMahon 2007). This scheme was one of the outcome of the *Teachers' Agreement* (The McCrone Agreement) (SE 2001) but was discontinued in 2012 following a further review of the teachers' contract, the McCormac Report (McCormac 2011).

As part of the *Schools of Ambition* project and schools planned a programmes of school transformation had access to additional resources including a team of researchers working with the school to support and review the school's development. Teacher research was one element some schools built into their plans for change and part of the funding supported a team of university researchers to work as mentors with teacher researchers. The university staff were to help the teachers identify evaluation strategies and research instruments. This research support to the Schools of Ambition was, according to Hulme *et al.* (2009, p. 19) "...founded on a commitment to building collaborative and durable research partnerships between the practitioner, the academic and policy community with the shared aim of embedding systematic enquiry within school culture." Part of the task of the mentor was to work with teachers to translate the goals of the transformational plan into "targeted strands of enquiry" (Hulme *et al.* 2009, p. 20). Thus the mentor worked with teachers in the design and planning, ethics dimensions, sources, data collection and analysis. As part of the *Schools of Ambition* programme conferences were held for teachers to present the findings of their enquiries and the mentors worked with teachers in the development of their conference presentations. In this Hulme *et al.* note a tension between the scope for teachers to choose the focus of the enquiry and the need to take forward an area or project in the transformational plan. There were issues about teachers confidence and their perceptions of the skill required to gather and use research data. However, more fundamental was the view that teacher enquiry was an extra area for teachers to take forward rather than seen as the means of achieving current demands and development priorities. As a consequence, there was a narrowing of the potential of teacher research as the core tool of transformation with smaller numbers of teachers taking part and so research becomes an individual practice and the collective potential is lost. While some of the issues identified by Hulme *at al.* were practical, there were issues related to the nature of enquiry, the engagement of a broad based group of teachers and a sense that teachers can determine for themselves what they wish to investigate:

Teachers' accounts of embarking on research within the *Schools of Ambition* indicate a need to provide opportunities for professionally rewarding enquiry (that is meaningful and

feasible) and which makes a clear contribution to organizational learning” (Hulme *et al.*, 2009, p. 27).

Therefore if we are to exploit the full potential of teacher research then part of this has to be about enabling teachers to work as a leader with the cultural and political factors in their school context to bring about improvement rather than implement externally driven reforms. Hulme and Mentor (2008) in their case study of a school building a research-oriented approach illustrate clearly the significance of school leadership in supporting teacher research. Other issues included attitudes of staff in seeing the relevance of enquiry and a concern about close scrutiny and in the sustaining of activities. Where successful Hulme and Mentor (2008) argue that for teachers there is a need to reconcile the idea of themselves as a teacher and as a researcher. Involvement did create space for a deeper reflection, and for discussion and exploration with colleagues. Time and trust are essential for embedding and allowing an inquiry stance to become a mature process.

The legacy of the chartered teacher programme is also important, as this has led to wider discussions of the potential of practitioner enquiry as a form of professional development. Teachers had to demonstrate their achievement of the Standard for Chartered Teacher (GTCS 2004, 2009) through undertaking a programme of professional development largely a masters degree and on successfully completing this received a significant salary increase. The focus of these programmes was practice-based learning and so practitioner enquiries projects were undertaken rather than dissertations. The studies of the programme (Reeves 2007, Carroll 2009, Reeves and Fox 2008, Williamson and Robinson 2009) reveal that teachers reported that engaging professional enquiries was professional rewarding, led to a new sense of agency but there were significant issues in being able to undertake collaborative practitioner enquiry as required by the Standard for Chartered Teacher particularly questions of legitimacy, impact and resourcing.

Reeves (2007) in her analysis of the experiences of teachers found that undertaking a classroom based enquiry and building a critical stance led to a new sense of confidence. Williamson and Robertson (2009) similarly found that engaging in reflection and enquiry led to a new sense of activism on the part of the teachers where they felt they were able to take action to address issues in their classrooms and schools. Carroll (2009, p. 27) argues the purpose of professional enquiries is “to develop knowledge and expertise in areas of the teacher’s choice, aligned with organizational goals, so they may contribute to knowledge creation activity tied into the process of school improvement planning.” He found that the established pattern of teachers were able to create new knowledge through collaboration. Collaboration, Carroll suggests, through discussion, gathering and exploring ideas from literature was an important element in the transfer of ideas from the programme of study to their practice in school and this promoted a horizontal expertise rather than the usual transfer of vertical expertise into the classroom. However, while the various studies reported a positive response from participants pursuing the Chartered Teacher Scheme and benefits in terms of their development there were a number of tensions.

Reeves (2007) found that once the enquiry moved beyond the boundaries of the teacher working on an enquiry in his or her own classroom, significant issues arose. These issues related partly to issues of understandings and skills of the teachers involved in a collaborative enquiry. In this study Reeves noted that though many teachers had been part of working groups in schools, such approaches had been driven by ‘educational operationalism’ where the focus was on the implementation of external priorities and policies. Consequently such working groups tended to be managed closely with teachers undertaking specific delegated tasks rather than leading any collective exploration of purposes and ideas gathered particularly from the wider literature. As Reeves (2007, p. 70) notes:

Whilst acting as a more autonomous individual did not cause problems, sharing practice and crossing individual classroom boundaries was a very different matter for both programme participants and their colleagues. People were unused to being asked to engage in joint diagnostic reflection on their own classroom evidence.

Thus there were issues around the teachers' skills and confidence in participating in such collaborative approaches. Equally important was the issue of institutional barriers. The collaborative enquiries were, as Carroll (2009) argues, designed to take forward areas of related to the school's improvement. There were significant issues in teachers getting time together and accessing resources but even more contentious was the question of the legitimacy of teachers in leading groups, professional learning activities and observations, activities usually undertaken by those in management roles.

The evaluative studies of both *Schools of Ambition* Programme and the *Chartered Teacher Scheme*, demonstrate the potential of practitioner enquiry as a tool for both personal professional learning approach and as a means of contributing to school transformation but also the studies set out clearly some of the barriers. Evaluative studies of the teacher research and enquiry strands in the *Schools of Ambition* (Hulme and Mentor 2008, Mentor *et al.* 2010) highlight some of the benefits and longterm potential of enquiry methodologies as part of school development. Further studies of the impact of chartered teacher scheme highlight the way that for teachers "that engagement in postgraduate studies, in particular structured practitioner research, had markedly affected the development of their classroom practice" (McMahon *et al.* 2009, p. 29). Both schemes had attracted significant investment – the *Schools of Ambition* had up to £100k additional funding while teachers who achieved a Chartered Teacher status had a salary increase of approximately £6000 above the teacher main grade salary. However, one of the legacies from these schemes is that practitioner enquiry can be seen to have potential but requires time to mature. On an individual basis for teachers to acquire the skills, confidence, readiness to explore their practice in depth and open it to the scrutiny of others, while on an organizational level there needs to be a culture which sees this as legitimate, productive and that this is not additional to a teacher's work but is a means of enhancing professional practice. The legacy of these two programmes in relation to practitioner enquiry is most clearly expressed in the revised set of professional standards for the teaching profession.

Reforming Teaching and Teacher Education

While teacher research was a central component of these developments in Scottish education and the associated studies found productive outcomes, nevertheless these projects were not sustained. These were bounded projects: not all schools involved in the Schools of Ambition programme drew on teacher research and the Chartered Teacher programme was very much a small minority of teachers. These projects were established at a point when leadership was dominating the policy imagination (Forde and McMahon, 2012) and there was little expression of ideas about teacher research. Thus in an influential policy document from the Inspectorate, *Leadership for Learning* (HMIE 2007), action research has one mention and here it is part of a discussion about the best use of meeting times: "involvement in action research projects" (p. 50) and the other strategies are those typical of managed change such as "remits for working groups, clear tasks linked to priorities SMART targets with associated milestones ..." (p. 50). Other than this any mention of research relates to pupils developing independence in their learning: "learners selecting projects to investigate and being involved as researchers and co-researchers (p. 64). Given the limited attention paid to teacher research in this policy, the changing position of teacher research in the reforms following the Donaldson Report is significant.

In the responses to the survey conducted as part of the review for the Donaldson Report, teacher research was identified by 32% of respondents as a CPD activity they had engaged in the previous academic session (compared to 59% and 66% responding that they had taken part in school and Local Authority CPD). This might seem a relatively high percentage of the approximately 2500 responses but this is from a teaching profession of about 53k and it is likely that those who were motivated or aware of the online survey may have been teachers embarked on programme and study. Part of the focus on research/enquiry is about “the aspiration of teaching being a research-informed profession” (Donaldson 2011, p. 58) in order to bring about system level improvement. Thus: “if we are to achieve the aspiration of teachers being leaders of educational improvement they need to develop expertise in using research, inquiry and reflection as part of their daily skill set” (p. 70). In this there is a reconceptualisation of what it means to be a teacher and of construction of teaching to an intellectually much richer process. These ideas underpin the professional standards for teaching in Scotland

Professional Standards: Research and Enquiry

One of the recommendations of the Donaldson Report (2011) was a review of the full set of professional standards for teaching in Scotland. A programme of revision was undertaken resulting in a suite of professional standards being launched in August 2013 (GTCS 2012a,b,c). These standards cover initial teacher education, teaching, advanced professional learning and leadership and management. *The Standards for Full Registration* are the legal benchmark required of all registered teachers.

- Standards for Registration
 - Standards for Provisional Registration
 - Standards for Full Registration
- Standard for Career Long Professional Learning
- Standards for Leadership and Management
 - Standard for Middle Leadership and Management
 - Standard for Headship

Professional standards for teaching in Scotland are based on the principle that professional actions are underpinned by values, a knowledge base and by sound personal and interpersonal abilities (Forde *et al.* 2012). Although the professional actions, bodies of knowledge may differ across the standards importantly there is a common set of professional values across all standards and in this is all teachers are expected to commit to “lifelong enquiry” (GTCS 2012a, p. 5). Across these sets of standards in the various components that make up the sets of standards there are two dominant themes that of (1) teachers using research to inform their practice and (2) teachers undertaking enquiry based activities as part of a process of professional development.

Research-informed practice

This idea of teaching being a research-informed profession runs across all standards. Partly this relates to the building of professional knowledge but also the development of a critical awareness of educational issues, policy and practice. Further, research is constructed as a tool to analyse, reflect on and justify practice.

Table 1: Research-informed practice

Standard	Examples
Standards for Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • show an indepth awareness of educational research... • read, analyse and critically evaluate a range of appropriate educational and research literature • systematically engage with research to challenge and inform professional practice
Standard for Career Long Professional Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • critically engage with...research... to make meaningful links to inform and change practice • develop and apply expertise, knowledge and understanding of research and impact on education
Standards for Leadership and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leaders critically engage with knowledge and understanding of research and developments in teaching and learning • apply their enhanced knowledge and critical understanding of research and development in educational policy to support school development • develop and use knowledge from literature, research and policy sources to support [specific professional actions]

Enquiry

While there is a clear theme across all the standards relating to the use of research to support practice and decision making, the area of enquiry is less evident in the *Standards for Leadership and Management* (GTCS 2012c), notwithstanding the expectation of a commitment to “lifelong enquiry” in the professional values. Although all teachers are expected to have a knowledge of practitioner enquiry, set out in the *Standard for Full Registration* (GTCS 2012a), the more detailed expression of practitioner enquiry is in the *Standard for Career Long Professional* (GTCS 2012b) where practitioner enquiry is part of advanced forms of professional learning to build teacher expertise in teaching and learning. There is little mention of the process of enquiry in the *Standards for Leadership and Management* (GTCS 2012c).

Table 2: Enquiry

Standard	Examples
Standards for Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know how to engage in critical enquiry, research and evaluation individually, collaboratively and apply this in order to improve teaching and learning • demonstrate an enquiring and critical approach to their professional practice
Standard for Career Long Professional Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contribute to a collegiate culture through collaborative enquiry • lead and participate in collaborative practitioner enquiry • develop skills of rigorous and critical self-evaluation, reflection and enquiry including how to investigate and evidence impact on learners and professional practice
Standards for Leadership and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regularly question their practice through processes of reflection and critical enquiry

Constructing Research as Professional Practice

In this discussion of the relationship between research and professional practice in Scottish education, the dominant theme in the standards is about research-informed practice and this is to be welcomed. Teachers and leaders have access to wider ideas which can challenge assumptions and offer alternatives. The position of teacher research is, however, less clear. As we have seen from the wider literature the idea of teacher research is complex and has many different forms and purposes. In the Scottish policy frameworks, the Donaldson Report (2011), the report from the National Partnership Group (ScotGov 2012) established to take forward the recommendations of the Donaldson Report and in the revised professional standards (GTCS 2012a,b) teacher research is constructed as practitioner enquiry and is an important element of the reconceptualisation of teacher professionalism. There is the limited reference to enquiry in the *Standards for Leadership and Management* (GTCS 2012c), both the *Standard for Middle Leadership and Management* and the *Standard for Headship* and so there is a question of how far teacher research becomes part of the practice of schools.

It could be argued that enquiry is an element of a wider set of practices around self-evaluation that is a key theme in the management and quality assurance process in Scottish education. Thus school inspections carried out by HMIE [now known as Education Scotland] are based on approaches that “have increasingly focused on the ability of an establishment or service to evaluate itself (which is referred to as ‘self-evaluation’) (HMIE 2011, p. 5). However, self-evaluation in this context relates to organisational systems of quality assurance, evaluation and improvement planning. There is a strong managerial structure where Local Authorities are required to ensure that schools are addressing national priorities. Therefore if practitioner enquiry is absorbed into the process of institutional self evaluation the sense of the agency of teachers exploring issues that have arisen in the immediacy of their classrooms or which have interested them could be lost.

Reeves et al. (2010) argue for that there are gains for policy makers, teachers and higher education in developing a more coherent approach to practitioner enquiry. However, despite considerable support through funding this approach is still adopted only in a minority of schools and by a minority of teachers. Currently the Scottish Government has committed to a master level profession and has established a scheme whereby the universities working in partnership with the Local Authorities have made bids to support masters programme of study which adopt a practice-based learning approach. Higher education remains the driving force in building practitioner enquiry by making this a core element of these masters programmes. However here we are in danger of replaying the issues around the chartered teacher programme where firstly, practitioner enquiry is seen as a set of practices associated with an academic award and secondly, as an individual ‘temporary’ practice rather than as a core component of pedagogic practice.

There are still some questions about how practitioner enquiry is constructed. In the wider literature as a defining feature of effective pedagogic practice or whether it will remain an area that relates what is conceived of as advanced practice and to the gaining of qualifications. In Scottish education practitioner enquiry is constructed as a process of professional learning. The rich possibilities of practitioner enquiry as the means to provoke, generate and innovate from the classroom context to contribute to a wider systems level improvement and where the possibilities for teacher research proposed by Stenhouse (1975) and Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) are lost.

In particular in Scotland we need to recognize the potential of the process and outcomes of practitioner enquiry to contribute to body of theoretical knowledge which is grounded in the experiences of the classroom and this will go towards repositioning teachers as initiators of ideas and practices.

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