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Available online: 28 Jul 2009

To cite this article: Lawrence Ingvarson (2009): Developing and rewarding excellent teachers: the Scottish Chartered Teacher Scheme, Professional Development in Education, 35:3, 451-468

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19415250903016707

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Developing and rewarding excellent teachers: the Scottish Chartered Teacher Scheme

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The Scottish Chartered Teacher Scheme was designed to recognise and reward teachers who attained high standards of practice. The scheme emerged in 2001 as part of an agreement between government, local employing authorities and teacher organisations. Policies such as the chartered teacher scheme aim to benefit students in two main ways: by attracting and retaining effective teachers; and by ensuring all teachers continue to engage in effective modes of professional learning. This paper reviews the Scottish scheme in the light of international interest in policies designed to promote teacher quality. Key features of the Scottish Chartered Teacher Scheme are identified and future challenges. The latter include the need to: strengthen the role of the profession in operational aspects of the scheme; ensure the scheme is based on a valid and reliable assessment of classroom performance; mainstream the scheme; and integrate the scheme with changing conceptions of effective school leadership.

Introduction

Nothing is as fundamental to the quality of students’ learning in schools as the knowledge, judgement and skill of their teachers. Wise countries, therefore, give priority to policies that assure the quality of present and future teachers. Scotland has long been one of those countries, a tradition reflected in its chartered teacher scheme.

The Scottish Chartered Teacher Scheme was designed to recognise and reward teachers who attained high standards of practice. The scheme emerged in 2001 as part of the agreement A teaching profession for the 21st century between the Scottish Executive, local employing authorities and teacher organisations (Scottish Executive Education Department, 2001). According to a mid-term report on the scheme by the auditor general for Scotland:

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By 1999, the bargaining machinery by which teachers’ pay and conditions were negotiated in Scotland ... had begun to fail. Negotiations between local authority employers and the teaching unions had broken down and industrial action was being threatened. Teaching was a profession under pressure. Morale was low with many teachers increasingly feeling underpaid, undervalued and overworked. Teaching was becoming perceived as an unattractive profession. (2006, pp. 5–7)

The Agreement was designed to ‘revitalise the teaching profession’. It included an across-the-board 23% pay increase for all teachers, a new, simplified career and salary structure, the creation of a new status of chartered teacher and a greater emphasis on continuing professional development for all teachers.

Policies such as the chartered teacher scheme aim to benefit students in two main ways: by attracting and retaining effective teachers; and by ensuring all teachers continue to engage in modes of professional learning that promote widespread use of successful teaching practices. The recent Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2005) report Teachers Matter showed that, in many countries, current policies relating to career paths and pay systems for teachers are failing to achieve these objectives. Traditional modes of industrial bargaining have not delivered competitive salaries for teachers, or working conditions that enable teachers to teach as well as they can. And the typical salary structure for teachers, based as it is on years of service rather than increased effectiveness as a teacher, provides weak incentives for professional learning. Consequently, these countries are recognising the need for fundamental reform of salary structures for teachers (Sclafani & Tucker, 2006).

Scotland has begun this process, one that will provide valuable lessons for other countries. There is considerable international interest in the Scottish ‘experiment’. The purpose of this paper is to review the Scottish Chartered Teacher Scheme in the light of international interest in policies designed to promote teacher quality (for example, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2005; Barber & Mourshed, 2007).

Linking teacher’s career stages to evidence of professional learning

One way to achieve these policy objectives is to introduce staged career pathways for teachers, based on evidence of attaining higher standards of professional knowledge and performance (Odden & Kelley, 2002). This is the heart of the Scottish Chartered Teacher Scheme provided by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS). To be eligible, teachers must be fully registered with the GTCS and at the top of the main grade salary scale. Initially, there were two routes to chartered teacher status (GTCS, undated). An Accreditation Route for very experienced teachers, based primarily on an assessment of evidence provided in a portfolio containing examples of current and recent practice; and a Programme Route, based on completing a customised master’s degree (12 modules over three to six years at a cost of about £7000, although credit is given for prior certificated learning). The accreditation route has now been discontinued (Murray & Matheson, 2008). As of September 2007, there
were 521 chartered teachers and over 2000 teachers working their way through the scheme.

Although developers of the scheme would not describe it as such, the chartered teacher scheme is also a performance pay scheme in the sense that teachers who meet the chartered teacher standard (Scottish Executive, 2002) receive a substantial increase in pay. It thereby aims to provide stronger incentives for evidence of professional learning, and greater recognition of the value of accomplished teaching.

The Scottish approach to providing incentives for good teaching contrasts with schemes with similar purposes in other countries. The US, for example, has experimented with many one-off, bonus-pay, or merit-pay schemes, based for example on standardised tests of student achievement (Ingvarson et al., 2008). The Teacher Incentive Fund, for example, introduced by President Bush in 2005, provides considerable funding for states and school districts who agree to introduce such schemes. Concerns remain, however, about the validity and reliability of schemes based on value-added measures of student achievement and their consequences for the breadth and depth of curriculum offerings in schools (McCaffrey et al., 2003). A more valid approach to recognising and rewarding accomplished teachers appears to be that developed by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). This is based on teachers providing direct evidence about the quality of conditions for learning they provide for students to learn in their classrooms (National Research Council, 2008), which has similarities to the discontinued accreditation route to chartered teacher status.

England introduced a new pay and reward structure for teachers in the late 1990s (Department for Education and Employment, 2000). This reform provided additional salary levels (up to 16% above the top of the incremental scale) for teachers who passed through the ‘performance threshold’, based on an assessment of application forms submitted by teachers to their headteachers. Menter et al. (2004) identify significant differences in approaches used in Scotland and England to ‘modernising’ the teaching profession. Wragg et al. (2004) cast doubt on the rigour of the assessment process and its impact on professional learning—as does Ingvarson (2002), who contrasts the Threshold scheme with the professional certification approach of the NBPTS.

Two further levels beyond the threshold have been introduced; the Excellent teacher and the Advanced skills teacher (Training and Development Agency, 2007). Unlike the chartered teacher concept, these are designated positions of responsibility in schools. In contrast to the threshold stage, teachers applying for these positions are assessed by an external assessment process. As yet, no evidence is available about the reliability and validity of these methods.

Effective organisations align their pay systems and status with possession of the knowledge and skills required to achieve their core objectives (Lawler, 1990). This has not been a characteristic of schools as organisations. If it were, excellent practising teachers, especially those in challenging schools, would be among the highest paid individuals in the education system. The weak alignment of career progression and evidence of improving professional performance has meant that the traditional pay system has been a weak instrument for improving student learning outcomes.
To an outsider, one of the most remarkable features of the Scottish Chartered Teacher Scheme is how government, unions and employers came to reach an agreement to reform the career structure and the pay system based, in effect, on evidence of higher standards of performance, or, in the language of industrial bargaining, increased ‘productivity’—something that many countries and school systems have been trying to do for many years, without success.

The chartered teacher: an example of professional certification

As usually defined, certification is an endorsement by a professional body that a member of that profession has attained a prescribed level of professional knowledge and performance. Certification is a means by which a profession can offer its members a valuable portable qualification. It is also a means by which the profession can offer a service to employing authorities that want to encourage effective professional learning and reward reliable evidence of its attainment.

This is a unique feature of the Scottish scheme; an independent professional body, the GTCS, has the statutory function of providing certification that a teacher has attained high standards of professional performance. The General Teaching Councils for England, Wales and Northern Ireland do not have this function.

The chartered teacher scheme in Scotland is at the forefront internationally among schemes to recognise and reward teachers who reach standards well beyond those expected of beginning teachers (Ingvarson & Kleinhenz, 2006a). However, evaluating teachers for professional recognition is by no means a simple task. Most schemes have failed to make the distance (Odden & Kelley, 2002). It remains an open question of how well the Scottish scheme will stand up over the long haul to some hard questions that will inevitably be asked more insistently.

As simple as it might sound, it has proved to be very difficult to develop valid and viable systems for identifying teachers who have reached high standards and rewarding them in ways that have positive and pervasive effects on teachers’ professional learning, staff relationships and school effectiveness.

This paper seeks to identify issues that may be of interest to other countries as they consider policies to promote teacher quality. It also seeks to identify a few key issues that the teaching profession in Scotland might consider as it seeks to ensure that its chartered teacher concept becomes embedded in the Scottish educational landscape. These issues might also be relevant to a review of the chartered teacher scheme, which was recommended in the recent Report of the Chartered Teacher Review Group (Scottish Government, 2008).

Key features of the Scottish Chartered Teacher Scheme

Several authors provide valuable background papers on the development of the Scottish scheme (Purdon, 2003; Connelly & McMahon, 2007; Reeves, 2007). Perhaps its key feature is that it emerged out of a prolonged period of discussion in the late 1990s by ‘The Committee of Inquiry into Professional Conditions of Service
for Teachers’, chaired by Professor Gavin McCrone (Scottish Executive Education Department, 2000). This committee brought together members of the new Scottish Government, the teachers’ union and employers over teachers’ pay and conditions.

The chartered teacher scheme is a carefully developed example of a ‘standards-based professional learning system’ leading to professional certification (Ingvarson, 1998; Ingvarson & Kleinhenz, 2006b). The main components of such a system are:

- **Standards** that describe what accomplished teachers know and do, providing, thereby, long-term direction for teachers’ professional development.
- A new *infrastructure for professional learning* that is responsive to teachers’ demands for activities that help them meet the standards.
- Valid, reliable and fair assessment procedures for providing *professional certification* to teachers who meet the standards.
- **Substantial financial recognition** from school authorities for teachers who gain professional certification.

These components form an interlocking and mutually reinforcing learning system. Take one away and the system loses its capacity to function effectively as an instrument for supporting and promoting effective professional learning and successful teaching practices.

When the Scottish Chartered Teacher Scheme is compared with similar certification schemes in other countries—such as the Advanced Skills teacher in Australia in the early 1990s (Chadbourne & Ingvarson, 1991), the Threshold reforms at the turn of the century in England and National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in the US—several features stand out and promise well for its future.

The first is that Scotland has managed to achieve a separation between the system for providing certification and the system for providing financial recognition for that certification by employing authorities. That is, a separation between the system by which the profession provides assessments of teachers and the system by which teachers receive financial and career rewards from their employers for that certification. In England and most Australian states, governments carry out both functions. However, this separation is essential to the credibility and, therefore, the success of professional certification schemes.

A certification system should be distinguished from performance management systems, which are the responsibility of employers and headteachers. It takes high-stakes teacher evaluation out of the messy micro-politics of school life and thereby makes rigorous, reliable and fair standards-based performance assessment more possible. A profession-wide system for identifying accomplished practice is properly the responsibility of a professional body. The decision about how to recognise and reward professional certification is properly the responsibility of employing authorities and local industrial agreements.

The second key feature is that the pay rise of about 20% for gaining chartered teacher status from the GTCS is substantial relative to many other schemes. In terms of financial recognition of professional certification by employers, Scotland has clearly got this part right. The incentive is set at a level that should be attractive
enough to engage most teachers in the required professional development. A teacher who gains chartered teacher status and teaches for another 20 years will gain an additional salary of more than $120,000 in return for an investment of about £7000 in course fees.

As yet, there appears to be no quota on the number of teachers who can gain chartered teacher status, which is surprising. Although quotas are inconsistent with the concept of a standards-based assessment, budget concerns usually have to be recognised. As Scotland is in the early stages of the scheme, this is not a pressing budget issue. However, the numbers of teachers applying will surely grow, as will implications for education budgets. As a result, pressure from employers and the public for evidence of validity and value for money will also surely grow.

Consequently, there may be a need to envisage a time when the proportion of chartered teachers reaches a desired ‘equilibrium stage’, when the number of teachers gaining chartered teacher status is roughly equal to the number moving on, in career terms, or retiring. There are just over 50,000 teachers in Scotland. Would 10,000 chartered teachers, or 20%, be a desirable proportion? Why not 50% of teachers at the chartered teacher level? What price can a country set on ensuring the highest quality teaching profession? The more the better in one sense, if the scheme is proving its credibility and lifting the quality of teachers and teaching, but it is inevitable that employing authorities will seek some predictability in the proportion of teachers who attain higher status if it is linked to an automatic salary increase.

A third feature of the chartered teacher scheme is the quality of the infrastructure for standards-based professional learning that the GTCS has built, in collaboration with Scottish universities. Gaining chartered teacher status calls for a major commitment of time, effort and money from teachers. Master’s courses have to be assessed and accredited by the GTCS. It is doubtful that teachers could complete these carefully sequenced master’s-level programmes without substantial benefit to their practice. The best combine recent research on teaching with practice and place teachers in a very active learning mode in their quest to meet high professional standards. They make classroom practice the site for learning and ensure that teachers receive insightful feedback on their practice in relation to the standards.

Questions might be asked, however, about why universities should be the only accredited providers of professional learning. And if a teacher can show evidence that they have met the standards through their own professional study and evaluation, why should they be expected to undertake three or more years of university courses?

Other providers could be considered, such as teachers’ own professional associations, who could provide programmes and networks of support to assist teachers to attain the standard. The UK Association for Science Education, for example, provides a certification system for accomplished science teachers. Other national teacher associations could readily build contributing systems under a national framework to provide consistency. Opportunities for teachers and their associations to engage in such provision might also help to strengthen a sense of professional ownership for the
scheme. Many teachers identify strongly with their professional associations, and these associations usually see professional learning as one of their core functions.

A final key feature is that chartered teacher status, as a profession-given certification, is portable. It belongs to the person. It is recognised by employing authorities across Scotland. It is not tied to a position or job with a particular school. In a more global world, however, the time will come, as it has in other professions such as medicine, engineering and accountancy, when teachers will seek to ensure their professional certification is recognised internationally as well as nationally. Mutual recognition across nations of advanced professional certification schemes like the Scottish Chartered Teacher Scheme will depend on the rigour of the certification process. Scotland can provide a lead in this, as it has in mutual recognition of teacher registration systems internationally.

**Future challenges for the Scottish Chartered Teacher Scheme**

This section of the paper is based on meetings with staff from the GTCS, academics from five Scottish universities, teachers and headteachers in several schools, members of the Scottish Government, representatives of the Educational Institute for Scotland and the Council of Scottish Local Authorities, together with analyses of official documents on the chartered teacher scheme and research papers published in academic journals.

**Strengthen the role of the profession in all aspects of the scheme**

Looking to the future, there are further challenges for this Scottish initiative. Perhaps one of the most important is to build a stronger sense of ownership among practising teachers for the scheme. There are four main areas in which this might happen:

- refinement of the Standard for Chartered Teacher and elaboration of what it means in the various specialist fields that comprise the teaching profession;
- development of valid methods whereby teachers provide evidence that their practice meets the standard;
- development and operation of a national system for assessing that evidence and providing certification; and
- provision of a broader infrastructure of professional learning to support teachers preparing for chartered teacher assessment.

**The Standard for Chartered Teacher**

The success of the chartered teacher scheme depends in part on teachers having a strong sense of ownership for the standards. Responsibility for the development and application of professional standards builds commitment to those standards. The initial process of developing the SCT was managed by Arthur Andersen consultants and the Universities of Edinburgh and Strathclyde, and was followed by an extensive
consultation process. This process led to a generic standard that was the same for all teachers, no matter what they were teaching, or at what level they were teaching.

The Standard for Chartered Teacher has three main domains bearing on professional action:

- Professional knowledge and understanding.
- Professional values and personal commitments.
- Professional and personal attributes.

Within the first domain, for example, a chartered teacher is expected to be able to demonstrate a ‘critical understanding of current research on teaching and learning’; however, what this means is not elaborated on for teachers who teach at different levels, or teachers who teach different subjects.

The level of teacher involvement in the development and refinement of the Scottish Standard for Chartered Teacher could now be deepened. One way to achieve this would be to ask teachers to elaborate on what excellent teachers should know and be able to do to meet the generic Standard for Chartered Teacher in each of the specialist fields that make up the teaching profession. There are probably about 20–25 different specialist fields within the school teaching profession. (Sixteen teacher associations in Australia, such as the Australian Science Teachers Association and the Early Childhood Association, have now developed standards for their specialist teaching fields.)

Teachers in Scotland are trained in specialist fields such as early childhood education, primary school teaching and secondary mathematics, reflecting differences in what they will be expected to know and be able to do when they begin teaching. Therefore it seems reasonable to expect that these differences should be reflected in standards for advanced certification as well as for initial registration.

Research shows that expertise in teaching, as in most professions, is ‘domain specific’, not generic (Shulman, 1987; Brophy, 1991; Hill \textit{et al.}, 2005). All teachers are specialists, and with experience they become increasingly specialised, but the current SCT does not reflect the diversity of teacher specialism. For example, what excellent teachers in the early primary years know about learning to read is very different from what excellent secondary art teachers know about helping students learn to draw. These differences in expertise are not trivial, and they need to be evident in the standards.

If standards are to pay due respect to excellent teaching, they need to reflect the diversity in what it takes to teach well in the different levels of schooling and subject areas. Curriculum standards for student learning should go hand in hand with teaching standards. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in the US, for example, has developed standards in 25 different fields of teaching. Medicine has a similar number of specialist fields. Generic standards for teaching cannot do justice to the complexity of knowledge and skill that underpins accomplished practice, which may be as diverse as early childhood education and high school mathematics teaching. Writers of standards for excellent primary teaching or secondary art teaching, for example, need to drill down from the generic
standards and elaborate on what excellent teachers know and do in each of their specialist fields.

Elaboration of standards in each specialist field would provide Scottish teachers and their associations with greater opportunities to build research findings into their standards. Generic standards for something as complex as teaching are necessarily superficial. They underestimate and fail to accurately represent what teachers need to know and be able to do to perform at an accomplished or excellent level. Writers of valid standards, for example, have a responsibility to examine research on teaching in their specialist field and synthesise its implications for what effective teachers in their field know and do. In this way, responsibility for the development and application of professional standards enables the profession to play a stronger role in relating research to practice.

It is in the interests of all stakeholders that teachers have a strong commitment to their own standards. The ability to define and enforce standards for practice is the defining credential of a professional body, the foundation for public credibility and trust. Claims to professional status are more likely to be taken seriously where there is a demonstrated capacity to articulate and to measure what counts as accomplished practice. Developing subject-specific and level-specific standards demonstrates such a capacity and provides a foundation for greater public respect and professional self-direction.

Responsibility for the development and application of professional standards would enable Scottish teachers to exercise more control over their professional learning system. At present, this system appears to be dominated by the developers of university courses for chartered teachers, although these courses are subject to accreditation by the GTCS. Valid teaching standards clarify what teachers should get better at over the long term. Developing standards would enable teachers and their associations to play a stronger role in defining long-term goals for their professional learning. There is room for greater teacher involvement in the task of articulating what excellent teachers in each specialist field need to know and be able to do and university researchers could provide valuable assistance in this process.

Ensure that chartered teacher status is based on a valid, reliable and fair assessment of classroom performance

Another challenge is to conduct the research and development necessary to ensure the validity of the process by which teachers are identified for chartered teacher status. Ultimately, the chartered teacher scheme will live or die according to whether it is a valid measure of excellent teaching; and whether its decisions are credible, not only to teachers but the wider public as well. Subject-level and level-specific standards will increase the validity and reliability of the processes used to assess teacher performance and to select chartered teachers.

One of the critical and unavoidable questions for all such schemes is whether teachers who gain such a status are better teachers than those who also apply but do not,
in terms of ability to show they can meet the standards. This is one of the questions that the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in the USA has subjected its own certification system to since it became operational over 15 years ago. More than 10 major independent research studies have now been conducted that show, according to a recent evaluation by the prestigious National Research Council (2008), on balance, students taught by board certified teachers (read chartered teachers) had higher achievement test gains than did those taught by non-board certified teachers. This is not the only basis for evaluating whether certification schemes are working, but it is an undeniable one.

At present, it appears that the decision to award chartered teacher status is based on whether a teacher completes a university course successfully. Perhaps surprisingly, it is not based on direct evidence of how a teacher’s practice meets the standard, or what students are doing and learning as a result that teacher’s teaching. It is not based on the quality of opportunities a teacher provides for student learning, as that teacher might show, for example, through videotapes they have made of their teaching, or student work samples showing learning over extended periods of time. It remains to be seen whether course completion in itself is a valid measure of whether a teacher’s performance meets the SCT.

There is an emphasis in several master’s courses on teachers undertaking action research projects on their teaching. Some also call for teachers to engage colleagues in action research projects. Action research can be a powerful means of professional learning. In fact, reflection on one’s own practice may be a necessary part of the process of learning how to meet the SCT, but it is not a reliable measure of whether a teacher has met the SCT in their practice.

To ensure the reliability and the credibility of the process for assessing teachers for chartered teacher status, it will be necessary to separate the process of assessing teacher performance for chartered teacher certification from the provision of courses that help teachers to meet the SCT and assessment of whether they have completed those courses successfully. (One Scottish university has been attempting to do this.) The latter is properly the role of university academics. However, they should not be placed in the compromising position of both being providers of courses to help teachers meet the SCT and being the judges of whether their performance in schools meets the SCT. Despite the best intentions, the risks of bias and the threats to the reliability of the scheme will be too great. It is unlikely that successful course completion, in itself, can be a reliable measure of whether a teacher’s professional knowledge and performance in a school meets the SCT.

It is understandable that, in establishing the chartered teacher scheme, Scottish teachers wished to avoid the imposition of invalid, intrusive and unfair methods of performance assessment, such as those that led to the downfall of so many merit pay schemes in the US (for example, Murnane & Cohen, 1986; Odden & Kelley, 2002). However, the long-term viability of the scheme will require the development of rigorous methods for assessing teacher knowledge and practice. The NBPTS experience shows that, when given the opportunity, teachers can do this convincingly (National Research Council, 2008).
Establish an independent national system for assessing applicants for chartered
teacher status

To ensure its credibility and viability, the GTCS should consider establishing an inde-
pendent national system for assessing teachers for chartered teacher status in a range
of certification fields. As mentioned earlier, Scotland is in the enviable position of
having a clear separation between the professional body that provides the certification,
the GTCS, and the bodies who provide recognition for that certification, the employ-
ing authorities. Most schemes that merge responsibility for these two functions fail,
as happened with the Threshold scheme in England in the early 2000s (Wragg et al.,
2004: Menter et al., 2004) and many failed merit-pay schemes in the US introduced
by local employing authorities and implemented by school administrators.

Establishing such a system, whereby teachers provide evidence of how they meet
the SCT and have that evidence assessed by carefully trained peers in the same teach-
ing field, could be another means by which the teaching profession in Scotland
becomes more deeply engaged in the operation of the chartered teacher scheme and
committed to it. New methods are emerging by which teachers can show how they
meet professional standards that teachers regard as valid, fair and professionally
developmental (Ingvarson & Hattie, 2008). Teachers have played a major role in
designing these methods. Senior colleagues could play an important role in providing
verification of this evidence, but it does not seem appropriate for them to decide, as
some have suggested, whether a teacher can apply for certification from their
professional body in the first place.

Under such a system, universities could still have a vital role to play in preparing
teachers to present evidence of their knowledge and performance for assessment by
the GTCS certification system. But there would be other possible providers of
supporting programmes for candidates as well. When universities compete for valu-
able students there is a danger that they might progressively lower costs or course
demands to attract students.

It is interesting, in this context, to note that universities in the US that provide
master’s courses for teachers preparing for certification by the NBPTS (read GTCS)
advertise themselves in terms of the success rate of their former students in applying
for National Board certification; for example, ‘Sixty-percent of students who
completed our master’s degree were successful in applying for Board certification’.
This is much more desirable than universities competing with each other in ways that
might devalue the qualification as has happened with education doctorates in the US
(Levine, 2005).

For this reason, consideration might be given to accrediting professional learning
programmes for chartered teachers mainly on the extent to which their graduates are
successful in their application for chartered teacher status, as assessed by the GTCS
as an independent professional agency. On the other hand, with a rigorous certifica-
tion system, there may cease to be a need to commit time and money to accrediting
courses at all as teachers will choose those activities they believe most likely to help
them meet the performance standards.
Create new roles that capitalise on the expertise of chartered teachers and free them up to work with other teachers

A common dilemma for schemes that aim to recognise and reward higher standards of teaching is what to do with teachers once they gain the certification. What roles, for example, should chartered teachers play in schools? How can their expertise be shared effectively? Is the scheme based on the principle of more pay for better work, or more pay for extra work and responsibilities?

The Scottish scheme was definitely based on the former principle. As Matthew MacIver, chief executive of the GTCS, has pointed out, the fundamental philosophy of the chartered teacher programme is ‘to acknowledge the worth and value of classroom teaching’. The appropriate use of chartered teachers in this view is to leave them unencumbered with extra duties and allow them to get on with what they do best—teaching as well as they possibly can.

However, many teachers who gain professional certification often express, as a result, a strong sense of empowerment and a desire to take on new and challenging roles that enable them to share their expertise within and across schools (McMahon & Reeves, 2008; Murray & Matheson, 2008). These attitudes are common among teachers who gain certification from the NBPTS in the USA (chartered teachers could have a choice whether to take on these roles or not). Therefore, the two principles may not be mutually exclusive. It depends on how the ‘extra work and responsibilities’ principle is conceived, and how a chartered teachers’ time is distributed.

A key problem occurs when schemes for recognising accomplished teachers are grafted on to unchanged models of school organisation and management. Connelly and McMahon (2007) and Reeves (2007) identify the complexities associated with the chartered teacher scheme in moving away from a hierarchical structure of school management.

Chartered teachers are left facing formidable barriers to exercising the kind of professional influence that the McCrone Report saw as critical to the status. (Reeves, 2007, p. 73)

The risks of ‘tissue rejection’ by existing staff cultures are high, if related reforms are not taking place in school organisation and management. A change in one part of an organisation as fundamental as the chartered teacher concept cannot be insulated from other parts of the organisation, or leave them unchanged.

In the early 1990s, most Australian states made the mistake of lumbering often trivial extra work on to full-time advanced skills teachers to justify the extra pay, rather than thinking through how their expertise might best be deployed in leading projects to improve teaching and learning (Watkins, 1994; Ingvarson & Chadbourne, 1997). New roles should have been conceptualised and legitimised to ‘free up’ the expertise of advanced skills teachers and make it available to other teachers, such as the English concept of advanced skills teacher.

There is not a necessary conflict between the purposes of acknowledging the worth and value of classroom teaching and the deployment of chartered teachers in roles where they are more available to share their expertise and to provide professional
leadership in teaching practice. A teacher does not have to become part of the management structure in schools before they can provide leadership in the core aspects of teachers’ professional work. But if a chartered teacher is invited, or elects, to offer leadership to improve school functioning in specified areas, then they will need to be relieved of part of their own teaching duties. Failing to do this was another mistake that some Australian states made.

The fatal flaw in similar Australian schemes in the 1990s was the failure to adapt to the idea that a teacher might be worth more—as a practising teacher. Teachers themselves often found it difficult to live with the idea. They looked for extra work to justify their pay rise, leading to more stress. Often employers also allocated extra jobs and duties to full-time ‘advanced skills teachers’, to the point that many would say ‘I don’t have any time to teach well any more’. In this respect, these schemes were self-defeating (Ingvarson & Chadbourne, 1997; Dinham & Scott, 1997).

Mainstream the chartered teacher scheme: make chartered teacher status a prerequisite for promotion to school leadership positions

In Australia, it became apparent that it was a mistake to conceive of schemes for accomplished teachers in terms of providing an ‘alternative’ career path. The alternative career path often turned out to be a dead end, or sideline, rather than a career path. Few teachers applied. Teachers found it easier to gain status and extra pay by applying for promotion to management positions in schools. As a result, the ability of the pay system to drive widespread professional learning toward high standards was diminished (Kleinhenz & Ingvarson, 2008).

It is also apparent, however, that the teaching profession in countries like Scotland and Australia has yet to become fully comfortable with the idea of better pay for better teaching, rather than better pay for extra jobs, even though union leadership has shifted markedly in both countries on this issue in recent years. Some chartered teachers still experience barbs from colleagues about why they are paid more when they do much the same job as them. It would help if a clear message was sent to teachers that chartered teacher status is available to all, and achievable by all teachers, provided they take up the professional learning opportunities to reach high standards of practice. It might also help if it was made clear that this is becoming the main basis on which the public will be willing to ensure that relative salaries for teachers are significantly improved.

What has become clear is that schemes such as the chartered teacher scheme in Scotland, the advanced skills teacher in Australia and National Board certification in the US need to be merged with new conceptions of teacher leadership, and new approaches to distributing the kind of leadership skills that has an impact on student learning outcomes. This kind of leadership depends on the expertise and credibility that chartered teachers should have.

This implies the challenging idea that achieving chartered teacher standards should be a pre-requisite for all promotion positions in schools. Instead of being an alternative career path, the chartered teacher scheme would be ‘mainstreamed’, as shown in
Figure 1. A standards-based career structure. Adapted from Dinham et al. (2008)

Figure 1 (adapted from Dinham et al., 2008). Figure 1 shows a framework for a career path based on increasing breadth and depth in professional knowledge and skill. Employing authorities would, of course, adapt the framework and rewards for professional certification to suit local needs and circumstances.

This mainstreaming suggestion may seem surprising, but it is well justified by many research studies showing that the most effective school leaders are highly credible to teachers as expert teachers themselves (for example, Robinson & Timperley, 2007). Some counter this suggestion with arguments that in football, for example, ‘the best players do not necessarily make the best managers’. This may be true. However, on close inspection, one finds there are few successful football managers who have not been successful players.

Teachers are more likely to look for leadership from school managers who have been successful teachers. And as one teacher pointed out to the minister for education at the 2008 annual National Chartered Teacher Conference: ‘I am more likely to accept annual review of my performance if it is conducted by a school manager who has chartered teacher status’. Headteachers are more than managers, or need to be, according to recent research on effective school leadership (Leithwood et al., 2004). And if they were only managers, this might provide all the more reason to ensure they were surrounded by teachers who can provide leadership concerning quality teaching and learning?

This suggests that chartered teachers might be given a choice between remaining focused primarily on their classroom practice or having part of their work allocation
devoted to teacher leadership; for example, working ‘shoulder to shoulder’ with other teachers on projects to improve school functioning.

Figure 1 adds a further level of advanced chartered teacher standards, or ‘leading teacher’ standards, based on a track record of successfully leading and managing several projects to improve student learning outcomes and welfare. Achievement of leading teacher certification in this model would, in turn, be a prerequisite for deputy and headteacher positions. This creates a stepping stone between the chartered teacher and headteacher positions. This may encourage more teachers to move into leadership roles, as the gap between the two levels at present appears to be very wide.

In the long term, as the Scottish education system seeks to ‘professionalise’ schools as organisations and increase respect for excellent teaching, it seems appropriate to ensure that responsibility for the quality of teachers’ work is placed in the hands of school leaders who have demonstrated that they themselves have reached high standards of professional performance. As mentioned above, this is consistent with research showing that the most effective school leaders are those with demonstrated expertise in the core areas of teaching, curriculum and assessment.

**Final comments**

The Scottish Chartered Teacher Scheme represents one of the most concerted policy efforts internationally to promote teacher quality. It aims to promote standards-based professional learning and to reward teachers who attain high standards. It provides a substantial salary increase to teachers who attain those standards. This incentive, and the status afforded to the chartered teacher concept, has the capacity to ensure that most teachers will engage in an effective, long-term programmes of professional learning to meet the standards. This incentive will be strengthened if chartered teacher status becomes a requirement for teachers to be eligible for promotion to school leadership positions.

One of the main strengths of the Scottish scheme is the extent to which universities have been mobilised in the service of the scheme to develop new master’s degree programmes. Universities now provide a substantial infrastructure to support standards-guided professional learning for teachers. This professional learning will be enhanced if guided by elaborated teaching standards linked more closely to findings from recent research on teaching and learning.

A key, perhaps unique, feature of the scheme is that it is operated by a national professional body, independent of government, employing authorities and unions, while still responsive to their needs for a rigorous certification system. Evidence so far suggests the scheme has a high level of credibility with teachers, but, as this paper indicates, there is room for greater participation by teachers in all levels of its operation.

The Scottish Chartered Teacher Scheme should be contrasted with other approaches to strengthening links between teacher pay and teacher performance. It offers a viable alternative to crude merit pay schemes that are usually short-lived and limited in their effects on professional learning. These include one-off bonus pay
schemes based on standardised tests of student achievement. Decisions about attaining chartered teacher status are thereby taken out of the local micro-political context, in contrast to assessment procedures used in England for teachers to attain ‘Post-Threshold’ status.

Other countries will watch the Scottish experiment with considerable interest. The greatest challenge facing the chartered teacher scheme will be to demonstrate its reliability and validity as a certification of teaching excellence. This will not be an easy task, but this will be essential to its credibility with government and the public and its long-term viability. Completion of university courses will need to be accompanied by an independent process of assessment and certification of teacher performance against the standards.

A final challenge is to integrate the chartered teacher scheme with changing conceptions of effective school leadership. The scheme will falter if it is simply grafted on to unchanged models of school management. Professional recognition such as chartered teacher status or NBPTS certification has powerful effects on teachers’ sense of agency and interest in sharing their expertise. As one Scottish teacher said when asked about the effects of gaining chartered teacher status:

I have felt like a pioneer in every sense of the word. I have explored new territory in terms of educational research. I have initiated new practices of teaching in the school. I have helped clear the obstructions of professional norms and misunderstandings and prepared a way for teachers to follow. (Murray & Matheson, 2008)

These sentiments of empowerment are characteristic of teachers who gain professional recognition (National Research Council, 2008). If these sentiments become widespread, as the number of chartered teachers expands, new roles and responsibilities will need to be created in schools that capitalise on their expertise and enthusiasm.

**Note**

This paper is based on an address given to the National Chartered Teacher Conference in Edinburgh in June 2008, at the invitation of the General Teaching Council for Scotland.

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