

Teacher Professional Development: EIS Role

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In speaking to this international audience of teacher educators, I would like firstly to say a little about the EIS – the Educational Institute of Scotland.

The EIS is a teacher trade union with almost 60 000 members; this is some 80% of Scotland's teachers. Our members work in all sectors of education: nursery, primary, secondary, special, further and higher education, including in the last case many of those who work as teacher educators.

The EIS was founded in 1847 and carries out the roles both of a professional organisation and of a trade union. Unlike almost any other trade union, the EIS has a Royal Charter, granted at its foundation by Queen Victoria. The aims of the EIS as defined in its Royal Charter include: 'promoting sound learning', 'advancing the interests of education in Scotland', 'establishing a Board of Examiners ...[to] ascertain and certify qualifications of [teachers]' with the aim of 'raising the standard of education' in Scotland. The Institute still has a Board of Examiners which awards the degree of Fellowship of the Institute each year; this is now an honour, not a qualification to teach. However it remains a powerful symbolic reminder of the origins of the EIS in its commitment to furthering the professional development of teachers.

The EIS contributes to professional development today in a wide range of ways.

Firstly like any other trade union, we provide a range of range of training courses for our members on such fundamental matters as negotiating skills, health and safety legislation, and equality and diversity. These are often designed for union representatives in school or for elected local officials; but some are open to any interested member. We have sought to encourage activity on the part of women members through designing training courses specifically for them. Beyond this regular training we have held, usually in alternate years, a series of equality conferences and education conferences. These have been attended by members from across the country. Many of those participating have not previously been active in the work of the institute in that they have not held elected posts or been involved in local negotiating. This is important because we wish as many of our members as possible to take part in the life and work of the union and we recognise that members will have different areas of interest and different strengths. The focus of the conferences has been derived from recent EIS work or from national initiatives. As examples of the former our national Equality Committee has over the years produced a series of reports under the heading 'Breaking down the Barriers': the barriers to learning include poverty and socio-economic inequality, sexism, racism, homophobia.. The publication of these reports and policy papers has often been supported by a national

conference. Examples of the latter have included a conference on assessment at which we considered both the OECD PISA outcomes for Scotland and evolving government policy on assessment; a conference organised during the 2002 National Debate on education, a government sponsored exercise seeking to discover a national consensus on school education ; and a conference focusing on inclusive education in the context of the implementation of new legislation in this field.

The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) was established by legislation in 1964. This was the first such Teaching Council to be established in the world and it has been the focus of international interest since it was set up. There are now similar Teacher Councils in the other jurisdictions of the United Kingdom and in Ireland while other countries continue to express an interest in setting up such an organisation. The Council has an elected teacher majority; other members are appointed by bodies and organisations with an interest in the quality of teaching, including the local authority employers and the University faculties and schools of education in which teachers receive their pre-service education; a small number are appointed directly by Scottish Ministers. However the fact that the majority are elected by teachers results in the body, ultimately responsible for the standards of teachers in Scotland, being accountable to the profession, the members of which pay annual fee to be registered to teach. The EIS encourages teachers to vote for candidates who are supported by the EIS in order to ensure that our commitment to professional development is carried through to the work of the Council..

The GTCS carries out a number of tasks directly relevant to teacher professional development. Firstly, the GTCS is the body responsible for the maintenance of the statements of teacher Standards. These are defined in terms of competences which teachers must demonstrate at various points in their career: these competences are not narrowly specified but represent broad areas of professional knowledge, of professional skills, of personal and professional attributes, which together lead to professional action. There are currently four such Standards: the Standard for Initial Teacher Education which must be achieved at the end of teacher preservice education before entry to the probationary year; the Standard for Full Registration which is attained at the end of the probationary period and which is the basic standard which all teachers must sustain throughout their teaching careers. There are two further standards: that for chartered teacher on which more is said later and that for headship.

All teachers in Scotland are graduates. They attain the Standard for Initial Teacher Education through one of two routes. Most primary teachers and teachers of some secondary subjects (especially music and technology) will have followed a four year bachelor's degree which includes the study of education related topics as well as the study of relevant academic areas; this four year course will include school placements. Some primary teachers and most secondary teachers study a first (bachelor's) degree in relevant subject areas and then proceed to study a post graduate diploma in education for one year which prepares them for teaching. A substantial proportion of this year is spent in school placements. While the framework for such courses and the entry requirements are set by the Executive (ie by the Government) this has been done through partnership with stakeholders. The GTCS has a second more specific role to play in the processes of

professional development in preservice education. A university cannot offer a new teacher education course unless it has been accredited by the GTCS; existing courses must go through the accreditation process every five years.

The GTCS certifies that a teacher has attained the relevant Standard. Every intending teacher on leaving preservice education who in the eyes of the University has attained the Standard for Initial Teacher Education must register provisionally with the GTCS. The GTCS supervises their progress through the probationary year during which they receive professional development and mentoring from their employer. In almost all cases (following receipt of reports from the school in which they have been employed) this process leads to the teacher being recognised by the GTCS as having attained the Standard for Full Registration. This standard allows them to teach in the appropriate sector (nursery/primary or secondary). Registration of secondary teachers also specifies the subjects they can teach.

Registration can be withdrawn as a result of disciplinary procedures being taken against the teacher because of unprofessional conduct. Any person can raise a concern about any teacher with the GTCS which is required to investigate this. Removal of registration means that the teacher can no longer teach in Scotland. (These disciplinary procedures overlap with child protection measures but are more extensive in including consideration of such offences as financial dishonesty.) Registration can also be removed when a teacher demonstrates incompetence after all avenues of support have been exhausted.

There had been some concern that the framework of statutory standards and the accompanying registration of teachers was so inflexible as to inhibit new models of deployment of teachers and could not afford recognition for specific areas of expertise (except for those which are legally defined for secondary teachers in terms of the subjects they can teach). The GTCS has developed a framework of professional recognition to deal with these issues. This permits specific recognition to be given to areas such as early years education in primary schools or pastoral care in secondary schools but also permits teachers with specific interests or competences to work in a sector other than that in which they are registered (eg a primary teacher working with younger secondary pupils). Recognition is afforded for periods of five years after which it would require to be renewed.

The model for EIS partnership in the development of inservice courses for teachers was afforded by the processes which led to the creation of courses for experienced teachers who were working in or intending to move into the area of special educational needs. Following two major reports, one UK and one Scottish, on this issue in 1976, it was decided to develop completely new high level courses in Special Educational Needs for teachers who were in employment. The criteria which such courses were required to meet, the structures of these courses and the statement of teacher competences which such courses would develop were elaborated by working groups the membership of which included representatives from the main stakeholders including the EIS. By the mid 1980's after some initial variation the a modular structure was developed at the level of a post graduate qualification: attaining the outcomes of 4 modules led to a post-graduate

certificate ; of 8 modules to a diploma; and the completion of the final 4 modules (usually through development and critical examination of practice) led to a master's degree. This initiative is important both because it formally accorded the EIS a role in the planning of courses, a role which was later developed, and because it afforded a model for other qualifications such as those in guidance and pastoral care or the qualification for headship or that for chartered teacher, considered below.

A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century afforded a major impetus to the educational work of the EIS. This document is a tripartite negotiated agreement between the teacher unions, their employers and the Scottish government. These bodies reached this agreement in 2001 after a period of deteriorating industrial relations had resulted in a break down in relationships between the unions and their employers. There was concern that teaching was likely to lose its attractions as career and that both recruitment and retention would suffer. To resolve this the government set up a Committee of Inquiry the report of which formed the basis of the negotiated agreement *A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century*. This agreement covered almost all areas relevant to the employment of teachers. A fundamental principle was the 're-professionalisation' of teaching. Clearly allied to this is the central importance afforded to collegiality, dialogue, consultation and negotiation.

The agreement provided that every person who achieved the Standard for Initial Teacher Education as they moved from preservice teacher education was guaranteed a fully paid induction (probationary) year during which their contact time is limited to 70% of the usual maximum and they are provided with support by staff of the school in which they are working and by the employer education authority. This year affords them the opportunity to reflect on and develop their professional capabilities. At the end of the year they should have attained the Standard for Full Registration. If there are any concerns about their progress this is reported to the GTCS which may decide to extend their probationary period (or may refuse to allow them to proceed to full registration). this latter outcome is extremely rare.

The agreement further provides for all teachers, whatever their level of seniority, the right and duty to undertake 35 hours professional development each year outwith their weekly contractual week. While the work undertaken during these 35 hours is ultimately the responsibility of the teacher it will have been the subject of a discussion with her/his manager through the professional review process which is also enshrined within the agreement. This process is not a form of teacher evaluation or appraisal: rather it is a professional dialogue within which the teacher and the person responsible for her/his development identify what staff development would be valuable for the teacher to undertake in the coming year. This may be related to the school's annual development or improvement plan but will also ensure that the teacher's own personal professional interests are recognised. Teachers are being encouraged to use the relevant Standard as another reference point for determining their staff development needs. It is recognised that staff development can take a wide variety of forms: timetabled courses, school planned events, membership of working parties, on-line study, professional reading, work shadowing.

A major outcome of *A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century* was the creation of the grade of Chartered Teacher. It must be stressed that this a teacher grade based on further qualification and is not a promoted post. It was created specifically to permit teachers to enjoy career progression without having to move into management posts in which they would have reduced classroom contact. The qualification is designed to promote enhanced classroom practice, primarily within the teacher's own classroom but also through development with colleagues. All teachers who have reached the top point on the main scale (ie after 6 years' teaching) are entitled to enter the Chartered Teacher route. Their employer or manager has no role to play in this decision.

The structure is modular (4+4+4): as candidates progress they move through certificate to diploma and ultimately to master's degree. All modules are at master's level. It is possible for prior learning to be accredited, not through credit accumulation but through proving its impact on reflective classroom practice. Progress is flexible in that teachers can determine their own pace of progression, deciding on the number of modules they will take in any one year and on whether they will take a break from working through the route. All study is carried out in the teacher's own time though much should be related to developing work in the classroom and can therefore be to some extent integrated with other work that the teacher is carrying out. The teacher gains a salary increment for each two modules completed.

EIS involvement in the Chartered Teacher programme has run from the initial agreement through the work of planning the national standard for chartered teacher and the structures required to underpin courses. This has been followed by the partnership with the University of Paisley which has resulted in its Chartered Teacher programme being the most popular in the country. The EIS has worked with other partners in ensuring publicity for the programme and is currently a member of the review group set up to examine the impact of the programme to date.

In addition to maintaining the Standard for the Chartered Teacher the GTCS is itself directly responsible for providing a route by which a chartered teacher can be recognised through the accreditation of prior learning. This process is likely to take a year to carry out and requires the candidate to work with a mentor to produce a report for submission which relates classroom practice to theory and research.

The EIS has worked closely with the Scottish Executive Education Department and the National CPD Team to ensure that advice to education authorities accords with the spirit of collegiality and partnership which is central to *A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century* and to ensure that practical issues that arise (eg over the allocation of preservice students to school placements) are addressed.

The UK Labour government inherited a suite of trade union legislation from the preceding Conservative government which was designed to limit the actions of trade unions. The Labour government has done little to liberalise these laws with the exception of legislation which created the post of union learning representative and allocating funds

to support this. All trade unions are legally entitled to set up posts of learning representatives and employers are obliged to afford them reasonable time to carry out their duties.

The EIS has taken full advantage of this provision and with funding from Scottish Union Learning Fund and thereafter from the Scottish Executive Education Department has created a qualification for learning reps in partnership with the University of Paisley. It is intended that the EIS local association in each of the 32 education authorities will have at least one multi-establishment learning representative, with a total of some 50 planned so that larger education authorities will have more than a single representative; so far there are 41 of these multi-establishment learning reps in posts. It is intended to have a rep in each of the 42 further education colleges; so far there are 17 in post. There are also 27 learning reps operating within individual schools; it is intended to continue recruiting at this level. Learning representatives operate to nationally established standards which require them to support members by encouraging recognition of the importance of staff development, encouraging employers to support their employees in accessing staff development, by providing information on staff development to members and by affording them advice.

Working with employers has resulted in a number of joint events to promote professional development. This has included a focus on Chartered Teacher and on the means of having prior learning accredited, workshops on specific topics, both content and learning methodologies, and advice to members. Learning representatives are supported by the EIS nationally including the provision of a detailed Handbook.

The EIS has developed several partnerships with universities. The first of these partnerships was that set up with the University of Paisley. Over the years this has included a certificate in work place learning, modules in particular subject areas, qualifying modules for Learning Representatives and a Chartered Teacher course. The partnership in the last case also includes Learning and Teaching Scotland, the national body responsible for curriculum development, and two education authorities. All courses in this partnership are taught on-line using a virtual learning environment which supports and encourages dialogue amongst the learners.

More recently the EIS has established a partnership with the University of Aberdeen. This University is developing a model for teacher education entitled Scottish Teachers for a New Era; this seeks to ensure that all teachers enjoy a coherent programme of professional education which encompasses pre-service education and the probationary year and through to continuing support into the first years of employment as a fully registered teacher. The EIS is represented on the relevant advisory board. This partnership provides courses for teachers in the early years of their teaching. EIS members who are Chartered Teachers and/or Learning Representatives are involved in the planning and delivery of this programme.

The EIS is developing a partnership with the University of Edinburgh: Centre for Educational Leadership. In this partnership EIS Learning Representatives work with

university staff on a research project to determine the barriers to the use of research findings by teachers. This involves developing collaborative models of identifying useful research findings and means of communicating and dissemination them to colleagues.

The EIS hopes to develop partnerships in the near future with other universities involved in teacher education. In every case, as with the existing partnerships, these will involve real, not token, formalistic partnership.

As a teacher trade union the EIS works with teacher unions throughout the world. This cooperation has included involvement in teacher development. Under the aegis of the Socrates Programme of the European Union the EIS worked with teacher unions in Ireland (ASTI) and France (FEN) on developing a staff development package *Improving the Learning Environment in Schools*. This was concerned with enhancing the capabilities of teachers to improve discipline within the classroom and to improve relationships among pupils by countering bullying. The package was made available to other organisations in both electronic and paper formats.

The EIS has participated in a wide range of seminars on educational issues organised by the European section of Education International (the international trade union body to which individual teacher unions belong) and by ETUCE (European Trade Union Council for Education) which is the teacher trade union federation within the structures of the EU. These seminars have covered a wide range of topics including assessment, bullying and violence, teacher evaluation, school improvement, the children of migrant workers, inclusion, nursery education, and equality. The EIS has contributed significantly to developing the equality agenda of EI, in terms of promoting policies in such areas as anti-racism, anti-sexism and inclusion. These seminars have afforded teacher unions the opportunity to share knowledge and research and have encouraged the development of a learning culture within and among these organisations.

The EIS has played an active part in the OECD Trade Union Advisory Committee. This in recent years has afforded opportunities for dialogue with the OECD staff responsible for planning and analysing major studies not only the three yearly PISA study of pupil attainment but also studies on leadership, on adult education and on teaching and learning. The outcomes of these discussions and analyses has contributed to the development of EIS policy and has informed our educational work with our members.

The EIS sees no tension in principle between promoting sound education including professional development and furthering the interests of teachers. Enjoyment of one's daily work and being supported in this are important to all employees.