

From the Editor

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The papers in this edition range over a number of interesting areas. Much recent discussion on the development of the school teaching profession in Scotland has centred upon two national reports published by the Scottish Government in 2011: *'Teaching Scotland's Future: Report of a review of teacher education in Scotland'* (the Donaldson Report), and *'Advancing Professionalism in Teaching: The Report of the Review of Teacher Employment in Scotland'* (the McCormac Report). The paper by Aileen Kennedy, William Barlow and James MacGregor provides a critical review of the McCormac Report. Having outlined contrasting perspectives on professionalism in academic literature, Kennedy *et al.* specifically consider the conceptualisation of professionalism in the Report by using critical discourse analysis (CDA) to interrogate the text. They conclude that the dominant form of professionalism being employed in the Report is managerial, not collaborative or democratic. Kennedy *et al.* give particular focus to the Report's mobilisation of the concept of professionalism in discussing a managerial approach to teacher 'flexibility', and the extent to which the direction of the Report is driven by financial, rather than professional, imperatives. They conclude that the text of the Report contains no explicit definition of professionalism, but that there is 'some evidence of the concept being mobilised as a form of control over teacher behaviour'.

The paper by James Avis, Roy Canning, Roy Fisher, Brenda Morgan-Klein, and Robin Simmons moves from issues of school teacher professionalism specifically to the consideration of teachers involved in providing vocational education and training in Scotland and England, principally as delivered in colleges of further education, but also in private training providers, particularly in England. In reviewing and discussing the recent development of vocational education teacher training (VETT) for these teachers, Avis *et al.* cover issues of professionalism as well as governance, regulation and pedagogy. The recent development of VETT policy and systems in Scotland and England is analysed within a 'home international' intra-comparative framework, but this analysis is also set in a wider European context. When viewed within a 'cross-border' setting, Avis *et al.* conclude that there may be significant differences in the ways that Scotland and England have responded to the pressures of neo-liberal competitiveness and globalisation, especially in relation to systems of governance and regulation. However, they also argue that there is an underlying similarity in the way in which both countries have 'by and large disengaged from European policy making in vocational education teacher training'.

The paper by Valerie Dickie, Kai Dunker and Vibhor Saxena considers a topic that relates to the professionalism of teaching in higher education. Dickie *et al.* analyse the position of graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) in higher education in Scotland, i.e. postgraduate students, mainly research (Ph.D.) students, who assist in the learning and teaching process on programmes. In the absence of HESA statistics on the employment of GTAs, the paper reports the findings from a survey of postgraduate students studying in Scotland, and seeks to define and explain the nature and characteristics of the GTA labour market in Scotland. Analysis of this data suggests that GTAs perform a variety of academic duties, and receive a wide range of hourly rates of pay. Training provision varies, and is mostly generic, not subject-specific. While some feedback and support mechanisms are evident, these are not universally provided. Dickie *et al.* expose 'a labour market with an imperfect structure, a market which lacks transparency and is without universally accepted conditions regarding responsibilities, duties, rates of pay and training'. They argue that 'Increased attention is likely to focus on this imperfect labour market as the quality and value

for money debate gathers pace and becomes a priority for new high fee paying students that opt to study in Scotland from 2012'. Dickie *et al.* emphasise the particular importance of issues around the employment of GTAs because they anticipate a likely 'increased reliance on GTAs to help maintain quality and excellence in higher education'.

The paper by Beth Christie and Peter Higgins moves to consideration of the curriculum for schools, focusing on residential outdoor learning within the Scottish context. Christie and Higgins reflect on the philosophy and theory underpinning outdoor learning. More specifically, they examine a particular example of outdoor learning provision, Aiming Higher with Outward Bound, an educational initiative introduced into secondary schools in North Lanarkshire, Scotland. Using the central themes of progression, connection and relevance, Christie and Higgins argue that such initiatives, and residential outdoor learning experiences more generally, have continuing relevance for the school curriculum, both in terms of current policy frameworks and more widely. They begin to articulate the links of outdoor learning to current Curriculum for Excellence initiatives in Scotland. Christie and Higgins conclude by offering potential suggestions for related future development and research which will ensure that outdoor learning 'can contribute to the major contemporary objectives facing schools as well as the current direction of modern curricula'.

The paper by John L. Powell is unusual in that it is not produced by a researcher currently active in the university sector. Rather, the paper was submitted by the author as a former senior member of staff of The Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE). The writer's motivation was to provide an overall history of SCRE from its foundation in 1928 until its ending as a separate organisation in 2003, given that previous histories of SCRE (one of them an unpublished Ph.D) covered only the years from 1928 to 1993. Following normal reviewing processes, the Editorial view was that this paper provides a distinctive record of a very important organisation in the history of Scottish education, which will be of permanent value to researchers on Scottish educational history. Of course, while Powell's 'insider' position enables him to provide unique insights into the history of SCRE, his more general views on current approaches to the funding of educational research etc. are his own, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editorial Board and the wider contemporary educational research community.

As continuing features, the edition contains Morag Redford's careful review of the activities of the Scottish Parliament's Education and Culture Committee from February to August 2012, as well as a number of book reviews on: Youth Work and Communities and Schools; Europeanizing Education; Coaching and Mentoring; Beginning Interpretive Inquiry; Creating Communities of Writers.

Ian Smith, November 2012