

Developing Accomplished Teachers and Teaching

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Summary of key issues

1. The recognition, enhancement and support of accomplished teaching is an area of policy and development in different education systems internationally.
2. The definition of accomplished teacher and teaching is complex with potentially many different facets including the achievement of wider educational purposes, teacher professional knowledge, disposition and actions of a teacher.
3. There are two contrasting models in the identification and evaluation of accomplished teaching: (1) value added model (2) process model.
4. The processes of teaching are being shaped by the changing expectations of what it means to be a teacher in Scotland alongside changing expectations of pupil learning outcomes.
5. The importance of the quality of teaching as the most important factor influencing individual pupil achievement.
6. The importance of a teacher's orientation to learning including their own learning in shaping their practice and its impact on pupil learning.
7. Opportunities for teacher learning which foster exploration of the prevailing beliefs and practices.
8. The issue of 'professional norms' which impact on aspiration and on opportunities for the development of accomplished teaching.
9. The contribution to cross-school development and the fostering of accomplishment in others.
10. The relationship between accomplished teaching and teacher leadership as a means of building expertise in pedagogy.
11. The question of impact of accomplished teaching in terms of the learning of pupils and of other teachers.
12. The implications of an enhanced professionalism in the role of chartered teacher and the engagement of stakeholders in education in fostering this.

Introduction

This paper discusses the question of the development of accomplished teachers and teaching in Scotland and examines a number of emerging issues including the definition of accomplished teaching, the enhancement of teaching quality, the role of accomplished teachers including chartered teachers in schools, the contribution of accomplished teachers and impact on pupil learning, the question of teacher agency and enhanced professionalism and opportunities to engage with the wider social and educational context.

Background

Scotland has an internationally well regarded Chartered Teacher (CT) scheme to enable teachers to develop and be recognized for their expertise in teaching. However, although there are now over 1,000 Chartered Teachers in Scotland, there remain questions about both how the scheme can be enhanced in schools and across the teaching profession (HMIe, 2009) and how this scheme relates to the question of the development of accomplished teachers and teaching more broadly. *The National Seminar on Accomplished Teachers and Teaching* is intended to build on recent work on the development of accomplished teachers and teaching in Scotland to explore these issues and consider ways forward.

The origins of this work on accomplished teachers and teaching were in a series of symposia at *ECER* (European Conference for Educational Research, 2009, 2010) organized by Dr Margery McMahon, University of Glasgow who brought together stakeholders in Scotland with international partners including academics and professional associations to examine the issues related to the recognition and development of expertise and accomplishment in teaching. These symposia were followed by an *International Symposium on Developing Accomplished Teachers and Teaching (ISAT&T)* co-hosted by the University of Glasgow and the GTCs and sponsored by the Scottish Government. Participants in the *ISAT&T* were drawn from the universities of Harvard, Oxford, Cambridge, Wales, Glasgow and Stirling and representatives from HMIe, Local Authorities and the GTCs.

Participants in the *ISAT&T* were asked to write and circulate a preparatory paper on issues related to the development of accomplished teachers and teaching. From the preliminary discussions at the *ISAT&T*, these issues were distilled into five core areas, each of which was then examined in greater depth. These core areas were as follows:

- definition of accomplished teachers and teaching
- accomplished teaching and the processes of learning
- the context of the school
- the impact of accomplished teachers and pupil learning
- the contribution of accomplished teachers (including but not exclusively chartered teachers)

A key outcome of the *ISAT&T* was to inform thinking in Scotland on the development of accomplished teachers and teaching including the enhancement of the chartered teacher scheme, programme and role. This paper provides a short summary of the issues identified.

Definition

Ingvarson (2010a) has highlighted the importance of the concepts of ‘expertise’ and ‘accomplishment’ in the recognition and status of the teaching profession in the wider society and has been involved in work around the creation of professional standards to support the development and recognition of teacher expertise. There is a range of schemes and programmes currently being established and developed in different educational systems internationally which recognize, certify and/or support the development of accomplishment/expertise in teaching including, for example:

- in England: the Chartered Teacher London, Advanced Skills Teachers and Excellent Teachers Scheme
- in Wales and in Northern Ireland: the development of a Chartered Teacher Programme (which differ for the Scottish scheme in some of the arrangements)
- in Australia: the Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher Levels,
- in USA: the National Board Certified Teacher using the National Board Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)
- in Chile: the Excellent Teacher Scheme
- in Singapore: a teacher career structure from senior to lead to master teacher

An important preliminary concern is the definition of ‘accomplishment’ in teaching. Reeves et al. (2010: 2) ask, “how many versions of accomplishment there are in any given educational system” and it would be worth considering what versions of accomplishment exist in Scotland and which are the more influential in different contexts such as policy development, the classroom setting, the wider school ethos and culture? Further, what should we include in an understanding of accomplishment: pedagogic expertise, subject knowledge, interdisciplinary understanding, practice, research, personal attributes, technical aspects of teaching, understandings of, and engagement with the wider political and philosophical issues of education?

A common theme in the exploration of ‘accomplishment’ in teaching is the importance of the wider political and philosophical contexts of education in any expression of accomplishment. Fenwick (2010: 6) argues that “the danger here is keeping teachers focused on technique, rather than the big questions of education and educational purpose” and is concerned that such moves “foreclose the invitation for teachers to jump into the unknown, to expand existing conventions to re-envision good schools, teaching and education, and to risk”. However, we have to consider how is this to be realized?

Ingvarson (2010b) raises issues not only about how we define teacher quality but how we assess this. He argues that a professional standard needs to be based on not only what an accomplished/expert teacher does but also on “a clearly articulated conception of quality learning” as well as articulate “professional principles and values” and he raises the question of the place of teachers’ professional knowledge including that related to their sector and/or subject alongside understandings of the wider sociopolitical context.

One way of looking at accomplishment is proposed by Opfer and Gronn (2010:1) who draw from Sen’s (2009, 2000) and Nussbaum’s (2006) work on capability to consider ‘what it means to be an accomplished teacher’. Opfer and Gronn argue that using the idea of capability expands educational outcomes and moves the discussion from considering what learners have a right to (for example, a high quality education) to considering what they

should be and have as a result of this education which enables them to achieve the vision of the ‘good life’ evident in articulations of human rights. There is a broad resonance here with the four capacities of the *Curriculum for Excellence* (SE, 2004) but what are the implications for teacher development? Opher and Gronn (2010: 2) propose, we need to consider:

what is it that has to be demonstrably evident about teachers, both in disposition and in action, for them to be able to make a difference to the learning of others, and help them become capable human beings.

Opher and Gronn view these two aspects of disposition and action as being vital. In their view we need to examine the ‘having’ of capability (what is known by accomplished teachers) and the ‘being’ element, that is the skills, knowledge, attitudes and values that actively shape the pedagogic processes.

How we define accomplished teachers and teaching raises questions also about how we ‘measure’ or evaluate accomplishment in teaching. Ingvarson (2010a) proposes that we can identify two contrasting ways of defining the effectiveness of teaching; firstly, teacher effectiveness is evaluated on the basis of pupil learning outcomes – valued added models – and secondly, teaching effectiveness is evaluated on the basis of the quality of the pupil learning experiences a teacher provides for the learners – process models. These are two contrasting approaches, however, in practice both the process of teaching and the outcomes achieved by pupils are seen as relevant although there may be a greater emphasis on one more than the other. In thinking about the Scottish context, we can consider whether these approaches are evident, where the emphasis should lie and in what ways do we, could and should we evaluate accomplished teaching?

We have in Scotland *The Standard for Chartered Teacher (SfCT)* (GTCs, 2009) as well as a number of programmes to support teachers in demonstrating their achievement of this standard in order to attain chartered teacher status. There are specific issues related to the CT scheme but there is a wider question about how the *SfCT* might support the development and sustaining of accomplished teaching on a wider front? A further question raised as part of the *ISAT&T* is whether “accomplishment is relative or absolute” (Reeves et al., 2010: 2). There are difficulties in considering any definition and subsequent ‘measurement’ of accomplished teaching as absolute as there are a complex set of factors coming together in the process of teaching related to the context of teaching, the particular point in a teacher’s career, changing expectations of schools and teachers. This complexity raises questions about how we define, identify and evaluate accomplished teaching:

- what are the range of sources and measures of effectiveness, evidence we can draw on?
- what is the place and use of pupil achievement?
- how do we draw on the views and experiences of pupils in determining accomplishment?
- does recognition of accomplishment relate to current practice or future potential?

For the CT programme we can also consider these issues particularly when we think about what counts as meeting the *SfCT* (Finn et al, 2009).

Accomplishment: Learning and Development

We considered earlier the question of whether accomplishment is relative or absolute and highlighted the importance of context. Context can be conceived of in different ways

including the specific setting in which a teacher is working. In a case study of expert teachers, Bullough and Baughman (1995) found that teachers who had been regarded as expert teachers in one setting, when they moved school they had to 'start over' in both establishing themselves as experts in the role and demonstrating the fluency and flair that had been evident previously. Similarly Rice (2003), in a study of teacher quality from an economic perspective, argues that the context including sector differences, pupil population and subject areas are significant. In addition, there are other considerations we need to take into account particularly the changing demands related to pupil learning and achievement, which in turn raises issues about teacher professional learning.

Timperley et al (2008) argue that to be effective, teachers need to be able to diagnose the learning needs of pupils, understand the content of the subject and how to teach this and to use assessment processes to understand the impact of the teaching process on the pupils' development. Teachers need both to know the content and how to help someone learn. However, in the current dynamic policy context including developments associated with the *Curriculum for Excellence* (SE, 2004) and the significant shift in what it means to be a teacher, accomplishment in teaching has an additional dimension. Here, where teachers are to be encouraged to push boundaries and to try out innovative approaches, we have to consider how a future or change orientation can be foregrounded as a critical dimension of accomplished teaching. Further, we have to consider how are these changes evident in teaching standards including the *SforCT*?

Timperley et al (2008) focused on describing what all teachers should be able to do to promote pupil learning while other studies have sought to distinguish between teachers who seem to demonstrate greater effectiveness in pupil achievement. This is a crucial issue because, as Egan (2009) notes, there is an extensive body of international research which highlights the quality of teaching as the most critical factor influencing individual pupil achievement (included in those cited by Egan are OECD 1994, Hattie 2003, Barber and Mourshed 2007, Dinham, Invarson and Kleinhenz 2008). Work has been undertaken to identify not just how we might define 'accomplished teachers and teaching' but to consider what is distinctive about accomplished or expert teachers. Hattie and Clinton (2008, cited Gronn and Opher 2010:3) have identified some critical features of practice in which expert teachers differ. Expert teachers:

- use much feedback to enhance student learning
- involve students in challenging tasks relative to the student's present achievement
- use their classroom management structures to maximize this challenge and feedback

However, there are teachers who seem to be deploying these strategies but who nevertheless are "not accomplishing optimal student learning" (ibid: 3). The question then for Opher et al (2010) is the relation between a teacher's individual orientation to learning and their practice. The researchers found that this orientation to learning has an impact on a teacher's teaching and on their approach to their own professional learning.

The change orientation embedded in a notion of accomplished teaching is evident in this study. Opher et al (2010) identify a continuum of five broad orientations towards learning. At the opposite ends of this continuum were firstly, teachers who were in the 'engaged learners' category and secondly, teachers who were in the 'infrequent learners'. Whereas for the engaged learners there was a high alignment in both their beliefs and practices related to

learning, this alignment was not evident in the practice of the 'infrequent learners'. Thus, there seems to be a critical relationship between teacher effectiveness and their attitude and approaches to their own development as learners. Those accomplished teachers who are engaged learners regard their own learning as the means of fostering the learning of their pupils and so it is of central importance. These findings raise questions about the nature of this professional learning.

In professional learning opportunities the development of techniques, routines and practices is necessary but not sufficient to bring about sustained change. There has to be an exploration and a challenging of the prevailing discourses. Timperley (2007: 30) argues that "the process of changing involved substantive, new learning that at times challenged existing belief". The implications of Timperley's survey suggest that there needs to be an alignment of beliefs, understandings and practice in order to exemplify accomplished teaching and that professional learning has to create opportunities for the exploration of the teacher's beliefs about teaching and learning as well as the development of these processes in practice. There are, therefore, some key issues about how we should construct opportunities for teacher learning. How might the practices of building critical reflection, professional enquiry and collaboration evident in chartered teacher programmes be drawn upon for wider groups of teachers? How might professional learning opportunities be enhanced to facilitate this? How is learning and development sustained over a career including the ongoing development of chartered teachers (Finn et al 2010: 5)?

The Context of the School

Moore Johnston (2010) discussing the programme for the accreditation of expert teachers in the USA, the *National Board for Professional Teaching Standard Standards (NBPTS)*, highlights a significant disincentive to teachers from going forward to be accredited as accomplished teachers found in existing professional norms. There are concerns by teachers who apply for certification and undertake the assessment process in order to be accredited that it might suggest to their peers that they see themselves in some way superior. Are there parallels in the Scottish education where numbers going forward to CT are below the numbers eligible? In the USA not only do these prevailing discourses potentially limit the numbers of teachers going forward to achieve certification, they also have an impact on the contribution of these teachers in their school. In the USA the *NBPTS* has become, as Moore Johnson (2010; 2) describes it, a "private pursuit of private recognition". She notes that:

Many teachers who succeed in achieving certification actually conceal this honor from their colleagues to avoid criticism. They then return to their classroom assured that they are accomplished teachers, but with little opportunity to be recognized for their accomplishment (2).

We can draw parallels with experiences in Scotland relating to the contribution of accomplished and chartered teachers might make in school. Chartered teachers (Reeves and Fox, 2008) have reported their frustration that their enhanced skills, insights and knowledge are not being recognized or drawn upon to promote learning across the school. *The Code of Practice on the Role of the Chartered Teacher* (SNCT, 2009) identifies a number of ways in which a chartered teacher could become involved in cross-school developmental activities. This Code pertains to the chartered teacher and we need to consider how this code is acted upon consistently. However, this issue does also relate to the question of the development of

accomplished teachers and teaching on a wider front and the contribution such teachers could make.

In this aspect of the contribution to the wider school context, an important issue is the tension between individual focused development and institutional improvement. Reeves et al (2010: 2) ask where we need to consider individual or collective accomplishment given the current emphasis on collegiality. Indeed, Fenwick (2010: 2) argues that: “the continuing focus on developing the individual ‘teacher’ belies an assumption that teachers are in deficit, that we just need to fix the teacher”. There seems to be a need to ensure a balance here. On the one hand, there is the importance of access to sustained and coherent professional learning opportunities including the chartered teacher programme which are an important part of the landscape and which have a profound impact not only the practice of individual teachers but on their sense of who they are as teachers and the possibilities of their role. On the other hand, we have to avoid a sense of these professional learning opportunities being ‘privatized learning’. Instead in the development of accomplished teaching, there needs to be an understanding that part of what it means to be an accomplished teacher is the fostering accomplishment in other teachers.

The view evident in a range of policy documents (for example, HMIe 2007, EIS 2008) about distributed forms of leadership is also endorsed in *The Code of Practice on the Role of the Chartered Teacher* (SNCT, 2009: 2) that “that every qualified teacher has, by definition, a leadership role to play”. Forde (2010) argues that while there is much to commend in the idea of teacher leadership we need to be cautious that it does not become what Fitzgerald and Gunter (2008: 32) see as ‘an illiberal conceptualization’, “...a customized solution for teachers to deliver government policy”. This form of teacher leadership is primarily about management strategy to ensure compliance rather than about fostering of professional agency, expertise and the development of innovative practice. The recent HMIe report *Learning Together* (2009) notes that where chartered teachers contribute successfully, these contributions are both explicit and planned and again there seems here a balance to be struck to enable accomplished teachers including chartered teachers drawing on their expertise in pedagogy to contribute to setting the agenda for change and to take this agenda forward innovative ways. In these discussions about teacher or distributed leadership how can we ensure the focus remains on the enhancement of accomplished teachers and teaching? An important aspect of accomplished teaching that is emerging, is the role of accomplished teachers including chartered teachers in supporting the development of pedagogy with other teachers.

Impact

As we noted earlier, the OECD (1994) report, *Quality in Teaching*, was clear in its conclusion that the quality of teaching is the most critical factor in pupil achievement and as a result many educational systems including those noted earlier are establishing programmes and schemes to develop and recognize pedagogic expertise. This is a significant investment of public resources and there are questions then about the impact that such schemes have in optimizing pupil learning experiences. The HMIe report (2009) note examples of the way in which chartered teachers can have a positive impact on learning and on the development of other teachers. This notion of ‘impact’ should not be crudely equated with pupil examination results though this may be an element. We need therefore to explore further how we define

and track ‘impact’ including on the quality of pupil learning experiences, on other teachers and the development of their practice and on the wider school community. One key aspect of the role of Advanced Skills teachers in England in outreach work in sharing good practice with teachers in others schools. Finn et al (2010: 5) highlight the need to define roles for teachers who are recognised as ‘accomplished’ within the school, the authority and the wider community.

Enhancing the contribution

There is much potential in the development of accomplished teachers and teaching particularly in a context where collegiate and distributive forms of leadership are emerging in schools. However, there are concerns about whether we, across Scottish education, are fully engaging with the issue of enhancing teacher quality including maximizing the chartered teacher scheme (HMIe 2009). Recent changes in Scottish education, which are mirrored internationally, are making different demands on teachers and there is a sense that we need to consider what this enhanced form of professionalism is and how we might develop a broad consensus about this across the system. As Fenwick argues (2010: 8), in relation to the chartered teacher, “...schools and local authorities have a crucial role as active partners in enabling effective teaching. Headteachers should be expected to support and expand, not contain and discipline, teachers critical inquiry and creative initiatives”. There is then the question about what conditions should exist to maximize the role of the chartered teacher including their work in developing accomplished teaching in others. What are the implications of an enhanced professionalism for the chartered teacher scheme: should it become the norm or a minority role? How might the chartered teacher programme and other professional learning opportunities support the development of this enhanced professionalism in the day-to-day practice in schools? How can the engagement of all stakeholders in the enhancement of teaching including in the chartered teacher programme be fostered?

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