

Chapter 11. Teacher Research in English classrooms: questions that are worth asking?

Caroline Daly and Lisa Taylor

In *Debates in English Teaching* (2020 in press) (Eds. Caroline Daly and Jon Davison), Oxon and New York: Routledge.

Introduction

The relationship between teaching and research has been subject to increasing scrutiny over the past fifteen years. Successive initiatives indicate the struggle to be clear about the *purposes* of teacher research, whether *all* teachers should engage with research, and when research is most relevant to teachers' professional learning and development. Brindley's (2015) study of teachers undertaking research as part of their professional development captures the lack of clear rationale for its place in practitioner learning:

Research became either a way of finding out 'what works' for examinations, or an interesting and sometimes compelling activity, but one which seemed to exist in parallel to the classroom. Research seemed to have little explicit impact on teachers' working lives, other than allowing them to meet policy expectations more readily, except perhaps to offer a place to enjoy intellectual activity. (Brindley, 2015: 280)

Part of this lack of clarity has resulted from the adoption of 'teacher research' as a component of education policy that incorporates multiple agendas. The introduction and subsequent withdrawal of government policy that established the Masters in Teaching and Learning in England (2010-2014) and of the Masters in Educational Practice in Wales (2012-2017) linked teacher research to the professional learning of early career teachers. In both countries, undertaking research was part of an entitlement to fully-funded professional growth opportunities and linked to wider agendas about the development and retention of new, 'high-quality' teachers. This followed iterations of the Scottish Chartered Scheme at the start of the millennium, which endorsed collaborative research conducted by experienced teachers with colleagues in their schools and awarded enhanced professional status to successful participants. Most recently in Wales, the Furlong Report (2015) has led to government demands for universities to provide 'research-informed' initial teacher education that prepares a 'research literate' teacher workforce with critical understanding of the use of evidence that can impact on pupil attainment. The introduction of Teaching Schools in

England in 2011, with a brief to conduct research within school networks, was a major step in promoting research that is ‘school-led’ and school-to-school collaboration as the architecture for system improvement and for fostering research-engagement. This is now a core feature of the Welsh Government’s (2017) current vision for education reform. Greany (2015) outlines the ways in which Teaching Schools now play leading roles in providing teachers’ professional development, related to their research role and remit to define effective practice.

Such initiatives indicate the ways in which the relationship teachers have with research has become politicised in UK contexts and linked to agendas that are aimed at school improvement and increasing pupil performance. This is a long way from traditions of thinking about teachers as researchers who undertake systematic inquiry into their classrooms in order to develop and share deep professional knowledge and understanding (Stenhouse, 1975). There are ambiguous consequences for the role of research in developing critically informed professionals, capable of independent critique of ‘what works’ in classrooms and for individual pupils within unique contexts. In this increasingly complex landscape, the BERA-RSA Inquiry (2014b) conducted a comprehensive review of the contribution of research to teacher education in the UK and international contexts. It identified four main ways that research can enrich teacher education:

1. Teacher education programme content may be informed by research-based knowledge about learning and teaching.
2. Teacher education programmes can be designed around the structured development of knowledge about how to research and exposure to educational research.
3. The development of critical skills in understanding research as consumers.
4. The learning of teacher research skills that enable teachers to investigate and develop their own practices.

The potential of such enrichment is a source of change in several UK programmes of initial teacher education and continuing professional development. There is much to be gained – and lost – in the future direction of teacher research in a climate where these ambitions do not sit comfortably with the performativity agenda that is pervasive in UK education systems. To begin with therefore, this chapter explores what research means to the teacher and why engaging with research is a vital aspect of practitioner identity. It then examines how we have arrived in a situation where engaging with research in some contexts can restrict teachers’

critical thinking and practice, rather than support the development of professional understanding and thoughtful action. Finally, the possibility of asking questions that are worth asking as the basis for teacher research is explored. Being ‘research literate’ is much more than knowing about and acting on evidence provided by others about effective practice. It is also more than generating one’s own ‘evidence’ of what works, either individually or as a group of professionals, although all of this is important. It is about changing professional thought and action by critically engaging with scholarly knowledge about teaching and inquiring into one’s own practice, based on a teacher’s curiosity about pupils’ learning in the unique environment that is created with them. It is about developing a ‘stance’ as an inquirer.

‘Inquiry as stance’ (Cochrane-Smith and Lytle, 1999)

‘Teachers as researchers’ is a term that is accused of being ‘patronising’ and lacking ‘authenticity’ in describing those who both teach and research (Hill and Brindley, 2005). Hill and Brindley insist that English practitioners who do both are teachers *and* researchers - not one acting as the other. The point they make is that teaching and researching share the same ‘quest’ – ‘developing an understanding of the ways in which education works and how different practices impact’ (Hill and Brindley, 2005: 1) on the English classroom. Being a researcher inside English classrooms suggests that the identities of English teachers – already complex – take on further dimensions. ‘Developing an understanding’ is not without controversy and deeply affected by our ideas about the purpose of English teaching and the values that underpin that. The issues that arise in teacher research are complex and can (and should) profoundly affect teachers’ sense of purpose and efficacy. That is because being a teacher and a researcher is about developing a critical orientation towards learning and teaching that frequently urges re-evaluation of what has become unquestioned in the everyday routines of teaching English and preparing learners for assessment. It is inevitable and desirable that research generates tensions between current ways of doing things (including ways that improve examination results) and pedagogical change. This relationship between being a teacher, being a researcher and its impact on teacher identity is what Cochrane-Smith and Lytle (1999) described as ‘inquiry as stance’. It is *a way of being* as a professional and one that can – and should – be essentially disruptive of ‘the way things are done around here’.

Teacher research is therefore related to teachers' values and beliefs about the subject English and its place in the learning of young people. It resists the construction of English teachers as 'delivery agents' for top-down initiatives, inflexible curriculum design and uniformity of teaching that is not based on deep knowledge of actual learners as individuals and the unique dynamics of classrooms. This basis for research in English classrooms faces many obstacles, but underlies the 'authenticity' of being both a teacher and a researcher. Forms of pseudo-research are sadly a feature found in many schools – research that is restricted to reinforcing existing practice, aiding implementation of external policies or encouraging teachers to 'tinker' so that they are granted part-ownership of dubious commercial initiatives and co-opted into implementing them. Teacher research is – or should be – a disruptive practice. The reasons why, and what that looks like, are explored in this chapter. The point is to argue for the importance of genuinely exploratory teacher research that asks *questions that are worth asking* about the ways English is learned and taught.

A 'directed profession' (Bottery and Wright, 2000)

Debra Myhill asks a crucial question in her chapter about Standard English and grammar elsewhere **in this book**: *Do you think research can 'prove' whether something 'works' in the classroom, or not?* (p. x). Underlying her question is a challenge to what has come to be known as the 'what works' agenda that has dominated policymaking for teaching for the past two decades and influences English teachers' views of what it means to be effective. English teachers can be subject to enormous pressures to introduce teaching approaches that are based on external 'evidence' in order to increase the performance of students against national and international benchmarks, based on research involving large datasets and experimental approaches to 'proving' effective practices (Wyse and Torgerson, 2017). Such research is a long way from the everyday knowledge and experience of teachers in their classrooms. The 'Global Education Reform Movement' (GERM) (Sahlberg, 2011) has had profound effects in the growing *marketisation* of education (Ball, 2012), promoting school improvement, competitive benchmarking and the induction of teachers into standard teaching approaches. Linked to all these is the belief that *standards* and 'standard' are synonymous indicators of teaching quality. English has been a particular target, as a core subject contributing to national indicators of attainment. A deficit view of teachers and teaching underpins this global trend. At the start of the twenty-first century, Bottery and Wright (2000) predicted that teaching would become a 'directed profession', where national policy prescribes what counts

as teacher knowledge, and where teacher identity is based on achieving compliance and conformity. Central to this has been the idea that teachers' practice must be informed by what others have proven to be 'what works'. The confusion of 'what works' with being 'research-informed' is one of the dilemmas that beleaguer English (and all) teachers as it positions as lesser forms of knowledge their unique understanding of their subject in local contexts, their learners and their individual classroom dynamics. 'Top-down' approaches to developing (and assessing) teaching have the effect of increased standardisation, minimisation of experimentation and adoption of narrow performance indicators. The effect is to limit risk-taking and creativity. The UK exemplifies the extensive impact of the Global Education Reform Movement. School leaders have been identified as reluctant to innovate curriculum design and pedagogies due to extreme accountability constraints (Greany and Waterhouse, 2016), and there has been limited development of strongly collaborative school cultures that support teacher-generated inquiry-focused learning for staff and pupils (OECD, 2018).

Influential relationships beyond schools can also serve to reinforce restrictions on teachers' critical thinking and risk-taking. Networks of schools can create 'microsystems' of knowledge about practice that is not open to challenge. Boylan *et al.* (2018) have criticised the impact of local systems that help determine the kinds of knowledge that teachers are exposed to and how they develop restricted curriculum models and 'answers' about effective teaching. In England this happens through the 'ecology of multi-academy chains, Teaching School Alliances and forms of networks and shared governance' (Boylan *et al.*, 2018: 368) and also via powerful local 'middle tier' organisations such as local authorities in other parts of the UK, that have a remit to mediate and implement evidence-informed policy.

What does this mean for undertaking teacher research that is genuinely exploratory, setting out to answer questions to which the answers are not already known – or 'approved'? What is the point of teacher research in a directed profession?

'The teacher's soul' (Ball, 2003) is at stake

Ball (2003) goes as far as to argue that, in a top-down culture of performativity, it is the 'teacher's soul' that is at stake. That is not an over-statement – one positive consequence of rising attrition rates among English teachers (Worth *et al.*, 2018) is that questions have to be asked about what it is that makes teaching English a rewarding graduate profession. How can

teachers be supported to develop teaching that is principled, intellectually engaging and most of all centred on deep curiosity about how young people can learn English? Teacher research is a fundamental aspect of this process.

Crucially, teacher research needs to be deeply self-aware and encourage teachers' critical questioning about practice - that usually means introducing outsider perspectives (based in universities or professional organisations) to the questions that are asked and how they can best be explored:

By making use of external expertise (typically drawn from professional colleagues who sit outside day-to-day routines, the immediate school environment and accountability systems), teachers gain access to a much broader range of knowledge reflecting the wider research evidence than is available in any single school or staff room...which allows for the prevailing orthodoxies and 'taken for granted' beliefs and assumptions within the school culture to be challenged. (Cordingley, 2014: 25)

An inquiring perspective is one that is not bound by school norms, power relations and everyday routines, and which can provoke teachers to ask fundamental questions that challenge existing practices and reject simplified and seductively ready solutions to complex challenges. A prevalent example of such a simplified solution is the over-prescriptive 'writing frame', now commonly used to format how pupils should respond to a text. This ubiquitous approach asks them to write to a formula, most frequently called 'PEE' – point – evidence – explain – with consequences that can inhibit pupils' independent thinking within a restricted model of writing development:

the PEE paragraph structure (or PEAL—point, evidence, analysis, link; PETAL—point, evidence, technique, analysis, link; SPEED – statement, point, evidence, evaluation, development, etc.) ...governs so much of the writing children do... pupils' writing has, with relatively few exceptions, become increasingly constrained and constricted (Gibbons, 2019: 36-37).

Elsewhere in this book, Sue Dymoke's admonishment of reductive approaches to teaching writing suggests 'Perhaps the act of devising elaborate acronyms has become the most creative aspect of English as a school experience' (p. xx). Despite warnings from inspectors (Ofsted, 2012) and criticism of such practices found by international comparative research

(Marshall *et al*, 2018), forms of ‘PEE-ing’ remain a staple teaching strategy in many English departments. Of course, carefully designed scaffolding strategies have an important place in the inclusive writing classroom and can help pupils across the attainment range to understand and master the powerful genres that help authors to communicate ideas. The problem with ‘PEE-ing’ is that completing a common pre-existing (repetitive) frame too often becomes the point of the lesson and limits the development of independent thinking – and indeed also limits teachers’ beliefs about pupils’ capacities for independent response.

‘The deep need to experience truth and beauty’ (McNiff, 2002)

To question such practices requires establishing collective openness among teachers and school leaders to the idea that teacher research is essentially *disruptive*. For example, to research an approach to writing about texts, teachers might begin by questioning the impact of current practices with writing frames on pupils’ sense of sense-efficacy. This means changing the research questions that are asked. Instead of introducing a new writing frame and asking, ‘Will this writing frame work?’ the fundamental question needs to change. One question might be ‘If I stop using this writing frame and ask groups of pupils to design their own questions for their peers to explore about what is going on in this text, will they understand it more – and enjoy it?’ This approach would begin by seeking pupils’ views on what reading a text is *for* and finding out their beliefs about effective writing and what they think it is to be a writer. Lesson activities position pupils as creative *developers* of guidance rather than passive respondents. Most importantly, pupils necessarily increase critical and independent reading of the chosen text, in order to collaborate on producing guiding questions that interest them, in order to prompt writing. Evidence collected with pupils is then reviewed and used as a basis to design a revised approach to writing about texts – one that is evaluated with pupils and other English teachers who share these interests. Such a stance values the learner voice as an essential source of evidence, alongside reading and discussing *a range of studies* about developing writing.

To query routine practices is based on *moral purpose* (Fullan, 2001) and supports teachers to examine how their teaching reflects their values - it might mean questioning the way things are done in a fundamental way, rather than trying to modify a less than effective teaching approach. Jean McNiff, a leading proponent of *action research* captured the principled basis for teachers conducting research, arguing that it is underpinned by

...the need for justice and democracy, the right of all people to speak and be heard, the right of each individual to show how and why they have given extra attention to their learning in order to improve their work, the deep need to experience truth and beauty in our personal and professional lives (2002, n.p).

Advice from Jean McNiff about how to carry out action research is included in the 'Further reading and resources' section at the end of this chapter. Her argument is that research that is worth doing has a deeply personal as well as professional impact on the teacher. It can bring about meaningful change. It is a catalyst for critical reflection on current practices, supported by the careful collection of forms of evidence *with* pupils that will enable teachers to better understand the impacts of their teaching and the experiences of their learners. This becomes the basis for adapting pedagogy, renewing curriculum design and addressing unequal opportunities to learn. It is a rallying call to English teachers to consider deeply the relevance of the subject in the lives of young people and the consequences of how it is taught in school. Teachers undertaking research need supportive contexts and networks therefore to enable them to ask brave questions of themselves and prevailing practices.

Part of this supportive context depends on the ways in which professional learning is organised. A sustained focus on developing teacher research requires a commitment from both leaders and staff participants to enable research to be conducted over a period of time, as an authorised form of professional learning within a school. It can't be additional workload – less effective things (for example 'one-off' whole staff training inputs) need to go. Most importantly, teacher research needs to be collaborative in order to support teachers to pursue 'brave questions' and to provide research relationships in which shared reflection can be sustained on the meaning of evidence that is collected. Teachers can 'run out of strength' when conducting research that is genuinely seeking to change practice, and need to exchange perspectives with colleagues who understand the aims of their efforts. Brindley (2015: 15) advocates for teacher voice to be 'strongly present' in the ways that research is developed. Spaces exist beyond individual school cultures for teachers to exchange research experiences, for example through 'Teachmeets' and a growing number of online research-oriented teacher communities in partnership with external bodies like universities, that can bring critical outsider perspectives to the interpretation and sharing of 'evidence'. There are plenty of examples of schools that work with universities and professional bodies to support a fundamental shift towards an inquiring culture, so that supported research activity can become a main source of development for teachers (see examples of collaborations between

universities and schools at <http://www.expansiveeducation.net/>;
<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/widening-participation/teachers-and-education-professionals/teacher-research-projects/teacher-action-research-project>). In Wales, a new curriculum is being developed within ‘Pioneer Schools’, by which the responsibility to innovate teaching and related professional learning is devolved to schools. It is too early to know the impact of such an initiative, but it is an indicator of how teachers have found diverse spaces in which to ask important questions about how the curriculum is taught can be changed. This is still however a long way from the norm. Considerable constraints exist in many contexts that make it difficult for teachers to base research on questions that are worth asking and generated from their own experience and knowledge of their learners and their subject.

‘To be “informed” is to know and acquiesce in what is provided... by the government and its agencies... no less, and especially, no more’ (Alexander, 2004)

Policy drivers in the UK have for a long time equated good teaching with evidence-based practice (DfES, 2002) and initiatives such as the Literacy Frameworks in England and Wales have been premised on this assumption. Brindley (2015) challenges the status of evidence-based policy as valid knowledge for teaching, contrasting teacher knowledge ‘which offers teacher autonomy of thought and debate’ with a lesser form of ‘policy knowledge’ (Brindley, 2015: 60). Wyse and Torgerson (2017) have warned about the current reliance on limited research studies as ‘evidence’ on which to base policy around the teaching of reading, writing and grammar. They argue that policy affecting literacy development should be based on multiple research findings – meta-analyses – that are synthesised and mediated by experts in the field. There is reason for English teachers to be sceptical of single sources that are argued to present unquestionable ‘evidence’:

The problems of attending to a single study have been seen in relation to the teaching of reading in the UK (Wyse & Goswami, 2008; Ellis & Moss, 2013); this, in addition to ideological belief, appears to be a reason for the dramatic emphasis on grammar in England’s primary national curriculum that was implemented from 2014 onwards, a trend that is counter to the research evidence overall, and one that risks having a negative impact on children’s literacy learning and hence life chances. (Wyse and Torgerson, 2017: 1044).

So prevalent is the discourse around ‘evidence-based’ teaching that it has become unthinkable in some contexts to question external ‘evidence’ – or face the ‘discourse of derision’ (Ball, 2012) that has helped to co-opt teachers into becoming delivery agents for ‘evidence-informed’ policy initiatives. To teach according to such expectations has become a pre-requisite of being a ‘professional’. Robin Alexander goes as far as to argue that this is acquiescence of the part of the profession:

...to be ‘informed’ is to know and acquiesce in what is provided, expected and/or required by the government and its agencies... no less, and especially, no more.
(Alexander, 2004: 17).

How then can teachers avoid the pitfall of conducting research that is part of such ‘acquiescence’? The starting point has to be asking questions that are worth asking as a basis for a research focus, for both scrutinising the evidence-based knowledge that is already available and for designing the collection of evidence with pupils – through careful observation of their learning, capturing the learner voice, critical collaborative review of teaching strategies and scrutiny of a wide range of forms of learners outcomes. Fundamental questions for teachers when choosing what to research have ethical foundations:

Does this research increase inclusion in my classroom/ school/ the subject English?

Does this research increase my learning about how to teach English more effectively?

Does this research increase my capacity to develop the curriculum for all?

This questioning means developing a clear understanding of the core tenet of the BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2018) – *do no harm*. In its fullest sense, ‘harm’ needs to be considered as actions that might: diminish the experience of English for some pupils; perpetuate restrictive practices (that ‘work’); and reduce the potentials of the subject to enrich young people’s lives rather than considering the needs and experiences of pupils as a starting point.

It can be difficult however for teachers to identify worthwhile questions for research within the constraints of performative schools’ agendas. Suppose a teacher has identified a problem which is preventing effective learning - here is a question based on researching an ‘intervention’ that is representative of teachers’ concerns: ‘How can I improve pupils’

understanding when reading the class novel *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* with my Year 8 English class?’ An immediate solution is potentially available to be ‘researched’: ‘Design a new approach to text-marking target passages in pairs using colour-coding to identify the language techniques and use this as a basis for writing about the theme of ‘fear’ in this chapter. Assess the outcomes as evidence of the effectiveness of the strategy’. The appeal of this approach is that it offers a concrete, ready-made solution that the teacher can design in advance with a straightforward form of evidence generation – grading of outcomes.

The danger with the proposed research however is that it has bypassed the fundamental question – why are pupils not understanding the text? Do they really have no knowledge or experience of ‘fear’ to bring to their reading? Can it really be that their language to express fear can only be articulated via ‘text-marking’? The potential for emotional connection and language generation is considerable. The immediate ‘solution-focused’ approach to a highly complex issue has focused on ‘fixing’ the perceived problem with the pupils – they don’t identify the language features that contribute to ‘fear’ in the writing. The language features have become *the point* of the development (in anticipation of the demands of reductive GCSE assessment criteria) – rather than the ways in which fear is a shared emotion between author and readers, all of whom who will understand it in subtly different ways. The responsive connection with the text is the source of meaningful interpretation of ‘language techniques’ – but this essential meaning-making is not so readily assessable and is frequently bypassed in pursuit of speedier, disengaged technique-spotting. There is a danger that a deficit analysis of pupils becomes the main rationale for planned changes, rather than inquiring into what pupils *do* know and seeking how to value that as a resource for their learning. A worthwhile question might focus instead on deep enquiry into how the pupils can be enabled to show expertise in understanding forms of ‘fear’, which they can then use to discuss the text and write about it (including about language techniques). The teacher-researcher has then been able to consider ‘What do I really know about my pupils’ sensitivities and experiences?’, ‘In what ways can my pupils be recognised as ‘expert’ already, in ways that can increase their empathy with this text?’, ‘How can I enable my pupils to articulate and capture the language they already possess, in readiness for writing?’ ‘Can I alter my teacher-led style?’ In other words, teacher research is about the teacher as a learner and affects the values and understandings which underpin their teaching. John Hattie put it like this:

...the biggest effects on student learning occur when teachers become learners of their own teaching. (Hattie, 2009: 22)

Conclusion: ‘No easy answers’ (Strauss, 1995)

Some questions for teacher research only tinker at the edges of the ways things are done in certain classrooms and schools, things that need to change more fundamentally to enable more pupils to thrive and succeed in English. At worst, the important questions are never asked, because a possible ‘solution’ beckons which is easier to measure and accommodate within normal routines. Perceived time restrictions and workload add to the pressure to conduct research that is confirmatory of existing practices. It can be quite a struggle to resist setting out to ‘prove’ that a readily available solution is working. Schools can be intolerant of uncertainty about outcomes and the time it takes to implement deep and significant change in learning and teaching. This is why external perspectives are so important in teacher research, whether they emanate from professional partners, mentors, or via peer-networks of teachers undertaking similar inquiries. Some time ago, Peter Strauss (1995) wrote in his famous reflections on becoming a teacher researcher that there were ‘no easy answers’ to the questions that are pursued, *if they are worth asking*. The times have become more pressing since then in seeking answers to teachers’ dilemmas, in high stakes contexts where the performance of pupils, teachers and schools is scrutinised. Worthwhile questions though, really don’t have ready answers. They might bring unexpected (and uncomfortable) findings. They will hopefully inject new ways of looking at an issue and provoke dialogue with colleagues around the topic. They will help ensure that teacher research is done *with* the learners, not to them. They will not try to fix pupils, they will try to develop teachers.

Questions for debate

1. The sections in this chapter have been developed around quotations from key studies that have implications for teacher research. Consider these quotations and how far they apply to current practices in English teaching and teacher research in the settings you know. Who needs to be involved in developing a supportive environment for teachers to engage with research – as both consumers and as inquiring practitioners?

Take this further – read the sources for these quotations that are included in the bibliography as the basis for these discussions.

2. The BERA-RSA Inquiry into the role of research in teacher education (2014b) included philosophical reflection on the desirability of teachers undertaking research themselves

It does not necessarily follow that *all* teachers should be expected or required to engage *in* research as a matter of course...on practical grounds...it may be unrealistic to expect all teachers to develop the capacity to be expert practitioners of educational research, as well as being expert practitioners in the school and classroom. (Winch, C., Orchard, J. and Oancea, A., 2014: 21)

What is the place of ‘realism’ and ‘expertise’ in considering whether research is an appropriate practice for teacher development?

Further reading and resources

- BERA-RSA (2014) *Research and the Teaching Profession. Building the capacity for a self-improving education system* London: BERA-RSA
<https://www.bera.ac.uk/project/research-and-teacher-education>

The final report from the BERA-RSA Inquiry argues for the importance of ‘research literacy’ for all teachers, based on collaborative ways of working between teachers and the wider educational research community.

- *Developing best practice in mixed attainment English teaching*
<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-and-centres/centres/best-practice-grouping-students/developing-best-practice-mixed-attainment-english-teaching>

The project website includes details about how research into developing mixed-attainment teaching was designed between university researchers and teachers based on modest funding (Taylor and Yandell, 2018). It is an example of how English teachers can tap into wide-scale research. The website includes the project report and resources to support English teachers wishing to develop inclusive pedagogy.

- McNiff, J. (2010) *Action research for professional development. Concise advice for new (and experienced) action researchers:*

<https://www.jeanmcniff.com>

The advice offered on this website remains one of the most relevant and principled practical guides for teachers undertaking action research. An abridged former edition of Jean McNiff's book is freely available online.

- The Wales Centre for Public Policy (WCPP) has published an investigation into developing evidence-informed practice, available at:

<https://www.wcpp.org.uk/commentary/evidence-practice-and-philosophy-how-can-we-undertake-effective-evidence-informed-practice-in-wales/>

The resource is relevant to addressing the challenges for teachers of working with evidence and the importance of reflection in action research and developing discrimination in responding to sources of evidence.

- Reeves, J. and Fox, A. (2008) *Practice-based Learning. Developing excellence in teaching*. Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press. (Chapter 3, pp. 28-37 especially).

This slim volume provides a comprehensive overview of the processes involved in carrying out meaningful research as part of teachers' professional development. It is rooted in the context of the former Scottish Chartered Teacher scheme, and co-authored by teachers and university researchers. It is highly relevant to all teachers who set out to undertake enquiry in an informed way. The authors show how important it is for teachers to 'make sense' of what they find so that it is of value not only to their own practice, but for their colleagues and the wider school community. This is one of the briefest, most accessible books available on this topic, without reducing the complex aims and values that are so important to making teacher research worthwhile.

References for bibliography

Alexander, R. (2004) 'Still no pedagogy? Principle, pragmatism and compliance in primary education'. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 34(1) 1-33.

Ball, S. (2003) 'The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity'. *Journal of Educational Policy*, 18 (2) 215–228.

Ball, S. (2012) *Politics and Policy Making in Education Explorations in Policy Sociology* London: Routledge.

BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2018), available at <https://www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/publications/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018> (accessed 23 June 2019).

BERA-RSA (2014a) *The Role of Research in the Teaching Profession. Reviewing the Evidence*. Interim Report of the BERA-RSA Inquiry into the Role of Research in Teacher Education. London: BERA.

BERA - RSA (2014b) *Research and the Teaching Profession. Building the capacity for a self-improving education system*. Final Report of the BERA-RSA Inquiry into the Role of Research in Teacher Education. London: BERA.

Biesta, G., Priestley, M., and Robinson, S. (2015) 'The role and beliefs in teacher agency'. *Teachers and Teaching*, 21(6), 624-640.

Bottery, M. and Wright, N. (2000) *Teachers and the state: towards a directed profession*. London: Routledge.

Boylan, M., Adams, G., Coldwell, M., Willis, B. and Demack, S. (2018) 'Theorising variation in engagement in professional and curriculum development: performativity, capital, systems and Purpose'. *Review of Education* 6(3) 360–407.

Brindley, S. (2015) *A critical investigation of the role of teacher research and its relationship to teacher professionalism, knowledge and identity*. PhD Thesis. Institute of Education University of London.

- Cochran-Smith, M., and Lytle, S. L. (1999). 'The teacher research movement: A decade later'. *Educational Research*, 28(7), 15–25.
- Cordingley, P. (2014) 'Inquiry paper 5: the contribution of research to teachers' continuing professional learning and development'. *The role of research in teacher education: reviewing the evidence. Interim report of the BERA-RSA inquiry*. London: BERA. 25-27.
- Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (2002) *Time for Standards: reforming the school workforce*. (London, HMSO).
- Ellis, S. and Moss, G. (2013) 'Ethics, education policy and research: The phonics question reconsidered'. *British Educational Research Journal*, 40(2), 241–260.
- Fullan M. (2001) *Leading in a Culture of Change* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Furlong, J. (2015) *Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers: Options for the future of initial teacher education in Wales* Cardiff: Welsh Government.
- Gibbons, S. (2019) "'Death by PEEL?'" The teaching of writing in the secondary English classroom in England' *English in Education*, 53 (1), 36-45.
- Greany, T. (2015) 'More Fragmented, and yet More Networked: Analysing the Responses of Two Local Authorities in England to the Coalition's "Self-Improving School-Led System" Reforms'. *London Review of Education*, 13(2), 125-143.
- Greany, T. & Waterhouse, J. (2016) 'Rebels against the system: Leadership agency and curriculum innovation in the context of school autonomy and accountability in England', *International Journal of Educational Management*, 30(7), 1188–1206.
- Hattie, J. (2009) *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. London: Routledge.
- Hill, M. and Brindley, S. (2005) 'English teachers as researchers' *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 4(2) 1-4.
- Marshall, B., Gibbons, S., Hayward, L. and Spencer, E. (2018) *Policy, Belief and Practice in the Secondary English Classroom: A Case Study Approach to the Teaching of Secondary English in Canada, England and Scotland*. London: Bloomsbury.

McNiff, J. (2002) Action research for professional development. Concise advice for new action researchers, available at <https://www.jeanmcniff.com/ar-booklet.asp> (accessed 23 June 2019).

OECD (2018) *Developing schools as learning organisations in Wales, implementing education policies*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

OFSTED. (2012). "Moving English Forward." Accessed 1 March 2018. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/181204/110118.pdf, (accessed 25 June 2019).

Reeves, J. and Fox, A. (2008) *Practice-based Learning. Developing excellence in teaching*. Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press.

Sahlberg, P. (2011) *Finnish lessons*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Stenhouse, L. (1975) *An introduction to curriculum research and development*. London: Heinemann.

Strauss, P. (1995) 'No Easy Answers: the dilemmas and challenges of teacher research'. *Educational Action Research* 3(1) 29-40.

Taylor, B. and Yandell, J. (2018) *Developing Best Practice in Mixed Attainment English*. London: UCL Institute of Education.

Welsh Government (2017) *Education in Wales: our national mission. Action plan 2017-21*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

Winch, C., Orchard, J. and Oancea, A. (2014) 'Inquiry paper 3: the contribution of educational research to teachers' professional learning – philosophical understandings'. *The role of research in teacher education: reviewing the evidence. Interim report of the BERA-RSA inquiry*. London: BERA. 20-21.

Worth, J., Lynch, S., Hillary, J., Rennie, C. and Andrade, J. (2018). *Teacher Workforce Dynamics in England*. Slough: NFER.

Wyse, D. and Goswami, U. (2008) 'Synthetic phonics and the teaching of reading'. *British Educational Research Journal*, 34(6), 691–710.

Wyse, D. and Torgerson, C. (2017) 'Experimental trials and 'what works?' in education: The case of grammar for writing'. *BERJ*, 43(6) 1019-1047.