

What is it like to be a Chartered Teacher doing action research?

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed by myself, that the work is my own, and that the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signature:

Date: October 2010

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Abstract

This thesis explores what it is like to be a Chartered Teacher doing action research. Much of the literature relating to teachers as action researchers tends to focus on teachers' research endeavours as part of award-bearing courses or university partnerships. This study, however, explores different terrain. It investigates teachers' experiences of undertaking action research post-award as part of their practice as a Chartered Teacher.

Action research has become a widely accepted and popular form of teacher professional development/learning, within the UK and internationally, and forms part of the professional actions of the Scottish Chartered Teacher. Whilst action research may be a valuable form of professional development supported through award-bearing courses (such as the Scottish Chartered Teacher programmes), funded projects or partnerships with university colleagues, it is questionable to what extent this is continued or even valued by teachers beyond the parameters of CPD courses. If Chartered Teachers are to engage meaningfully in action research then it is vital we understand how they perceive the nature and purpose of such activities and explore the opportunities and limitations they may face. This is not just an issue for Chartered Teachers in Scotland but one that may concern any teacher attempting to engage in action research as part of their practice.

To explore teachers' lived experience of engaging in post-award non-funded action research a case-study approach was adopted. The case study comprised six qualified Chartered Teachers with this thesis focusing on the stories from three of the teachers. In-depth loosely structured interviews were held with participants at three intervals over the course of a year to discuss their current and ongoing action research work. In addition visual data was created by participants to explore, share, (re)present and negotiate their understandings of action research. Documentary data was also collected. A broadly inductive approach to the analysis was taken, coding both within and across cases. A thematic narrative analysis of the individuals' stories was also undertaken because I believe teachers' individual stories are critically important and was keen not to reduce these to 'codes' and 'categories'.

Emerging from the data are three significant themes - the importance of understanding the nature and purpose of action research; the teachers' evolving identities as Chartered Teachers/action researchers; and the need to develop and promote a Third Space – creating a conceptually different way of being a teacher.

The data shows that traditional notions of research are influencing these teachers' understanding of action research and this limits their action research work. How teachers understand the nature and purpose of action research is deeply interrelated with their identity as a teacher/Chartered Teacher/action researcher. Their identity(ies), I suggest, is/are a site of struggle, contestation and negotiation and Chartered Teachers are, arguably, in an in-between space: they are simultaneously teacher and researcher, yet they are neither one nor the other. It is possible, then, to understand Chartered Teacher as a hybrid identity and I draw upon Third Space theory as a heuristic to understand Chartered Teacher as a distinctly different way of

being a teacher. I argue that a more complex view is needed that promotes the dynamic and fluid nature of action research. The insights drawn from this study offer some understandings that may help us to (re)consider and (re)frame the way in which we understand the teacher as researcher.

(71164 words)

Glossary of Terms

AifL	Assessment is for Learning (the AifL programme was established in 2002 to develop a coherent framework for assessment for Scottish schools to support learning, see http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/assess/about/index.asp)
AST	Advanced Skills Teacher (Australia)
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CfE	A Curriculum for Excellence (new Scottish Curriculum 3-16, see http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/index.asp)
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CT	Chartered Teacher
GTCS	General Teaching Council for Scotland
HMIe	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education
LTS	Learning and Teaching Scotland
PT	Principal Teacher
SEED	Scottish Executive Education Department (until 2007)
SERA	Scottish Educational Research Association
SETT	Scottish Learning Festival
SG	Scottish Government (from 2007)
SNCT	Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers
SoA	Schools of Ambition (a government funded initiative to support school transformation which ran from 2005-2010, see http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/schoolsofambition/about/background.asp)
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority

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Chapter 1: An Introduction to the study: context and purpose

The research aims and focus

This thesis explores what it is like to be a Chartered Teacher engaging in action research. Ingvarson (2009:451) argues that: ‘nothing is as fundamental to the quality of students’ learning in schools, as the knowledge, judgement and skill of their teachers’ and therefore the continuing professional learning and development of teachers is of critical importance. Action research has become a widely accepted, potentially transformative and popular form of teacher professional development/learning, within the UK and internationally, and underpins part of the professional actions of the Scottish Chartered Teacher. Whilst action research may be a valuable form of professional development, supported through award-bearing courses such as the Scottish Chartered Teacher programmes, it is questionable to what extent this is continued - or even valued - by teachers beyond the parameters of such courses. Much of the literature relating to teachers as action researchers tends to focus on teachers’ research endeavours as part of award-bearing courses, formal university partnerships or small funded research projects. This study, however, explores different terrain. It investigates teachers’ actual experiences of undertaking action research post-award as part of their practice as a Chartered Teacher.

Michael Bassey (1999) suggests that individuals, despite engaging in research endeavours for academic award, tend not to continue to do so post-award. Action research is an important feature of the professional actions of a Chartered Teacher, as described in the Standard for Chartered Teacher (SEED, 2002). Therefore it would be pertinent to investigate the extent to which teachers do continue to engage in research activity beyond the formal study of Chartered Teacher programmes. If Chartered Teachers are to engage meaningfully in action research, it is vital to understand how they perceive the nature and purpose of such activities and to explore the opportunities and limitations they may face. I am, therefore, particularly interested in those teachers who have achieved Chartered Teacher status and who are still committed to the idea of continuing to engage in action research, even though it

is not part of an award-bearing course. My research is thus designed to explore some of these issues with the following overarching research question:

“What is it like to be a Chartered Teacher doing action research?”

The aim of the research is to understand Chartered Teachers’ lived experience of engaging in post-award, non-funded action research. My research, through a collective case study of six qualified Chartered Teachers, explores their beliefs, assumptions, values and experiences etc. of engaging in action research and examines their dynamic, unique and complex contexts. To obtain an in-depth and rich view of what it is like for a Chartered Teacher engaging in action research, a number of subsidiary questions were considered. These included:

Wider policy context

- How is action research promoted/described/represented within documentation relating to the work of Chartered Teachers?

Chartered Teachers’ previous/current knowledge and experience of action research

- What are Chartered Teachers’ previous experiences of action research?
- What do they understand action research to be?
- What purpose(s) did/do they see action research fulfilling, in terms of their own professional development and any potential impact on colleagues, their school/professional context and pupils and their learning.

Current and ongoing experiences of doing action research

- Why do teachers (in this study) wish to pursue doing action research?
- What are their experiences of doing this action research?
- What are teachers’ perceptions of themselves as action researchers?
- What impact (if any) is this having on them and their practice, their professional context and their pupils?
- What are the influencing contextual factors and in what ways are these shaping and informing the Chartered Teachers’ action research process?
- Are any tensions emerging for the Chartered Teachers as they attempt to engage in action research projects?

Developing this kind of understanding of teacher research and teachers as researchers is not just important for Chartered Teachers in Scotland, but may concern any teacher attempting to engage in action research as part of their practice.

My Professional Interest

Later in this chapter I shall explain and discuss more fully the underpinning principles of the Chartered Teacher scheme and a brief overview of its history. First however, I believe it appropriate to explain my own professional interest and the currency of this topic. I am interested in teachers' professional development, in particular their engagement with action research as part of their professional learning. One part of my role as a lecturer at Edinburgh University involves my working closely with experienced teachers who are returning to university to undertake a Masters degree (the MTeach), leading to the award of the status of Chartered Teacher.

It would appear from recent research exploring the experiences of teachers engaging in Chartered Teacher study, that they are meeting with considerable challenges in attempting to initiate change and undertake action research within their own professional contexts. This is often regarded as challenging the traditional hierarchical structures within schools (Reeves 2007). This issue was echoed in my own earlier research with a cohort of Chartered Teacher candidates. One teacher doing action research as part of the MTeach(Chartered Teacher) course commented that she felt she was "swimming against the tide of the profession" (Williamson & Robinson, 2009). I find this particularly troubling as I believe teachers' engagement in action research is not only a fundamental aspect of the Chartered Teacher initiative, but also a core activity for teachers' professional learning and development potentially leading to transformative change. A recent report published by McMahon and Reeves (2008) on the impact of the Chartered Teacher initiative in Scotland, commissioned as part of the Chartered Teacher Review in 2007, further reinforces this. It reports that teachers believe engagement in structured practitioner enquiry has had the most effect on their professional development and should

continue to be a core activity for Chartered Teachers. As Hagger and McIntyre (2006:174) suggest: ‘engaging in classroom action research is one of the most rigorous ways in which practising teachers can set about improving their practice’.

Much of the current research about Chartered Teachers has focused on Chartered Teachers’ motivations for engaging in Chartered Teacher study and the perceived impact of this. However, there is very little research into sustained impact or the experiences of Chartered Teachers post-award. Whilst it is reported that action research is of significant value to the teachers, there is no exploration of: what this research is perceived to be; its value; its purpose and indeed teachers’ experiences of actually attempting to engage in such an activity. We do not currently have a developed understanding of teachers experiences post qualification. Hence, with the recent Review of Chartered Teacher and with the number of qualified Chartered Teachers now reaching just over 1000, this study is timely.

Chartered Teacher being a relatively new initiative within Scotland, what it means to be a Chartered Teacher is very much still evolving (Reeves, 2007). I foreground action research as the focus of this study because a central component of the Standard for Chartered Teacher is ‘professional action.’ Furthermore, one of the core forms of this professional action is the promotion of Chartered Teachers engaging in ‘action research’ as a way to ‘critically self-evaluate and develop practice’ (SEED, 2002).

It would be pertinent to point out at this time the problematic nature of the very term ‘action research’. Different underpinning ontological and epistemological assumptions inform the nature, purpose, value and process of any action research. I do not intend to provide a single, definitive version of what ‘action research’ is. Instead, I regard this research as an opportunity to explore in some depth what it might mean for Chartered Teachers in the current Scottish context. In Chapter Two, the literature review, I examine more fully some of the dominant understandings of action research in the literature. Numerous terms are often used synonymously with action research, such as ‘practitioner enquiry’, ‘teacher research’ and ‘professional

enquiry'. For the purposes of initial consistency and clarity, I shall use the term action research as this is used in the Standard for Chartered Teacher. I revisit the use of this term in Chapter Eight as I reflect on the insights and understandings gained from this study.

Throughout the rest of this chapter I will provide first of all a brief history of some challenges and changes within the teaching profession in Scotland and will outline some of the significant policy developments relating to, and influencing, the development of the Chartered Teacher initiative. I will then provide an overview of the underpinning principles of Chartered Teacher as described in the Standard for Chartered Teacher. The chapter will end with a brief synopsis of the structure of the thesis.

The teaching profession in Scotland: challenges and changes

The teaching profession is in a state of transition. The issue of teacher professionalism is a focus of debate (Reeves, 2007) and the very concept of *profession* is contested (Hoyle & John, 1995:1). Andy Hargreaves (2003:125) argues teaching, as the 'core profession', is the 'key agent of change in today's knowledge society'. Consequently, this impacts on the perceived role of teachers and how teacher professionalism is to be understood. Within the Scottish context, recent policy developments are (re)shaping conceptions of professionalism. This is particularly evident from the initial McCrone Committee Inquiry into the Professional Conditions of Service of Teachers in 2000 and the subsequent McCrone Agreement of 2001, 'A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century', which outlines the pay and conditions for teachers.

Recent government reforms, both within Scotland and internationally, have been part of a wider strategy to ensure education systems function for a globalised knowledge economy. This is made explicit in the most recent curriculum reform in Scotland, 'A Curriculum for Excellence':

Like other countries, we face new influences which mean that we must look differently at the curriculum. These include global social, political and

economic changes, and the particular challenges facing Scotland: the need to increase the economic performance of the nation; reflect its growing diversity; improve health; and reduce poverty . . . (SEED, 2004:10)

The above sentiment illuminates one of the paradoxes for teachers and schooling: whether they are to act as the enablers of change in this modernisation agenda, or if schooling is about the reproduction of existing culture (Davies, 2002). This is not the mark of a new epoch in education; teacher professionalism has always been highly contested and, as Anderson (1998) remarks, throughout history, teachers have felt professionally disempowered. During the seventies and eighties of the last century, there was sustained critical review of professionals' claims. This centred on their expertise, knowledge and the implications of them acting as self-interested groups who simply denied choice to the public under the guise of this professional expertise (Clarke & Newman, 1997; Nixon *et al*, 1997). This contributed to the diminishing of trust in the teaching professions (Nixon *et al*, 1997). Critiques of the very purpose and process of the professionalisation of teaching emerged from a range of perspectives. Whilst it is not my intention to present a cogent or thorough discussion of this, it is worthwhile for me to present a brief overview to help contextualise my later discussion in Chapter Two.

Teacher Professionalism and the inception of Chartered Teacher: a brief look at the recent history of the Scottish policy context

The status of teachers and their role as professionals has been at the forefront of Scottish policy in recent years. After devolution in Scotland in 1999, one of the first acts of the new Parliament was to set up a Committee (which later became the McCrone Committee). Its remit was to inquire into the changes that needed to be made to create a 'framework providing fair and flexible pay and conditions of service for the teaching profession in the new millennium' (SEED, 2000). This framework was supposed to promote and reward "effectiveness in both teaching and school management" (SEED, 2000:71). McCrone was intended to modernise the teaching profession in Scotland and attempt to reposition teachers by addressing the apparent atrophy of teacher professionalism and the resulting demoralisation of teachers (Menter *et al*, 2004; Patrick *et al*, 2003; Kirk *et al* 2003).

The McCrone Committee was established in 1999 and after an extensive consultation process, a report was produced in 2000. This somewhat controversial report made a number of recommendations which were then further reviewed by key stakeholders before the proposals were sent to teachers. Agreement was reached in 2001 and this saw significant changes to teachers' salaries and conditions of service. The Agreement, 'A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century' has been reported as heralding the most major restructuring of the teaching profession in Scotland for thirty years (Lennon, 2003). Although the Agreement was wide ranging in its proposals covering teachers pay and conditions, for the purposes of this research I wish to identify only two key aspects: the first is the emphasis on teacher professional development and the second the introduction of a new grade of teacher - the Chartered Teacher.

McCrone emphasised the importance of continuing professional development (CPD) in strengthening the professional role of teachers. This had been also identified by the earlier Sutherland report of 1998, which stated that it was both an entitlement of the profession as well as an obligation. It is this emphasis on professional development that perhaps distinguishes the Scottish reforms from similar initiatives in England. As Menter *et al* (2004) suggest, the English Green paper, 'Teachers: Meeting the challenge of change', (DfEE, 1998, in Menter *et al*, 2004) placed a greater emphasis on the 'performance' management side and located teachers more as objects of policy who should implement whatever policy imperatives are placed upon them. There were still, however, strong overtones of a modernisation and improvement agenda within the McCrone Agreement and whilst the rhetoric may appear more democratic in the Scottish context, caution must be exercised. As Christie (2006) reminds us, the purposes of CPD, and in this case action research specifically, may be interpreted in different ways. This depends on the prevailing conceptions of teacher professionalism and in whose interests it may serve - a point to which I return in Chapter Two.

The second significant development from the McCrone Agreement was the introduction of Chartered Teacher status. Detailed discussion and accounts of the

background to the development of the Chartered Teacher initiative can be found in Connelly and McMahon, 2007; Purdon, 2003; and Reeves, 2007. There is also a particularly comprehensive account from Kirk *et al* (2003), who were heavily involved in the development of the scheme.

Chartered Teacher status was introduced with the purpose of being an alternative career pathway for teachers who did not wish to pursue a career in management. It was designed to recognise, reward and develop excellence in the classroom. According to Ingvarson, it ‘represents one of the most concerted policy efforts internationally to promote teacher quality’ (2009:465). England had introduced the Threshold scheme, which also was designed to offer an alternative pathway for teachers not wishing to enter management. However, the threshold scheme was perceived to be more oriented towards performativity. The Chartered Teacher programme differed in that it was oriented towards professional development (Menter *et al*, 2004). Reeves (2007) further exemplifies the distinction by identifying the framework upon which Threshold is based, seeing it as being largely a behaviourist set of standards in comparison to the more developmental Standard for Chartered Teacher, which is based on a model of action. Reeves (*ibid*) does, however, suggest that there is evidence of a more ‘soft’ managerial tone to the Standard for Chartered Teacher with hints of ‘educational operationalism’.

In contrast to the English Threshold initiative, it was agreed that the Chartered Teacher scheme should be achieved by academic qualification. It would be overseen by both Universities and the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) to ensure ‘academic and professional integrity’ (Christie, 2006). As it currently stands, teachers undertake modules as part of a Masters degree¹ leading to the award of Chartered Teacher status. The onus is on the teacher to meet the cost of this, although Chartered Teacher status comes with a significant pay increase – approximately 20% more than that of a teacher at the top of the main grade salary

¹ An ‘Accreditation Route’ was set up by the GTCS as part of the transition arrangements to accommodate experienced, long standing teachers who had already undertaken study at Masters level and were able to submit a claim against prior formal and experiential learning. This route closed in 2008.

scale. This is equivalent to around a £7000 increment for a fully qualified Chartered Teacher.

At present (May, 2010) there are 1010 qualified Chartered Teachers in Scotland. There are a further 3364 teachers who have already embarked on Chartered Teacher study and have completed one or more modules, with 524 of these teachers currently completing their full claim for the Accreditation Route². An additional 2000 teachers have applied for and received an eligibility certificate from the GTCS, but as yet have not recorded completion of the first course. Emerging, then, are large numbers of aspiring and qualified Chartered Teachers. However, what it means to be a Chartered Teacher and what is actually involved in the process requires rigorous examination.

Who/What is a Chartered Teacher?

Chartered Teacher status was introduced as a ‘grade’ of teacher rather than a specific ‘post’. This was to reinforce that Chartered Teachers were not part of the management structure and would not be expected to take on any additional management responsibility (Kirk *et al*, 2003:6). Instead, Chartered Teacher is intended to be an alternative career pathway for teachers not wishing to pursue a career in management. It is designed to recognise, reward and develop excellence in the classroom and is about developing the expertise of the teacher. Chartered Teacher status is achieved by qualification and is underpinned by the Standard for Chartered Teacher.

The Standard for Chartered Teacher was first published in 2002 and comprises part of the national framework for teachers’ continuing professional development. It is regarded as a significant enhancement of professional skill and understanding beyond the Standard for Full Registration. The Standard for Chartered Teacher was developed as part of a consultation process drawing on views of Scottish teachers and international literature on professional accomplishment (Kirk *et al*, 2003:16).

² Although the route itself closed for entry in August 2008, those already registered were given until August 2010 to complete their claim.

The Chartered Teacher Standard is values-based and should not be regarded as simply a list of competencies. It is underpinned by professional values and commitments and, as Kirk *et al* comment, this ‘acknowledges that teaching is not reducible to a narrow set of skills or techniques’ (2003:17) instead it is a ‘value-laden activity’.

The Standard for Chartered Teacher consists of four key components:

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

In addition the Chartered Teacher is characterised by four central professional values and personal commitments:

- Effectiveness in promoting learning in the classroom
- Critical self-evaluation and development
- Collaboration and influence
- Educational and social values

The Standard states that ‘in every sphere of his or her work the Chartered Teacher should be reviewing practice, searching for improvements, turning to reading and research for fresh insights and relating these to the classroom and the school’ (2002:3). Engagement with research and an enquiring approach to professional development is a core aspect of professional activity. Emphasis is placed on critical self-evaluation and a commitment to improved practice, this critical self-evaluation and development being underpinned by reading and research. Chartered Teachers are not only expected to keep abreast of the latest educational research but should be ‘evaluating practice and reflecting critically on it’ (2002:10) and should ‘ensure that teaching is informed by reading and research’ through generating and analysing evidence of impact and ‘engaging in professional enquiry and action research’ (2002:10). The Standard also states that Chartered Teachers should be ‘articulating a personal, independent and critical stance in relation to contrasting perspectives on educational issues, policies and developments’ (2002:12). It goes even further in

suggesting that the Chartered Teacher should develop a ‘philosophical awareness and understanding to provide a rationale for their work’ (SEED, 2002).

There is a strong emphasis on teachers engaging in reading and research and making explicit connections to practice. Kirk *et al* (2003) explain that whilst the traditional schism between research and practice continued to exist in schools, notions of reflective practice had gained significant credibility and were seen as a way to bridge the gap between theory and practice. The Standard, then, was designed to ensure that issues of theory and practice were given equal importance and notions of teacher research given greater legitimacy. This reinforced the idea that ‘theorising about teaching, thinking seriously about how it might be more effectively conducted, is an integral feature of the practice of teaching’ (2003:24) and Chartered Teachers are expected to have a more active engagement in research and development work (Kirk *et al*, 2003:28). Aspirations for Chartered Teacher are high and Kirk *et al* suggest that they are, or potentially could be, ‘active agents in the transformation of the work of the school’ (2003:18). I would argue this challenges prevalent conceptions of teacher professionalism, a point I return to in Chapter Two.

Chartered Teacher Review

In 2006, Hugh Henry, the then Minister for Education and young People announced that the Chartered Teacher scheme should be reviewed with the aim of evaluating its impact and considering possible future developments of the scheme. A Review Group was set up and was tasked to consider: issues of eligibility; the assessment process; the Standard for Chartered Teacher; the profile of teachers undertaking it; the use of Chartered Teachers in school; issues affecting uptake of the scheme and the future of the accreditation route. The group met with a variety of stakeholders and reviewed some current research projects into the Chartered Teacher scheme which were investigating the impact of Chartered Teachers and their views (for example, McGeer, 2009; Reeves & McMahon, 2008). The Review Group produced 12 recommendations, one of which is particularly pertinent to the present study:

Recommendation 1: That the GTCS should, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, review the Standard for Chartered Teacher and the Chartered Teacher modular route format. (SG, 2008:9)

The review of the Standard is significant because this underpins and influences what it means to be a Chartered Teacher. It informs the professional actions of Chartered Teachers and is the Standard by which any aspiring Chartered Teacher is assessed. Any changes to the Standard may well have vital implications for programmes of study and the ways in which Chartered Teachers work in schools. The GTCS undertook a consultation process to review and revise the Standard for Chartered Teacher. This involved a review group comprising various stakeholders, including university representatives from the Chartered Teacher programmes and Chartered Teachers. The revised Standard was introduced in June 2009 and at the same time the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) produced a Code of Practice on The Role of the Chartered Teacher.

The revised Standard does much to reinforce the original core principles as stated in the original Standard. It reinforces that Chartered Teachers:

are expected to be at the forefront of critically engaging with practice and to take a leading role in its development and implementation of change in current and future educational initiatives (GTCS, 2009:1)

It places greater and more explicit emphasis on the need for Chartered Teachers to be able to take on a leadership role and to act in more critically challenging ways with research underpinning their actions. It states that the Chartered Teacher is a ‘critically informed, reflective practitioner who systematically evaluates the nature and extent of impact achieved for learners and learning’ (GTCS, 2009:10).

One change in the new Standard that is of significance for this study, is a shift in language from the original use of the term ‘action research’ to ‘practitioner research’ being used in the Revised Standard. In my final concluding chapter I shall discuss more fully, possible future implications of this change in terminology. However, the teachers in this study were working within the framework of the original Standard

for Chartered Teacher, and so it is this document to which I shall refer throughout the thesis, unless stated otherwise.

As mentioned above, following the Review Group's recommendations the SNCT produced a Code of Practice for Chartered Teachers. This provides guidance on the role of Chartered Teachers. The code of Practice reinforces that Chartered Teachers should not be regarded as part of the management structure and that they remain classroom teachers. Like the revised Standard, it makes explicit that Chartered Teachers should play an important leadership role within their schools and also foregrounds the need for Chartered Teachers to be able to lead 'collegiate activities and professional enquiry' (2009:3).

Amongst the other recommendations the report explicitly suggests that the Chartered Teacher scheme should be endorsed, supported and promoted by all relevant stakeholders. It also advises that any study for Chartered Teacher should be included in a teacher's contractual 35 hours of CPD. This is an important step as it emphasises the value of the work Chartered Teachers do as part of their study and reaffirms the relevance to their practice and the needs of the school. The Report endorses the model of action that programmes of study should be built upon which bring together academic work and school practice. It also promotes action research projects, stating that this route involves 'genuine transformational change for participants as they work through school based action research projects' (SG, 2008:12). It is reassuring to find that, in rhetoric at least, the government is continuing to support a form of teacher professional development that is underpinned by teachers' engaging in action research. How it is understood and interpreted in practice is of course another matter.

Action research and the broader Scottish educational context

The promotion of action research is not limited to the Chartered Teacher programme. Within Scotland there are several national and local initiatives promoting 'teacher research', 'practitioner enquiry' and other variations of action research. However, Hulme *et al* (2009) suggest that although action research is promoted in Scotland, the

approach is somewhat piecemeal. The GTCS offers teachers an opportunity to engage in small-scale classroom research through the ‘Teacher Researcher Programme’. This initiative provides successful applicants with a small grant to enable them to carry out a research project. The research must be about improving teaching and learning and must support teacher professionalism. There are ‘research priorities’ to guide applicants towards ‘preferred’ topics for study, although there is scope for submitting a research proposal not directly related to these priorities. The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) has also provided funding for small scale action research projects which explore ‘ways in which current and future qualifications and assessment can support and enable Curriculum for Excellence aims, values, and principles’ (SQA, 2010). The Schools of Ambition (SoA) programme ran from 2006-2010 and provided schools with significant funding to support school transformation and promoted action research as central to school change. University mentors supported the school research projects. These mentors were intended to support, among other things: teachers refining the focus of enquiry; data collection and analysis; ethical practice in teacher research and dissemination (Hulme *et al*, 2009).

Engagement with research is also promoted at all stages of a teacher’s professional development and actions, through the framework of Professional Standards (Kirkwood & Christie, 2006). The Standard for Initial Teacher Education suggests students should, from this early stage, be learning about and ‘engage appropriately in professional enquiry such as action research’ (GTCS, 2006:14). The Standard for Full Registration and the Standard for Headship also promote active engagement with research.

It has been my intention in this section to provide an outline and overview of the development of the Chartered Teacher initiative and how it is located in the wider Scottish Educational context. I have explored its inception as part of the McCrone Report and subsequent Agreement in 2001 up to the most recent review of the scheme in 2007 and the subsequent introduction of a revised Standard and Code of Practice. The purpose of this was to present sufficient background detail and

contextual information to allow the reader to engage with the ideas and arguments developed in the rest of the thesis.

Structure of this thesis

In this introduction I have brought attention to several issues influencing and informing the Chartered Teacher initiative and I discuss these more fully in the Literature Review presented in Chapter Two. The literature review explores action research and teachers as action researchers/Chartered Teachers. Specifically, I discuss the discourses of professionalism that appear to locate and influence the Chartered Teacher and I extend this to a brief discussion about the professional identity of Chartered Teachers. I then introduce and discuss some frameworks and models of action research and examine underpinning ontological and epistemological concerns that inform its nature, purpose and process. The chapter concludes with an overview of some recent research into the Chartered Teacher initiative, specifically that which relates to Chartered Teachers doing action research.

In Chapter Three I present and discuss the methodological considerations informing and influencing the design of this research. I explain the ways in which my ontological and epistemological positions frame the choices I have made in designing this case-study research and, in particular, the importance I place on developing understandings from the local, particular and unique stories of those involved.

Following on from the methodology in Chapter Four are ‘The Teachers’ Stories’. Through this chapter I present the narratives I have written about the three teachers upon whom I have chosen to focus for the purposes of this thesis. The aim of these narratives is to introduce the teachers and to provide some insight into their experiences. These narratives go some way towards introducing the key ideas of the subsequent thematic chapters.

As I unpick and question what it is like for a Chartered Teacher to do action research, three themes appear to emerge that underpin their experiences and

understandings. These three themes form the structure of the main analytical chapters.

In Chapter Five I explore the nature and purpose of action research, drawing on insights from the Chartered Teachers. Through this chapter the protean nature of action research is explored and questioned in relation to the teachers' experiences. I introduce the notion that action research can be regarded as a boundary dweller, resting in an 'in-between space' between theory and practice.

In Chapter Six this theme is continued as I unpick and construct some understandings around the emerging, shifting, conflicting identities of the teachers involved. The issue of being and becoming a Chartered Teacher/action researcher is prominent and I explore the notion of identity as fluid, multiple and socially constructed. I discuss what I regard to be a process of alterity for these teachers and consider the liminal space they occupy.

This culminates in the final chapter of this section, Chapter Seven focusing on creating and conceptualising Third Spaces. Throughout this chapter I use Bhabha's (1994) notion of the Third Space as a heuristic device to think about, question and understand not only what it is like to be a Chartered Teacher doing action research, but also what supports, structures and attitudes help promote this in the most meaningful ways. I look towards ideas of Third Space to challenge some long held and taken for granted beliefs about teachers as researchers.

In Chapter Eight I draw together the issues I have raised throughout the thesis pertaining to what it is like for a Chartered Teacher to do action research. From the insights I have gained, I consider possible future openings and opportunities, not only for Chartered Teachers specifically, but also and more widely, for the range of other practitioners within the educational community with whom they might work.

Chapter 2: Action Research and Teachers as Action Researchers/Chartered Teachers

In order to explore what it is like to be a Chartered Teacher doing action research it is necessary to consider why this might be deemed an appropriate or worthwhile activity for teachers and Chartered Teachers. It is also important to consider what views of professionalism inform and influence this and develop an understanding of the differing conceptions of action research.

I begin this literature review by discussing issues of teacher professionalism and teacher professional identity. I will approach this from two competing views of professionalism that, I believe, are pertinent to the Scottish context. The way in which these are influencing and informing the nature and role of Chartered Teacher will be discussed. I will then go on to outline briefly some of the major views of the nature and purpose of action research before presenting Noffke's Professional, Personal and Political dimensions as a way of understanding the nature and purpose of action research. I use these dimensions as an overarching framework to develop my own understandings of action research; and as a lens to make sense of the stories teachers share regarding their action research work. This literature review will then conclude with a specific look at the Scottish Chartered Teacher context; the relevant literature and research emerging from this initiative and the contribution I believe this study will make to this field.

Chartered Teacher and discourses of professionalism

It would be prudent to start by examining prevailing discourses of professionalism, because, as Clarke & Newman (1997:92) point out, these 'discourses offer particular kinds of subject positions and identity through which people come to view their relationships with different loci of power'. Discourses frame our actions and shape our perceptions. In this case, they do so by conceptualising professionalism within the educational field and what it means, or might mean, to be a Chartered Teacher doing action research. Danaher *et al* (2000), interpret Foucault as saying that discourses define the parameters of how we see, understand or 'make sense' of our experiences. Through Barker's (Barker, 1998) understanding of Foucault's position,

we can see how the rules, roles and hierarchies that are produced from these discourses serve to regulate behaviours in particular ways. Perhaps most importantly, we also come to understand who speaks on behalf of whom, to whose benefit, serving whose interests and at whose expense (Barker, 1998; Moore, 2004).

Discourses, of course, are not static; they are contested and negotiated. Some will prevail over others at different times. Furthermore, understanding and meaning will vary from ‘...society to society, culture to culture, and from ‘stakeholder’ to ‘stakeholder’ (Moore, 2004:33). Therefore we must interrogate the emerging discourse(s), and ‘critique the canon’ (Fine, in Smyth & Shacklock, 1998:27), analysing the power and status created for particular groups or stakeholders. For this study, and for the Chartered Teacher initiative more generally, fundamental questions need to be asked regarding what versions of professionalism prevail and whose interests they serve (Whitty, 2002; Smyth & Shacklock, 1998). Reid (2003), The taking of a labour-process perspective demands that we ask not only questions about how teachers are being ‘controlled’ but also the impact of this control on their work.

As I see it, two discourses frame the current debate regarding professionalism: managerial discourse and democratic discourse (Sachs, 2003; Kennedy, 2007). These two contrasting paradigms are informing different reforms in teacher professionalism and set the parameters of what is debated. Within the Scottish context, policies are emerging which are underpinned by notions of a new professionalism. However there appears to be a lack of clarity over what is actually meant by a ‘new professionalism’ (Patrick *et al*, 2003). Sachs (2003), speaking from an Australian perspective, draws our attention to democratic and managerial perspectives of professionalism. The managerial perspective speaks more to notions of effectiveness, individual accountability and measurable outcomes, placing greater emphasis on compliance and general acceptance of management and authority. (Sachs, 2003:26; Kennedy, 2007:98). The democratic perspective leans more towards an emphasis on values, attitudes and knowledge, thus promoting collaborative actions rather than individualistic ways of operating. It places emphasis on the knowledge and power of

the teacher rather than solely of the manager and builds on stronger relationships between different groups within the educational community – rather than promoting linear top-down hierarchies.

These debates about teacher professionalism and the underpinning notions of a managerialist and democratic professionalism are well rehearsed in the literature from Scottish, UK and international perspectives (see for example: Gewirtz, 2002; Kennedy, 2007; Reeves, 2007; Sachs 2003). I intend to explore in more depth the underpinning assumptions of both these competing discourses with reference to Chartered Teacher and some underpinning assumptions about teachers engaged in action research. As Reeves (2007) suggests, Chartered Teacher is ‘entering a space between competing discourses of teacher professionalism . . .’. The very meaning and concept of Chartered Teacher will be shaped by the discourse(s) that dominates. It is also, I believe, an opportunity for those involved in and enacting the policies (for example Chartered Teachers and those working with Chartered Teachers) to shape, influence and inform what it becomes. It is imperative, then, that the prevailing ideologies are questioned and examined.

Important issues are then raised with regard to the Chartered Teacher initiative: how will a Chartered Teacher programme, influenced by a discourse of democratic professionalism, affect the professional identity of teachers, Chartered Teachers and aspiring Chartered Teachers, not to mention the potential wider impact upon the educational community? Conversely, if the programme is influenced more by the technical-rational discourse of the managerialist agenda, what impact will this have on the future of the programme and (Chartered) teacher professional identity? What kind of action research will be promoted within each of these perspectives? I raise these questions rhetorically and as a way to bring to the fore important issues of teacher professionalism within the context of Chartered Teacher.

Managerial discourse

Recent policy in Scotland relating to the work and lives of teachers (as identified in Chapter One) arguably speaks to both managerial and democratic discourses of

professionalism and is creating this contested space, as highlighted by Reeves (2007). However, despite a political rhetoric in Scotland that may suggest otherwise, it would appear that the teaching profession is more influenced by a managerialist perspective which is constraining teachers' professionalism (Forde *et al*, 2006; Kennedy, 2007). This managerialist discourse, as recognised by authors from Scottish, wider UK and international contexts, speaks of tighter controls, regulation, accountability, standards, performance indicators, targets and performativity (Forde *et al* 2006; Hargreaves, 2003; Kennedy, 2007; Reeves, 2007; Smyth & Shacklock, 1998; Whitty, 2002).

Teacher professionalism as promoted through a managerialist perspective, arguably, leads to the de-skilling, de-professionalising and demoralising of teachers (Kennedy, 2007; Kincheloe, 2003; Locke *et al* 2005). Teachers are controlled through a discourse of 'performativity' (Ball, 2001:143) which speaks of performance targets, outcomes, standards, competencies and benchmarks (Avis, 2005; Webb, 2006). Giroux (1997, in Kincheloe, 2003:12) argues that these technical standards '...become regulatory forces that limit the professional discretion of teachers'. Teachers are regarded as the implementers of policy and the deliverers of pre-packaged curriculum materials, locating them as receivers rather than producers of knowledge. They are accountable to government, local authority and local management structures. This view of teacher professionalism attempts to create homogeneity across the profession and has led to a loss of trust and autonomy among teachers (Reeves, 2007; Woods & Jeffrey, 2002).

Counter arguments favouring managerialism, as highlighted by Whitty (2002) suggest that the managerial discourse is more about 're-professionalising' and empowerment through the devolution of responsibility (for delivering curriculum programmes) to individual teachers. However, what is silent in this rhetoric is the lack of devolution of power. Teachers are working within parameters defined by the competencies framework imposed upon them. The teacher, then, is expected to seek the most effective ways of implementing policy initiatives. It could be argued that the devolution of responsibility to teachers while maintaining performance controls,

allows for the appropriation of blame upon individual teachers rather than on governmental policies (Smyth & Shacklock, 1998; Moore, 2004) and thus becomes a more subtle form of control.

To exemplify this point it is worth turning to the Australian context and the introduction of the Advanced Skills Teacher (AST). The AST scheme, like Chartered Teacher, was promoted as a new and enhanced career pathway designed to recognise and reward excellent practice, keeping 'good' teachers in the classroom and making teaching appear a more attractive career to enter (Smyth & Shacklock, 1998). The scheme promoted a notion of the 'preferred' teacher who worked effectively, efficiently and exemplified excellence. It thus created teachers with what Menter *et al* (1997) describe as an 'enterprising identity'. Consequently, the scheme served as another 'iron cage' where reflection, far from being an empowering or emancipatory process, took place only within the constraints of the dominant ideologies and policies imposed from above (Smyth, 1992). The teachers were not afforded the opportunities or legitimate spaces to question the policies or initiatives being introduced. Rather, they were regarded as the proponents of the latest government ideologies.

The dominant managerialist discourse does not encourage teachers to question either their professionalism or the wider issues about schooling and education (Bottery & Wright, 1996, in Smyth & Shacklock, 1998). It is this lack of questioning that disenfranchises teachers and, as Reeves *et al* (2002) argue, 'robs them of their professionalism'. This has led to what Sachs (2003:12) describes as a 'crisis of legitimacy of the teaching profession'. If this is to be addressed, then there needs to be a shift in thinking, there being required a 're-culturing of the teaching profession' (Fullan, 2001:136). Teachers, as part of their practice, must ask fundamental questions about education since teaching is ultimately a moral, intellectual and political activity (Sachs, 2003; Smyth & Shacklock, 1998).

Democratic discourse

Spaces must be created that provide opportunities and support for teachers to engage in critical questioning of educational ideology and policy. For teachers, this must involve a move away from the 'how to' and they must start asking the more difficult and complex questions of 'what and why' (Ozga, 2000). This questioning of the canons could be seen as one of the central tenets of Sachs' (2003) 'Transformative Professionalism'. This concept of professionalism rests within the democratic discourse and is in direct challenge to the propositions of managerialism.

A democratic professionalism, according to Sachs (2003), demands that teachers question and understand themselves and their role within a broader societal perspective: challenging taken-for-granted assumptions about teaching; collaborating and questioning; and being 'policy active' and 'enquiry oriented'. She contends that this democratic professionalism is something that is emerging from within the profession itself and will challenge the managerialist agenda, which has stemmed from top-down hierarchies. The Chartered Teacher initiative, I believe, potentially offers the opportunity and spaces to realise the aims of what Sachs describes as transformative professionalism. I shall explore this further and to help provide a structure for this discussion I draw, somewhat loosely, on Sachs' (2003) conceptual framework for transformative professionalism and use this to locate the potential position of Chartered Teachers. I shall focus primarily on her conceptual constructions of learning, participation and activism.

Democratic professionalism: learning

The Teaching profession must become a better learning profession (Fullan, 2001:266)

Teacher education is a critical factor in any transformation in education (Caldwell, 1997 cited in Ozga, 2000). At the core of transformational teacher education is the teacher as researcher, questioning their own assumptions and beliefs about education and investigating and enquiring into their own practice and beyond.

To question their assumptions and beliefs, teachers, according to Smyth (1992), must engage in academic study. This is critical if we are to counter Dewey's concern for teachers' apparent 'tendency to intellectual subservience' (1992:96) This is an issue less to do with the intellectual *capabilities* of teachers themselves, and more an issue bound in the cultural mindset of the 'professional milieu' - something which is evident within the teaching profession today. There is a pervasive and deep culture permeating the teaching profession which undermines the theoretical domain (Kennedy 2005:238; Kincheloe, 2003; Smyth, 1992). This is a damaging mindset that sits well within the 'de-professionalising' discourse. It reinforces a notion that research is something lying outwith the domain of teachers and teaching. Instead, the outcomes of external research, or the 'what works', is presented to teachers as neatly pre-packaged materials or initiatives that they are expected to simply implement without question. Within this perspective, teacher professional learning becomes transmissive rather than transformational, usually limited to attendance at a range of in-service sessions. These are designed to 'coach' or 'mentor' teachers in the latest initiative, but serve only to disempower teachers (Edwards *et al*, 2002). This model of teacher learning is not acceptable. If we are to move towards democratic professionalism teachers must reposition themselves as learners. The simple acquisition of a set of skills or information about the latest programmes is not sufficient; teachers must be encouraged and supported to challenge and question these 'initiatives' (Sachs, 2003; Hargreaves, 2003). This is intellectually demanding and not an anti-theoretical activity.

The rhetoric of Chartered Teacher could be seen as a fundamental step towards promoting professional learning, actively encouraging and supporting teachers in questioning those dominant ideologies which inform and impact upon their practice. Whether or not this 'activist' discourse is legitimised in practice is, of course, open to debate.

Professional learning is at the core of the entire Chartered Teacher programme. It is evident through the Standard for Chartered Teacher, both implicitly as well as explicitly, that teachers pursuing this route must not only be committed to their own

continuing professional development, but should also engage in ‘critical self evaluation and development’ and ‘evaluate practice and reflect critically on it’ (SEED, 2002). The Standard states that teachers should engage in professional enquiry and action research, and remain abreast of current research as well as contributing to the research field. These notions are echoed in both the original and revised Standard for Chartered Teacher.

However, for teachers to be able to engage in this depth of reflection and action research, spaces need to be created to support it. Learning does not take place in isolation, as Sachs (2003) has observed. Teachers need to be in an environment that values learning and promotes action research; one where they can work collaboratively and collegially, opening up lines of communication and ensuring they are active participants. Teachers as action researchers is not a new concept. However, the nature, purpose and process of teachers as action researchers is deeply contested and I intend to identify and explore some of these issues later in this thesis.

Participation

Professional Action is one of the four key components of the Standard for Chartered Teacher. This ‘professional action’ is not only an intellectual activity but also one that may, indeed should, challenge the current cultural and political climate. As Sachs (2003) explains; in order for a transformative professionalism to emerge, teachers must become ‘active participants’, constructing their own professional futures and engaging in debate and enquiry about education, in order to bring about improvement (Reeves *et al*, 2002). For this to happen, a high level of professional trust is required (Avis, 2005; Sachs, 2003; Hargreaves, 2003; Ball, 2001), both between teachers themselves and in teachers by the education and wider community.

Within the current educational policy context, there is a rhetoric of participation that talks of empowerment, collaboration and teacher voice. The danger is that this is empty rhetoric which, instead of being about genuine participation on the part of teachers, becomes no more than ‘contrived collegiality’. Hargreaves (2003) regards this ‘contrived collegiality’ as something that inhibits and constrains teachers’

engagement in action research, preventing genuine opportunities for collaborative practice. Instead, collaboration is imposed, the research agenda being set by others who dictate who will work with whom, when and how. Smyth and Shacklock (1998) recognised this as an issue within the Australian AST scheme, where participation was only seen to be acceptable if it did not challenge or question the rationale behind any imposed governmental scheme.

Similar issues are emerging within the Scottish context. Chartered Teacher candidates are meeting with some resistance from management and colleagues because what they are attempting to do is alien to the structural and cultural systems currently operating in schools. Reeves (2007) in her recent study of Chartered Teacher candidates found that teachers, in trying to engage in action research projects, were often fighting against the norm in their schools. This was due in part to School management who, she suggests, felt a loss of control. Where it was agreed that teachers could lead certain initiatives, this was required to be conducted within agreed parameters - and not to challenge traditional hierarchies or school/local authority/national policy initiatives.

Perhaps at the centre of this struggle is the issue of trust. Senior management teams will need to trust Chartered Teachers and such trust is one of the core aspects of developing Sachs' 'activist' professional. Active trust, Sachs (2003) contends, is not unconditional and can only be developed through a process of debate and negotiation over shared values, principles and strategies. The question then for the Chartered Teacher programme may be to ask how can we foster and promote this active trust within schools and between professionals at all levels of the hierarchy thus allowing for the development of the activist professional.

Activism

An 'activist' teacher may well appear very threatening to those whose work and beliefs are firmly rooted in the managerialist discourse. Teachers acting as 'agents of change' (Sachs, 2003) who are willing to take risks, to speak out and challenge policy may be viewed simply as troublemakers. Reeves (2007) found this to be an

issue in schools where Chartered Teacher candidates were faced with some resistance as they tried to initiate change, and where these actions challenged the traditional role of the teacher, as perceived by both colleagues and management. It may be unsurprising to find management reacting in such a way if teachers are under what Ozga (2000) has described as a form of 'direct rule' where their 'active participation' is discouraged. Any action on the part of the teacher to try and promote change may then be negatively perceived as militant behaviour. This, for me, raises an interesting question: where does activism end and militancy begin, and indeed is militancy a 'bad' thing?

I would argue that for activism rather than militancy to take place, relationships of trust need to be promoted and a genuinely collegial environment fostered. This will encourage teacher learning, and create spaces for teachers to question policy and theory. This must be recognised and legitimised in the 'official' discourse and realised by all those working in the field of education.

Current policy in Scottish education does appear to align with a democratic ideology, or promote a version of teacher professionalism that is democratic and arguably encourages an activist identity. The Standard for Chartered Teacher explicitly states that part of a Chartered teacher's *Professional Action* should involve them in 'articulating a personal, independent and critical stance in relation to contrasting perspectives on educational issues, policies and developments' (SEED, 2002:12). They should 'engage in critical discussion; undertake critical evaluations of policy; contribute and respond to changes; and be an initiator and advocate of change' (SEED, 2002). This discourse is further supported through the latest educational reform to emerge in Scotland, 'A Curriculum for Excellence'. This curriculum reform potentially offers teachers greater autonomy and further legitimises the need for teachers to actively question and critique teaching, learning and education as a whole. These various actions could potentially transform the teaching profession and lead to genuine teacher empowerment.

Professional Identity

Despite the emergence of two competing conceptions of teacher professional identity; the ‘entrepreneurial professional’ embedded within the rhetoric of managerialism and the ‘activist professional’ emerging from the democratic discourse, these identities cannot be forced upon teachers. Snow and Anderson (cited in Woods & Jeffrey, 2002) describe these ‘social identities’ as ‘attributed or imputed’ to others in order for us to locate them in social spaces. They will only become identities when the individual internalises the discourses and constructs their own meaning and understanding of them (Castells, 2004).

The notion of identity can be seen as the key construct for people to make sense of their experiences, to make meaningful and to understand their actions and to define themselves as, in this case, Chartered Teachers (Castells, 2004; Reeves *et al*, 2002). These social identities are not static, they are socially constructed and negotiated. They evolve through a process of interaction – politically, socially, and culturally. To draw upon the framework used by Day *et al* (2006), identities are affected by: the wider political and societal factors of the Macro structure; the culture and structure of schools at the Meso level; the Micro level factors of colleagues, parents, children and importantly also the teachers’ own personal biographies; their belief systems and assumptions. Teachers will need to re-establish their professional identities which will shift with time and discourses. They will negotiate and struggle with them and, in doing so, are likely to produce a plurality of selves, multiple identities that may even conflict with each other (Ball, 2001; Sachs, 2003; Castells, 2004, Casey, 1995, Wood & Jeffrey, 2002,).

One catalyst for transformation, or re-negotiation of identity, may be through the learning process which Chartered Teachers engage in as part of the programme. This learning is more than just the acquisition of a set of new skills or strategies to be implemented in the classroom; it involves a deeper engagement with educational issues, challenging the taken-for-granted and critically questioning policy, theory and practice. This process may be a site of tension and conflict for teachers. It makes it an uncomfortable experience as individuals question and challenge their own deep

held beliefs, assumptions and values as well as wider political, social and cultural issues impacting on their professionalism (Castells, 2004). They may find themselves as ‘living contradictions’ (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006), in conflict between their own values, self-representations and their social actions, possibly due to the constraints placed upon them and their developing understanding of who they are. It is ‘a process of becoming’ (Wenger 1998, cited in Sachs, 2003).

This process of identity building, or ‘project identity’ (Castells, 2004) which seeks to redefine the teachers’ position, is both an empowering and a destructive process (Ball, 2001). Potentially it may be particularly empowering for those teachers in the process of becoming Chartered Teachers, but only if they are able to take ownership of what it means to be a Chartered Teacher. These teachers will need to define their own professionalism and, if they are to challenge the dominant managerialist discourse and assume an ‘activist identity’, they will need courage and support. There appears to be a commitment to this in the rhetoric of recent policy in the Scottish context, but the challenge may be to disrupt the alternative conception of professionalism more closely associated with the dominant ideology of managerialism. Teacher professional identity is at the core of the profession and if the status of teaching is to be enhanced teachers must (re)negotiate their professional identities. As Bernstein (cited in Beck & Young, 2005) asserts, academic and professional reform are insufficient if academic and professional identity are not also restructured. Being and becoming a Chartered Teacher/action researcher and teachers’ professional identities emerged as significant issues from the data and are explored in greater depth in Chapter Six.

Action research – some frameworks and models

The nature, purpose and processes of action research and of teachers doing action research are widely debated in the literature. The varying stances, understandings and conceptions of it are informed by different underpinning ontological and epistemological assumptions. Although action research, now referred to as ‘practitioner enquiry/research’ in the revised Standard for Chartered Teacher is a core aspect of the professional actions of a Chartered Teacher, it is unclear how this

is conceptualised and given its 'protean nature' (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, 2004) It is thus in danger of becoming anything and everything.

A number of other terms are often used synonymously with action research. As an umbrella term Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2004:601) use 'practitioner inquiry' to include a wide range of practitioner based research endeavours. Within this we could include 'action research', 'self-study', 'professional inquiry/enquiry', 'practitioner research', 'practitioner enquiry' and 'teacher research' to name a few. What is perhaps more important than using one specific term, is understanding what is meant by action research (or one of the numerous other terms). We must understand the underpinning assumptions, beliefs and processes involved. Important issues that must be interrogated, as suggested by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2004:602), are: What can be known, by whom, for what purposes? What are the connections between knowledge, experience, research and practice, between researchers and practitioners and between knowledge generation and professional development? What is made problematic and what is assumed when teachers engage in action research must also be examined.

The literature discussing the nature, purposes and process of doing action research is vast. Numerous models and frameworks claim to help practitioners understand action research: what they should be doing, how and why - each with underpinning assumptions, although these are not always made explicit. I do not intend to provide a comprehensive account of the multiple conceptions of action research. Instead I shall briefly describe some major views and present one framework which I believe is particularly useful for thinking about action research for Chartered Teachers - Noffke's (2009) three dimensions: the professional, personal and political.

The reported purposes of action research are very diverse. These include: to empower teachers and encourage them to challenge and transform education; to provide a way for teachers to monitor and develop their own practice; to test new strategies and initiatives; to increase their knowledge of teaching and learning thus enabling them to make more professional and autonomous judgements and to

enhance their self-esteem and professional identity (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2004; Kincheloe, 2003; Lankshear & Knobel 2004; Zeichner 1993).

The process involved in teacher action research and the type of knowledge to be valued is also contested. Fishman and McCarthy (2000) present two opposing viewpoints: that which they refer to as the ‘Stenhouse camp’ which values systematic data collection, analysis and academic voice; and in contrast, that of Berthoff, emphasising the personal narrative of the teacher that encourages reflections on experience and engaging in dialogue about these.

One popular model of the different forms of action research was produced by Carr and Kemmis (1986:202). They draw upon Habermas’ knowledge constitutive interests, and identify three types of action research:

- Technical – focusing on finding solutions to relatively simple problems, often in search of ways to become more effective or efficient at implementing a particular programme or initiative.
- Practical – looking for ways to improve practice in the classroom, developing practical judgement, problematising issues and being open to self-reflection.
- Emancipatory – a critical engagement with issues, usually at a broader level such as challenging unjust social structures, which aims for transformation and empowerment

The model presented by Carr and Kemmis underpins some dominant conceptions of action research although it is regarded by some as being too hierarchical (see for example Somekh & Zeichner, 2009; Somekh, 2009 and Noffke, 2009). Zeichner (1993) is critical of this hierarchical model as it denigrates the value of teachers researching their own practice within the classroom by suggesting that ‘real’ action research must involve a questioning of the ‘macro-structures’ and a challenge to unjust systems (1993:201). Elliott also rejects the notion that action research must be emancipatory, but he is also critical of that which only seeks to promote the improvement of technical skills. Instead, he promotes more practical problem

solving and sees teacher action research firmly rooted within the teachers' own personal professional development (Elliott, 1991). However, Zeichner (1993) insists that much of this debate about the epistemological underpinnings is neither of relevance to the practitioner, nor is it particularly helpful. He contends that these arguments between the technical and the critical are simply distortions. The critical, he believes, is embedded in the micro-world of the teacher and therefore the teacher, in investigating their own classroom will, in some small way, be necessarily taking account of and perhaps questioning the structural conditions of their professional contexts (1993:207).

Noffke (2009) provides us with a framework to consider and examine the form and purpose of action research being undertaken by practitioners. She introduces what she believes are three dimensions of action research. I use these three dimensions as a framework to make sense of and understand the action research work the teachers in this study have engaged in, a discussion of which can be found in Chapter Five.

These dimensions are not, like the classification provided by Carr and Kemmis, hierarchical. Rather, she explains, they may be used to 'explore multiple layers of assumptions, purposes and practices' (2009:8). The three dimensions: personal, professional and political – are not discrete but interconnected, or as Noffke and Somekh (2009:1) describe it, they are 'fluid with porous boundaries'. Through specific action research activities, one dimension may be foregrounded more than the others, although none will be absent. Action research is always a political activity. The personal and professional dimensions are also ever present. What is critical is that those undertaking action research are aware of - and clear about - the assumptions underpinning their research and how the dimensions influence the action research.

Noffke (2009), and others (see above), challenge, and to some extent reject, the more hierarchical models of action research such as Carr and Kemmis' framework. However, I do believe that within Noffke's dimensions, action research may be conceived of in significantly different ways, promoting different purposes for doing

action research. For that reason, I believe it is worthwhile to present a brief overview of the nature and purpose of action research within the three dimensions and how these might influence Chartered Teachers as action researchers. It is important to note that whilst I am presenting each dimension separately in order to discuss issues pertinent to each, they are of course deeply interconnected.

The professional dimension

The professional dimension, according to Noffke (2009), highlights different purposes of action research. Firstly, the extent to which action research may be seen as a way to enhance the status and quality of the teaching profession is an important issue. It is assumed that through professional enquiry/action research teachers are able to enhance and improve their professional practice and the quality of teaching and learning. They do this by generating knowledge about practice, from practice and the research thus acts as an important bridge between theory and practice. This may be particularly apposite in the context of the Chartered Teacher initiative where Chartered Teachers are regarded as the ‘accomplished’ teacher or enhanced practitioner. Therefore, it may be assumed that the purpose of action research for Chartered Teachers is, in part at least, a way to enhance the status of Chartered Teachers specifically and the teaching profession more generally.

The knowledge generated by teachers doing action research can be understood in two different ways within this professional dimension. Teachers may be seen as contributing to the ‘knowledge base’ of teaching (Noffke, 2009:10), most often locally within their own professional contexts and using this knowledge primarily for their own personal professional development. As Noffke (*ibid*) points out, the difference may be whether action research is seen as a way of producing knowledge for self or for others. It is for these reasons that action research is perhaps regarded as a significant and worthwhile form of professional development. However, action research within the professional dimension may also be regarded as a distinct ‘way of knowing’ (Noffke, 2009:10). Within this understanding, teachers are legitimate producers of knowledge, generating new ways of understanding teaching, learning and practice within schools. This way of thinking changes, or at least challenges,

traditional notions of what it means to be a teacher and in what activities a teacher should/could legitimately be engaged. For Chartered Teachers, I would argue that this promotes a distinctive way of being a teacher: one who habitually engages in action research as part of their practice. This is a point which I discuss in Chapters Four and Five. This activity is inherently political.

Understanding the nature and purpose of action research within the professional dimension becomes more problematic when those involved choose to ignore, or are unaware of, the political or personal influences. Within an educational context influenced by managerial perspectives and a culture of performativity, action research may become somewhat technical. Noffke (2009:20) argues that the underpinning assumptions of action research must be exposed and problematised. Otherwise there is a very real risk that action research will simply serve to reinscribe, rather than challenge or question existing practices and deny opportunities to focus on issues of social justice. Arguably, this is evident through the promotion of 'evidence-based' practice.

Evidence-based practice appears to support, validate and promote teachers as researchers studying their own practice. However, what is actually promoted is that practice should be actively informed by evidence of 'what works' emanating from empirical experimental studies conducted by academic researchers. This 'gold standard' of research aims to produce 'what works' in education and to provide policy, strategies, initiatives and/or programmes of study that can be applied by teachers in practice (Biesta, 2007:2). Action research within this perspective, whilst still, in rhetoric at least, enhancing the professional status of the teaching profession, seeks only to find local ways of implementing these national, top-down 'best practices' in the most effective ways. As Biesta contends, this 'technocratic model' assumes the only relevant questions to be asked are about the;

effectiveness of educational means and techniques, forgetting, among other things, that what counts as "effective" crucially depends on judgments about what is educationally desirable. (Biesta, 2007:5)

What is absent from this perspective are the more critical questions about effective practices for what, for whom and why. Action research then becomes intervention focused and constrained by parameters defined from top-down. When action research is rooted within a technical perspective of knowing, its purpose is narrowly conceived. Action research arguably becomes a tool for performance management or, at best, a form of enquiry available to teachers in order to ascertain the best techniques or strategies to meet pre-specified goals or targets. It may allow teachers an insight into a particular condition, but tells them very little about the situations that have created that condition, or which alternatives to consider. Far from being an ‘empowering’ process for teachers it actually serves to limit the teachers’ professional autonomy and ultimately may serve to reduce, rather than enhance, professional status.

However, it must not be assumed that there is no place for the forms of enquiry and knowledge conceived within the technical perspective. Kincheloe (2003) acknowledges that there is a place for the type of knowledge and skills that are acquired through technical rational research. He realises some of these skills are fundamental to the work of excellent teachers but warns they are only one aspect and must be viewed within the context they are created.

It is therefore essential that if Chartered Teachers are to engage in action research, we must question the underpinning assumptions about the nature and purpose of that research. Chartered Teachers doing action research appears to align with ideas of enhancing the status of the teaching profession. What is perhaps more in question is the extent to which the teachers will be able to genuinely question and challenge educational practices, policy and ideology. Important also is whether the knowledge they generate will be valued in the wider educational community, or whether they will be limited by externally imposed parameters.

These tensions appear quite explicitly in Chartered Teacher policy documents. For example the recent Code of Practice for Chartered Teachers (SNCT, 2009) describes Chartered Teachers as being able to ‘promote new initiatives in school...’; ‘develop

a range of appropriate resources...’ and ‘share best practices’. This could be understood to mean that action research for Chartered Teachers is more concerned with seeking solutions and best practices and is then at risk of becoming, to borrow Smyth & Shacklock’s (1998) term, ‘conduits for the latest educational ideology’.

Alternatively, the Standard for Chartered Teacher (both the original and revised version) states explicitly that Chartered Teachers should develop, share and continually evaluate a critical stance towards practice, teaching, learning and current educational policies and initiatives. Arguably, to do this one must engage in action research that questions and challenges. The knowledge created from this research should be shared and valued across the profession and not just be limited to the individual professional development of the teacher. The professional is then by its very nature political and necessarily personal.

The personal dimension

The personal dimension can also be understood in different ways. Noffke identifies three distinct aspects of the personal dimension: an emphasis on personal growth and the development of the individual; individual rather than collaborative action research; and the role of university collaborators, if any, in the research process (2009:10). For the purposes of this literature review I shall focus on the first aspect of personal development.

Within the personal dimension, the purpose of action research could be understood as a way of developing the knowledge and skills of the individual teacher. It is perhaps inescapable that action research work that engages the individual in personal professional growth and improvement, also has the professional dimension deeply embedded within it. The political dimension must also be recognised – the nature and purposes of this personal professional growth is necessarily political.

Often the kind of enquiry that is located within this personal dimension may focus around questions such as ‘How can I improve?’, McNiff and Whitehead (2006, 2009) being well known advocates of this kind of approach. The focus is on the

individual and their ability to examine their practice(s). For some, such as Elliott (2009) action research is personal and understood as being practical in nature. It is about changing practical situations in education and the individual developing practical wisdom, drawing on Aristotle's notion of *phronesis*. However, as discussed above regarding the professional dimension, I believe there is a potential danger of this form of action research being constrained by a more 'technical' improvement agenda that seeks to find the most effective and efficient ways to work without questioning the broader issues of why. I believe the development of practical wisdom is critical and therefore it is essential that any action research within this personal dimension has rooted at its core the need for individuals to question, challenge, examine and negotiate their own assumptions, beliefs and values.

McNiff and Whitehead place great importance on the teacher questioning their own beliefs, assumptions and values, an action often leading to exposure of what they term 'living contradictions' (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). Individual teachers through action research or 'self-study' expose and confront those practices that are incongruent with their personal beliefs. In some ways this challenges some dominant and traditional beliefs about teachers as generators of knowledge (Noffke, 2009:13) and places them as in the best position to question, challenge and (re)consider their own professional practice. It is not difficult to understand how the personal and political dimensions are deeply intertwined here.

Within this personal dimension the 'self' becomes critical in action research. Pithouse *et al* (2009) explain that by understanding and knowing more about ourselves as teachers;

changes us, provokes growth, jolts us out of complacency – sometimes radically, in ways that can seem transformative (2009:48).

This kind of action research, or self-study, is deeply political and a potentially very powerful form of professional development. It not only focuses on the situated self but also necessarily forces the individual to examine and consider the social, cultural and political context within which they work. What teachers choose to make

problematic and thus become the focus of their research work, will be critical in determining the value, worth and rigour of such action research.

The political dimension

The political dimension, just like the professional and personal, is manifest in many different ways. The political, Noffke suggests, is embodied in all action research (2009:8). It has an overarching importance and it is impossible to remove it from any action research (Carr & Kemmis, 2009; Somekh & Zeichner, 2009:10).

Action research most obviously embodies the political when it is explicitly focused on social justice concerns or promoting democratic ideals and practices. It has commonly been connected with work by/for/with marginalised groups (Noffke, 2009:12). However the political is present in more implicit ways too – not just through its focus or aims, but also through the very act of doing action research. There is also much action research that claims not to be political at all, with some researchers actively attempting to reject the political dimension. This of course is in itself a political act!

There is a concern that action research may be used to reinscribe and justify practices without allowing for an appropriately critical questioning of these practices (Noffke, 2009; Griffiths, 2009; Somekh & Zeichner, 2009). One such example of this is when action research is employed as a means of justifying practices and ideologies without critically questioning or challenging the underpinning assumptions. Somekh and Zeichner (2009:15) argue that under the influence of neo-liberal policies there has been a ‘co-option of action research by Western governments and schools systems to control teachers’. This, they suggest, serves to promote the view of teachers as technicians and allows for a constrained and limited version of what teachers can legitimately do under the guise of action research. Action research then becomes a way to test out and to seek the most effective ways to implement government policies, an issue I also highlighted within both the professional and personal dimensions.

The very fact that we are promoting teachers as researchers is political. It is important that teachers are able to engage in action research and become ‘knowers and agents in the classroom’ (Lytle *et al*, 2009:24). This locates teachers differently and encourages them to actively question practices and challenge the taken-for-granted and ‘what works’. Teachers then become the problem posers, rather than solvers or implementers of solutions, and this, according to Reeves (2007) is an essential part of the work of professionals. Functioning in this way as a teacher may well challenge dominant conceptions of what it means to be a teacher and it:

seeks to create the kind of communicative space within which practitioners can participate in making decisions, taking action and collaboratively inquiring into their own practices, their understandings of these spaces, and the conditions under which they practice. (Carr and Kemmis, 2009:79)

However, as much as we do not wish to promote action research that is concerned only with technical matters, it is equally not possible for teachers to only engage in action research that directly challenges political structures and issues at the macro level. Action research is not necessarily just about acts of subversion. Griffiths highlights her concern that action research which appears to be focused on technical matters may report that technical aspects of practice have been transformed. However there is no evidence of those involved engaging in any critical understanding or questioning of the political in professional practice (2009:96). When thinking about action research within the political dimension, issues of social justice must also be considered. Griffiths (*ibid*) argues that there is a moral and/or political obligation for action researchers to engage in studies concerned with issues of social justice at least some of the time – suggesting that action research could be for/as/mindful of social justice. She proposes some ‘questions to be asked frequently’, or QAFs, when planning and doing action research. These QAFs, rather than operating as a set of rules or procedures to be followed, offer a useful means of understanding issues of social justice in action research which embody the political dimension.

The QAFs help to foreground issues that could be easily ignored or forgotten, particularly within contexts that are limited and constrained by the ‘what works’

agenda. By focusing upon, or at least exposing and acknowledging issues of social justice, teachers may problematise issues in school that are more critical, challenging and probing rather than technical and mechanical. The QAFs also help to provide a way of understanding the nature and purpose of action research for teachers. They embody the issues of the political and focus on: epistemology; action and effects; voice and power; and recognition and redistribution. They include questions such as:

- Is there an acceptance of continuing change, of no final answers, of provisionality?
- Is there an openness to others' perspectives?
- Whose actions are they for and for what ends?
- Have barriers and constraints to action been questioned and assessed?
- Who is included in the research? (and therefore who is excluded and why?)
- Has individual difference and social diversity been considered?

In considering whether action research is **for** (the outcomes are focused on issues of social justice), **as** (issues of social justice are reflected in the processes of the research) or **mindful** of (although not focused on issues of social justice, it is mindful of aspects in terms of the processes and outcomes) of social justice, teachers are having to negotiate and consider carefully the nature and purpose of their research activity. By asking these kinds of questions of action research, political and critical issues are brought into focus. These are of course risky and daunting questions for teachers to ask. They do not allow for an uncritical understanding of why one is carrying out action research, or of the focus of that research.

I have raised some of the dominant issues concerning the nature and purpose of action research and discussed some of the implications for teachers acting as researchers as part of their professional practice. How this is enacted, understood and experienced by teachers, in particular Chartered Teachers is of central concern for this research. Therefore it is worth now turning to some of the recent research literature that explores and addresses issues specific to the Chartered Teacher initiative.

Chartered Teachers doing action research: insights from the research

There is a vast body of literature, both from within the UK and internationally, relating to teachers as researchers. This often addresses either the theoretical underpinnings and rationale for action research (e.g., Carr & Kemmis 1986; Kincheloe, 2003; Somekh 2006), and/or provides useful toolkits, helpful strategies and methods for teachers doing action research (e.g., Altrichter *et al* 2008; Baumfield *et al* 2008; McNiff & Whitehead 2006). Frequently these are illustrated with examples from the field - often stories of authors' collaborative action research with teachers, or examples of teachers' individual action research (e.g., Altrichter *et al.* 2008; Fishman & McCarthy 2000) . The majority of these studies tend to focus on teachers' research endeavours as part of award-bearing courses, or funded projects. I have drawn on this body of literature in the previous section to discuss the nature and purposes of action research for teachers. It is also important to look more specifically at the Scottish context and consider the current research focusing on Chartered Teachers. This helps to provide some contextual understanding for this thesis but also identifies the distinct contribution made by this study.

Given the relative infancy of the Chartered Teacher initiative, there are very few published studies, although more are emerging. With the exception of the Chartered Teacher review carried out by McMahon and Reeves (2008) all the published literature has focused on teachers undertaking Chartered Teacher study, motivations for engaging in this study and perceptions of impact - rather than individuals' experiences of being a Chartered Teacher and doing action research post-award. For example, early studies, such as O'Brien and Hunt (2005) and Connelly & McMahon (2007), focused more on teachers' motivations for engaging in, and their experiences of, early modules of Chartered Teacher study, while some more recent studies (see McGeer, 2009) seek perceptions about the Chartered Teacher initiative from both Chartered Teachers and their colleagues.

Perhaps the most comprehensive and critical review of teachers' experiences of engaging with Chartered Teacher study, emerges from work done at the University

of Stirling. Several studies, papers and a small edited book (see for example Fox & Reeves, 2009) have now been published based on the tutors' and teachers' experiences of doing professional enquiry as part of the MEd in Professional Enquiry, leading to the award of Chartered Teacher status. This work illuminates and raises some issues that are pertinent for any teacher attempting to do research and provides some insights into the contexts in which teachers may work. It also draws together a balance between research undertaken by university colleagues about Chartered Teacher and reflections from Chartered Teachers about their experiences. However, it is entirely focused on teachers engaging in professional enquiry as part of an award-bearing course. It is possible, however, to draw upon the insights gained from these studies and use these to inform the present study.

Some common themes emerge from the recent studies into Chartered Teacher that are particularly relevant for this study (some of which have already been discussed in relation to wider literature in the field):

- The nature of professionalism and teachers as professionals
- Teachers' professional identity(ies)
- The role of the Chartered Teacher
- Purposes of action research

As I have identified earlier in this chapter, Reeves (2007 and Reeves & Fox 2008), frames Chartered Teacher as resting between competing discourses of teacher professionalism. She explores these issues in relation to the teachers' experiences of studying for Chartered Teacher and engaging in professional enquiry. The teachers in these studies report facing some difficulties as they engage in activities perceived to be at odds with the traditional role of the teacher. This highlights some wider concerns about the nature and role of Chartered Teacher and the ways in which this might be challenging traditional practices. From the data gleaned from his online survey McGeer (2009) suggests that some teachers are raising questions about the underpinning philosophy of Chartered Teacher and what any future role for Chartered Teacher might be. Carroll *et al* (2008) unpick this issue further and claim

that there is a need for a conceptual shift within education to a regime that is more supportive of teacher learning and legitimises dialogue and spaces where:

teachers can hear other voices, take on new perspectives, create new professional knowledge and reassert and redefine professional identities (2008:21).

The redefining of professional identities appears to be a common issue emerging from a variety of studies about Chartered Teacher, an issue which I explore in greater depth in Chapter Five. Reeves (2007), drawing from teachers' reports of their experiences of engaging in professional enquiry as part of their Chartered Teacher study, begins to explore the emerging identities of Chartered Teachers. Ann MacDonald (2007), through the use of semi-structured interviews with a small number of early Chartered Teacher candidates, discusses possible emerging identities of 'Chartered Teachers.' She advocates that Chartered Teacher programmes of study that encourage and develop spaces for teachers to 'imagine themselves differently', understanding how their positions are discursively formed and thus possibly 'resisting and reconfiguring these discourses' (MacDonald, 2007:136-7).

Creating these spaces for Chartered Teachers to engage in research and critical dialogue about educational issues has become an important point. Chartered Teacher programmes of study are regarded as spaces where teachers are supported and encouraged to engage in such activity. As Carroll *et al* (2008) suggest, they are creating 'communities of practice' that support professional enquiry. They argue that this is essential as it creates a type of 'third space', an idea that I'Anson *et al* (2008) also support. This, they define, as being a space where different sets of assumptions are able to interact and are disrupted, creating openings for new practices and ways of thinking. The emphasis, it would seem, according to Carroll *et al* (2008), is on teachers' own sets of assumptions and opportunities to work collaboratively within schools as part of the modules of study, rather than disrupting the assumptions of the wider educational community. I also draw upon Third Space thinking. However, I use this more broadly as a heuristic to understand Chartered Teacher as a distinctly different way of being a teacher (see Chapter Six).

In addition to understanding the broader conceptual issues influencing Chartered Teachers and their engagement with action research, it is also critical that we engage with stories from the ‘inside’. A group of Chartered Teachers participating on the M.Ed. at Stirling have published their own reflections of engaging in professional enquiry as part of their study. These accounts provide some interesting insights. The critical theme that appears to emerge from these stories is the teachers’ struggle to do action research that might challenge or disrupt the hierarchies and culture within schools – indeed it is questionable to what extent the professional enquiries were actively designed to be challenging.

Throughout the reported professional enquiries there is a strong emphasis on the ‘intervention’ based nature of the enquiries which the teachers are expected to undertake. Carroll (2009) explains that this is not intended to be seen as a deficit model that simply focuses on ‘problems’ in the teachers’ practice, but instead could (I would argue *should*) be about ‘teachers considering and reconsidering values, practices and theories in order to bring about change...’ (2009:28). This appears consistent with I’Anson, Reeves and Whewell’s position that the professional enquiry and the work of Chartered Teachers should be deliberately critical and raising questions. They go as far as to suggest that:

professional enquiry is necessarily subversive: as a practice it implies that things could be otherwise; it invites critical engagement and necessarily involves a politics of change (I’Anson et al, 2008:72).

This position would suggest then that the professional enquiry which teachers are encouraged to initiate and lead, would focus on critical questioning of the latest policy initiatives and on examining not just how best to implement these initiatives and strategies, but also to evaluate whether they are worthwhile, or not. However, as I’Anson *et al* acknowledge that schools are under pressure of external examination and are encouraged to conform to what is promoted by bodies such as HMIe. They report that the Chartered Teachers in their study:

find themselves up against an account of the good that does not permit debate since schools become good to the extent they are aligned with what the quality indicators say is good (2008:70).

In examining some of the practitioners' accounts this tension is all too obvious. There is a strong emphasis on the interventions introduced as a way to comply effectively with the national or local authority initiatives. As Buchanan and Redford (2008) explain, doing professional enquiry allowed teachers the opportunity to trial new ideas and approaches and engage directly with current trends, in line with the school's development plan. Similarly, the enquiries described by Dunlop, Massey and Scott (2008) also appeared to rest more within an approach that seeks to test out and trial initiatives in order to find and promote 'what works' and 'best practice'.

Whilst there is merit and value in agreeing one's research and engaging in enquiries relevant to the professional context, this must still allow for meaningful and critical questioning and not serve to limit what can and cannot be investigated. However, this is a risky business. After all if a Chartered Teacher is to have the space to critically question and examine practices, this may well disrupt the taken-for-granted. It is as I'Anson *et al* (2008) suggested 'subversive' and may well challenge the long held assumptions, knowledge and skills of the management or other colleagues. Drew, Fox and McBride (2008) discuss this very issue and whilst they too faced these constraints and limitations, they explain that they were able to pursue this kind of activity because it was for professional study. This in some way provided legitimacy for their professional enquiry. Managers and colleagues alike made allowances for this and, if not supportive, at least did not prevent teachers from undertaking enquiry. This raises a critical issue for teachers as they attempt to engage in action research beyond the parameters of professional study and the relative safety of Chartered Teacher programmes.

It is for these very reasons that it is crucial that we then explore and examine what is the reality for Chartered Teachers once they have completed their study, achieved Chartered Teacher status and are attempting to negotiate their role within school and their identity as a Chartered Teacher and perhaps action researcher. How do they

overcome or negotiate this culture, given that it is not yet fully receptive to professional enquiry. Whilst it is entirely appropriate at times to engage in some research that seeks to test out new approaches, this is not sufficient and falls short of allowing Chartered Teachers to engage in action research that is more critical and problematising. Or, to refer back to Noffke's dimensions, action research should be more oriented towards the political, personal and professional.

We must look at the experiences of teachers doing research as part of their normal practice – their way of being a teacher. We need to understand how we may better support them, what needs to be done at a national and local level; and how we can encourage research work that is more critical and subversive in nature. Whilst it is important that we develop a good understanding of teachers' experiences of engaging in Chartered Teacher study, particularly at this early stage of the initiative's development, it is essential that we look beyond the programmes of study and begin to unpick and explore what it is actually like for teachers attempting to enact this vision of a Chartered Teacher.

There are few studies that explore teachers' experiences of undertaking action research post-award or outwith funded initiatives. As Marion Dadds (Dadds, 1995) comments in her book which discusses in-depth one teacher's experience of doing action research, much teacher-based research work which is valuable in providing insights into the complexity of classroom life is going unrecognized outside the award-bearing context. This is where I see my research potentially offering valuable insights. This is through exploring different terrain(s) and looking closely at teachers' experience(s) of doing action research which is not part of any award-bearing or funded activity but instead is an integral part of their work as a (Chartered) teacher.

Also missing from the accounts of teacher action research is any exploration or discussion of any sustained impact on practice or classroom learning. More often than not we are presented with accounts of what has worked or successful stories from the field that paint a positive view of action research work. These, whilst

acknowledging some of the difficulties along the way, rarely delve into the deeper issues with which teachers are faced: the multiple influencing factors, how teachers cope with and negotiate these and indeed the assumptions held by teachers that inform the very purpose and motivations for engaging in research at all. It is with this in mind that I regard my research, the telling of individual teachers' 'little stories' or 'truths' (Cotton & Griffiths, 2007), as an opportunity to perhaps open up spaces that encourage us to think differently about familiar or assumed contexts and consider ways in which these may be challenged or changed.

In conclusion, what might it mean for Chartered Teachers to do action research and be action researchers? As Lytle *et al* (2009) comment, teacher research is 'continually being invented and reinvented by participants in the movement and is strongly informed by local conditions, agendas and epistemologies' (2009:23). This research seeks to explore what it is like and I turn now to outlay the specific focus and methodological approach of this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This study, to recap briefly, is about Chartered Teachers engaging in action research and it explores: “What is it like to be a Chartered Teacher doing action research?”. The research question is deliberately structured to be open with the aim of understanding Chartered Teachers’ lived experience of engaging in post-award, non-funded action research. Careful decisions and choices have been made to ensure that the research is designed to allow a full exploration of the research question in the most appropriate way. My ontological and epistemological assumptions necessarily inform the framework and methodological decisions guiding this research.

Through this chapter I position, explore and discuss my ontological and epistemological positions and how these necessarily influence my decisions and interpretations. I then describe and discuss the research design and process, providing a critical and reflexive account of the methods and techniques I adopted together with the processes involved in carrying out this research. This will allow the reader maximum opportunity to understand why I have acted in the way I have and the implications of these actions upon the research. This is necessary for the reader to be able to make their own judgements on the worth, truthfulness and value of this research.

Local and particular: looking for ‘little stories’

Two theoretical frameworks inform my thinking about the nature of social reality, education, research and what ‘counts’ as knowledge: complexity theory and postmodern thinking. There is much confluence between complexity and postmodern thinking, both question the objectivity of knowledge and allow for a focus on the local and particular. In particular, I draw on complexity thinking to help make sense of, and bring different insights and understandings to, the nature of action research and Chartered Teachers as action researchers. It also informs and influences the choices I have made in designing this research. Postmodern thinking underpins my beliefs and assumptions about the nature of knowledge. It therefore influences and informs how I understand and interpret educational situations. Complexity thinking,

I believe, provides a useful framework for considering research within educational settings. The certainty and objectivity of knowledge is questioned and complexity thinking is concerned more with the dynamics of change, development, evolution and non-linear systems. Knowledge is seen as socially, culturally, temporally and locally constructed and situated (Hoban 2002; Mason 2008a&b; Morrison 2008). Complexity thinking assumes reality is dynamic and ever changing. However, issues of power, as Morrison (2008) contends, are under-theorised through a complexity perspective and therefore I feel it is essential to recognise this and to retain a critical perspective in relation to these issues. This, I believe is particularly important for thinking about Chartered Teachers doing action research and the multiple influencing factors upon their work, actions and identities as Chartered Teachers.

Postmodern thinking also offers a different way of seeing. It rejects the idea of universal truth(s) and renders foundational logic problematic (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Usher & Edwards, 1994). In taking a postmodern stance, dominant and taken-for-granted educational ideas - and other ideals in social reality - are brought into question. It must however be acknowledged that taking a postmodern stance is itself problematic since 'postmodern' thinking is very much contested terrain (Usher & Edwards, 1994:7). It is not a single coherent and static system of thoughts or a fixed body of ideas. It is, rather, as Usher and Edwards describe, 'best understood as a state of mind, critical, self-referential posture and style, a different way of seeing and working...' (1994:2). Postmodern thinking does, however, allow us to adopt a questioning stance and provides alternative ways of thinking without offering a single new 'correct' way of seeing. Caution, however, must be exercised to ensure that one dominant discourse is not simply replaced by another, instead an openness to questioning is required. In the current educational climate of 'evidence-based' and 'what-works' practices, I believe it is critical that we (i.e. *all* those in the educational community) are able to render problematic these dominant notions and pose questions as to what works *here* and *now*.

In *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Lyotard (1984) discusses his 'incredulity towards metanarratives' (1984:xxiv). He calls into question grand

narratives and the dominance of scientific discourses that serve to legitimate knowledge. To counter these grand narratives and metadiscourses Lyotard places greater importance on the *petit recit* or ‘little narrative’ (1984:60). He argues for paralogy – bringing new meanings, problematising and a questioning of and resistance towards metanarratives. Underpinning my own beliefs, and this research, is the notion of the importance of looking for these Lyotardian ‘little stories’.

An acceptance of an ‘incredulity towards metanarratives’ allows for the recognition that all knowledge claims are perspectival and situated (Griffiths, 1998:72; Kvale & Brinkman, 2009:52), partial, local, historical and specific (Usher & Edwards, 1994:10; Guba & Lincoln, 2005:204; Richardson & Adams St Pierre, 2005:961). Consistent with this understanding of the social construction of social realities is the recognition that there are multiple meanings. My own position rests within a broadly relativist ontology that recognises these multiple constructed realities and values an epistemology of the ‘unique and particular’, to borrow Griffiths and Macleod’s terms (2008). However, I am also wary of a relativist position that is nihilistic and promotes an ‘anything goes’ attitude, leading to what Usher and Edwards (1994:27) describe as an ‘irrationality and paralysis’. Rather than claiming, from a postmodern perspective, that one cannot know anything, I agree with Richardson and Adams St Pierre (2005:961) that we *can* know *something* – but the critical point is recognising that this knowing is ‘partial, local and historical’ and ‘recognizes the situational limitations of the knower’. Or as Law (2004) states, ‘knowing as situated inquiry’.

As Griffiths (1998:47) explains it is important that we seek those local and particular knowledges. She contests developing a ‘god’s eye view’, or a ‘view from nowhere’ (Lather, 1994:21) and instead foregrounds the importance of the local and particular, the specific and perspectival. It is these kinds of knowledges, she argues, that are needed together with questions that probe specific cases and situations, asking ‘what is happening here and why and what is it like?’ (Cotton & Griffiths, 2007; Griffiths & Macleod, 2008). This challenges the dominant view, preferred by policy makers, of seeking (supposed) truths about technical knowledge and ‘what works’. Law (2004) encourages us to question and reconsider ‘how far whatever it is we know

travels and whether it still make sense in other locations, and if so, how'. This renders problematic any view that promotes a singular perspective and promotes a 'what works' agenda. Instead it values those knowledges that can be illuminated from the positions of individuals' specific situations and contexts. The focus of my research is to ask 'what is it like?'. This is because I recognise and foreground the importance of understanding what it is like from the position of those involved in and enacting particular ideas and programmes.

Understanding what it is like for Chartered Teachers in Scotland presently is, I believe, crucially important. The Chartered Teacher initiative is still fairly young in terms of policy and educational change. It has recently undergone a review and is beginning to embed into the Scottish educational system and structure. A critical mass of Chartered Teachers is starting to emerge. Therefore it is prudent to understand what it is like for these teachers, to question what is happening and to look at ways to further support and develops this initiative. Embarking on such a study is, of course, not without its own issues and limitations. In the following section I shall raise and discuss some of these issues. I now turn to the methodological approach informing the design of the research.

The research design: a case study approach

This study is an instrumental collective case study to understand Chartered Teachers' lived experiences of engaging in action research. I adopted case study as a research strategy for this research as it is commonly regarded as apposite for the investigation of a phenomenon in its real-life context (Bassey, 1999; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2003). I understand case study as an in-depth empirical study of human activity, understood within its complex real-life context, the boundaries of which are essential yet problematic to define (Gillham, 2000; Stake, 2005; Stark & Torrance, 2005). This approach allows me to take a more holistic and dynamic view of the phenomenon being investigated – in this case Chartered Teachers as action researchers.

At the heart of case study research is a commitment to understanding meaning from the position of the individuals involved and to seek ways to illuminate or provide insights into their beliefs, assumptions, values and actions (Pring, 2000). Therefore I regard case study as a useful strategy to develop a picture of ‘what it is like’ for individual(s) and to build an understanding of their real-life, lived experiences and actions (Cohen *et al*, 2000). It has been important, then, for me to ensure my study is comprehensive and detailed. In order to develop this holistic view I focus on the experiences and beliefs of the individuals and am also concerned with the context in which they operate. As Creswell (2007) and Pring (2000) note, understanding of any phenomenon, or human activity can only be realised in context. Hence, my study has been conducted, as far as possible, *in situ*. In fact, what distinguishes case study is not just the focus on the particular, but also that this is only studied in cognisance of the unique and dynamic (Cohen *et al*, 2000) contexts in which the case is embedded. As such, I have constructed narratives about each teacher involved.

The contextual conditions of any case are complex, as is recognising that complexity itself is valuable in developing an understanding of the meaning brought by participants. It is also important to recognise that this necessarily creates a limitation, and indeed the impossibility, of attempting to draw generalisations. However, rather than seeking these generalisations, it is important to recognise instead the overlaps and commonalities existing between the teachers. The teachers are all situated within the Scottish Education system and all have the shared experience of becoming a Chartered Teacher. Therefore, there will likely be some commonalities between them.

I have attended to the broader political, cultural, historical, societal and other contexts which, I believe, shape and inform not only the Chartered Teacher initiative but teachers as action researchers. I do, however, acknowledge that an in-depth study of these multiple influencing contexts is not possible within the scope of this study. Whilst the Chartered Teacher initiative itself will act as one contextual boundary for the case study, I recognise that each individual Chartered Teacher will be influenced by numerous diverse contextual factors. This is why I chose to view each teacher as

an individual case within a collective case study rather than as ‘embedded’ cases. From a critical perspective, this has included the need to explore and be aware of any power relations in operation and the way dominant discourses shape action and consciousness (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005).

It is the addressing of this complexity that appeals to me. I view case study as being concerned with process and because of the depth provided by case study, it may be possible to identify, examine and explore the interactions of significant factors, the sequence of events and the possible underlying reasons that influence and inform the individual teachers’ perceptions, beliefs, assumptions, experiences and actions (Gillham, 2000; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2005). Schostak and Schostak articulate this well:

synchronic and diachronic can be elaborated, covering and describing the in-depth interactions of the dramatis personae, mapping the multidimensional spaces of their intentional networks, their beliefs, their interests, their values, their practices, the events that take place, the dramas and the spaces and places that compromise the scenes of action, the built environment, the stealth architecture and so on that compromise their everyday sense of realities and through which they articulate their sense of identity and community and formulate their personal projects. (Schostak & Schostak 2008:239)

Stake however notes that due to this complexity it is essential that the case has clearly defined boundaries, though this itself can be deeply problematic. Whilst I recognise that the defining of the ‘case’ is crucial as it can set parameters around what is and is not a focus for the study, I believe that from the perspective of complexity theory these parameters or boundaries must be recognised as open, shifting and evolving, somewhat vague or blurred and perhaps contrived (Radford, 2007). This may be particularly true for imposed temporal boundaries, as contrived start and end points of the teachers’ action research projects will likely need to be defined in order to work within my own research timescale.

Stark & Torrance (2005) contend that defining boundaries in case study is more than simply a pragmatic matter, being in fact a significant epistemological issue. I, as the researcher, have a ‘conceptual responsibility’ (Stake, 2005). A number of

epistemological questions are then raised for me: who decides the boundaries – is it the researcher or the individuals of the ‘case’?; who and/or what is included or excluded?; who decides what it is a case of? (Stark & Torrance, 2005). It is for these reasons that I consider it essential for myself, as researcher, to act reflexively in acknowledging and making explicit my epistemological position, being openly aware of how this will likely influence the research purpose and design.

Following my own epistemological beliefs, I consider the teacher as a participant in the research; not objects I am researching *on* but instead participants I am researching *with*. I therefore regard the teachers as co-creators of data, knowledge and understandings. The teachers, as participants, contributed to the decisions made regarding the contextual boundaries of their case. They were also, to some extent, involved in decisions relating to the operational methods adopted, details of which are explained in the following section. This approach, I believe, both recognises and contributes to the complexity of this case study research. I do acknowledge however, that this ‘democratization of content and method’, as Heron (1996:9) describes, is somewhat limited. Therefore, I do not attempt to suggest that this is a ‘full-blown’ co-operative inquiry.

Some issues and limitations

Case studies, as I have indicated above, are strong in providing an in-depth view of participant experience. It is this richness and detail, furnishing insights into the participants’ view and delving into the complexity of the lived experience that made case study research such an appealing prospect for me. This richness is presented in part through ‘thick descriptions’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1979) of the individuals involved and should be recognised as one of its key strengths. I have constructed narratives of the three teachers involved in the study as a way of providing what may be described as these ‘thick descriptions’. The complexity and richness of these helps us to understand and develop a thorough knowledge of the particular. This cannot be achieved in a large-scale study which may only seek to provide a breadth of understanding. The depth that can be gained from focusing on three case studies can provide insights which we can use to extend and possibly challenge our

understanding when we are able to recognize them in new and unfamiliar contexts (Stake, 1978). However it is imperative to keep in mind that whilst it is tempting to be drawn into the case study because of its vivid and rich descriptions and understand it as an account of a 'whole', it is still just a 'slice of life' (Lincoln & Guba in Merriam, 1998). It is perhaps with this in mind that I can see a greater relevance for 'fuzzy propositions' – making no absolute claims to knowledge but instead highlighting the uncertainties and discussing the 'lessons learned' (Bassey 1999; Creswell 2007). I am, however, cautious in stating any claims about 'lessons learned' or 'fuzzy propositions'. This is because I am crucially aware of the trap of oversimplifying or exaggerating the extent of the case, or worse 'sensationalising' it by illuminating only the most salient features and thus distorting the reality of the case (Cohen *et al*, 2000).

A further cautionary note from David Bridges suggests that:

we have good reason to treat with some scepticism accounts provided by individuals of their own experience... We know that such accounts can be riddled with special pleading, selective memory, careless error, self-centredness, myopia, prejudice and a good deal more.

He claims that we must acknowledge these limitations and not 'attach special authority' to it (2002:74). Whilst I take heed of his warning, I do not believe that we can obtain a more 'accurate' or 'truthful' account from 'outsiders' who are not themselves experiencing and enacting the very issues that are under investigation. Instead, I believe it helps to highlight the importance of providing as much contextual detail as possible and ensure that the stories are located within the specific local and cultural contexts as described by the teachers.

This brings me to some further questions about validity of the research. It is not my intention to generalise the issues raised by teachers and provide solutions and new statements of 'what works' for Chartered Teachers. Instead by telling these 'little stories' and addressing the question of 'what is it like' (Cotton and Griffiths, 2007), it is my intention to create an opportunity for discussion that may illuminate, challenge and disrupt theories and understandings of teachers as action researchers/doing action research.

Validity

Arguably, validity is at best a problematic term in any qualitative research and indeed some would argue that it is an inappropriate term altogether (Guba and Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 1998). I do not have space within this thesis to explore in detail the contested and problematic nature of validity and I certainly do not wish to provide an oversimplified account of such a contentious issue. Instead, I intend to foreground some pertinent issues that I believe are important to consider for this research. Lather (1994), in an exploration of the issues of validity and the conditions of 'the legitimation of knowledge' (pg36), suggests a reframing of validity as 'multiple, partial and endlessly deferred' (pg38). Her discussion of four possible 'framings' is detailed, but I wish to briefly highlight two issues she raises – the notion of neopragmatic validity, or Lyotardian paralogy and that of situated validity.

In considering Lyotardian paralogy, she suggests that we should be nurturing heterogeneity. This then is not about seeking a singular fixed meaning or accepting a 'closure'. Instead it is about a focus on 'openness to counter interpretations' (pg43). This is particularly apposite for my research as I do not intend, as previously noted, to provide a static and fixed set of ideas and solutions about how and why teachers and Chartered Teachers should and could be doing action research. I am not attempting to provide some reconciled and smooth account of what it is like. Rather, I wish to acknowledge the tensions, the multiple interpretations and raise questions about some taken-for-granted or assumed practices and understandings of teachers as action researchers within the Scottish Chartered Teacher initiative. Following on from this, I also find her notion of situated validity, the idea of 'a view from everywhere contrasted with a view from nowhere', is germane to this research. This is not research that seeks to provide a 'god's eye view.' Rather, it is situated and it is specific, the strength of the research lying in identifying and exploring this unique and specific view.

An alternative understanding of validity which may be appropriate for this research is Richardson's metaphor of the crystal. She argues that crystallization as a metaphor

deconstructs the traditional notion of validity (2000:934). Crystallization is not about fixed or rigid understandings but instead ‘transmutations, multidimensionalities and angles of approach... what we see depends on our angle of repose’. This way of thinking about validity provides, Richardson claims, ‘a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic’ (*ibid*). However, understanding validity is not just about an acceptance of multiple perspectives, interpretations and understandings. Validity must also be about judging how trustworthy and relevant these interpretations are. One may well ask, ‘are all ‘angles of repose’ equally valid?’. To help address this issue I draw upon Griffiths and Macleod’s (2008) discussion of the nature of validity in relation to auto/biographical research which I find particularly apposite for this research.

They suggest that we consider validity in terms of the extent to which it is well grounded, justifiable, relevant and trustworthy, which is a move away from an understanding developed from the natural sciences. Specifically, they argue that we need to consider the relevance to the research focus of (in this case) teachers’ storied accounts and my narratives about each teacher. These stories and narratives must be in some way representative of the issue under investigation and should also offer a way to understand or re-frame the issue at hand. They may well be representative because whilst they are unique to the individuals, they are not atypical of the wider group and could be seen as ‘perfectly ordinary’ (2008:134). As I discuss in the section below about the participants, I would argue that the teachers in this study are not ‘atypical’ in terms of Chartered Teachers. The stories I draw upon and the narratives I have created, do offer a way to understand ‘what it is like to be a Chartered Teacher doing action research’. They are broadly representative and possibly offer ways to re-frame our thinking; their stories are relevant.

Arguably, though, there are two levels of judgement that need to be asked of this research: firstly the extent to which we can judge the validity and trustworthiness of these teachers’ stories and, secondly, judging my representation and interpretation of these accounts. I must consider what insights or conclusions I may be able to draw from these stories and be clear about the ways in which I edit and frame each

narrative. In deciding and making judgements about the validity of a piece of research, questions about truthfulness assume central importance. Griffiths and Macleod (2008:131) draw on Williams' argument that we should focus upon truthfulness rather than truth and in doing so we need to ask questions about accuracy and sincerity. Therefore, I have been conscious of the need to consider how far I thought that the teachers were being sincere in what they said. In the case of this study, however, accuracy is less of an issue since it is the teachers' perceptions that are under consideration, and all that is being asked of them is accuracy about their own perceptions. Thus, in so far as they are being sincere, they are also being accurate. Further, to address concerns about the validity of *this* research and *these* teachers' stories, I am very conscious about being explicit with regards to what I have done. It is essential that I act reflexively in terms of my actions and in writing about the teachers I must provide as much contextual information as possible. This includes cultural, political and personal information as appropriate, so that judgements can be made regarding the validity of this research. These judgements are made firstly by me as the researcher as I draw interpretations and conclusions about being and becoming a Chartered Teacher and action researcher. The readers of this research must also make judgements so they also may make decisions about the trustworthiness and validity of the research presented. Therefore the need to act reflexively is of central importance.

In returning to my earlier question, it is not necessarily that all interpretations are valid or trustworthy. Instead, I have shared the ways in which I believe this research to be valid and trustworthy. I believe the partial, situated and complex understandings and interpretations I draw from this research raise questions, and acknowledge the complexity, situatedness and constant flux of becoming Chartered Teachers as action researchers. Therefore, drawing on a complexity perspective, I consider this research as contributing to the 'shape of possibility'. It is, as Davis and Sumara (2006:161) promote:

partial rather than comprehensive, active rather than inert, implicated rather than benign. In complexity terms, one cannot represent things as they are,

simply because the representation contributes to the transformation of an always evolving reality.

In taking this stance I believe that issues of reflexivity become ever more important and it is to these issues that I now turn.

Reflexivity

Simons (2009) highlights the importance of acting reflexively within case study research. She argues for the importance of the researcher to consider their own actions, values, beliefs and assumptions and how these will necessarily influence the process and outcome of the research. This is particularly important for me, as the researcher, when constructing, interpreting and (re)presenting the individual teacher's stories. Simons (*ibid*) states that:

to be fair to those within the case, we need to be clear how our values and judgements affect our portrayal of them but we also need to examine how the specific context and topic of the research shapes the story we come to tell. (Simons, 2009:81)

For me this is a critical concern. As I have engaged in this research and developed my relationship with the individuals involved, I have come to realise that I too have been reconsidering and negotiating my identity. Fine (1998:134) challenges researchers to 'unearth the blurred boundaries 'between''. She suggests that too often researchers 'deny the hyphen by choosing to write *about* those who have been Othered and, as a result, tend to erase their own selves and assumptions from the writing. Instead, she calls for researchers to work *with* those who have been subjugated. This is working the hyphen. If, as she suggests, this reveals as much about ourselves as researchers then it is critical for me to pay attention to this.

My research biography

In order to act reflexively it is important for me to include my own research story. I have deliberately chosen not to write my own 'narrative' and place this alongside the teacher stories in Chapter 4. This is to ensure that it is the teachers' stories that are foregrounded with the greatest emphasis placed on them, after all this research seeks

to explore *their* experiences of doing action research. However, it is still necessary for me to be explicit about my own stories, especially those experiences, beliefs and assumptions that may directly impact on this research or change as a result of this study. In many ways my stories reflect some parallels with the teachers' stories. My story is also a process of becoming: being and becoming a researcher and negotiating my identity of academic/researcher/teacher/practitioner.

I acknowledge (and will discuss in the later section about the narratives) how my own understandings and assumptions will necessarily influence the ways in which I interpret and choose to construct the narratives of the teachers. I recognise that my (his)story as a teacher, learner, academic, researcher and so on informs, shapes and influences any interpretation I make. It also influences the way in which I interact with the teachers and the how they locate me. How my relationship began and evolved with these teachers is also an important issue. In the section on page 64 I describe more fully this relationship in my account of the research process and the participants involved.

In my own exploration of the Chartered Teachers identities as being and becoming Chartered Teachers, I realise that I too am negotiating the space of being and becoming a 'researcher'. I was still holding tightly onto my own identity as 'teacher' which allowed me to find common ground and camaraderie with the teachers - yet I began to realise that this identity is fading more into the background. Instead, I find a broader interpretation and identity as a 'practitioner' as more appropriate. I am neither academic nor teacher, neither researcher nor practitioner but simultaneously both. This perhaps allows me to draw some parallels with the teachers in this study, although it is essential to recognise the significant variations in our stories, histories, social and cultural positionings.

My history as a teacher is also an important influencing factor on my research and underpinning assumptions and beliefs. My own commitment and interest in teachers' engaging in action research perhaps stems from my previous experience as a young teacher in a reasonably affluent primary school and the negative experiences I faced

from my attempts to exercise my own professional judgement. This included being reminded of 'my place' in the staffroom, being cautioned not to speak out and advised against deviating from the management's plan of introducing a highly structured literacy hour. This I regarded as a simple act of transplanting an English curriculum initiative into a Scottish context without sufficient evidence or careful consideration of appropriateness. At that time I did not have the language, knowledge or evidence to challenge this.

I believe that engaging in action research can have a possibly transformative impact upon individuals involved. Through my own self-study and small-scale action research I have gained knowledge about myself as a practitioner/researcher/academic. I have developed significantly as a result of this, both in terms of my practice and my deeper understanding of educational issues. It is from this position that I regard action research as a very powerful activity for classroom teachers to develop their understanding, and as an opening and opportunity to become more autonomous and informed in their daily practice. This is not simply for their own career benefit or job satisfaction, but because the pupils with whom they work surely deserve this.

My own commitment to and involvement with the Chartered Teacher programme and initiative at a national (partnership meetings with the GTCS and other providers) and local level, as tutor on the Edinburgh MTeach programme, will also influence the stories that speak to me in the data, the issues I choose to foreground as well as the issues and stories that the teachers will inevitably choose to share, or not share, with me. What I believe to be crucially important here is not that this may adversely affect the stories I do tell, but more that I am explicit about and aware of the issues inherent in this kind of research.

I have made every effort to ensure that I have acted reflexively throughout this research and have made explicit my assumptions and beliefs as well as examined and exposed the decisions I have made. I have acted reflexively when discussing my research relationship with the participants and explored some of the issues relating to

power imbalances and my methodological decisions in relation to the participants and this can be found on pages 64-66. In discussing the interview and analysis process I have made explicit my own understandings and interpretations and how these influence and impact the decisions I made. Specific examples of this are detailed on pages 69 and 71-72 and further exemplified through extracts from my research journal, which can be found in Appendix D. Further, I have been explicit about my own subjectivities and the ways in which my understandings and assumptions have been renegotiated as a result of the data, and process of analysis and interpretation and this is discussed on pages 79-81. Finally, I recognise the importance of exposing my own beliefs and through pages 83-85 I explore this in relation to my construction of the teachers' narratives.

Ethical issues

The BERA revised ethical guidelines (BERA, 2004) have been used to guide ethical considerations for this research. In particular issues pertaining to the voluntary informed consent of participants have been considered. Detailed information was given to participants to ensure they were as fully informed as possible of the nature and purpose of this research and the involvement requested of them. The teachers were informed that they would be able to withdraw from the study at any time. Each teacher provided written consent to participate. Discussion with the participants gave consideration to any means whereby this research might impinge on any of their colleagues or the pupils. Issues of anonymity were also considered. Where appropriate, and with no immediate bearing on the wider understanding of the context or issues raised, some details have been altered to ensure full anonymity, for example specific job titles/changes or other pertinent information that would make some individuals easily identifiable, given the size of the Scottish educational community. All data is held in strict confidence and anonymity is ensured as far as possible. Participants were, however, offered the opportunity to waive anonymity. This was a way of allowing them an opportunity to retain ownership and a sense of voice within any publication. However, it was agreed with each individual that pseudonyms would be used.

Visual data was also gathered as part of the study. This potentially raised issues regarding intellectual property and the Data Protection Act (1998). However, I have chosen not to present any of the photographs or other potentially contentious visual data in this study. Proper measures have been taken to ensure copyright permission where appropriate or permission from individuals and this will be retained in respect of any future publications. I have elected to use one image that requires copyright permission. This is a photograph that Maggie brought to an interview. The image was taken from an article in a national broadsheet newspaper. I have traced the ownership of this image and obtained permissions to use this.

The above ethical issues are focused more on practical and pragmatic matters which could be deemed to be somewhat instrumental. In addition to this, it is important for me to also attend to issues relating to my moral position and ethical responsibilities as the researcher. In other words, to consider the ways in which I am researching with integrity. I am drawing primarily on Macfarlane's (2009) advice that I must, as far as possible, act and practice as a researcher in a way that is consistent with, and true to, my self, my values and my identity (2009:45). In order to research with integrity, Macfarlane identifies six core virtues: courage, respectfulness, resoluteness, sincerity, humility and reflexivity. I do not believe it would be possible or appropriate to list the ways in which I acknowledge these core virtues. Instead I shall look briefly at each of the virtues and identify my own understanding of these. Throughout the thesis I highlight how they have informed and influenced my research.

Macfarlane suggests that we must act with courage when engaging in and planning research. This, he believes, is about taking risks and risking failure (2009:50). I understand this to be about my own courage to pursue this enquiry because I believe it is worthwhile and about taking the intellectual risk which may find /result in my own knowledge and skills being challenged. Indeed, I have found my own thinking and understanding being constantly brought into question and revised throughout this research.

Researching with a commitment to respectfulness is, I believe, fundamental to any research work. Being respectful of the participants involves more than simply seeking consent and treating individuals as people not resources (Macfarlane, 2009:63). In working with the teachers in this study I have ensured that throughout the entire process I have involved them to as great an extent as possible, given them all the appropriate information in a timely manner, following up information and keeping any promises I have made. This has included me keeping in touch with the teachers regularly, searching for information and literature or references mentioned during our conversations and passing this on to them. This has involved my building relationships with the teachers that extends beyond the official formal space of the interview, and has included, for example, informal and unplanned meetings at educational events and chats over coffee.

Resoluteness is a virtue which Macfarlane suggests is core to research with integrity. For me, I believe it is my duty and responsibility to the teachers in my study to ensure that I do complete this work and commit to ensuring that it is of the highest standard of which I am capable. I was reminded of the importance of this when I met one of the teachers' colleagues, Jane, in the local supermarket. It happened to be a day when I was feeling that my progress was slow and my research somewhat lacklustre. Jane and I spoke briefly about educational issues and developments in her school and she was explaining to me that she felt de-motivated by her current context. She enquired into the progress of my thesis and commented that they (she and Lorraine) were 'counting on me'. I was surprised by this, but it was at that moment that I realised the need for me to complete this research and find ways to share it meaningfully with those involved in the Chartered Teacher initiative.

Sincerity and humility are critically important in any research. For this study I am acutely aware of the need for me to present my data and the teachers' narratives in such a way that does not misrepresent them. I must wholeheartedly believe in my own interpretations and judgements. It is thus essential that I do not exaggerate or mask any issues that arise. I address some of these issues further in the analysis and interpretation section and have already partly raised this in the above section on

limitations (page 53). Similarly, it is critical that I do not attempt to glorify or overstate my 'case'. It is my responsibility to share and disseminate this research in ways that are meaningful for those involved in the research, as well as the wider educational community. I am aware that the thesis itself is not sufficient for this purpose and therefore have already committed to sharing this research in a range of settings including academic research conferences (BERA 2008 '*Beyond the action research spiral: A Chartered Teacher's experience of action research*'; CARN 2009, '*The teacher/researcher divide: networks as 'Third Spaces' to support teacher research*'; ECER 2009, '*Challenging the action research spiral: addressing the complexity of teachers as action researchers*') and within the Scottish educational community at the National Chartered Teacher conference. These have been important opportunities to not only share and receive feedback on my research, but also to engage teachers with some of the emergent ideas and issues.

Finally, it has been essential that I act in a critically reflexive way. Being reflexive means that I must expose and consider my own reasons, beliefs and assumptions and articulate these and question them in light of the research and my actions. I have attended to some issues of reflexivity in a specific section above (see page 58) but have also acted reflexively throughout this work.

Having explored some of my ethical considerations in this research, it is now appropriate for me to explain in more depth the participants involved, the specific processes and methods adopted.

The Participants

Before I discuss the details of the participants involved, I think it is worthwhile to first state how I perceive the role of the individuals involved in the study. As Merriam (1998) highlights, the term 'participants' is suggestive of an implicit notion of cooperation and inclusion. She cautions that the term should only be used if one is committed to the idea that those included will have a participatory role in the research and not simply become the 'subjects' of the research. For me, this raised a number of questions about the nature of my research design and the extent to which

it could be a collaborative endeavour with participants. Although I have been committed to the idea of the teachers as participants and encouraged them to direct or redirect the focus of discussion and interview structure, I am only too aware that this is *my* research project and it was not *ours*, or indeed *theirs*. The teachers ultimately had no ownership of the research design and as participants they were conscious of the fact that ultimately the ‘product’ of this study would be *my* thesis, leading to *my* award and academic benefit. However, I did endeavour to encourage them as far as possible to guide, direct and focus each interview and any interpretations I made. This was an attempt to ensure that I acted in ways that were respectful of the participants.

I invited teachers to participate in this research whom I believed would be informative and knowledgeable of the main issues and therefore a purposeful sampling approach was taken. Only those teachers who had already successfully completed their study for Chartered Teacher status were invited to participate. In an attempt to avoid any need to engage in a comparative study of the range of provision offered by the ten accredited providers of Chartered Teacher programmes, I chose only to contact teachers who studied - or began their study - for Chartered Teacher status at the University of Edinburgh, where I am also a tutor on the programme. Of course, this is not to suggest that each of the teachers involved in this study had the ‘same’ experience; they all came to study with diverse experiences, academic histories and motivations. The decision to work with teachers with whom I already had some professional relationship was a conscious choice to allow me to build on already familiar relationships, rather than starting anew. However, I had also to be aware of the possible implications of any power imbalances, perceived or otherwise, between the teachers and myself. As they previously knew me in the role of ‘tutor’, I felt it important to spend some time during the initial interview, and in prior communications to them, to try to alleviate some of the possible power imbalances.

I feel it is important at this stage to acknowledge that the decisions I made regarding the participants I chose meant that I necessarily excluded others. Other groups of Chartered Teachers, or teachers who are doing action research and yet not part of the

Chartered Teacher initiative (who may provide alternative perspectives) were excluded. However, this is an in-depth case study of the experiences of a small number of Chartered Teachers doing action research. There is simply not the scope within this project to include a broader range of teachers and, given the focus, it would be inappropriate to attempt to do so. I also do not wish to claim that the teachers involved are in any way 'representative' of Chartered Teachers as a homogenous group (an idea I find quite troubling). However, the teachers involved are in no way 'atypical' in terms of the demographics of the Chartered Teacher group. I do believe they are able to present a variety of perspectives that may echo or offer commonalities with the experiences of other Chartered Teachers.

My intention was to include three in-depth case studies as I felt these would be sufficient to provide the necessary depth for this research and provide insights into teachers' lived experiences of doing action research. However, in order to ensure that sufficient teachers were involved and to counter any possible issues relating to teachers requiring to withdraw from the study for personal or professional reasons, I invited a larger group to be involved. Initially sixteen teachers were contacted and invited to participate in the project. Of this group six were able to participate for the full duration of the project: Lorraine, Maggie, Simon, Ruth, Doug and Anne. It was my intention to work with teachers from different sectors of compulsory education: primary, secondary, additional support for learning, visiting specialist service. I was also keen to speak to teachers who had achieved Chartered Teacher status through the different routes; either through completing the MTeach degree or completion of Module One and then a subsequent full claim to the GTCS. An overview of these six participating teachers is provided as an appendix (see Appendix A).

I chose to focus on Simon, Lorraine and Maggie because their stories and the issues emerging from these, appeared to be most germane to the research focus. This was not a decision I took lightly. It was only after I had engaged in an analysis of the final round of interviews and had looked in depth at the issues emerging within each case and the themes, commonalities and tensions across cases, that I was able to select these three teachers. They each had significant issues or experiences that

provided insights and critical issues for teachers doing action research and becoming Chartered Teachers. The tensions I interpreted in Simon's stories, the risks and constraints Lorraine faced and the complexity and passion that Maggie speaks of, contributed to my decision to focus upon their particular stories for this research.

The experiences and stories from the other three teachers were also interesting. Ruth, the only teacher to complete the MTeach, took a secondment when part of the way through the research. This took her out of her classroom and her action research work and into a university context, a situation not uncommon for many Chartered Teachers. Ruth and I were colleagues for the period of her secondment. The stories and experiences she shared about this were very interesting, but I chose to focus exclusively on those teachers who remained in the classroom. I believed that many of the issues arising from Doug (Simon's colleague and friend) and Anne's (Maggie's colleague and friend) experiences and insights were mirrored, albeit in different ways, through the stories and experiences of Simon, Lorraine and Maggie. I do, however, intend to draw upon this data at a later stage and write further research papers.

Research process and methods adopted

Multiple methods and sources of data were necessary to ensure that sufficient, extensive and detailed data were created in order to build a comprehensive picture, addressing the complexity and ensuring the depth of study required for this case study research. This has included:

- In-depth loosely structured interviews with teachers
- Use of visual methods
- Teacher created artefacts and other documentation
 - examples and extracts from teachers' action research endeavours;
 - extracts from research diaries and journals;
 - poster of research;
- In-situ observation and observation of one teacher in her class setting
- My research journal

As a means of providing an overview of the research process, I have produced a timeline and summary of what I have undertaken. This can be found in Appendix B.

Interviews

Interviews were the most significant source of data for my case study. I have drawn primarily on these for my narratives and thematic analysis chapters. Interviews are particularly beneficial for gaining in-depth and rich insights into individuals' lived experiences, their attitudes, beliefs and understandings of their own context (Kvale 1996; May 2001; McMillan & Schumacher 2006). Interviewing, though, can be complex and as with case study research itself, its design and purpose are influenced by the assumptions and beliefs of the researcher. It is therefore my ethical responsibility to be reflexive about the process of conducting the interview. Interviews are necessarily biased, as they are inextricably contextually bound and influenced by time and space, as well as by the personal relationships between interviewee and interviewer (Fontana & Frey 2005; Kvale 1996). Scheurich (1997, (in Fontana & Frey 2005:62) encapsulates the issues well, describing interviews as 'persistently slippery, unstable, and ambiguous from person to person, from situation to situation, from time to time'. However, interviews are an opportunity to speak to people and hear their stories.

Interviews can be designed to be very structured and directed by the researcher in order to 'elicit' information from respondents, but I believed this to be problematic for my proposed research. I did not wish to conduct interviews with a set of predetermined and uniform questions, as I believe this is incompatible with my understanding of the complexity of the interview and the nature of understanding individuals' stories. Instead, I regarded the interview process a little more like a 'professional conversation' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:2). The interviews were open and flexibly designed in order to explore with participants their experiences, beliefs and assumptions. The interviews were thus designed to be fairly unstructured. I had aims for each interview, which I describe more fully below, but each one was driven by the individual: their work, their questions, and their stories.

The purpose of this kind of interview is to develop an understanding of the individuals' stories and experiences (Fontana & Frey 2005). The kind of data created is rich and nuanced, offering depth of insight. It may lead to new understandings or knowledge on both the part of the interviewer and the interviewee. It presents an opportunity to not only talk through experiences but also to uncover and expose one's own taken-for-granted values, assumptions and actions and both interpret and negotiate meaning with each other (Kvale, 1996). This certainly appeared to be the case during this research. My own assumptions and understandings were challenged as a result of these meetings and Maggie explicitly talks about and reflects on her shifting and evolving understanding as we talk.

There are also difficult choices that must be made by the interviewer in deciding on how much of themselves they should reveal (Fontana & Frey, 2005:712). A delicate balance is essential between dominating the conversation, thereby potentially conveying 'correct responses' and withholding one's own position entirely. Kvale and Brinkman (2009:31) suggest that, as the interviewer, I must be 'curious and sensitive' to what is - and is not - said in the interview and importantly I must be cognisant of my assumptions and presuppositions. For me this was critical, particularly in the initial interview, as I deliberately did not want to enforce my own ideas about action research upon the teachers, even though they subtly probed me for reassurance as to whether their work was 'actually' action research. I found myself being vague in responding to these comments, instead probing *them* as to why they believed it to be action research, or not. However, as the research progressed and my relationship developed with the individuals, I did find myself sharing more my own, ever changing, beliefs and understandings. This was something I reflected on in some depth in my research journal, particularly after the first interview. I also shared with the teachers the ways in which my own understanding was changing in light of their stories, experiences and thoughts.

I believed the interviews to be a site where the co-construction of knowledge took place between the individual and myself. This was encouraged by my use of probing questions and the subtle use of body language that encouraged an individual to

continue talking or perhaps clarify the point they were making. It is important that I also recognise at this stage that the teachers themselves chose which stories of theirs they wished to (re)tell, or make sense of, during the interview. There will also be many stories they chose not to share. In the interviews with Simon there were often moments of brief debate as we discussed particular educational issues, or instances where only the body language and laughter could indicate that the words used were meant ironically. Lorraine observed, having read all the transcripts, how sentences were often left unfinished or words unsaid as the body language and non-verbal cues intimated a shared understanding of particular views, whereas in some cases there was ambiguity and further clarification would be required; for Maggie the process appeared to be an opportunity to share but also a space where she constantly appeared to negotiate her own understandings and make sense of these. The interviews are not passive and objective – they are active, ambiguous and unstable and it is for that reason they are so rich.

Once I had made initial contact with the teachers, I provided a draft outline of a possible timeline for each stage of the research. My main form of communication with them was via email as this seemed to be most convenient for all. I then contacted them, by email again, to arrange the first meeting. In this communication I gave an overview of the nature and purpose of the interviews and offered a choice of dates. Along with details about the content and structure of the interview, I also provided the teachers with a flyer recapping what the research was about (see Appendix C). This was designed to act as a reminder, a further summary to clarify the research and also a way to reinforce that the research was exploratory and not about any predetermined ‘right answers’ in terms of what action research the teachers *should* be doing.

Three interviews were held with each participant over the course of a year and were conducted *in-situ*. The exception to this was my first interview with Maggie which was held in a location of her choice, a local hotel, as she was just returning to work after a period of significant absence through illness. The initial interviews took place in the final term of the 2007-08 academic year. I intended each interview to be

approximately an hour in length as I felt this was sufficient time to engage in dialogue of some depth, without encroaching unfairly on the teachers' time. However, every interview lasted longer than this as the teachers spoke at length about their experiences and thoughts. On two occasions, the interview lasted a little over two hours.

The purpose of the first interview was twofold: looking back and planning ahead. This was an opportunity to discuss what experiences of action research the teachers had had to date and what their current conceptions of action research were. The participants were 'looking back' and reflecting on past experiences and exploring these with me through sharing and discussing artefacts from previous action research projects. The other critical aspect of this interview was to explore with the teachers their planned action research projects and negotiate with them specific issues relating to any proposed research methods and make initial plans for the next stage of the case study research. This was an ideal opportunity to discuss and explore the boundaries of the research and to begin to build up important contextual information. The use of visual data was also an important part of this interview. I asked participants to create a visual representation to express their experiences and/or understandings of action research and share this with me at the interview. I discuss this further in the section below.

Whilst I already had a relationship with each of the teachers, I regarded our first meeting to be important in terms of rapport building and was keen to create a space for the teachers to talk openly, as far as possible, about their experiences. My intention was to listen, occasionally gently probing or asking open-ended questions that would prompt more narrative responses. Because of my work as a tutor on the MTeach programme, and particularly as several of them saw me as representing the 'University' and the 'Chartered Teacher programme', I believed the teachers might regard me as having a single definitive view of what action research was and that there was some sort of 'correct response'. It was very important then for me to dispel this notion and encourage teachers to be frank about their experiences and understandings and that there was no single correct response. What I was interested

in is what *they* were doing and thinking, and not a regurgitation of an academic definition. I also quickly found they challenged my initial and perhaps naïve, if well meaning, understandings of why teachers would continue to engage in action research and what that should look like. Throughout this study I have constantly been negotiating and re-negotiating what I understand action research to be and the impact and purpose of this upon these Chartered Teachers.

The second and third interviews broadly followed the same loose structure. They began with an opportunity for the teachers to raise any questions or issues; catching up with what they had been, or not been, doing in terms of their action research since our last meeting; what they are planning next/until the next meeting; discussing any points emerging from the previous transcription and initial analysis. Each interview was structured around issues which the participants wished to discuss. I invited them to begin the interview and decide what aspects to turn to first. The teachers all brought artefacts which they wished to share and these became the focus of some of the discussion. Sometimes it was just spending some time talking about what had been happening in their school since the last meeting. As an ‘interested outsider’ they were able to talk to me about some of the issues impacting on their professional lives, conversations that they might not have been able to have with colleagues in school. Some chose to go directly to the summary of the previous meeting, or the transcript, and pull out issues that had come to their attention.

I made some reflective notes post-interview while things were still fresh in my memory and experience. These notes range from fairly descriptive accounts of what happened, notes about the context, surroundings or other influencing factors and, some interpretation and analytical thoughts. Questions were also jotted down and highlighted for future consideration. I reflected on my own feelings, emotions and experience of the interview and used this space as an opportunity to act reflexively by questioning and exposing some of my assumptions. Inevitably, the process of interpretation and analysis began at this stage.

I believed it important to have a transcript of each interview. This would allow me the opportunity to read and re-read the interviews and ‘get to know’ the data in as much depth as possible (Simons, 2009). After each interview the audio recordings were immediately sent for transcription, a copy of which was sent to the participant. Respondent validation is an ethical obligation and an important aspect of research, offering the participants a chance to check the transcripts for accuracy (Ezzy, 2002:68; Simons, 2009:131). I believed it to be very important that the participants had an opportunity to check for accuracy, or to add to anything they had said. I also took this member checking further and shared my initial analysis and summaries of the transcripts and the narratives I have written about each teacher. The teachers then have an opportunity to reflect on whether they believe these ‘ring true’ for them and are a fair representation of our meetings and their experiences. I raise this issue again in the section on page 82 about the construction of the teachers’ narratives.

I chose not to do the initial transcription myself for pragmatic purposes. It would be more time-efficient for a skilled transcriber to do this and so I had professional typists create the transcriptions. However, I believed it was very important for me go through each transcription very carefully. It is essential to remember that the transcription is not necessarily an ‘accurate’ record of what was said, it is itself a ‘translation’ of the interview. This relates to issues of mishearings as well as more problematic issues of interpretation and deciding what moments of speech, pauses, verbal and non-verbal cues, hesitations and repetitions to include or leave out (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009:184; Riessman, 2002:698; Simons, 2009:136). I have chosen to transcribe the interviews as close to verbatim as possible, believing it important to keep the individuals’ nuances of speech.

As each transcription was returned to me I spent time listening to the audio, checking the transcript for accuracy and making amendments and additions as necessary. These amendments included any obvious mishearings (usually related to dialect, accent and specific terminology) and a check for any typographical errors. More importantly, I was able to include my own ‘hearings’, and inserting and emphasising silences, laughter and notes on body language which I cross-referenced with my own

notes from the interviews. This was important, as often there were unspoken hidden meanings when what the participant said was indeed the exact opposite of what was meant. This was evident from the use of sarcastic tones, comments, raised eyebrows, ironic comments and laughter.

Listening to the conversations again brought back some of the emotion and feeling from the interviews. Whilst I went through the process of checking the transcripts I also made detailed notes about each interview – a record of my musings, thoughts, deliberations and perhaps early interpretations or points that I found of interest and notable for further exploration. These notes formed a key part of my own research journal, where I kept planning, methodological and theoretical notes, as well as detailed notes and reflections about each teacher.

Prior to each subsequent meeting, in addition to sending the interview transcript, I sent the teachers a summary of my initial analysis of that transcript. This was something I had discussed and agreed with participants beforehand. Whilst they all wished to see the transcript, they felt they did not have the time to conduct a full analysis themselves and were keen to see my initial thoughts. These summaries attempted to identify what I thought were the dominant, recurring, interesting and unique points the individual had raised. As the research progressed these summaries broadly fell into two main sections: the nature, purpose and process(es) of action research; and professional context and identity. I included with the summaries some questions that arose for me as I did this initial analysis. These were broad and probing questions, sometimes simply seeking further clarity and explanation, others were more from puzzlement or surprise and intended to facilitate further discussion at subsequent meetings (see example below).

I believed it was important for me to carry out an initial analysis after each interview. As Kvale and Brinkmann (2009:49) suggest, interviewing and analysis are ‘intertwined phases of knowledge construction’. I will speak in more depth about my analysis and interpretation in the following section on page 78. However, I feel it is worthwhile raising the importance of the ongoing analysis which formed such a key

part of the interview process. In the summaries, provided to each teacher between interviews, I attempt to not be too analytical, although the very fact that I was deciding what points I believed to be ‘of interest’ or importance is necessarily an act of interpretation.

Table 1. Example taken from summary of second interview with Simon.

Text in black is my summary of what I think Simon said. Text in red is my questions about the specific points made.

Process:

- *Academic side of AR – whilst necessary to pass Chartered Teacher submission – is not so valuable in practice/any ongoing evaluation or AR work – you look for more ‘practical’ rather than ‘high falloutin’ academic stuff what is ‘academic’ stuff? Why does it not have a place?*
- *You ‘trust’ the academic reading – don’t question or challenge it why is that?*
- *Your use of theory that was more practical – i.e. case studies – these are valuable and easier to make connections to own practice does this contradict in any way the criticism of AR being too focused on unique contexts of individual?*

Visual methods and artefacts

Visual methods were also used in this study to provide a way for teachers to capture, recount and/or make sense of their own stories, understanding of action research and their experiences as action researchers. The use of visual methods can be a powerful way for individuals to conceptualise their understanding, perhaps making familiar experiences unfamiliar, or as Johnson (2004) suggests, the visual may also provide an opportunity to ‘disrupt the stability of the verbal narrative . . .’ (2004:429).

Johnson also contends that the use of both visual and verbal (written) texts provide a way to hear different stories, or multiple tellings. In preparation for the first interview, I asked teachers to create a visual representation to illustrate their previous experience and understanding of action research. Drawing on Banks (2001) I encouraged a broad interpretation of ‘visual representation’ suggesting this may range from a picture or photograph to a drawing, diagram or visual metaphor. I anticipated that these personalised visual representations would offer an initial framework for dialogue and allow an exploration of the complexity of a range of issues. Prosser states that:

Visual methods, importantly, slow down the act of looking but equally they make for efficient and effective analysis of complex data (2007:23)

This ‘slowing down’ of the looking and analysing the complex is one of the reasons why I find visual methods so rich and apposite for this study. By asking teachers to produce these visuals, I am asking them to begin to analyse their own complex situations. Most, but not all of the teachers produced something and this ranged from photographs, to flow diagrams and metaphors.

I had hoped that the participants would continue to draw upon visual methods to help tell the story of their action research and their experiences as action researchers. All the teachers shared a range of artefacts from their action research work and much of this was visual (pictures, diagrams, posters etc). However, visual data as a way to make sense of their understandings of action research did not become a significant tool for the teachers. Maggie was the exception to this. Throughout the interviews, she used visual metaphors to construct and reconstruct her own ideas, understandings and to make sense of her experiences. Although initially unsure of it, the notion of producing a visual representation stayed with her throughout the research. In the final interview she produced what she considered the perfect image to capture her understanding of action research, an image she found in a newspaper (see Maggie’s narrative). Maggie’s images, both physical and metaphorical, provide such rich insights into her experience and understanding of action research. They provide a different way of seeing that I do not believe would be possible through text alone. This kind of visual data also creates an opportunity for the participant to share and express their particular understanding and meaning they bring to something (Prosser & Loxley 2008; Rose, 2007), in this case Maggie’s understanding of action research, her as an action researcher. Prosser and Loxley (2008) also argues that this kind of respondent created data fosters a more participative approach to research, empowering respondents by emphasising the meanings they give to images.

Documents

As a way to help build up a deeper contextual picture both at local and national level, I believed it important to gather a number of key documents that may influence the teachers knowledge, understanding and engagement with action research. This included policy documents such as the original Standard for Chartered Teacher and the new revised Standard, together with other government-related texts including key documentation from the General Teaching Council Scotland relating to Chartered Teachers. Other significant documentation from bodies and initiatives such as SQA and Schools of Ambition were collected as deemed appropriate to the individuals' contexts. How action research is promoted within these documents was explored and used to further contextualise the work of the teachers and to raise questions regarding opportunities, tensions and/or contradictions between practice, theory and policy. I refer to these documents in the introduction and literature review to help provide context for this study.

The teachers produced and provided me with a range of other artefacts relevant to the research work they were doing. This ranged from copies of flow diagrams and mind maps they used to analyse and make sense of questionnaire data, to items they produced as part of their action research work. I used this data primarily as a means to gain deeper insight into the nature of the individuals' action research work. These were usually discussed in some length during the interviews and the artefacts helped to exemplify and further clarify how the teachers understood action research. However, since the artefacts shared do not lend themselves well or help to exemplify the aspects that I have chosen to focus upon in this thesis, they have not been included.

For the final interview, I asked the teachers to generate a brief written reflection of their participation in this project. The purpose for producing these was to encourage the teachers to reflect more broadly on their understanding of action research and their work as a Chartered Teacher. A further purpose was to give them an opportunity to consider and reflect on some of the issues emerging from my initial summaries, analysis and narratives. I hoped to use these reflections as a way to bring

together the final interviews. Only Simon and Maggie produced a written reflection. They both referred to their reflections in the interview and this became part of the interview data, but I also referred to the reflections as separate documents. I have drawn on both of these reflections in my narratives and in the analytical chapters. I have explicitly stated wherever I have made specific reference to their written comments.

Observation

Informal observations were made during the interviews with participants in their own settings. Observations *in situ* can be a very helpful way to build up a picture of the context (Simpson & Tuson, 2003). When I visited the teachers I recorded in-depth field notes about the varied contexts within which each teacher was operating. My intention was to build up rich and detailed descriptive records that would help me to understand their working context: the school, the surrounding area, and the classroom. The data created here was/were helpful in reminding me of the individuals' situation and added to my broader understanding of their context and I have used this in helping me construct the narratives for each teacher.

I also had the opportunity to observe Maggie working with a group of pupils. She invited me to observe her teach this class prior to our final interview. She suggested it would allow me the opportunity to see 'in action' what her action research was about. It was also an opportunity for me to talk with one of the classroom teachers she was working with, to speak to the pupils and engage in a dialogue with Maggie about this. This appeared to be a mutually beneficial process, to which I refer again in chapter seven.

Research journal

I chose to keep a research journal from the early stages of planning this study. I used this journal to make notes and keep a log of my thinking, ideas, planning, evolving theoretical understandings and general notes. The journal was separated into four main sections:

- Case notes on individual teachers - this contained demographic information, contextual information, notes from interviews, reflective notes, and emerging analytical and interpretive comments (see Appendix D)
- Planning notes – containing notes, thoughts and reflections about the process and logistical and practical considerations and ‘to do’s’.
- Methodological notes – I used this space to reflect on and consider issue pertaining to methodological issues. I acted reflexively in this space – exposing and questioning what I was doing and why (see example in Appendix D)
- Theoretical notes – this section was used to reflect and be reflexive about issues emerging from the data and underpinning theoretical assumptions and positions, such as my shifting understanding of action research

Process of analysis and interpretation

I understand the process of analysis and interpretation to be largely interconnected and interwoven activities. I draw on Simons’ (2009:117) articulation that analysis refers predominantly to those procedures of coding, categorising and sorting through data, whilst interpretation leans more towards meaning making, researcher understanding, insights and interpretation of these codes, themes, categories and thinking about the connection and relationships. With that in mind, the process of analysis and interpretation undertaken throughout this research project could be seen as a series of interconnecting, progressive spirals. As Ezzy (2002:60) suggests, the analysis of the data began with the data collection and I have described part of this ongoing process of analysis and interpretation in the above section on interviews.

My analysis of the data was a broadly inductive process and I see this as an interplay between me as the researcher and the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It should be noted that any analysis of data must be acknowledged as just one interpretation - multiple interpretations being possible. In case study research arguably it is the possibility of multiple interpretations that makes it a desirable approach. Indeed the reader is also invited to draw their own interpretations, connections and generalisations between their personal context and the case study (Merriam 1998;

Stark & Torrance 2005) A case study can be regarded as an heuristic device for the reader. Whilst I do recognise the value of the reader making their own interpretations in relation to their context, and believe this to be one of the strengths of case study research, I do not, however, believe that, as the researcher, I can or should hide my own. Nor do I believe that I should deny any subjectivities I bring to the research. Instead, it is crucial that I attend to these and unmask them (Griffiths 1998; McMillan & Schumacher 2006).

The strategies employed and techniques I used are consistent and congruent with my underpinning philosophical position and the epistemological lens of this research. Two main approaches have been adopted: an inductive process of coding, categorising and identifying themes and issues emerging from the research as well as a thematic narrative analysis. Both approaches have been essential to allow me to interrogate the data in ways consistent with my underpinning philosophy.

A case record was created in NVivo 8 for each teacher and all data connected with the individual was stored here including any photographs, policy or other documents and transcripts. NVivo was used as an effective organisational tool for the storage and systematic analysis of the data. Through the process of reading, re-reading, checking, listening to and re-listening to the audio files I became very close to the data, reconnecting with the 'live' experience which Simons (2009:146) suggests as being a worthwhile part of the process of analysis and interpretation.

The initial analysis, following an inductive approach to the coding and categorising, was done within case. In part, this first stage of coding is drawn from some of the principles of a grounded theory approach in the sense that I did not approach the data with *a priori* themes, theories or codes (Ezzy, 2002; Charmaz, 2006). Whilst I attempted to bracket some of my own assumptions prior to reading the data, these necessarily informed decisions I made throughout the process regarding what to 'see' or 'hear' and what not to 'see' or 'hear'. Throughout the process I have been open to challenging my assumptions and, through teachers' experiences and words this has indeed happened. I have been surprised, confused, puzzled, perplexed and even

angered at some of the comments and experiences described by the participants. My own understandings have been dismantled and reconstructed throughout the research study, with consequent impact on the process of analysis and interpretation as I make sense of, and draw new meaning from, the data.

I began by looking at the individual, since Creswell (2007) suggests that one should always start with the individual when working with a collective case study. At this stage I also followed Charmaz's (2006:64) advice, drawing on some of the principles of grounded theory, and used codes as a way to summarise rather than analyse what I believed the teachers were saying. Throughout this stage my aim was to stay close to the data and, as Charmaz (2006:49) suggests, to use the participants' words and actions as far as possible, keeping the codes short, simple and active. I believed it was important at this early stage to not become too general. Appendix E illustrates the process of analysis and interpretation and provides an example of the coding and categories created from the data.

Once this initial stage of coding the data was complete, I returned to each individual transcript and the codes created. I began to look for ways to categorise and analyse the codes; looking for themes, issues and commonalities all within case. Throughout this process I refined and reduced the codes, eventually being able to synthesise the codes and categories across all three interviews, but still focused on the individual. I also returned to the data, drawing upon Winter's (1982) idea of 'dilemma analysis' and looked for any points of tension or decision making, through looking more closely at any inconsistencies, tentativeness and contradictions within the teachers' stories.

As I engaged in this process certain issues, common experiences or understandings were beginning to emerge. At this stage I began a cross-case analysis, looking at the themes, contradictions and commonalities across all cases. Deem and Brehony (1994) argue that cross-case analysis adds strength to the research, adding more weight to any generalisations or conclusions that can be drawn, beyond what would be possible from a single site case study. As I have previously stated, I am not

attempting to provide generalisations that I believe will be common to all Chartered Teachers doing action research, but I do think it is critically important to find commonalities and contradictions and explore these. Some overarching issues and themes did emerge across all cases and I have used these to frame my three analytical chapters. These issues comprise: the nature and purpose of action research for Chartered Teachers; the issues pertaining to the notion of being and becoming a 'Chartered Teacher' and their sense of identity; the need to create spaces to legitimise and promote action research for Chartered Teachers and the developing notion of 'Third Space'.

This inductive approach allowed me to question, explore and identify a number of interesting issues for Chartered Teachers doing action research and explore some themes I believe to be common to all. I am also acutely aware of the danger of this process disaggregating the individual, reducing the person to a series of codes and categories, and thus missing out on the depth, richness and uniqueness of their local, particular and specific context and experience. It is for this reason that I also believed it critically important to look at the whole story of the individual and engage in a thematic analysis of their narratives. As Ezzy (2002:95) reminds us 'parts of the story become significant only as they are placed within the context of the whole narrative'. I have produced a narrative for each teacher and it would now be pertinent to discuss in some detail the process involved in the construction of these.

Creating narratives

Providing 'thick descriptions' is one of the core aspects of case study research (Merriam, 1998:38). These thick descriptions can take many forms from vignettes peppered throughout a text, in depth case profiles, detailed narratives and portrayals of the individuals (Simons, 2009). Drawing on Simons (2009) I am using narratives in this research to 'capture the experience as it was 'lived' in the particular context through rich description, observation and interpretation' (2009:75). I have constructed narratives about each teacher and present these before my thematic analysis chapters. This is a conscious decision and is intended to foreground the importance I place on the individual as a whole person, complete with their complex

and messy lived realities. It is also a pragmatic move to introduce the three teachers who are the focus of this research and to gain some insight into them, their experiences and their stories. They also go some way to introduce the three main analytical themes.

Looking at the stories of individual teachers is critically important for this research and consistent with my underpinning epistemology. I recognise, as Chase (2005:657) reminds us, that I am not preoccupied with questions of fact but rather I am interested in the 'versions of self, reality and experience that the storyteller produces'. It is important then for me to bring my own interpretation to these experiences. The stories the individuals tell are important in allowing me to understand how they are bringing meaning and sense to their own experiences. The stories they tell are socially situated and produced in particular settings (research interview) for a particular audience and purpose: this necessarily influences what stories are told by the participants, how and why (Chase, 2005). It is worth explaining that I use the term story in the same way Connelly and Clandinin (1990) distinguish 'story', as what the participant-storyteller tells me, and 'narrative' as the term used to describe the textual representation/interpretation I give to these stories.

In my analysis of the teachers' stories I looked for what I believed to be the 'critical events' of their stories. These critical events are identified, according to Webster and Mertova (2007), by the impact they appear to have on the storyteller. They exist within a particular context, are unplanned, yet have significant 'life-changing' consequences and are 'intensely personal with strong emotional involvement' (2007:83). Webster and Mertova describe critical events as lying 'between the flash-point incidents and the long-term consequences' and significantly they are unplanned and unanticipated.

I looked specifically for any tensions or contradictions within their tellings. I realise that this is a deliberately interpretative act. It is through my interpretation of their stories that I decide what moments or experiences are 'significant'. I do not intend these stories to be told from a position of 'nowhere'. Instead, I acknowledge the need

to foreground myself and my own assumptions and beliefs and how these necessarily influence and impact on the decision I have made in choosing what to include and what will remain silent. I therefore recognise that there are many stories that I *could* tell, but what I have chosen to include in the following narratives are those stories that I believe to be most pertinent, illuminating, intriguing and valuable for this research. I do not attempt to provide, through the narratives, some sort of smooth reconciled account of the teachers' lives and experiences of doing action research and becoming Chartered Teachers. Instead I intentionally foreground the tensions, issues and contradictions that I believe are indicative of the messy, complex reality of their lived experiences. As Stronach and Maclure (1997:57) argue, it is essential that the accounts produced by the researcher do not promote a 'coherence, singularity and closure... which aims to set up a cosy camaraderie with the reader' but instead 'deny the reader that comfort... and foreground ambivalence...'.

It is also, I believe, an ethical and moral obligation that I share these narratives with the teachers, thus providing them with an opportunity to question, reject, discuss, debate or agree with my interpretations. I did this in two stages. I constructed a first draft narrative about each teacher and sent these in advance of our final meeting so that we were able to look at these and find some time to comment and consider the narrative I had written about them. The discussions this initiated with the teachers were very interesting. Simon was initially perplexed at the negative and bitter attitude he seemed to portray in my narrative and this led to further discussion about why he perhaps held the perceptions he did and what has influenced him. Lorraine, in contrast, recognised herself immediately and was reminded of the extent to which she has felt that she has been in 'peaks and troughs' over the last year. As for Maggie, seeing her story through my eyes allowed her the opportunity to question and further negotiate how she understands and makes sense of her experience of being and becoming a Chartered Teacher. She was also quick to disagree with my wording where she believed I had misrepresented her position. Through discussion, I explained why I had made the interpretation and statement I had and she was able to share how she felt my wording did not convey what I had meant. The issue was

more a matter of semantics than any deeper interpretative meaning. The final draft was also sent to teachers for comment.

In the construction of the narratives of the teachers, the ‘Others’ of my research, I was conscious of Michelle Fine’s (1998) words. She states, and it is worth quoting at some length here:

We may self-consciously or not decide how to work the hyphen of Self and Other, how to gloss the boundaries between, and within, slippery constructions of Others. But when we look, get involved, demur, analyze, interpret, probe, speak, remain silent, walk away, organize for outrage, or sanitize our stories, and when we construct our texts in or on their words, we decide how to nuance our relations with/for/despite those who have been deemed Others. (1998:139)

In writing using their words I am cautious to not engage in acts of ventriloquism (Fine, 1994:17). By this she cautions against research that seeks to deny the researchers’ subjectivity and somehow assumes authorial anonymity, something I am actively rejecting. However, Fine also warns of a more subtle form of ventriloquism when writing using the words of others. This is by appearing to let ‘Others’ speak by using their words to manipulate them and thus tell the story I wish to convey. Fine (1994) suggests that in using the ‘voice’ of Others we must provide our own interpretation of these voices and be explicit about this. As the researcher, then, I must be explicit about my own positioning – and I believe that I have been. Through the texts I construct, I must write with a critical eye toward ‘what is’, attending seriously to local meanings, changes over time, dominant frames, and contextual contradictions (Fine, 1994). The narratives I have produced and present in the following chapter are constructed with this in mind.

These narratives are, as I have stated, my interpretation of the teachers’ stories. I will try not to speak for the teachers, but at the same time I do not wish to represent them as speaking for themselves through my careful selection of their words. This would simply be a sophisticated act of ventriloquism on my part as writer. I am therefore explicit that these are an interpretation - but one which the teachers themselves have examined and found to be a fair representation.

There are many stories that I could have told and thus, by omitting these to focus on others, there are silences in the narratives. For example, I barely speak of individuals' serious illness, recent bereavements and other significant influencing personal factors. I have identified significant critical events in their stories and, in using these to weave narratives about them, I am hoping to provide an insight into the people I met with over the last year. By choosing to bring these events to the fore, others are inevitably being overshadowed. For Lorraine her narrative centres on the themes of risk and resilience. Complexity, change and hope emerge as themes in Maggie's narrative as she negotiates changes in herself and possible future directions for Chartered Teachers. It is to Simon's narrative that I turn first. This could be seen as a tale of two halves: the disillusionment he has felt but also the revelations he has experienced as a result of being a Chartered Teacher and doing action research.

Chapter 4: The Teachers' Stories

Through this chapter I am presenting the narratives which I have written about the three teachers upon whom I have chosen to focus for the purposes of this thesis. The aim of these narratives is to introduce the teachers and provide some insight into their experiences. These narratives go some way towards introducing the key ideas of the subsequent thematic chapters. I believe it is important to reiterate that these narratives are necessarily my interpretation of the teachers' stories.

Introducing Simon

Simon is an experienced History teacher. We first met when he embarked on Module One of the Chartered Teacher programme at the University of Edinburgh and I was his tutor. Our relationship continued as he prepared his full Chartered Teacher claim for the GTCS and I acted as his advisor (along with another of his close colleagues, Doug). Simon was quick to respond when I invited him to participate in this research. He was willing to be part of it mainly, he tells me, as an act of reciprocity to thank me for all the help I gave him as he prepared his claim for full accreditation. Simon seems happy to share with me his thoughts and experiences of his Chartered Teacher study and the action research he has conducted as part of that. He welcomes me into his classroom and to the History and Modern studies Department. On my numerous visits to the department (to see both him and Doug) I am privy to the prevailing collegial ethos; there is an easy relationship between colleagues in the department. This relationship is fostered not only through their personal friendships but also through their mutual belief in being open and receptive to sharing and exploring new ideas. Angela, the Principal Teacher (PT), frequently drops by during my meetings with Simon and Doug and often coffee and cake with the team is a precursor to our meetings.

Over the last year Simon has spoken to me in some depth about his experiences of doing action research as part of his Chartered Teacher studies, as well as the kind of work he is engaging in post-award. Our meetings often have an edge of debate about them as we question and challenge each other about particular points. He is frank and

to the point but also reflective as we discuss his experiences. On occasion we digress into a debate about other current issues in education – usually the developments surrounding A Curriculum for Excellence, a topic of particular interest to Simon *post* Chartered Teacher study.

Throughout the stories which Simon tells me, I see tensions emerge as he appears to negotiate what it means for him to be a Chartered Teacher. Two connected yet somewhat opposing stories appear to recur and these two quite contrasting experiences provide a suitable backdrop for this narrative. As he talks about his experiences and understandings of action research and his emerging role as a Chartered Teacher, stories of resistance, discord, disillusionment and frustration come to the fore. This stems in part from a negative perception of Chartered Teacher held by him and colleagues. This is coupled with his being required to resubmit his Chartered Teacher submission and the subsequent negative experiences of the assessment phase of Chartered Teacher study which this brought. These conflict with his positive experiences: his experiences of transformation in his own learning and understanding and a desire to develop an exciting role as a Chartered Teacher leading change in a context of major curriculum reform – both of which are pulling him away from potential complacency, as he describes it as a bringing in “the slippers and a pipe” mentality, suggesting a relaxed outlook with no desire for change or development. These stories weave throughout Simon’s interviews and are therefore the focus for this narrative.

I am intentionally exposing and bringing to the fore these tensions, thus highlighting the problematic and illuminating possible dichotomies. I do not intend to attempt to provide a ‘smooth’, refined or reconciled narrative of Simon’s experiences, actions or identity as a Chartered Teacher. To do this would be to deny the very complexity that exists at this ‘hyphen’ (Fine, 1998) as Simon negotiates, resists and constructs his own shifting and evolving identity. Instead of seeing this as a weakness, or something lacking on his part, I recognise these tensions as the lived reality of his being/becoming a Chartered Teacher – his process of alterity (a point I discuss in more detail in Chapter Six). Simon, however, is apologetic for his contradictions:

I noticed, I mean, I was embarrassed to see how much I contradicted myself. So I kind of think you possibly could have done with someone better than me.

Simon appears to want a reconciled version of his experiences. However, as Maggie Maclure (1996) suggests we must ‘resist resolution’ and instead live ‘between those boundaries that are inevitably implicated in narratives of becoming an action researcher’.

The transformative impact of doing action research

Simon’s experience of studying for Chartered Teacher and engaging in action research of such academic depth for the first time appears to have had a transformative impact on his practice. At times he has been reluctant to acknowledge this. Throughout Simon’s stories there is a recurring tension between his acknowledging the success and benefits of the action research he did as part of Chartered Teacher study and expressing his frustration, disappointment and resistance towards doing action research. It is a tension between giving recognition to a process that was “revelatory” for him but yet at the same time was the source of an emotionally negative experience – one that was “galling”, “sore” and ultimately made him “disillusioned” about the entire process.

During our final meeting, Simon spoke more positively about the experience and he recognised he was not the “most enthusiastic” about it at the beginning. As I reflected on his interviews I did question what was the source of this positive turn. Perhaps the memory and emotion from not successfully achieving Chartered Teacher status on first submission had faded somewhat; perhaps a more sustained reflection on the process over the last year aided a more positive outlook; or perhaps Simon felt he ‘needed’ to be more positive about it for me and my research – to be ‘useful’ for me. Simon identifies his constant state of flux and suggests:

Well, I think also that you go through kind of, sort of waves where sometimes you go, do you know what, that was really worthwhile that whole exercise and I like what I took out of that. [pause – interruption] ...And that's what I did last night, I just sort of sat down and I tried to put it in a really positive light. Because I am aware sometimes I come across a little bit over cynical.

And I'm probably just quite a negative person, but... But it's not true to say that I'm entirely negative about it.

Simon tries to resolve the tensions and contradictions he perceives. However, I believe these tensions remain, and rightly so, unresolved for him. As I have mentioned previously, I will not attempt to provide a reconciled account of Simon's beliefs about action research and his role as a Chartered Teacher. Instead, what follows is the messy reality of these two conflicting experiences of being/becoming/resisting.

Nobody does it to improve their teaching... they want the money, right?

Simon, far from embarking on the Chartered Teacher programme to improve his teaching, tells me early on in our meetings that he was in it for the money. He suggests this is common for all teachers and perhaps as an act of seeking concurrence from me he phrases the statement as a rhetorical question:

When you first went into Chartered Teaching it was, yeah, I'll bluff my way through this ...because all you think about when you first do Chartered, nobody does it because they want to improve their teaching, as such, they want the money, right?

From the outset he saw the academic side of the process as one of the 'hoops' to be jumped through in order to achieve the award and the resulting salary increments. Despite this, he found quite quickly that actually engaging in the action research process was not only easier than "making it up", it was actually also "really useful". In fact the learning he did and knowledge and skills he gained throughout this process had a significant and positive impact on his practice:

And the best thing with Chartered Teaching [action research as part of Chartered Teacher study] was you understood the value of it [formative assessment]. And the absolute best thing about Chartered Teaching was this self-evaluation, self-auditing of what you were doing, because that was by far and away the most useful thing, it was far and away the thing that made you change.... And that was really useful because, in the end, you convert yourself...

He explains to me how his practice has developed and he tells me about units of work he created prior to studying for Chartered Teacher. He compares these to the level of resource or curriculum development he is preparing now:

All you would have to look at is work I produced prior to Chartered Teaching and work I produced afterwards. If you look at something before, I could hold out some of the proudest pieces of work I've ever done...I look back at it now and I just think, wow, because it's all what I thought were quite original questioning and things, but essentially it's moving words around on the page, which is what we've always done.... It bears no resemblance to the sort of work I've done post it [Chartered Teacher/action research].

He attributes much of this change to the knowledge and skills he gained as part of his learning through the action research he was required to do. He talks about the theoretical knowledge he gained, some of which he “hadn’t a bloody clue” about prior to Chartered Teacher study. He also spoke of the research and evaluation skills he developed and the depth of critical reflection he engaged in, all of which he says has “made a difference”. More importantly, Simon recognises now the importance of the understanding and knowledge he gained from doing action research. In particular, through his action research into the use of formative assessment strategies, he now understands not only the purpose behind these but he also became aware of their significant limitations. This revelation could be seen as a significant critical event in Simon’s stories of becoming/being a Chartered Teacher. Action research helped Simon to expose what he describes as “the fallacies” of formative assessment and become aware of what he powerfully suggests is a “propaganda war” by the government to ensure all teachers are ‘doing’ Assessment is for Learning (AifL):

Simon. And the other things I discovered with Chartered Teacher were some of the sort of fallacies that are perpetrated by especially the sort of evangelists for formative assessment. I think the biggest sham is traffic lights. I think I said this to you last time. Traffic lights are ...

Zoè. but why do you think...It's one of my favourite ones as well because you have people talking about, oh, it's okay, I've got all my assessment sorted, I traffic light.

imon. It doesn't tell you anything. It doesn't make you reflect at all. It just means you can say I kind of understand this, I don't understand this. There's no actual ...

Zoè. So why are so many teachers doing that?

Simon. Because they're told it's good. Because there's a propaganda war going on, especially the Assessment is for Learning.

This is a critical and transformative moment in Simon's own learning and professional development. Simon is frustrated and angered by the perceived deception of teachers by government. He likens the promotion of formative assessment to the old fable of the Emperor's New Clothes and sees these as being "preached" by "evangelists". The "unknowing" teacher is powerless to resist. As Simon suggests teachers continue to unwittingly use, in this case, formative assessment strategies because they are "told to". They do not have the same knowledge and experience as he has developed from his action research. It is through the action research that Simon suggests he has gained a "real understanding and depth" and has had the opportunity to examine carefully some taken-for-granted practices:

...The teachers themselves, don't really understand what the purpose of the lesson is, all they know is, 'I know kids quite like this.' And so teachers aren't really assessing what it is they're looking for. So you have a fantastic lesson, which the kids seem to be really enjoying. What have they learned at the end of it? Can you tell what they learning? How did they learn that? Now, if you've got the experience, if you've read the stuff or if you've been trained in the stuff, it makes sense. Otherwise it's piecemeal, it's half ass, it's like anything you do where you don't fully understand it.

...And again, that's part of the Chartered Teacher thing, again, talking about positives, it definitely makes you more innovative because you understand, because you know what you're looking for...

Being and becoming a knowledgeable other

It is from this position of knowing that Simon begins to disconnect himself from his colleagues. Implicitly, he locates himself as a 'knower' and 'thinker', in contrast to his colleagues and peers who, through lack of engagement in further academic study and action research, are not in the same knowledgeable position:

But in reality, with a bit of knowledge and maybe a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, I don't know enough, but I've become very very, not sceptical, but concerned about exactly what Curriculum for Excellence is doing... You know, they bought into it and a lot of people bought into it [teachers, academics, policy makers]. And this is where the action research bit comes up, as well as critical thinking... [Teachers who have not done action research have] no real understanding and depth. And also a sense amongst them that, well, that's fine, I've been told that's [formative assessment] okay.

Simon has identified a schism between himself and his colleagues. It is within this space that Simon constructs/negotiates an identity for himself as a Chartered Teacher. This negotiation is awkward, uncomfortable and risky for Simon. He is a teacher and Chartered Teacher, both a practitioner and action researcher; he is simultaneously powerless and empowered; he is both cynical and positive; and is at once both Self and Other.

Simon simultaneously wishes to be recognised for his study and achievement of Chartered Teacher status, but also is cautious of it and resistant to being “told what to do”. He believes that there is a very negative perception of Chartered Teacher amongst the profession, suggesting it is a “sham” or that Chartered Teachers are “shysters” and as a result feels the work he has done has “been quite devalued”. He feels strongly about the potentially damaging affects of this negative perception that Chartered Teacher is only about the money, despite his own earlier statement:

...And I generally don't like mentioning the fact that I'm a Chartered Teacher because the negativity you get from other people – ‘Extra however many grand it is, yeah, yeah, right.’ And you think, well, I did work quite hard for it and, secondly, if you look at the criteria for it, I feel I met them. So if you're so fucking bright, you do it. If it is that much of a scam why don't you do it?

Despite this Simon does look ahead to potential opportunities and roles for Chartered Teachers. He feels he has gained some “status as an innovator” and believes that Chartered Teachers are ideally placed to be leaders of curriculum development within school. But he is very clear that this should not be in the shape of top-down management duties:

I think Chartered Teachers would feel appreciated [if they were able to lead curriculum developments etc], but I think also the sense of responsibility, without having management responsibility is what they're wanting. You're absolutely right, there is a dichotomy but essentially I'm not going to be told what to do. I'm not going to be given additional responsibilities for the sake of being a Chartered Teacher because that wasn't part of the deal.

Action research and the work of a Chartered Teacher

It would perhaps seem appropriate then, from Simon's experiences, that engaging in action research would be a worthwhile and core activity for Chartered Teachers. However despite his own increased position of knowledge and depth of understanding resulting from action research he does not believe it to be something he would readily continue now he is 'post-award':

...But I don't think I would ever, unless it was specifically for this, I would never do this formally again... But to collate them and to analyse them and to put them into statistical analysis and to, you know, I'm unlikely to do that unless there was a very good reason for it...

He talks in some detail about the time pressures and the constraints within which he works, as a fundamental reason for not doing action research. He does not believe it possible, and perhaps even appropriate, for him as a teacher to be engaged in action research work, unless this were at the request of management (or funded by the Scottish Qualifications Authority) with time was allocated to allow for it. There are perhaps several reasons for this. His perception that action research must be larger scale involving some sort of statistical analysis and report writing is one possible prohibiting factor. If management, or external bodies such as the SQA, ask teachers to carry out some action research it adds a certain legitimacy to the activity which possibly allows for some time and also provides a specific purpose. This kind of action research is different from that promoted through Chartered Teacher study. I discuss these issues of the nature and purpose of action research in more depth in Chapter Five.

There is also an undercurrent of a discourse within Simon's story that points to deeper issues relating to *who* should be doing research. At a fundamental level Simon diminishes the *need* for teachers to engage in action research by asserting:

...in the end we're employees and we're there to deliver what we're instructed to do and it's nice if we get to interpret how we do that...

And he suggests:

in the end teachers want to be – tell us what we're meant to do. It's difficult because it's tell us what you want us to do, but don't do it in a dictatorial way.

This apparent relinquishing of autonomy is in part out of frustration but is also in recognition of deeper issues of power, control and hierarchy at play within schools and indeed within the education system. It also sits at odds with his own belief that ideally things should be very different and that Chartered Teachers should have a 'voice':

But there's this element of realpolitik which is that when we're doing Chartered Teaching in a very idealised form – well, of course we should all be collaborative, we should all be informing each other, we should be helping each other, sharing good practice and within that framework coming up with a coherent and effective curriculum that delivers on the core values being sent down from the government and meets with the school's vision, its development plan and all these other things. But in reality that's not what happens because in reality we're squeezed for time, there's petty empire building in various departments where people are not prepared to give up time or give up specialisation in their subject or whatever. And your voice gets kind of lost because although you're the voice of reason, I mean, we're not really consulted. Consultation is very hierarchical.

Simon appears somewhat frustrated at the “illusory” nature of the consultation within his own school and is apprehensive about the future role of Chartered Teachers. He believes that Chartered Teachers have an important role to play in the development of the school and he sees their expertise lying within collaborative activities and in leading curriculum development and evaluation:

You have to be able to work collaboratively, you have to know how to do these things, how to get people on your side, but also to listen to other people's ideas and to try and develop ... And I think Chartered Teachers really ought to be put in charge of that sort of thing because I think that's

what they're best trained in or certainly it's the thing they've reflected most upon.

Simon is adamant that Chartered Teachers should have particular roles to play and does not want to be dictated to in terms of what this role may be. He does however appear at ease with the idea that management will give him particular projects to undertake, rather than him seek out and decide what should become the focus of future action research into learning and teaching within the school. He has, and is to a certain extent, *resisting* an identity as an action researcher. Whilst he is happy to undertake such activity on the request of management (to either develop or evaluate) he still believes that it is not the role of the teacher to be undertaking research into particular educational practices/initiatives/theories. That is for the world of 'academics.' He remains in the world of 'practitioners':

And I personally think this is what the education establishment is for and there needs to be a better joining. There is an isolation between teachers who think that people sit in ivory towers and know bugger all about classroom and what it's like and they preach down these sort of edicts. And at the same time I think there's a kind of institutional inverse snobbery from teachers towards academics who kind of they feel, oh yeah, just because you went and did your masters or you did your PhD or something, you're clever, and, yeah, I don't think that helps either, there's fault on both sides in that respect... But actually, the sort of research you're talking about, what we could do with from academics is them to come up with these research projects and to publish them in easy to read accessible means for us, which happens every so often.

He recognises that there is too great a disjuncture between the two worlds. Simon suggests that for theory and practice to be worthwhile the two need to come together; there needs to be a "symbiotic relationship". However, for Simon, this coming together is apparently not in the shape of Chartered Teachers becoming action researchers as part of their ongoing 'role'. Instead, he regards that as possible only through a secondment:

Well, you could only do it by secondment then, if that's what you really wanted to do... Well, if you really wanted a Chartered Teacher to proselytise about what they've done and how it's improved the teaching and the learning for the kids and you wanted them to research and say this is the impact of me

doing Chartered Teaching, this is why it's improved the learning for kids, I think you would need to take a secondment because you would be asking them to write documents ... Not a secondment for a year or six months, but for ... If you gave them a task, said look, you focussed it and said, right, you can have a month off to develop that and present that in terms of a document or something.

Despite recognising the impact of small-scale action research on his practice and the more informed position he is consequently now in, being a researcher is not an identity he is choosing to take on. Simon, as a Chartered Teacher, has not yet claimed any ownership of the research domain:

I'm not going to sit and read educational research books because that's not my field.

This story has begun to look at some of the tensions and emerging issues which Simon has, and still faces, as a Chartered Teacher. It tells a bit about his own living contradictions – things he wants to do or believes are worthwhile sitting in conflict with the constraints, barriers and frustrations of practice. This is just one story that Simon tells, one that I have interpreted. Through this interpretation, I have necessarily omitted other stories which would give different insights into Simon's work as a Chartered Teacher. I could talk about his extensive curriculum development work; explore the action research projects he has actually undertaken; tell about him negotiating what action research actually is and tussling with the notion that what he does is perhaps more evaluation than research. All of these are also critical parts of Simon's story.

I see Simon's stories as providing an interesting and nuanced insight into the overarching themes I have identified. His observations and opinions about action research illuminate issues relating to the way the nature and purpose of action research is understood, particularly within the context of the Chartered Teacher initiative. Important points emerge as Simon is negotiating shifts and changes in his identity. He highlights interesting issues relating to the professional culture and spaces in which he operates. These issues also emerge in the stories of Lorraine and Maggie, albeit they manifest themselves somewhat differently. It is to Lorraine that I

now turn and to her stories of risk and as she tries to engage in action research and hold on to her identity as a Chartered Teacher.

Introducing Lorraine

Lorraine is a learning support teacher in a large and challenging Secondary Community school and has been a Chartered Teacher since 2004. Lorraine was part of one of the first cohorts of teachers to undertake the initial Chartered Teacher pilot modules before successfully submitting her full claim to the GTCS. I first had the opportunity to work with her on an in-service CPD course which a colleague and I were running within Lorraine's local authority. The course was designed to support and encourage action research in schools and we met at four intervals throughout the school year (from September 2006 through to May 2007). Lorraine was one of around ten colleagues from her school, and the only Chartered Teacher in the group. The school had recently failed an HMIe inspection and staff morale was very low. The school was also about to join the third tranche of Schools of Ambition [SoA is a government funded initiative to support school transformation] and the head teacher at the time, Steve Morton, was keen, in rhetoric at least, to promote action research as a possible way forward for the school.

Lorraine and one of her close colleagues, Sarah, were keen to undertake a piece of action research to tackle, expose and examine some of the issues contributing to the low morale in the school. The project was quite risky and we, as tutors, were excited to see how it would unfold, offering support and guidance where and when we were able. It was a year later when I first contacted Lorraine, inviting her to be part of this research. She immediately agreed and explained to me that she felt it was a critical time for the Chartered Teacher programme and believed it important that someone should be looking at the experiences of what it is like for Chartered Teachers. The hurdles she has had to face as a Chartered Teacher attempting to do action research perhaps fuelled her motivation to participate.

My meetings with Lorraine as part of this research project were always in her learning support base. Our discussions often continued far longer than I anticipated.

Always keen not to encroach on teachers' very busy time, I allowed approximately an hour for each meeting. However Lorraine and I would often still be talking nearly two hours later. This time, I think, was appreciated and valued by both of us: for my part, I was grateful of the time Lorraine was willing to give to me to share her thoughts and experiences and help me understand some of the difficulties she and others face in the lived reality of trying to do action research; for Lorraine I think the meetings provided her a space to talk through some of her frustrations, difficulties and desires regarding her work/life as a Chartered Teacher.

The narrative that follows is, like the others, my interpretation and selection of just one thread of Lorraine's stories and experiences. It could be seen to be about compromise, uncertainty, change and conflict. I have chosen what I regard as a critical event for Lorraine - an action research project halted by management – and this lies at the core of her story. This narrative, then, focuses on Lorraine's current working context: the changes in management, the ebbing morale in school and the impact of this on Lorraine as a (learning support) teacher/Chartered Teacher/action researcher/Principal Teacher.

The negative experience of leading action research, coupled with changes in management, has created a complex and unstable working environment for Lorraine. The impact of this has been significant: it highlights the extent to which the hierarchical management within her school has control and power and the ways Lorraine has been constrained by this; it illustrates how risky action research can be when tackling deeper issues, rather than tweaking teaching strategies. What may be exposed through the action research may well be threatening for some; this appears to be the case for Steve Morton the head teacher at that time. It also brings to the fore Lorraine's own commitment to the school and the pupils together with her interest in equity and justice. As she explains to me she is not yet willing to let this go and continues to seek ways to address these issues.

The nature and purpose of action research for Lorraine

Lorraine has been involved in numerous action research projects, both before and since achieving Chartered Teacher status. Some have been successful, others less so; some are ongoing; some funded, most not; individual projects within her own class/teaching context and school-wide projects; projects supported by external 'expert' others and projects that have failed to materialise. What she is clear about is that regardless of anything else, the action research that any teacher does must be an integral and meaningful part of practice. It must arise from genuine concerns or questions and not simply be driven by funding or management diktats:

... I quite like when it happens that way, rather than somebody clocks funding somewhere and thinks, oh, let's make up an investigation so we can get some money. Because to me it doesn't work that way and it's for all the wrong reasons. There has to be a real thing there that you want to investigate otherwise there's no conviction behind it.

... Or because your Head Teacher says I want some research done on such and such, you've got this kind of onerous task of finding out.

But I think the best action research comes from teachers thinking I wonder what or I wonder why or part of your normal job and you're just curious enough to investigate it a bit further

Lorraine is frustrated and concerned that there is discrepancy in the way people understand what action research is in her school. She suggests that many of her colleagues, including management, have a more limited knowledge of research and she calls for greater quality and rigour in school action research undertakings:

...And to me I thought, no, no, no, it's not [action research]. You've tried a new activity, it's gone down well, you think, but how do you know it's gone down well? What are your observations on it? Have you asked the pupils? Have you asked the person that sits beside the pupil? No, it's not action research. And yet the people who, you know, like the head teacher used to come along and she used to smile and really enjoy all these stories that came back and everything and I thought, no, that's not, you haven't actually asked yourself, what are the circumstances before and what are the circumstances after? How am I going to measure it, how am I going to know that I've made an impact? To me it just wasn't...

Lorraine is frustrated by the way in which colleagues and management conceive the nature and purpose of action research. She believes that action research should be about something more meaningful than minor technical changes to practice and strategies or resources adopted. Instead Lorraine talks about action research projects that have more ambitious aims in terms of issues of social justice. This has been at the heart of the larger action research projects she has tried to lead.

Action research for transformation

Lorraine had recognised that there were serious issues in the school and that conversations needed to be initiated to try and engage management and staff in finding ways to resolve some of the problems. She explained how she saw this as an opportunity to engage in some action research and that her role and knowledge as a Chartered Teacher positioned her ideally to take this forward. Lorraine believes that one has to be proactive in addressing sometimes difficult and risky issues, and her role as a Chartered Teacher should create an opportunity for her to do this:

Well, I felt it was a kind of Chartered Teacher type thing, you know, sort of like trying to take a bit of responsibility beyond my own role. Because I have done quite a bit of research within my own role.

The initial spark and impetus for this research came in part from interviews she was conducting with pupils and also from her own anecdotal stories in the staffroom. She tells me about this process, highlighting the extent of the negative school climate and what she believed she could or should be doing about it:

Yeah. And it came through the pupils, again, because we do monitoring interviews every year to catch up on pupils... And we get the feedback and we ask them how they're getting on in their subject and we get feedback. You get the odd wee bit where pupils will say they don't like so-and-so and there's a wee personality clash, but we were getting hugely negative feedback about teachers; grumpy, grouchy teachers, you know, and I'm supposed to get homework, but I don't and the teacher can't be bothered marking it, and it was all kind of very negative. And you think, it was unusual, because, again, having done it over many years, you kind of get the stock answers and you know what's coming and some people are doing fine and the odd person's having a kind of a down so they complain about things, but this was more than that. This wasn't just the odd pupil who was at the end of their tether,

wanting their holidays; this was a whole significant group of pupils who are reporting lots of negative things. And also the atmosphere in the staffroom was very negative and when we were trying to do development work with teachers they were all kind of like, oh, no, I'll never have enough time to do it, it will never work anyway, and no, the discipline's awful. And it was all kind of moan, moan, moan and I thought, well, me as a Chartered Teacher, I felt as if I had to think beyond learning support, I had to think, school. Sarah was very supportive of that and when we started the action research group we thought here's something we could look into because the school's inviting action research; we're very concerned about the atmosphere, the ethos, the kind of general feeling that the school's going downhill, what can we do about it?

Lorraine was well aware of the possible hornets' nest that would be disturbed by this kind of action research, but at the same time believed that the risk needed to be taken; these tough issues needed to be addressed if there was to be any positive change in ethos. Lorraine tells me how management was not ready to face this challenge, despite the fact they supported the project initially. They were not ready or able to take the necessary risks required for change and ultimately management “pulled the plug on it all because it was too negative”:

...But the management wouldn't acknowledge that there was anything wrong.

... So I think that, again, it's a big risk, you take something that's bigger than what you can control yourself. You're either going to turn up things that you can't do anything about or you're going to have to face people that may not want to be faced. And we lost on it; I really regret that we lost on that.

There was something about Lorraine's beliefs and her passion for what she was doing that was refreshing. This piece of action research seemed to be very much within the realms of 'Chartered Teacher' work and it was exciting to see teachers engage in action research that went beyond seeking minor improvements to their own classroom practice. I followed Lorraine's research with great interest over the course of our CPD sessions and listened to the ways she went about gathering some meaningful data from colleagues and the issues this raised. By the end of the course, however, the head teacher had “pulled the plug” on their action research perceiving it to be “too negative”. During our meetings for this research Lorraine spoke to me at length about this experience. She and her colleague were, understandably, frustrated

and let down by this decision and I see this experience as being a critical event for Lorraine as a Chartered Teacher. This experience is also perhaps indicative of the troubling time the school was facing. Since this time the school has been coping with significant changes in management and this has been a disrupting and unsettling time for staff and pupils.

Coping with an unstable school context

Lorraine's school is coming through a lengthy process of change and she tells me about the recent and current changes they face. There have been three head teachers in as many years and 'acting' rector in between. Lorraine talks about the "really, really low" staff morale and attributes this in part to a top-down hierarchical management, led by Steve and a failed HMIe inspection. Steve left the school in 2007 after the follow-up HMIe inspection was also unsuccessful. A new temporary rector, Lesley Milne, arrived in late 2007 and was in post to 'troubleshoot' and turn the school around. After her initial temporary appointment, Lorraine suggests, the staff were beginning to feel appreciated, core work around learning and teaching was prioritised and, as she remarked, "the school is changing very gradually". The staff were relieved to see Ms. Milne making a commitment to stay with the school for a reasonable period of time, hopefully allowing time for changes to be implemented and embedded:

So she came along here as a kind of troubleshooting measure and we didn't know for how long but it was meant to be to stopgap until we got our own head teacher. But her job at Bellcastle High School has now been advertised and she's going to stay here for the duration, which will probably be till her retirement, which is not that far away. But it shows her level of commitment to this school that she's allowed her other job to be advertised... Whether she'll be here long enough to kind of like see it on, I don't know, but she's certainly committed to December 2009, she's told us that she'll be here at least that length of time, so...

Much to the disappointment of the staff Ms Milne left the school in late 2008 to pursue a career with a leading children's charity. A new appointment has now been made and the Rector took up permanent position in March 2009. These significant changes in leadership will inevitably take their toll on both staff and pupils. Lorraine

also has other staffing issues to contend with, in addition to the changing management. Her own department is suffering as a result of staff absences, disputes and retirement. Lorraine has also had to juggle a dual role as acting Principal Teacher (PT). This was a position she initially (and reluctantly) agreed to take on whilst an internal dispute was being dealt with, as well as trying to continue her work as a Chartered Teacher/learning support teacher:

...We're still in the same situation staffing wise. The person who's off is no longer off sick, but she's off still under investigation. And in a way it's worse because I think – well, I'm not sure all the ins and outs of how they finance it and whatnot, but basically she's not being replaced until this whole thing's been resolved. So I'm actually two people; I'm still doing this Principal Teacher thing and I'm doing my own job as well. And in the meanwhile one of my colleagues has retired and she's not been replaced. They have advertised, but this is like – what, we're in the end of September now and she knew since June that she was retiring so they've taken this long to get an advert out and to get somebody and the interview still hasn't taken place. So we're running the department, which is normally about five or six, we're running it on three people. So I'm finding it really difficult.

The situation was exacerbated by the departure of Lesley Milne and the subsequent period of an Acting Head. During this period of time the acting head was making no decisions. Furthermore, since the new head teacher was appointed it would appear that there has been no improvement in the staffing situation:

So since our new head teacher came along, we went for a meeting with him and he more or less said, quite frankly, you know, we don't have the money to staff you properly, we'll see how we go and his exact expression, which will stay with me forever, is "We'll see if we've got enough money in the biscuit tin at the end of the day to give you a bit more staffing". And we were so offended at that, having been asked to hold the fort for such a long time and to be understaffed for such a long time... you know, it's like crumbs of the rich man's table...

Since then, Lorraine has found herself “strong armed” into taking on the PT position now as a seconded post until Summer 2010. Lorraine is “very unsettled” in her current context and is feeling the pressure of such an increased, and unwelcome, workload. She is frustrated because in the current situation she is unable to do the kind of work and be the kind of teacher/Chartered Teacher she wishes to be:

but since becoming a Chartered Teacher I've done so many management things it's incredible. That was what I wanted to get away from. I'm an acting principal teacher just now, against my wishes.

Yeah. And I actually have to say, I mean, this morning, for instance, I've had loads of people coming to my desk to talk to me about things and I haven't, but I've wanted to say, 'Can you go away and leave me to get on with this, because I really need to get this done and I'll speak to you later.' And it's the opposite to the person I want to be; I want to be the person that folk will come to and say, 'I'm thinking about doing this, what do you reckon?'

Engaging in action research is one of the activities she no longer feels she has sufficient time to do, or certainly to do properly; it has become a “luxury” she cannot afford. There are lots of potential projects she would like to investigate and she is “desperate to do things, but the opportunity is not there” for her at the moment:

And the problem with the investigating something a bit further is it requires that bit of extra time, over and above, and unfortunately when you're short of time and staff, that's the first thing to go. You kind of block those thoughts about I wonder why. Rather than investigate further you block it and go on to the next thing.

For Lorraine this has been a challenging and fraught time and she talks about feeling “disappointed”, “let-down”, “ashamed” and “negative”. However, she is still hopeful that things will start to improve:

I feel really disappointed. Well, I felt better for a while because I thought we're on the up and up. And we still are on the up and up, I'm not saying that we're not. But at one point everybody seemed to be focussed and people seemed to be signing up and there was an element of, there was a kind of a space at the end of the day where you can sit down and do things. And gradually, as the weeks have gone by, ...I just feel kind of let down. It's like, you know, you get built up for a fall sometimes. And within my own department I feel kind of negative about it because we're so busy just trying to hold things together, that there's no time to do something over and above. ...in a way I feel ashamed that I'm not doing anything and that I can't be more helpful to you with but I'm being completely honest with it, I just don't have time.

Despite these obvious barriers Lorraine has been trying to create opportunities wherever possible. She has attempted to find ways to tie in research work with other school responsibilities, such as being involved in school committees although these have not always been successful either:

I'm feeling a bit kind of let down by it all because after I spoke to you the last time I thought, well, the next time round I'll have things on the go. ... and I just feel that I'm coming across dead end after dead end, which is not very helpful to you, I know.

The situation is not entirely negative. Although she is not currently able to engage in the kind of action research work she would like to undertake, and although her time is very constrained with management tasks, she is finding some benefits of her seconded position.

I'm invisible as a Chartered Teacher

Lorraine reports that she now feels she is in a position, as a PT rather than 'just' a Chartered Teacher, to return to the action research project that was previously halted. She believes there is an opening for the action research project as the school begins to consider ways forward for A Curriculum for Excellence and through the Schools of Ambition agenda. What this highlights is the underlying issue that despite her knowledge, experience and status as a Chartered Teacher, Lorraine does not believe she is in a position, within her school, of "influence" or "power" as a Chartered Teacher. Although the rhetoric in the school (under the guise of Schools of Ambition) is in support of action research with research committees having been formed (under previous management), in reality the story is quite different. Lorraine attributes part of this problem to the status and perceived influence she, as a Chartered Teacher has (or not). Reflecting on the first failed action research project Lorraine comments:

I think the failure that we had was that we just didn't have the power to either do anything about it ourselves or to make other people do anything... The whole thing was bigger than anything that Sarah and I could do.

And when you don't have influence there's nothing you can do. You can do your bit, but you've got have the backing of management. And although a lot of the staff backed us up with what we were trying to do, we needed the management to say, yeah, we have to face difficult times as well.

This lack of influence or power is a significant concern for Lorraine. She talks about her potential role as a Chartered Teacher as being an “agent of change”. As a Chartered Teacher she wants to be - and indeed sees it as her responsibility to be - a support to colleagues developing learning and teaching within the school. She believes she is able to lead action research projects that could enable change, but for that to happen she needs the support of management.

Paradoxically, rather than being seen as a proactive leader of learning, Lorraine comments “I feel as if I'm reasonably invisible in this school”. She explains that she feels as if her Chartered Teacher status has been seen as a demotion within the school. Her transition from PT1 (as a Senior Teacher she was placed on the Principal Teacher scale post-McCrone) to Chartered Teacher saw her removed from all the meetings and conversations reserved for ‘promoted’ staff. Whilst she is not concerned about specific titles and being ‘management’ as such, she is concerned that her removal from these groups in some ways prevents her from taking forward her role as a Chartered Teacher.

Yeah. And I wasn't invited to any of the meetings, they have meetings on Friday lunchtime and it's supposed to be a forum, an exchange of what's going on in the school. And it's PTs only, so Chartered Teachers aren't invited to it. And again, there's this idea that you're an agent of change and that you're supposed to be showing good examples and you know what's going on in the school, cross curricular, whole school type issues, but you're not invited to the meetings.

Ironically, Lorraine felt she had more “power” to undertake action research while she was still studying to become a Chartered Teacher and she believed she was able to make more of an impact in her previous role as a Senior Teacher. This she suggests is because, unlike her Chartered Teacher role, as Senior Teacher she had a clearly defined remit of which all staff were aware, and they knew they could come to her about specific matters. Her Chartered Teacher study offered her some legitimacy and

“licence” to do action research. Both management and colleagues were more amenable to completing a questionnaire, helping out with research, or addressing points when it was purely to assist her achieving a ‘qualification’. Maybe because her colleagues and management regarded it as fulfilling the very specific purpose of satisfying the needs of an external body (the university or GTCS) it somehow distanced the action research from the context, making it ‘less real’ and possibly less important to address.

Now as a seconded PT, Lorraine is finding herself back “in the loop” and “part of the people who are discussing how decisions are made”. She is included in meetings where promoted members of staff discuss ideas, curriculum issues and learning and teaching matters. As a PT she has a voice again. What she finds ironic about this is the very fact that with this ‘given’ identity or label of ‘Principal Teacher’ people recognise her as someone who should and can contribute to meetings and in some ways be this ‘agent of change’ - but really she is just a Chartered Teacher in disguise.

But, ironically, as a PT seconded, people listen to me more than as a Chartered Teacher.

...Because my principles haven't changed but my title has. And attitudes towards me have changed, which is a sad situation for Chartered Teachers because I thought that by going the Chartered Teacher route I was giving myself legitimacy in a different way to being a PT. ...All of a sudden people were listening to what I was saying (at meetings).

...because of my change in title I've got more authority.

As she notes she is the “same person”, her ‘real’ identity, beliefs and knowledge as a Chartered Teacher are what inform her work as a PT. She is just disappointed that she needs to be disguised as a PT in order to legitimately initiate action research and push forward her ideas.

But I just kind of hoped that Chartered Teacher meant something to people and I'm disillusioned by it, I don't think it does.

...I feel more empowered at the moment, but I'm the same person as I was before. And it seems wrong that school, in general, values me more as a seconded Principal teacher than as a Chartered Teacher. Whereas in the eyes of the salary scales I'm exactly the same, no different.

This is a significant issue for Lorraine. If Chartered Teachers are to be 'agents of change', as Lorraine describes herself, or be effective in leading learning and teaching, then there must be legitimacy given to these actions and support must be there from management and colleagues. This is an issue that I explore through Chapters Six and Seven.

This narrative has been about Lorraine's struggle as she attempts to negotiate and assert her identity as an "agent of change" within a frequently changing management structure, which is hierarchical and constantly seeking control. Lorraine cares about being a Chartered Teacher, an "agent of change", yet with this identity she is "invisible" to others in the school and she is forced into assuming the role and identity of a Principal Teacher (PT). In order to be the person/teacher/Chartered Teacher/action researcher she wishes to be Lorraine feels she has to masquerade as a PT – being a Chartered Teacher in disguise.

There is a sense of Lorraine being in the midst of a battle; throughout our meetings she makes reference to "battles", "fights", "uphill struggles", being in the "pits of despair", facing "hurdles" and it is easy for me to feel the emotional journey she has been on as she deals with the highs and lows of her current context and her very unsettled feelings. She explains to me:

...I feel as if I'm in peaks and troughs about it. Sometimes when you've talked to me I've been in a trough. And when I look at what I've said I completely meant it. It's not like I've said it because I was in a bad mood that day. I was in a point in my teaching where I felt that I wasn't valued. And I'm not actually out of that at the moment, but I feel as if there's wee glimmers of hope.

This narrative could be seen as a story of constant compromise. Alternatively it is a story of resilience and survival, courage, determination and risk taking. Like Simon, there is no smooth or reconciled story to be told here. Instead, I hope I have shared

an insight into the complex and messy tensions faced by Lorraine, as she is/becomes a Chartered Teacher. The issues emerging from being/becoming a Chartered Teacher and an action researcher underpin the following narrative about Maggie.

Introducing Maggie

Maggie and I first met in early 2006 when she embarked on Module One of the Chartered Teacher programme which I was teaching. At that time a colleague and I were engaged in a small-scale research project about teachers' experiences of beginning Chartered Teacher study and Maggie, as a candidate on the course, participated in this study. When I contacted her about participating in this current research for my doctoral studies she was quick to respond and was enthusiastic about my proposed idea. Maggie's motivations for participating appeared to be twofold. She explained to me that she really would like to help me out but also she felt it might "add value" to her own potential future action research projects.

This brief narrative about Maggie is, of course, just part of her story. I am necessarily selecting and re-presenting and interpreting the stories Maggie has told me. The visual is important in Maggie's narrative. She told many of her own stories through the use of visual metaphors and she used images to help explain and negotiate her own understandings. This particular narrative focuses on Maggie *being and becoming* an action researcher. Like the others, her story is filled with tensions and contradiction as she negotiates this new identity of action researcher. She understands action research to be not just a core activity for her as Chartered Teacher, regarding it more as her 'way of being'. She recognises and is excited by a view of action research that is complex, flexible and dynamic, rather than fixed, rigid and linear. Underpinning all of this is her new found understanding of Third Space thinking, using this to make sense of the spaces she believes should be created that bring together the educational community in distinctly different ways, ways that promote an enquiring and research-oriented disposition. Maggie's story could be seen as identifying questions about the future and 'what now?' or 'what more?' for teachers/Chartered Teachers. In some ways her stories challenge many taken-for-granted assumptions about teachers doing action research.

Building our research relationship

On Maggie's suggestion, our first meeting was in a local hotel over coffee and shortbread rather than in one of the six primary schools where she is a visiting Physical Education (PE) teacher. The informality of this location allowed Maggie the opportunity to talk to me about her experiences without necessarily committing to the full duration of the project. At that time Maggie was only just returning to work after a period of illness and although she was keen to participate it would only be possible if it were manageable for her. We agreed that she could withdraw from the research at any time if she felt it was too much commitment or pressure. Maggie arranged for each of our subsequent meetings to be in a different school, as a visiting specialist she works across six primary schools. This offered me an insight into the diversity of her teaching contexts. These included a very large, reasonably affluent commuter town primary school, a small village school and large town schools in areas of higher socio-economic deprivation.

Maggie and I also had several opportunities to meet beyond the official parameters of the interviews for this research project. These included meeting at the Scottish Learning and Teaching Festival (SETT, in Sept 2008), the Chartered Teacher National Conferences (June 2008 and May 2009), the GTCS National Conference in May 2009 and the Practitioner's Day of the BERA Conference in Edinburgh in September 2008. It was the BERA conference that seemed to be a critical event for Maggie. On reflection, I also believe that this moment was a critical event in my own thinking and developing understanding too. We sat together as Ken Zeichner delivered his Keynote address on "Creating Third Spaces in the Education of Teachers and Educational Research". The ideas Zeichner presented struck a chord for Maggie - and for me - and she was quickly making connections and seeing possibilities for her own research and for future collaborative action amongst Chartered Teachers, teachers and universities. We discussed these ideas at some length over coffee after the Keynote. I draw upon this as a critical moment in Maggie's narrative and use it, as she also does, to weave together and make sense of some of her other stories and experiences.

During our scheduled meetings Maggie and I were engrossed in discussion, poring over some of her materials, teaching resources and research data. She talked at length and shared her experiences, perceptions and motivations for becoming a Chartered Teacher and doing action research. For our final meeting Maggie also invited me to observe her teaching. The purpose was to allow me the opportunity to see aspects of her action research ‘in action’ and she explained why she believed my observing her teaching would be beneficial for her own learning as part of her action research project:

That's why I wanted you to see that class actually. I thought it might be beneficial. My perception of myself ... And I would say this is all in this [in her written reflection], you see. Develop my own practice and I've put teach better as well. That's what I'm hoping for. Not just for me but for the children obviously, it's a two way ... Enhanced learning in myself and in the pupils.

Maggie and I developed what seemed to be an easy and open relationship that appeared to be based on mutual professional respect and trust. Her words during our final meeting as we discussed my presence in her class, encapsulates this relationship for me:

...There is an equality, I've become aware of that. And even today – now, you see, we haven't done this before, so if I was to give you feedback on how it felt for me today, I felt there was something, a wee dynamic, that there was something, there was an equality in us...

For Maggie being part of this project has been important as she has felt valued, just as the action research she is doing has been valued; she has been able to share it and discuss her ideas, allowing them to evolve and take shape as we talk. She comments that opportunities for this kind of sharing are hard to find in school. She explains this to me:

*Do you know what I love about this as well, Zoè? I mean, I really feel valued when I share this with you.
...Thank you so much for all your listening.*

I was surprised by Maggie's comments and had not appreciated that this opportunity to share her research would be so valuable. For me this has been a remarkable and unanticipated outcome of the research. Her comments offer a valuable insight into the often solitary, experience of the teacher/Chartered Teacher/action researcher and hint at a lack of engagement with research within the profession. It also goes some way in highlighting a division between school and university, academics and practitioners, teachers and action researchers, practice and research. Maggie explores some of these issues as she talks to me about her journey of being/becoming a Chartered Teacher and action researcher.

Negotiating understanding through metaphors

As Maggie tells me her story(ies), she uses many metaphors. Many of these metaphors help to explain and understand her developing sense of being/becoming a Chartered Teacher and action researcher. These metaphors not only help me to gain deeper insights into her experiences and understandings, adding 'texture' to her story. In her accounts, retellings and reflections she considers and puzzles over her experiences, negotiating meanings of these and at times constructing new understandings:

But you know just now, it's just come to me right this minute, as I'm talking about that and I'm saying it now, do you know what it's forming in my mind, it is forming in my mind, like it's building into something. A bit like the Lego thing in the last interview we talked about, it's cogs, but what is building into, I don't know...

Maggie reflects on her work over the last few years and both questions and discusses her engagement with action research. She tries to identify turning points and critical moments and explains the impact of studying for Chartered Teacher, in particular her engagement with action research as part of that study. She refers to her initial action research activity as part of Chartered Teacher study as being on a "journey" or on a "road", metaphors to which she returns often during our discussions. Maggie talks about the impact doing this action research had on her. She suggests that it really challenged and changed her practice and her thinking. She goes further to suggest ways she has changed in herself, this she likened to coming "out of the box":

Aye, I would say. And I would say I maybe had myself in the box, initially, then when I came out the box... [laughter] ...I thought, wooh, you're out, like Jack in the Box, you're out and you're seeing what's going on here. But it is wider than just that because it made me look at, well, if that's happening in that context in the classroom and there's all these approaches, I then started to reflect and think, well, how can I bring that into my learning and teaching in the gym...

As she reflects on and talks about her journey, tensions emerge in her stories. Whilst Maggie recognises changes in her this conflicts with her belief that she perhaps has always had this questioning/enquiring/researcherly disposition. She views her action research journey as being “adventurous” and her motivations do not arise from dissatisfaction. As she states, “it’s not discontentment”. She ponders whether she “has always been like this” and perhaps it is just “her way of being”. Maggie uses another metaphor to explore this notion of her disposition: the iceberg and its hidden depths under the sea. She refers to this newly recognised passion/enquiring disposition as “coming alive” but suggests that:

...in actual fact it always has been there and it's just been got out because of what you're trying to do or what you're taking on or what you've maybe become...

Maggie explains that in the journey to becoming a Chartered Teacher and being an action researcher she believes that, in fact, “that’s who I be”. It is in our final discussion that she reflects on and appreciates a shift in her own perceptions about doing action research and being an action researcher. Previously Maggie used water as a metaphor to describe how she engaged in action research. For example, she was “paddling about” while many of her colleagues looked on from the shore preferring to “stay in the sand”. She regarded action research as the opportunity to “pull stuff up” i.e. from the seabed/water, and explore the “shimmery bits”. During one of our early conversations she comments:

It's like you would be in the sea pulling out a shell or looking at a stone and you think, ooh, there's a bit of seaweed and pull it out. Do you know what I mean? It's like that, it feels like for me just now that I'm just pulling stuff up...

When Maggie reflected back on her use of some of the water metaphors to describe her action research and herself as an action researcher, she decided that a different metaphor was now more appropriate, indicating a change in her own understanding and attitude. She now sees parallels with metaphors of growth, commenting:

Maggie. I would say there's a wee shift in that though, Zoè.

Zoè. Right. Okay.

Maggie. I would say that, as I think about that now, it was a lifting up and having a wee look at things. I would say there's more an embedding in now. I feel for me it's in. It's like putting it over the soil or whatever. I mean, I've been thinking about it more on that sort of metaphor. It would be ... Something would be starting to grow up from it.

Creating Third Spaces: being/becoming a Chartered Teacher and action researcher

Her metaphors work at two levels: not only describing a process of doing action research but also hinting at her identity as a researcher. As she tries to explain and make sense of her understanding and experiences of action research she is also negotiating her own identity as a Chartered Teacher and action researcher, as someone who is no longer 'in the box'. For Maggie being an action researcher is part of "who she be" as a Chartered Teacher. She does remark that this is who she is "now" and she questions what "more" there might be:

But it's like it's just part of a ... It's something that's part of me now. That's who you be now. It's as if it's ... I don't know, I suppose it's opened you up. Do you know? a flower there, you know? you know? You open it up and you get all these different lovely ... Ooh, look at that, there's pinks and whites and greens on that petal, you know. So there's just sort of a more than just what you thought was there. I quite like that. Just keep that, you know.

Maggie is acknowledging a shift from learning about and simply 'doing' action research to a position where it is more embedded; it is part of who she is. At a conceptual level Maggie has moved from 'knowing' about action research to 'being/becoming' an action researcher. Parallels can be drawn to the notions of Third

Space which Ken Zeichner introduced in his keynote. He referred to ideas about finding ways to rethink the spaces in which we work and breaking some of the barriers between academics and teachers, those traditionally understood to be the ‘practitioners’ or ‘researchers’. This would involve bringing these two groups together in ‘Third Spaces’ to work in distinctly different ways.

As Maggie sees it, she has moved from being ‘in the box’, where many of her colleagues still are, to now being ‘opened up’. Maggie begins to locate her ‘Self’ - an action researcher/Chartered Teacher/thinker - as different from many of her colleagues. They are not all “on the road” yet and few teachers engage in or even value research. Unfortunately, as she reminds me, not everyone shares her or my enthusiasm for research. She describes the difficulties of finding time and support within a professional culture that does not necessarily recognise action research as a worthwhile or legitimate activity for teachers:

Maggie. Exactly! Just with all this stuff that I'm talking about, where do I get the space and the funding to get that? Now, I did it all on my own time for the Chartered, but I did it.

Zoè. But surely there must be a way to create space within school time.

Maggie. what I was trying to say to you... you see they are not all up for doing it...

Zoè. I know. That's the problem, isn't it?

However, Maggie comments that we cannot simply blame teachers for this lack of engagement with action research or to expect change to come from a single direction. One issue she believes that is not helping, realised after her own participation and experience of the BERA conference, is the lack of communication and collaboration between the perceived ‘academic’ research world and the ‘practitioner’ world. She believes this divide is helping to fuel the paucity of action research in schools:

That's one of the reasons why we're not seeing it [action research] happening so much with the teachers

She suggests that the kind of academic research happening in institutions like Moray House could be useful to help inform her own research, perhaps by illuminating different questions or helping her to think differently:

Well, yeah, or even something that's impacting on children, you know. Anything that would – is there anything coming out of the unis, you know? It's like what that Ken Zeichner said, I mean, what must be happening in the academic sphere, I'm down in practitioner level, but where do the two meet? You see, I would be maybe needing a wee bit – like he said an academic could say, well look, this is really what that's about what you're doing there.

Maggie believes that bringing together these two seemingly distinct worlds, creating opportunities for teachers to be engaged in action research and providing space for dialogue is important. She has made numerous references to Ken Zeichner's ideas and has been turning over in her own mind how this notion of "third space" could/should be fostered. However, if any sustained or meaningful change is to take place there needs to be, as Maggie suggests, a culture shift. For this shift to happen she is keen to emphasize that these Third Spaces must not be hierarchical. What is important, she claims, is not whether one domain has greater importance or significance, instead it is about a coming together: physically, geographically, virtually and/or conceptually:

As long as the two are coming together to meet.

For these spaces to evolve, she believes change will need to come from the 'grass-roots up', but it won't happen without support from all levels. She knows only too well that strong leadership is required. Management who are open to the risk and value of action research need to support and help push this shift forward. They need to help create these spaces and everyone needs to be able to engage in them. She is interested in finding ways that may help this work and she tells me about her recent experience at the Scottish Learning Festival:

And I'll tell you the reason I asked her, there wasn't time for questions because the people before were running late, but I said you talked about teacher action research, so I says, I'm interested in that bit. Can you tell me, was that – when she went overseas – was that academic research or was it, to

take it from BERA - Was that academic or was that practitioner research? She says, oh, it was practitioner. I says, well very good. And I says, my next question is, who funded that, where did they get the time to do that, the teachers? I says, because there's action research going on, I says, how is that facilitated within the school and the region? I'm not quite too sure about that, you see. Now, the thing is, if it's not there at the grass roots coming up from the bottom ... Because that's what I said to her, I said I've been at the BERA and this is what was Ken Zeichner was talking about, the academic world and the practitioner coming in at the Third Space. And by this time there was another high heidie [head teacher/member of senior management] one standing beside us, I don't know who he was. And I said, and how does it then come? And so I thought third space, I thought here we go, third space. I said, but in actual fact, he's [Ken Zeichner] right. How did he get that third space operating? I'd love to see that working. We were excited by that, weren't we? It was great”

From this anecdote that Maggie shares, I believe we gain an insight into her developing confidence as ‘knowledgeable other’ and an action researcher. It would seem that she is perhaps already nudging at the boundaries of the two ‘worlds’ and reflecting on her participation in this research project. Maggie feels that we perhaps have already started to create/foster third spaces. In some ways we might understand Maggie’s being and becoming a Chartered Teacher and an action researcher as her beginning to engage conceptually in Third Spaces.

Understanding the nature and purpose of action research

Underpinning Maggie’s identity as an action researcher is the value she places on doing action research and creating Third Spaces. This is closely tied with her experience and understanding of action research itself. She shares the ways in which this has changed, developed and evolved from her early days of studying for the Chartered Teacher award to her current experience of engaging in post-award, unfunded action research. She spoke about the nature and purpose of action research for her. One tension that emerged was her recognition that action research is not straightforward, linear or easily broken into clear steps within a cyclical process. She uses several visual images and metaphors to illustrate this.

Initially she likens action research to abstract art and sees the process as full of numerous and often simultaneous “explosions”, recounting a story a friend told her, she explains:

I have a friend who is a science teacher and he's trying to explain a nuclear explosion to his pupils, so what he did was he set out 400 mousetraps with a ping-pong ball in each one. So he says, now, boys and girls, this is how a nuclear explosion works. He had a ping-pong ball and he chucked it in. It hit a mousetrap, two went up in the air, obviously; they came down, four goes up, they came down, six goes up. And before you knew it, everything was going up. And he turns to me and he says, 'That's what you remind me of.' I'm like, thanks, I'll remember that. I went, oh, that's lovely. When you went like that, that visual thing, that's what it reminded me of. All these ping-pong balls everywhere, and you think, hello, they're all going off, isn't that great? Now that I could say is a bit like what action research is like. It's all going off and it's like, oh, yeah, look at that.

Maggie shares her understanding that action research is dynamic in nature. It is open, flexible, fluid and not fixed or loaded with predetermined outcomes. She recognises the complexity and describes action research as dynamic and emerging:

And it is the dynamic nature of that. That's the dynamic thing about it. It's not prescribed or formulated, it is dynamic.

Recognising action research as complex and dynamic helped her to understand what action research might look like for her in her classroom and as a part of her practice. For our final meeting Maggie brought an image which she explained just “speaks volumes” to her. This, she told me, visually captures action research, being an action researcher and the notion of third spaces. She produced a copy of an image of subatomic particles in the bubble chamber of CERN’s Large Hadron Collider (Image 1. Below).

Image 1. Particle Tracks from CERN's Large Hadron Collider
©Science Photo Library



What is powerful about this image for Maggie is that:

it makes its own shape...there is no cycle sort of shape to it. That doesn't dictate that that's what will happen next...Because they're all sort of different if you look at them [the smaller bubbles/atoms/stations]...

She explains how the various paths are connected, interconnected and all “in the moment” yet there are also some boundaries (which are arguably fluid and flexible). The small yellow dots, or particles, could be seen as some of the many “ping pong” balls still in the air. The blue spirals are different yet connecting action research projects. They may spark off each other, some coming to the fore as other fade to the background. It can also be viewed as a “picture within a picture”. If you magnify just one of the ‘explosions’ it could show research within research. This further exemplifies the complex nature of what action research is like. As well as visually representing what action research for a classroom teacher may look like, Maggie suggests it can also be viewed as what it is like to *be* a teacher/Chartered Teacher/action researcher. It could be seen to represent the Third Spaces: the

moments of collaboration, learning communities or even a conceptual engagement with Third Space ideals of connecting research/practice, teacher/researcher, and school/university.

Through each of the teachers' stories I have pulled out what I believe to be significant and critical issues which relate to their being and becoming Chartered Teachers and action researchers. The way in which the three teachers understand the nature and purpose of action research appears to differ and this is influencing the extent to which they value it as a core part of their work as a Chartered Teacher. I unpick and explore some of these conceptions of action research in Chapter Five and in Chapter Six I go on to explore the teachers' emerging and evolving identity(ies) as a Chartered Teacher/action researcher. The notion of Third Spaces also appears as an overarching issue common to all the teachers. Maggie is the only one to mention this explicitly and discuss possible future implications. However the underlying issues and themes are evident in all the teachers' stories. Chapter Seven is devoted to exploring this.

Chapter 5: Understanding the nature and purpose of action research: insights from Chartered Teachers

In this chapter it is my intention to explore and discuss the nature and purpose of action research as constructed and understood by the teachers involved in this study. As I have previously argued, I believe it important to foreground the local and particular stories that are unique to each teacher. These stories can be used to gain insights, reframe and re-consider familiar and taken-for-granted understandings about teachers' action research. I am keen to ensure that the data are not simply reduced to codes, categories and connecting themes. Therefore this chapter is structured to allow the stories of the individual teachers to exemplify and illustrate some common issues and themes, although these are manifest and enacted in different ways.

Action research as a site of debate was introduced in Chapter Two. Rather than seeking to provide a single definitive definition I introduced Noffke's (2009) three dimensions; the personal, professional and political, as a way to help understand and make sense of the nature and purpose of action research. I argued that given its contested nature it is essential that we interrogate what is understood as the nature and purpose of action research within the Chartered Teacher context in Scotland. As Noffke contends, it is:

...vital that those using the term action research (and indeed those who use other terms for similar ideas) are clear in their assumptions about the kinds of knowledge(s) they seek to enhance, the traditions they feel are part of their work, the ends towards which their research efforts are aimed, and the social movements with which they articulate....Action research unproblematized in terms of its goals, can act to reinscribe existing practices rather than create new forms which can focus on social justice. (2009:20)

The contested nature of action research is, however, one of its exciting and fruitful characteristics. The fact that it is contested allows, indeed forces us, to discuss, debate and negotiate what it possibly means for us. It creates a space, or an opening to construct our understandings of what action research may mean for Chartered Teachers as action researchers. It demands that we question what kinds of

knowledge(s) may be created and for what purposes. The aim of this discussion is certainly not to close down options, presenting boundaries that serve to limit and restrict what action research could be for. It is more a way of negotiating the nature and purpose of action research to ensure that it is a meaningful, worthwhile and rigorous activity for Chartered Teachers.

The focus of this chapter, then, is on examining the teachers' understandings of the underpinning nature and purpose of action research. This informs the kind of research they engage in, the focus of this research, the processes they employ and the ways in which this is deeply interrelated with their own sense of identity as a Chartered Teacher and action researcher. This is an issue which will be explored in the following chapter.

Their own personal histories and experiences of research through previous study, work and experience, inform how teachers understand and construct meaning about the nature and purpose of action research. It is also informed by their encounters with (action) research in practice, and the ideas and practices that are dominant within schools and the educational community. Their experiences of study for the Chartered Teacher programme also impact on their understanding. The dominant discourses, then, necessarily inform and influence teachers' understandings and experiences of doing action research. Unpicking the teachers' constructions and their examples of action research allows me to consider and question the nature and purpose of action research for Chartered Teachers.

The ways in which teachers and their understanding of, and engagement in, action research are influenced, informed and constrained by dominant discourses emerges as a prominent issue from the data. This chapter focuses on the tensions between action research as understood from a traditional research perspective that seeks to establish 'what works' - against a more complex understanding of action research that supports and promotes 'riskier' research that may challenge the status quo.

But what is action research?

There appears to be an assumption that there is a shared understanding of what action research actually is. This appears to be the case within the Scottish context as the term(s) appear across a wide range of policies and local/national initiatives yet they are understood differently in each. The terms ‘action research’, ‘practitioner inquiry/enquiry’ and other similar terms are used interchangeably yet appear to mean different things to different groups. There is a danger that ‘action research’ is simply becoming what Griffiths (2009:86) describes as a ‘Hurrah’ word – a concept widely agreed as ‘good’, yet has significantly different meaning depending on an individual’s own political and moral position. There is also conflation of the terms action research and research. There is no explicit statement regarding the underpinning philosophy, nature or purpose of action research/practitioner enquiry within the Standard for Chartered Teacher. Action research underpins the Schools of Ambition initiative and HMIe (2006 & 2009) also promote research as a valuable activity for teachers, yet what that means is not articulated. The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) encourages teachers to engage in action research and has funded a number of action research projects. Similarly, the GTCS has a teacher researcher scheme providing funding for teachers to do action research but again the nature and purpose is varied.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2004:610) warn there is a danger that the ‘Institutionalization of practitioner inquiry’ will bring the:

possibility of the co-optation, dilution and misinterpretation of the very roots that may have made this kind of inquiry epistemologically desirable....

This danger of ‘institutionalizing’ action research is potentially problematic within the Chartered Teacher initiative, particularly if there is a disparity in the way the various stakeholders understand what action research is, could be and perhaps even should be. Simon alerts us to this very problem as he explains the kind of action research the SQA are interested in:

Well, they don't require the academic rigour. ...as far as they're [SQA] concerned, all they want is, how does this practically apply, how could we roll it out in schools, why is it successful, rather than the very detailed academic research and sort of analysis you had to do for the Chartered Teaching thing... So, to that extent, actually it's less difficult to do

The reality may be that many Chartered Teachers (indeed any teacher, practitioner, academic or policy maker) are not entirely clear about what action research is. Simon's response when I asked what his understanding of action research is, illustrates this issue;

I don't know. You know better than I do. I was never very clear about what action research was. I know what research is, I've done research before [as part of previous undergraduate study]. Action research to me seemed to be just practically based. Instead of looking through books and articles and things you were actively involved. But I'll be absolutely honest with you, I never looked up a definition

Simon is not alone; Maggie and Lorraine also appear unclear with regards to what action research actually is. Simon's comments raise a number of concerns regarding Chartered Teachers engaging in action research and the influence different educational bodies have on the way teachers do and/or understand action research.

Action research – working within agreed parameters and finding out 'what works'

Returning to Simon's perception of what the SQA want in terms of action research, we are confronted with an implicit message that action research is simply about finding out 'what works' within a 'practical' context. It also looks at ways in which this can be transplanted into other practical contexts, or 'rolling it out', as Simon suggests. Further, the resistance to academic rigour is surprising. It must be questioned why any educational body wishing to share knowledge, curriculum resources and teaching and learning strategies would not require the work or ideas to be academically rigorous. To deny the opportunity to bring together theory, practice and policy in meaningful critical ways is to deny the very roots of action research.

This view of action research seeks to reject the political dimension. This becomes problematic as, arguably, the research is then simply a matter of 'technical' problem

solving. It then begins to become apparent that what teachers are being required to do under the guise of action research is to seek ways to justify and reinforce ‘best practices’ as prescribed by government and other official educational bodies, such as SQA. For Simon the SQA carries significant weight and legitimacy for him as a secondary teacher – it controls the assessments and examinations his pupils must achieve, which he is measured against in league tables and examination performances. Simon has explained that he is unlikely to continue to do any action research unless the SQA, or similar body funds him to do so. Therefore the view they transmit becomes dominant. This is one significant influencing factor informing and constraining Simon’s understanding of the nature and purpose of action research.

Action research within Lorraine’s context is also understood in rather limited ways. She is particularly frustrated at some of the projects emerging in her school that are masquerading as action research, when in fact they appear to be nothing more than hollow gestures to justify decisions already made and to prove and justify ‘what works’:

...But these opportunities for doing a piece of school research - how useful are the planners? what do people think about the planners? Let’s plan ahead and if they don’t like them let’s change them before next year [apparent focus for a current action research project led by member of SMT]. But the new planners have already been planned for August and we haven’t got the results of this massive big [questionnaire]...

This is an example of action research that is particularly futile. Other less obvious examples exist and appear to form many of the action research experiences the teachers in this study have had. Most often this is evidenced by the limited autonomy and control the teachers have in deciding the focus of the research. Government initiatives, policies and issues at local and national level inform what schools focus on in their development plans. This in turn dictates, or at the very least influences, what is deemed appropriate for teachers to explore as part of their action research work. This, of course, is not necessarily a negative thing, but it must be acknowledged and interrogated.

Maggie talks about how her action research work has kept her “involved in current approaches and initiatives in learning and teaching”. Indeed the focus for all her action research work has stemmed from the latest educational initiatives and curriculum developments. Her work on formative assessment and her current action research into the pupils’ understandings of the four capacities of A Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) are two examples, both of which are major national educational initiatives emerging from central government.

Similarly, Simon talks about the focus of his action research as deriving from big national initiatives such as ‘Assessment is for Learning’ and new developments related to and emerging from CfE. At a more local level Simon expects his Principal Teacher (PT) Angela, to agree and decide on the focus of his action research based on the school and departmental concerns. This research is about finding the best practices within these initiatives and how to best apply them within his departmental setting. For example his action research into the use of formative assessment strategies was not emerging from his own desire to critically explore his assumptions and beliefs about formative assessment, nor indeed to explicitly understand the underpinning theory and philosophy of this approach. Rather he focused on finding out “what’s working” in relation to “what’s being pushed in schools”. Specifically he speaks about exploring “whether certain techniques are working”. This research is at the expense of deeper and more challenging critiques of these initiatives. It fails to recognise the political dimension and the professional and personal dimensions are translated in narrow technical terms. Indeed when Simon did explore these topics in more depth because the nature of the action research required for Chartered Teacher study, his research exposed and challenged assumptions – a point I raise later in this chapter.

This echoes Lorraine’s experience where the activities in school, including the focus of any action research, is in line with the major national initiatives being promoted:

There seems to be this big push to get through Assessment is for Learning and to talk about Curriculum for Excellence and because we're a School of Ambition, there seems to be so many fingers in the ...

This focus on action research as a way to effectively and efficiently evaluate and ‘test out’ current government and local initiatives promotes one particular conception of action research. It locates it within a professional development agenda that is somewhat narrowly conceived. If we consider the dimension metaphor we can see certain elements and interpretations of the personal and professional being foregrounded, at the expense of a more critical understanding. From the personal dimension what is promoted are questions such as “How can I improve my...?” but without the deeper critical questioning of assumptions and beliefs. This improvement and intervention focused version of action research, which focuses on the ways teachers can evaluate and improve their teaching practices, is very popular within CPD discourses. It is also of immediate practical and achievable benefit to teachers. As Simon explains to me:

So yeah, my primary notion of action research is it helps to inform me of where I should improve. ...So that's my understanding of action research. If you're talking about a formal systematised academic exercise, I don't do it. And I don't think I will do it unless I was seconded off to do something.

Simon’s understanding and motivations appear to be influenced by a managerial discourse. He is seeking to find the best ways to implement policy initiatives and, as a result, improve practice. From this position Simon does not appear to align himself as a ‘creator of knowledge’, instead he appears to regard himself more as a ‘technician’ - a point I raise in the following chapter on identity. Action research within this view is about teachers finding the best ways to implement national strategies and initiatives (I raised some of these concerns in Chapter Two). This is one narrow understanding of action research within the professional dimension. My concern here is more to do with the extent to which teachers may be limited to only engage in research that will not challenge policy and initiatives from above. It also does not legitimate teachers as ‘knowers’, or regard action research as a ‘distinctive way of knowing’, which I believe is problematic for developing a deeper understanding of the professional dimension of action research.

It could be argued, as Noffke (2009:13) contends, that this is a form of professional development designed to simply reinforce current, or dominant practices and educational ideologies from above. Somekh and Zeichner (2009:15) recognise the danger of action research that is narrowly conceived within a managerial and performative agenda as it then becomes a tool to serve the purposes of central reforms or initiatives rather than critically examine them. It may be questioned then to what extent this is happening within the Scottish context. There is no explicit mention within the Chartered Teacher documentation (the Standard for Chartered Teacher or the Code of Practice) regarding the purpose of action research, although there are some indications that a ‘what works’ view is supported. At the National Education Conference 2009, hosted by the GTCS, Tony Finn, the new Chief Executive of the GTCS, stated in his opening address:

*...all teachers thrive in an atmosphere where they are encouraged to experiment within **agreed parameters**, where they feel supported, where their contribution is valued. Good professional teachers welcome support, advice and constructive challenge and many but not all will respond to opportunities for leadership... [Bold my emphasis]*

This statement, whilst perhaps nodding in the direction of a rhetoric supportive of teachers as researchers, makes absolutely clear that this ‘experimentation’ may only be done ‘within agreed parameters’. It may, of course, be necessary and entirely appropriate for some parameters to be agreed regarding individual or collective action research projects. However it immediately raises critical questions about who decides these parameters? In whose interests do they serve? What does this mean for the teacher(s) who, through rigorous and systematic action research, question what is promoted within these parameters and finds the dominant vision is problematic in some way and alternatives are necessary and desirable? Indeed Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009:46) insist that taking an inquiry stance ensures that teacher researchers:

Challenge the purposes and underlying assumptions of educational change efforts rather than simply helping to specify or carry out the most effective methods for predetermined ends, such as raising test score.

Critical questions about the nature and purpose of action research must be asked. Otherwise there is a risk, as illustrated above, of action research being used for the purposes of social control rather than of social justice (Griffiths, 2009:85). If we frame and understand the action research within the three dimensions – acknowledging and negotiating the political, personal and professional - and consider Griffiths’ call for action research to be for/as/mindful of social justice then the ‘agreed parameters’ may look very different to those focused on technical ends. It is critical then, that we examine what is made problematic when teachers engage in inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lyle, 2004:610). In particular it is worth foregrounding the importance of examining one’s assumptions regarding the nature, purpose, process and focus of any inquiry.

Not only are the latest educational ideologies and dominant discourses of managerialism influencing and informing what the nature and purpose of action research may be, but what counts as research is also a point of debate.

The influence of a traditional view of action research

Dominant discourses about what research is and what counts as knowledge are influencing how teachers, schools, academics, policy makers and the wider educational community understand action research. Some of the major critiques of action research rest upon assumptions that arise from a ‘preoccupation with “scientifically-based research” or “evidence-based” research’ (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2004:625). This is premised on a belief that there is somehow a formal, ‘scientific’ knowledge that is distinguishable from and superior to, practical and experiential knowledge. This traditional view of research, whilst actively challenged in the literature (see for example Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2004; Griffiths & Macleod 2008) is still dominant within school contexts.

Research in schools (rather than on or about schools) is still not fully part of the culture of education. Most teachers, headteachers, and colleagues in local authority will likely have had very little specific education in research methods. From the teachers in this study it is apparent that where there has been opportunity this is often

as part of previous academic study within their own specialist areas, such as history, economics, or as part of further professional study such as Special Educational Needs (SEN) diplomas.

As I have argued, the term action research is deeply contested and too often it is assumed to mean quite simply research that is ‘in action’. In other words conducted by a ‘practitioner’ who uses this information to act upon and improve practice. There is a preconceived idea within schools that doing (action) research requires a rigorous systematic, highly measurable approach that seeks to ‘prove’ something, provide answers and determine what works in a particular classroom or school. There is also often a preoccupation with quantifiable data (Clayton *et al*, 2008). Unfortunately it would appear that this version of pseudo-scientific research is what influences what is researched, and specifically action research within educational contexts. Anything that may be seen as subjective and ‘woolly’ is easily discounted as worthwhile knowledge. This appears to be evident within the Scottish context. As I have already briefly highlighted, the type of action research promoted by bodies such as SQA rests firmly within this more traditional understanding of research. Similarly, when looking at the kind of action research encouraged and supported through Schools of Ambition work, similar patterns emerge. Action research within this initiative is explicitly connected to issues of school improvement. It is very much intervention focused and evaluation driven with traditional methods (such as questionnaires and quantifiable data) and processes employed. Hulme *et al* (2009) argue that this, in part, is to do with the ‘powerful forms of accountability that continue to draw on conventional performance indicators’ and perhaps deny the opportunity for innovation, risk-taking and critical teacher research.

Simon and Lorraine both experienced the constraints of this traditional conception of research, although their own understandings and positions are quite different. Simon appears to come from a position that regards research, and action research, as something that requires formal empirical evidence to ‘prove’ something. He sees the process involved as cumbersome and extensive; something quite beyond the practicalities of day-to-day teaching. For Simon, although he also believes smaller

more informal evaluations are important, to engage in any “proper” (action) research would involve a thorough and in-depth analysis of “the stats”, such as test scores, attendance records, and attainment results. He claims that “proper analysis” involves “number crunching” which, for him, is a core part of his (formal) action research. However, he realises this is not practical for smaller pieces of research that are more akin to day-to-day evaluations of teaching, although he would also not value theory, literature and other research as important for these evaluations. He, like Lorraine, feels that if the action research is to be presented or published more widely, then the ‘stats’ are what counts and are needed to “push our point”. This, it would appear, is the form of evidence that has credibility within the educational community. Lorraine also feels trapped by this focus on quantifiable facts and figures to ‘prove’ attainment, which goes against her own preference for qualitative data:

I like the qualitative, but in order to get anybody to pay attention to us, other people like facts and figures. We just had a management meeting last night and one of the deputies put on a presentation and a lot of the stuff was hung on the stats – ‘And when we get the stats in’; ‘And we’ll look at the stats.’ It just kept going back to figures all the time. In the early days when the reading project was set up and we were given a bit of extra funding for it, the rector wanted figures. And, of course, the figures were great, the results between before and after were fabulous. So a lot of, ‘Are we going to run this again?’ was based on whether or not the children’s reading scores went up. And I could talk till I was blue in the face about their increased confidence and how teachers are giving us feedback on how they were volunteering to read parts in plays and one of the pupils had stood up in assembly and had done a reading in assembly. And all these things mattered a lot to me.

As Lorraine points out above, this focus on statistics and numbers and test scores ignores, even denies, other crucially important information and forms of knowledge. She speaks about wanting to engage in research that is more about making a difference to others, in particular to pupils. This, she recognises, requires speaking to pupils, observing them and observing her own teaching and others. These are all very different types of data that will create particular forms of knowledge. However, despite Lorraine’s drive to engage in research that is more open to qualitative data and arguably more focused on issues of social justice, she still is informed by a very traditional view of research. She is critical of research that claims to be (action) research, either published or ongoing within her school, which she argues, it is not.

And part of my problem now is that I read about things like special children and various magazines and things where teachers have done things and it's reported as their research and I'm questioning is this research, what kind of controls have they put in here? And I think you can be unduly hard on yourself by insisting that you control situations and you have data and all sorts of things... I did it through the SEN diploma and I did the research modules and things, so at that point when I did all the paradigms of research and I did all the serious stuff, I now find it difficult to eliminate that and go back to what just might be a happy wee enquiry in the class.

She goes on to share her frustration at the lack of understanding of what action research is within her school; and the lack of quality:

here was a couple of teachers were using Koosh balls in their English classes and they'd handed them out, said who would like them, who feels they need them? Handed them out, they seemed to go down really well, so they said that that's a bit of action research and I've done it. And to me I thought, no, no, no, it's not. You've tried a new activity, it's gone down well, you think, but how do you know it's gone down well? What are your observations on it? Have you asked the pupils? Have you asked the person that sits beside the pupil? No, it's not action research. And yet the people who, you know, like the head teacher used to come along and she used to smile and really enjoy all these stories that came back and everything and I thought, no, that's not, you haven't actually asked yourself, what are the circumstances before and what are the circumstances after? How am I going to measure it, how am I going to know that I've made an impact? To me it just wasn't...

She is critical of research that she believes is too subjective, without proper controls or parameters. Whilst she is open to the creation and use of qualitative data this is within a more traditional scientific understanding. In fact, one of the tensions Lorraine perhaps faces is her own belief in action research for social justice, which conflicts with her belief that research cannot be subjective and should be dissociated from passion and emotion:

I remember, I was wallowing in figures. I add most of it into a database so I can play around with the figures, rather than my perception of it, I make the database sort things for me so that I can't use my emotion to make it say what I want it to say, I make the database sort things out for me a bit. I was awash with figures at one point and I was running out of time to get something in

It is perhaps this view that prevents Lorraine from engaging in some action research and leads to her feeling disappointed that she is unable to do it. When talking about the numerous projects she wished to undertake, her reasons for not being able to were almost exclusively linked to not having the time: the time to collect data, such as questionnaires, or analyse test scores, or gather large quantities of data from large sample sets of pupils. She appears so influenced by this one view of research that it has not been possible for her to consider an alternative; an alternative that could be equally as systematic and rigorous. When I ask her about this she comments:

I find it difficult to imagine that because it means that I've got to do a fast rewind to where I used to be before I knew anything about research.

I would argue that Lorraine conflates research with action research and is not fully aware of the philosophical, ontological and epistemological differences. She has engaged in research methods for a specific purpose in previous study. She has not revisited this, questioned it or raised awareness of her own assumptions and epistemological positions. This may, in part, be connected with her never being 'taught' about action research.

It must be questioned whether action research then simply serves the individual's own professional developments needs. This may help raise the status of the profession but, equally, may it serve to keep teachers as compliant consumers of knowledge? There is a danger then, within a climate of performativity that the CPD for teachers may be about:

improving their skills and chances of promotion, but also to help them acquire information, languages, and language games allowing them both to widen occupational horizons and to articulate their technical and ethical experience (Lyotard, 1984:49).

Programmes such as Chartered Teacher could be interpreted as a way to ensure efficiency by involving teachers in learning the rules and playing the appropriate language games – in this case within a 'reflective practitioner' discourse. Chartered Teacher study and the engagement with any action research as part of it, is itself

arguably an act of performativity. Simon, perhaps very perceptively, is all too aware of this game and is possibly playing it exceptionally well:

Yes, But it is, because at the back of your mind you are trying to make sure that they grant you Chartered Teacher status. So you are going to do all the things you think that they are looking for. So I was relatively uncritical of formative assessment. I had a couple of gripes here and there, but on the whole my feeling when I went into it was, right, these are academics, these are the people that brought us formative assessment, these are the people that are rolling it out as the basis for the broader curriculum. I'm not going to be an idiot here and say formative assessment's rubbish. And I don't think formative assessment's rubbish, but I do think it needs a critical analysis it's not getting.

There may be a danger of creating, what Catherine Casey describes, as a new elite of 'designer employees' (Casey, 1995). By this she refers to those teachers who are compliant to policy imperatives, performing at high levels of efficiency and effectiveness as measured by externally set indicators. They are at once efficient, effective, and accountable within parameters defined from above, and they do not question or make problematic these parameters.

To counter such a position the nature and purpose of Chartered Teachers doing action research must be critically examined. We need to look at ways and examples of action research that seek to challenge, problematise and take risks rather than simply serving the ends to a predetermined means. Distinctions must also be made between the work teachers must submit for the successful achievement of an academic award; and the kind of action research that is part of their ongoing work as a Chartered Teacher. We must also ensure that all those involved in supporting this understand the distinctive nature of action research. It might be helpful to consider action research from an alternative perspective, challenging the more traditional views and drawing instead on complexity thinking.

Understanding action research as complex

In marked contrast to Simon and Lorraine, Maggie appears to have a different understanding of the nature and process of action research. However, Maggie recognises the numerous constraints teachers face and the significant pressures of the

day-to-day job of teaching. She sees, in the various schools she works, how teachers are trapped into constantly trying to negotiate each new initiative that comes their way. As a result any action research is focused on the latest initiative. The research projects are designed to coincide with block units of teaching plans and arguably it is more evaluation than research.

And I think that's something that you find in school and education, in any teacher trying to do research in constrained time, is it's very easy to do, like you said earlier, oh, here's something, I've got to research this new initiative, I'll do that, right, that's it, done, on to the next thing. We've got the new initiative in school, let's research that.

Maggie believes that part of the issue here is systemic, and it is not necessarily the individual teachers or management that are at fault:

...So I'm not putting the blame on anything, there isn't any blame in this, it's a system and we all work in the system.

Maggie, however, is not content with this position and instead has tried hard to find ways to work within these constraints yet still hold true to her own values – a point I discuss in the following chapter on identity. These forms of action research that appear to be informed by a traditional view of research are not acceptable for Maggie, who attempts to seek some sort of alternative.

For Maggie, action research is not a linear process, as I identified in her narrative. Instead, through her metaphors, she explains and describes how complex, fluid and dynamic action research is. For her it is not something that fits neatly into predetermined time periods (often to coincide with term planning periods or funding opportunities). It is ongoing and is in a constant state of flux. She does not ascribe to any action research that is predictable or with predicted outcomes instead:

I like the emerging outcome where you think, well, how is this going to go? How deep will we be going? We're paddling now, but how deep will we go in? How deep will we go in and where do we go with that?

This way of thinking and understanding may well be very threatening for many class teachers, or indeed managers. The loss of control or certainty is an uncomfortable position. It requires taking risks. It also requires thinking differently about the nature of knowledge and the ways knowledge can be created, interpreted and shared. Whilst, as I have stated above, the focus of Maggie's action research does not appear to actively take a critical stance against policy, or question the bigger issues of 'why', her research does appear to be quite different in terms of the nature and purpose of knowledge produced. This is in contrast to the way Simon and Lorraine have engaged in action research.

Maggie is committed to embedding this way of working into her practice. Regardless of the constraints she is working within she is able somehow to continue to engage in action research. This is related to her evolving understanding of what action research is. It has shifted from something more external and 'intervention' focused to something that is dynamic and embedded in her 'way of being' a teacher:

When I started to read first about action research it was all maybe having to be about doing something or it had to be something that was being brought in or you were trying out, but in actual fact the process is within, that's right

This shift in understanding for Maggie has allowed her to engage in action research at a more personally and professionally meaningful level for her. She is able to embed the processes of the research into her practice because her understanding of the nature of action research is far more critical, challenging and open.

Challenging the status quo – understanding action research as risky

Maggie, Lorraine and Simon all spoke about their experiences of 'riskier' action research. This challenged themselves and the educational structures around them. In some ways they each were/are constrained and influenced by dominant discourses and structures, but they each also found ways of challenging this. For Maggie the risk first and foremost was a personal risk. It was about challenging her own practice, her "way of being a teacher" and her understanding of learning and teaching. For any teacher this is a risky business – challenging the very core of their

own practice. As Lorraine explains it, action research should “challenge your preconceived notions”. This risk is an essential part of action research for Maggie, something she is “no longer threatened by”. It is only by taking the risks and examining yourself and your own beliefs that you step out of your comfort zone – something she believes cannot be done if you engage in a linear, step by step ‘controlled’ action research.

Because then you're controlling it all and I think you're blinkering a bit creativity and a bit of your own, coming out of your own safety zone and taking the risk of what about that? ...Take the risk. That's what I did, I took the risk and I tried something different, I stepped back and I thought, ooh, where will all this go? And that was exciting.

Drawing on Maggie’s understanding and views of action research, we can see the three dimensions as interrelated and complex. The very fact that she understands doing action research as a ‘way of being’ indicates the deeply political nature of teachers engaging in the act of research. It challenges taken-for-granted notions about what the job of the teacher is. The teachers all talked about a certain element of professional responsibility to work with others, collaborate with them and lead new developments and action research. Simon is active in his own department, leading and initiating change. Lorraine constantly faces the tension of trying to engage others in meaningful action research. Maggie tries to work with those who seem willing to engage, rather than fight against resistance from colleagues not yet ready to think in these ways. They all met with resistance at times, or just passive acceptance from colleagues not actively restricting or inhibiting their work, but who were not necessarily proactively supporting it or getting involved. As Maggie comments:

So the challenge there for me would be to try and present or let people know what I'm doing in such a way that it would perhaps challenge them: have you thought about this, did you know about this that's happening? So I turn the challenge, what's happening to me and I try and challenge that where it's not happening, to try and get more people in on the challenge. And where it was already happening, I'm being challenged proactively,

However trying to initiate change and support developments is a challenging and risky activity for teachers. Something Lorraine is all too aware of. I have discussed to some extent in her narrative Lorraine's experience of attempting to engage in riskier action research and the negativity and resistance she met with. The hierarchical nature of the school and the lack of 'power' she had as 'just a Chartered Teacher' were difficult factors for her to contend with. She was faced with a situation where, in rhetoric, the school invited action research and claimed to be open to change, but where in reality the individuals involved were unable to accept the risks this posed to their own positions of power and the negative school culture this might expose.

...as a Chartered Teacher, I felt as if I had to think beyond learning support, I had to think school. Jane was very supportive of that and when we started the action research group we thought here's something we could look into because the school's inviting action research; we're very concerned about the atmosphere, the ethos, the kind of general feeling that the school's going downhill, what can we do about it? So I think they, again, it's a big risk, you take something that's bigger than what you can control yourself, you're either going to turn up things that you can't do anything about or you're going to have to face people that may not want to be faced. And we lost on it, and I really regret that we lost on that.

It is disappointing to hear about the deliberate moves to prevent this kind of action research from evolving. It is these kind of difficult questions and problematising of the school culture, ethos and actions that may well lead to transformational change. In fact the Standard for Chartered Teacher suggests that a Chartered Teacher would be well placed to:

identify and challenge any negative features of school culture, such as low expectations, poor relationships or discriminatory practices, and stimulate colleagues to bring about improvement (SEED, 2002:11).

This raises a very important issue for the future of Chartered Teachers in school. Is the idea of a teacher, a Chartered Teacher, who is knowledgeable and able to initiate and engage in enquiry and challenge the status quo in schools, something that the wider school culture is able to accept? As I identified in Chapter Two, Reeves (2007) found that Chartered Teachers initiating and engaging in action research was

a new concept for many schools. It disrupted the traditional structures and hierarchies of what is an acceptable activity for teachers because it is posing difficult questions about learning and teaching and the school environment. This is not normally done. It raises questions about the nature, role and status of the teacher as a professional.

If we are to promote action research that is more about problematising educational issues then Chartered Teachers will need supportive structures within school that are open to and understand its importance. Any teacher/headteacher/policy maker who does not believe that teachers are able to contribute to the wider knowledge base about a particular issue will not support action research that is more challenging, possibly subversive and seeking political change. Instead, they will likely view action research as something more personal and aimed at individual improvement that at most will be shared with colleagues as ‘what works’.

This risky and more ‘politically’ focused research does not necessarily always have to mean a usurping of the management and disrupting of the hierarchies. Instead it is about challenging educational issues and bringing a greater focus on issues of social justice, rather than just technical matters of testing out new strategies or techniques to monitor and ‘roll out’ best practices in school. For Lorraine this has meant retaining and foregrounding issues that are important for pupils and their learning. The importance of listening to their voice, involving them (and parents) in the research and engaging in action research that has at its heart the needs of the pupils. As Lorraine states:

Much of what I would like to do – what I have done and what I would like to do more of is to make a difference for other people, not to justify me as a teacher or the purchase of new resources...

Simon’s experience of action research that may be described as ‘risky’ has had quite a different impact from Lorraine and Maggie’s. Like Maggie the impact of Simon’s action research had a significant transformative impact on his own practice and understanding. But the risk potentially extends beyond himself, though not explicitly

and overtly to management, like Lorraine's, but more implicitly. Perhaps, and somewhat ironically given the earlier discussion about Simon's ability to 'play the game', he illustrates for us the very real and significant importance of teachers doing action research that both challenges their own beliefs, understanding and assumptions and which also questions and challenges the taken-for-granted and latest educational ideologies passed down to schools.

Simon tells us that it is through his action research into formative assessment that he became aware of the "propaganda war" going on in education in terms of the government promoting formative assessment within the wider agenda of CfE. For Simon, his research enabled him to expose the fallacies of certain aspects of formative assessment. He recognises that teachers are implementing initiatives based on these ideas without any critical questioning of them or any understanding of the underpinning philosophy – they are doing it, he says, because "they're told it's good". It is only through his own engagement with the literature and the theory, examining the policy and researching this through his own practice, that Simon was able to come to this more knowledgeable position. Not only does this shift in knowledge and understanding have an impact on his own practice, but also this is potentially a very threatening and risky development for policy makers and management alike. If teachers engage in this more transformative and deeply probing action research, then it is likely they will be able to meaningfully and critically question policy and develop a deeper understanding of how and why certain strategies/initiatives/developments may be worthwhile, or not, in education.

Chartered Teachers doing action research – a way of being a teacher?

Through the stories and experiences these teachers have shared regarding their action research work, I believe several important and critical issues are raised relating to Chartered Teachers, indeed any teacher, doing action research. Their experiences are hugely varied and go some way to indicate the complexity of the issues. One's own underpinning assumptions about the nature and purpose of action research are significant in influencing not only the focus of any action research project, but also the extent to which teachers feel they can or should continue to engage in this type of

activity. Indeed, I believe one significant contributing factor to how teachers will engage with and understand action research in schools is influenced by particular dominant views of what counts as research, who are to be regarded as the legitimate knowledge creators and whether teachers can be producers rather than just passive consumers of such knowledge. This will necessarily influence and be influenced by the teachers' own view of whether they can and should be regarded as legitimate creators of knowledge. Do they believe they can produce distinctive ways of knowing about teaching and learning that can contribute to the broader educational community?

If and how teachers negotiate the physical and conceptual boundaries between teaching and research, school and university, theory and practice are significant here. These issues are deeply interconnected with one's own sense of identity and I explore this in the following chapter. Traditional notions of research appear to dominate what is understood by action research. Moves must be made to try and challenge this and demystify what research is for teachers.

For this to happen, I believe we need to reconsider how we understand and promote action research within education. By understanding it through a lens of complexity thinking we may be able to refocus the nature and purpose of action research. As Davis and Sumara (2006) suggest, we need to find ways to 'problematize the contemporary desire for 'best-practices''. We need to promote action research as a way to generate knowledge through the complex process of engaging in research and promote action research as a 'process of expanding the space of the possible' (2006:453).

Action research then needs to be understood as dynamic and fluid. The emphasis must be, as Griffiths (2009:89-90) suggests, on revisability and provisionality, on uncertainty, fallibility and risk and must be understood within the context of particular, local and historical contexts. Teachers must become action researchers who are able to engage critically with research, policy and practice. I would argue that what is required is a focus on supporting teachers to become knowledge creators

and regarding teacher action research as a legitimate ‘way of knowing’ about education. This of course is deeply political. It is risky. It is challenging for all concerned.

As Maggie illustrates for us, there is perhaps a different ‘way of being a teacher’. Taking Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2009) position, action research should be seen as ‘inquiry as stance’; In other words regarding teacher research as a way of knowing. It is not, they contend, just about specific and ‘bounded’ research activities to meet the necessary requirements for further academic study or professional education. Rather, it is:

a larger epistemological stance, or a way of knowing about teaching, learning and schooling that is neither topic- nor project-dependent.
(Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009:44)

It is, I believe, more to do with a way of being and becoming a (Chartered) teacher. The issues raised here are inextricably bound with emerging issues of identity, the complexity of being and becoming a Chartered Teacher and action researcher. These are explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 6: Being and Becoming Chartered Teachers: issues of identity

In the previous chapter I explored the teachers' understandings of the nature and purpose of action research. Their stories provided insights that offered a way to reframe and reconsider some of the taken-for-granted assumptions about teachers' action research and teachers as action researchers. I suggested that the teachers were influenced - and often constrained - by certain dominant discourses about action research. This was, in particular, the extent to which action research was risky and focused on questioning and problematising or whether it was more about technical matters of effectiveness and efficiency operating within predefined parameters. This also highlighted the issue of whether teachers were regarded as legitimate creators of knowledge, either by others within the educational community or by them. What emerged was a sense that Chartered Teachers doing action research may be a very different 'way of being' a teacher and it became apparent that how teachers construct and understand the nature and purpose of action research is deeply connected with their own (shifting) sense of identity. Both are ontologically rooted.

In this chapter I intend to unpick and explore issues of teachers' shifting identities as they engage in action research as Chartered Teachers. Through this chapter I will discuss the notion of being/becoming a Chartered Teacher. The ways in which the teachers are resisting and/or embracing new emerging roles and way of being a teacher will be discussed. I consider the notion of multiplicity of selves from a postmodern perspective and draw on a broadly sociological perspective of identity, giving particular consideration to the social construction of professional identities and the conflicting issues and tensions of the 'changing' self.

A central issue arising from the case studies is the idea of the teachers being and becoming Chartered Teachers and action researchers. Bound within this is the complex and unstable notion of identity. In considering this issue I find Maclure's (1996) discussion of identity and embracing an 'in-between-ness' particularly helpful.

Maclure describes the transitions of ten influential people (within the action research field) as they moved from teacher to action researcher to academic, or in some cases from teacher to academic to action researcher. She explores their stories of transition as they traversed and negotiated the boundaries of their identity(ies). She talks of exits and entries, as people make the physical as well as cognitive and emotional transition out of teaching and into academia. Maclure highlights the parallels between the boundary-crossing negotiated by individuals and the 'oppositional dilemmas' inherent in action research: the personal/professional; theory/practice; school culture/the academy; teacher/researcher and the scholarship of research/the dialectics of practice.

These 'oppositional dilemmas' or dualities that are often so prominent in action research must be exposed and questioned. Instead of focusing on these distinctions, Atkinson (2001) argues that we need to consider that boundary, hyphen or 'slash' as a 'a representation of alterity' and we need to 'begin the process of troubling the taken-for-granted signifiers' (310). Similarly, Maclure rejects the acceptance of single identities of 'self' and the binary notion of being on either one side of the boundary or the other and questions the call to 'consume our own otherness' (1996:283) or, alternatively surrender one identity for another. Instead, she argues we need to consider the 'in-between-ness' (p282). Rather than seeking a resolution to this in-between-ness, she draws on Fine (1998), and calls for us to live 'at the hyphen' - to operate, negotiate and expose that space between boundaries.

For the teachers in this study the issues of being/becoming and negotiating these boundaries are significant. For these teachers, however, it is not about a physical transition from school to university (like the individuals in Maclure's study) but rather the cognitive and emotional transitions as they recognise, resist, embrace and traverse boundaries of being/becoming teachers/Chartered Teachers/action researchers. It is about how they 'other' themselves; the way they locate and 'other' their colleagues and peers; their status, place, role and identities within school; significant transformations in their own thinking and practice and how they

problematise and negotiate these changes and shifts. It is about their process of alterity.

Identity as fluid, multiple and socially constructed

Identity is a complex notion upon which there is a vast literature available. In the earlier literature review I introduced some main key ideas relating to teachers' professional identity. In particular I focused on identity as a social construct and introduced some of the tensions between identities attributed to individuals and the extent to which an individual internalises or resists these. In this chapter I develop some of these ideas further and draw largely on the work of Lawler (2008) to frame this. Discussing identity from a sociological perspective, Lawler (2008) contends that identities are socially produced. They are 'profoundly social, and [are] continually interpreted and reinterpreted' (Lawler, 2008:17). She explains that individuals use narratives as a way to understand, explain and produce identities. For me this highlights the complexity and multiplicity of identity.

As individuals (re)tell and (co)create their stories, reflect on and recall memories, and experiences, they are in the very act of (re)telling, interpreting and reinterpreting their identities. What they choose to make explicit and what they choose to forget and leave in the shadows is in itself an act of constructing their identity. As Maclure explains, the past can only be 'reconstructed from the vantage point of the here-and-now' (Maclure, 1996:274). Therefore, we may see identity as something '*produced* through the narratives people use to explain their lives' (Lawler, 2008:17). This view of identity(ies) denies a singular, fixed, individualised self. Instead it seeks to embrace the notion of identity as fluid, multiple and socially constructed.

From this position then we must also consider issues of discourse and the ways in which discourses will shape our identities and our social constructions of self. As I discussed in previous chapters, discourses define what can and cannot be said and done. They are not simply representations or ways of speaking but instead they are the 'rules of *what* can be said and thought about and of *how* those things can be said and thought about' (Lawler, 2008:57). Particular 'truths' about the world, or

particular identities – say ‘teacher’ or ‘Chartered Teacher’ – are constructed through discourses. Important questions must then be asked about the ways in which teacher identity is constructed and culturally bound. Identities of, say ‘action researcher’ or even ‘Chartered Teacher’, are perhaps a challenge to the dominant discourse of what it is to be a teacher and the traditional views of the role and identities of ‘teacher’ or ‘researcher’. It is against some of these tensions that I shall explore the issues of identity emerging from the teachers’ stories of being/becoming Chartered Teachers.

Of course discourses are not fixed. Lawler suggests, somewhat provocatively, that we may regard identities as ‘always built on an edgy repudiation of a variety of ‘threats’’ (2008:142). Therefore, we can never view identities as stable or unproblematic. The discourse of what it means to be a Chartered Teacher is very much open and fluid at this time, a point I noted in Chapter Two. Therefore, it is appropriate that at this juncture we explore, expose and further negotiate the emerging, evolving and shifting identities of Chartered Teachers.

An enquiring disposition?

The teachers in this study, similarly to Maclure’s participants, all identified themselves as having a particular ‘disposition’: a way of being that meant they already had a tendency towards acting in particular ways which they now regard as consistent with action research. In Maclure’s study the individuals involved all reported having a predisposition to embracing action research. This was manifest in different ways and arose from varying concerns. For some it was their dissatisfaction with aspects of school – like Lorraine; for others it was a thirst for learning – like Maggie; and some reported the discovery that action research had always been a part of practice, in some shape at least, ‘before-the-name’ was recognised – a position Simon adopts. Common to each of the teachers was the idea that they had an enquiring disposition – whether this was manifest through a thirst for learning and finding things out, challenging practices and/or being an innovator and trying something new.

In negotiating her identity as a Chartered Teacher and action researcher Maggie has examined and considered the changes she has seen in herself. She has tussled in her own mind over when these changes took place. She recognises that it is a continuous process of being and becoming and it is not possible to necessarily define exactly when she changed, *per se*. To try and make some sense of this, she uses a metaphor of an iceberg to suggest that different aspects of her have been developed or brought to the fore more through the Chartered Teacher study.

You know, Zoè, if I really was reflecting – and again, it's this, probably unconscious part of you and sometimes you're not aware of your own consciousness. It's a bit like the iceberg; the tip that you see, the bit that you are aware of, you think, oh yeah, this is me and this is what I'm aware of about me. There's actually loads underneath and sometimes it is brought up. And I think it's a bit like that as you go down the journey [of Chartered Teacher study]. Things that are in your unconscious, you weren't aware of it yourself, but you think, oh, aye, I'm like that as well. And it could be we call that that developing bit, but in actual fact it always has been there and it's just been got out because of what you're trying or what you're taking on or what you've maybe become aware of.

Maggie talks in some length about her disposition as a learner:

Or just be who you want to be. And I think it is linked into lifelong learning, there is something about that. And I do call it lifelong learning but there's something about that that I think has always been me....

In exploring her desire to continue to research, enquire and question practice, Maggie suggests that this is maybe just “who she be”. She has found, through learning as part of Chartered Teacher study and doing action research, that she is aware that this enquiring teacher is “who she be”. Despite reporting that she has always been like this Maggie does comment that this is in fact who she is “now”, in other words who she has become.

It's something that's part of me now. That's who you be now....

As they construct and (re)consider their identities as teachers/enquirers/researchers the teachers recognise shifts and changes in themselves. This is a complex struggle

for them as they begin to negotiate the tensions of noticing ‘new ways of being’ yet also sure they were ‘always already’ like that.

I probably would have gone into them [investigating the formative assessment strategies] anyway, probably, because it’s just maybe who I am.

Being a learner is also an important identity for Lorraine. She believes this has been a critical part of her development as a teacher, from when she was a young teacher becoming a learning support teacher to her current role now as Chartered Teacher/PT. Learning has always played an important role for her, as she explains:

I’ve always done it, you know, postgraduate diplomas and certificates and I’ve always seemed to have had some kind of post-grad study on the go...

But ‘just’ being a learner is not sufficient for Lorraine. She also believes that her disposition as someone who challenges her own practice and thinking is also critically important. She goes as far as to suggest that anyone who might consider themselves as a potential or aspiring Chartered Teacher should also have this enquiring disposition:

It’s just that curiosity you’ve got that you want to investigate further. And again, getting back to being a Chartered Teacher, I just feel that people who are interested in their teaching will probably ask themselves hundreds of questions and here’s an opportunity to pick one of them and do something about it...

This, for Lorraine, is all part of a wider culture or identity of being a reflective practitioner – a realisation she came to through her study for Chartered Teacher status. For Simon he makes the connection more with his own disposition to be innovative, or as he describes himself:

‘I’m quite an ideas person...’

It may be questioned then whether there are certain characteristics, attitudes or beliefs that predispose individuals to being drawn to Chartered Teacher study. Are Chartered Teachers the kind of people who are more innovative, enquiring and

believe in the importance and value of continued learning or, through Chartered Teacher study, have the teachers become like this? As the teachers engage in study, learning and action research there is a sense, from these teachers at least, that their thinking and practice is transformed in some way. As they are becoming this different teacher they are negotiating shifts in their identity: what it means for them to 'be' a Chartered Teacher and/or action researcher. This of course has implications not only for how the teachers understand themselves and their roles, but also how their colleagues and the wider educational community value and perceive the role of Chartered Teachers and action research.

Invisible, isolated and devalued: Chartered Teachers operating in disguise

A significant issue for the teachers as they negotiate and construct their identity as a Chartered Teacher is the way they are perceived by others, or at least how they believe others perceive them. One concern that appeared common to all the teachers was that they each felt, in some form or another, under/de-valued, invisible and lacking a voice as a Chartered Teacher. Far from gaining 'status', which they each had hoped for, the opposite is in fact the case. The teachers reported feeling as if they have lost status now they are Chartered Teachers. Maggie refers to a certain sense of isolation or a disconnect from colleagues and describes herself as out swimming on her own. She suggests that some appear somewhat bewildered by her actions, as they do not understand the value of doing action research. They are neither actively supportive nor obstructing her research. As a result she feels devalued in that no one is really interested in her action research. It is possible they regard this as her personal (and possibly private?) activity and do not understand the potential value or worth of sharing knowledge developed through action research. Simon also feels much of his action research work is not valued by others. He suggests that within the profession itself, Chartered Teacher status is not something that is well respected:

Well, there is an interesting point about Chartered Teacher, you mentioned about feeling you can't do things... There is a definite perception amongst the profession, not just the public, in fact the public at large aren't particularly aware of it, but amongst the profession that Chartered Teachers are a scam. That people do it to get money and that's it. And the result is I feel that the work I've done has been quite devalued.

He does, like Lorraine and Maggie, feel that much of his work (the curriculum innovations and developments arising from his action research) is not valued in his school. He is concerned that as a Chartered Teacher his voice is not heard, recognised or really invited in wider school. This is despite the very supportive and collegiate department in which he works. It is perhaps not surprising that this may be the case, thinking back to the issues I raised in the previous chapter. If action research is not understood in the wider community as a legitimate way of knowing, and if teachers as action researchers and legitimate creators of knowledge are not valued, then it is unlikely that the knowledge developed will be regarded as worthwhile beyond the parameters of an individuals' professional development.

Despite this, Simon does believe that he does, to a certain extent, have a status as an “innovator” within his school. This is largely based on new strategies and resources which he has introduced and evaluated. As a Chartered Teacher he believes he is ideally placed to lead new curriculum initiatives or developing courses because of his knowledge and skills developed through Chartered Teacher study. However, he is not convinced that he even has the space and legitimacy to engage in this at any meaningful level. He explains that there is some space but that, on the whole, management is so hierarchical that there is little space for him (or other Chartered Teachers) to do this.

Simon *I mean, we're not really consulted. Consultation is very hierarchical.*

Zoè *When you say we are you meaning you as a Chartered Teacher or we as teachers?*

Simon *I mean, we as a Chartered Teacher, as ... What you get it kind of lip service to consultation because you're not involved in the ...*

Lorraine's stories provide further insight into the ways in which Chartered Teachers may find their expertise, knowledge and skill are not only undervalued but also that their voices are silenced within their own school context. Lorraine has overtly 'lost'

and been denied status and voice in her own school since becoming a Chartered Teacher. She has been excluded from meetings and her action research terminated by management. She talks about being isolated and feeling “invisible” within school. She believes that most of her colleagues are either unaware that she is Chartered Teacher - or if they do it means very little to them:

...And teachers will sometimes say to me, oh, you're a Chartered Teacher, aren't you? Like, 'very good', as in a passing comment, but it actually doesn't really mean that much to them...

Lorraine explains that she had hoped that being a Chartered Teacher would mean that she was able to work in different ways. She anticipated being an “agent of change” – supporting other teachers, leading action research and working with others to bring about change for the better for their pupils. She wanted to stay in the classroom and not pursue management, in the hope that this would give her “legitimacy in a different way to being a Principal Teacher”. However, much to her disappointment, she feels completely disillusioned about this. She realises now that she has been unable to take forward action research work, and unable to try to bring about change. She has, in her own words, “failed” because as a Chartered Teacher she is not recognised as having any status, power, authority or legitimacy to act in such ways.

And when I went Chartered Teacher, I just hoped that that would kind of – not add to my status because I'm not a 'status' type person, I'd rather people knew me for the work that I did rather than because of a title. But I just kind of hoped that Chartered Teacher meant something to people and I'm disillusioned by it, I don't think it does.

This issue is further exacerbated by the very traditional and hierarchical management structures within her context and the lack of legitimacy and value bestowed upon Chartered Teachers by management. Within Lorraine’s school she feels as though Chartered Teacher is regarded as a ‘demotion’. When she was a Principal teacher 1

(PT1) - a position assumed during the transition from Senior Teacher³ to the conserved salary scale of PT1- she was recognised as a member of staff with seniority. She was included in a variety of meetings and discussions, however once she achieved Chartered Teacher Status she found herself removed from these spaces.

Clearly my head teacher doesn't think that being a Chartered Teacher is a promotion in the department and he's not counting me as a promoted member.... I'm not that worried about it, I mean, I don't have to be called a PT or whatever to do what I am doing but it was that kind of notion that I did all that extra work at university and I've obviously done a lot of practical work within the classroom and things like that to get to that stage, and at the end of the day I could have just been a PT1 and been pretty much considered as a promoted member.

She is troubled and frustrated by this is as she knows that with no authority or legitimacy within the school, she is unable to effect any change, lead initiatives or have her voice heard – despite the increased knowledge and skill she can offer as a result of Chartered Teacher study. Like Simon, she feels her voice is not only lost but also denied. They also believe they can make an important contribution to the school and the lives of the pupils but they are not being given this opportunity. What is perhaps particularly galling in Lorraine's situation is the privileging given to management, regardless of knowledge, skill or expertise. As I described in Lorraine's story she has taken on the position of PT as a secondment for a further year against her wishes, and it is only now in the guise of a PT that feels she is able to 'be' the kind of Chartered Teacher she was hoping to be. She now has a voice, she is listened to, and has some authority to speak, contribute and lead change. She feels empowered.

But ironically, as a PT seconded, people listen to me more than as a Chartered Teacher....but because of my change in title I've got more authority.

And it's been driven home with me because I feel more empowered at the moment, but I'm the same person as I was before. And it seems wrong that school, in general, values me more as a seconded Principal Teacher than as

³ After the McCrone Agreement and introduction of Chartered teacher the role of 'Senior Teacher' was removed. Those individuals on a Senior Teacher salary were offered a conserved salary and placed on the PT scale (PT1).

a Chartered Teacher. Whereas in the eyes of the salary scales I'm exactly the same, no different.

Her story illuminates a very real and troubling issue that Chartered Teachers may be facing: they are struggling to find legitimacy in their school and as a result are forced to masquerade in an alternative identity. They have to find an *alter ego* that is more acceptable within the school culture. To have a voice they are forced to be incognito. I find it troubling that it is only by masquerading as a PT that Lorraine feels she can be heard again. But, ironically, it is with her Chartered Teacher voice that she speaks. The teachers are arguably trapped between identities: they are conflicted with their own understandings and assumptions about who they are and what kind of teacher they wish to be (and are/have been) Simultaneously, they are negotiating the identities and roles attributed to them by others.

The self and other: transformation of self, knowledge and practice

Within the educational community identities are often attributed, understood or constructed in relation to the activities and roles given to a particular position. As we have already noted, this is problematic when an individual's research work challenges the long held traditional structures and hierarchies. This is an invitation to think anew and consider a different way of being a teacher. The teachers reported shifts and changes in their beliefs, assumptions and actions. They are tussling with the ways in which they have changed and what they have become/are becoming. This is set against a belief that they were perhaps always already like that. Lawler (2008:2) offers one way of understanding this and she suggests that identity appears to 'hinge on an apparently paradoxical combination of sameness and difference'. In order to identify 'Self' one must identify the 'Other'. However the dualism is not that simple – it is possible that one is neither the Self nor Other, or to borrow Bhabha's terms to be neither One nor the Other but something else besides (1994:41).

The other is located both in past and in the future: the self and other exist simultaneously. Maclure (1996) also finds the paradox of Self and Other somewhat troubling and suggests we should not seek to simplify or resolve the boundaries of Self/Other. Instead, we must resist resolution. Maclure asks:

might we be cyborgs, hybrids or tricksters, whose business is to prevent solutions to the problem of getting safely across the boundaries of teacher/academic, personal/professional, being/becoming? (1996:283).

This, I believe, creates an opening, perhaps even an obligation to explore this liminal space of the 'living at the hyphen'. As Maclure identifies from the participants in her research (1996:275), many of them spoke of action research as a transformative event in their own narratives of 'becoming'. Similarly all the teachers in this study spoke of transformative events related to the action research work they had undertaken as part of Chartered Teacher study. They also spoke of the continued transformations in themselves, their thinking and their practice. These transformations were involuntary/voluntary, unanticipated/anticipated, unexpected/expected, unwelcome/welcome and significant in their stories of being and becoming Chartered Teachers and action researchers.

Perhaps most obviously, and contentiously, changes in the teachers' knowledge and skill level were significant for each of them. As Simon explains, he has gained much knowledge and is more informed as a result of engaging in Chartered Teacher study and action research. He explains how he is more able to have intelligent discussions about educational issues and some of the vagueness that was perhaps part of these dialogues previously has been removed. He recognises that this knowledge has developed as a result of the learning journey he has undertaken as part of Chartered Teacher. He highlights that as a classroom teacher one is not necessarily exposed to this depth of knowledge or opportunity to explore and develop your understanding:

And then you talk to someone who's actually on the Chartered Teacher programme and they ask you things and you think, 'Wow, you know nothing.' But actually it's just because we've been through it. If you'd asked us the same time, we would have gone... And, you know, you're sitting there going, 'How can you not know what that is?' Well, actually how should you know?

With this increase and change in knowledge the teachers appear to be developing new identities as 'knowers' and 'thinkers'. These identities locate them somewhat at odds with colleagues and others within the educational community. The teachers

have all spoken of themselves as teachers, and as having a 'teacher' identity but yet simultaneously dissociate themselves from other 'teachers'. They have located them as an 'other' – identifying them as 'them' or 'they' (rather than a collective 'we' or 'us'). These distinctions appear to emerge from the teachers' awareness of their own developing knowledge and understanding and they locate themselves as more 'knowledgeable others'. They are no longer the same as many of their peers and colleagues. But they are also not the 'them' from the 'ivory tower' - they are not 'researchers' or 'academics'.

The them/us and self/other takes on multiple meanings. 'Them' refers to academics and researchers external to the school community; the management; or other (less knowledgeable) teachers (those who do not know, understand or value action research). 'Us' becomes a collective of Chartered Teachers, even when working in isolation. 'Us' is at once the community of 'teachers', but it is also an 'us' that engages in enquiry and research and seeks an alternative way of working in school. The boundaries are far from clear and unproblematic.

Simon is simultaneously 'them and 'us'. He locates himself by identifying others and appears somewhat disconnected from peers, colleagues and the ivory tower academics. He views himself as more knowledgeable than fellow teachers, yet he locates the academics as more knowledgeable than him – which appears to suggest a distinct hierarchy emerging. However I would suggest that this is indicative of Simon entering this unknown and blurred space of 'in-between-ness', a space with which I believe Simon is not yet reconciled.

Becoming aware of these separations was also important for Maggie. She recognised shifts in her thinking and practice and how this now somehow set herself apart from colleagues. As she began to engage in action research and study for Chartered Teacher she became aware of the potential difference between herself and some colleagues. Not only was she questioning and enquiring into practice and working in more creative and innovative ways but she was also challenging the traditional view of the place of the 'gym teacher'. Maggie draws on several metaphors to describe

and locate her relationship with colleagues. She describes herself as already being 'on the road', but recognises that not everyone is on the same journey. She imagines herself as swimming out in the sea (sometimes alone) and looking back to her colleagues as they dip a toe in the water:

So in that sense I might have felt there's some going that way and some not paddling, that would just be off back on the shore, on the sand. But how they perceived me, you see again, it would depend on who I would be connecting with in that set up. So I connected with the ones that were going in, in for the paddle and in for, look, this is happening, let's go in and try this and see what's happening. So from their perspective, they would probably have seen me as part of that. And even I would, I would hope, and I think it is the case with the ones that I have worked with like that, they won't see me as separate now in the gym. And that was something I really had to push through.

For Maggie this has been an important realisation. She knows that it is important for her to identify and work with those whom she can connect with, the teachers who understand and value this more enquiring and questioning way of being. Where this has not been possible and she has met with resistance, she has had to do what she believes is right for her:

That I know and I've had to push through on this and others who say, why are you doing that? And I've just had to go with what was true for me..... There are times when we just go with what's right for us and it's where we're at as a person.

Doing what is right for her has been an important step for Maggie in being able to become - and be - the teacher she wants to be, and she describes a significant transformation of the self. She uses metaphors to explain and make sense of these changes and they hint towards a certain 'freedom' she now feels. She talks of being "opened up" and being "out of the box" within which, she now realises, she was once trapped. This freedom has forced her to see beyond her own immediate professional context:

I thought, wooh, you're out, like Jack in the Box, you're out and you're seeing what's going on here. But it is wider than just that because it made me look at, well, if that's happening in that context in the classroom and there's all these approaches,

Maggie speaks about becoming aware of changes taking place within. She asks “Did I want to see changes in me?” and explains that she liked the changes she saw. She tussles, like the others, with the notion of whether she was ‘always already’ like that, if these changes were just different parts of her coming to the surface (as she described through the Iceberg metaphor) or whether these changes were different ways of ‘being’ for her. This is an issue that will remain unresolved for Maggie as she recognises that the changes and transformations in herself are somehow “unconscious” which she describes as “an unaware thing”. They are ‘in the happening’, in the blurred spaces of ‘in-between-ness’ (Fine, 1998). The changes are, as Maggie notes “very difficult to pinpoint” and she attempts to describe these changes as emerging within her:

And that to me has shown me that something emerged in me, that has – it’s changed... it’s changed. But it’s something that’s part of me now which obviously I want ... It’s just part of me now.

She tries to explore and explicate what this process of change was: was it a transformation, a metamorphosis or something different?

*Maggie and in the moment something was starting to happen.....
Things were just ... Not metamorphosing ... That may be it. I
don't know if it is the word. It might be ... It's not that they
were transforming, they were emerging ...*

Zoè So not transforming because ...?

*Maggie Well, I mean, you're changing one thing from one to another. I
think in that moment place when you're hitting off ...*

This process of change and negotiation of identity is critical for Maggie, and indeed for any teacher engaged in such transformation. We might regard this process of change that Maggie is experiencing as a process of alterity? She now refers to herself as “an action researcher” – the only teacher in the study to do so. This new label which she gives herself is more than a form of identification it is about identity. She is referring to a change in the way she understands things, a shift in her attitudes, and

a way of being. Maggie certainly appears to welcome and embrace these changes. She is open to this whether or not she anticipated this process of change. This is in contrast to Simon's experience. He explains that he actively did not anticipate, and I suggest was perhaps even resistant to the idea of changing his practice. Almost certainly he had not considered that his 'self' would be negotiated/able. In fact Simon finds it difficult to believe anyone would engage in Chartered Teacher study to learn or change their teaching:

in the end, you convert yourself because you're kind of, you start off – because all you think about when you first do Chartered, nobody does it because they want to improve their teaching, as such, they want the money, right.

Becoming aware of changes and transformations in his thinking has been a more difficult process for Simon in some ways. He too tussles with the paradox of realising that he has indeed changed in some ways, yet is reluctant to accept this and is quick to suggest he has always been like this. When he does make explicit reference to the ways in which he has changed Simon hints at possible concerns. The danger of having a 'little' knowledge is one:

But in reality, with a bit of knowledge and maybe a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, I don't know enough, but I've become very very, not sceptical, but concerned about exactly what Curriculum for Excellence is doing.

Is this 'dangerous' because he feels he does not know enough - and that for a full critical engagement of the issues he needs to know and understand more? If this is the case, perhaps here we have opportunities for further action research and professional development for Chartered Teachers. Or possibly he is referring to the potential risk for managers and policy makers – do they really 'want' individual teachers, or perhaps worse a critical mass of Chartered Teachers who are knowledgeable and able to critically question the value and legitimacy of policies and their proposed implementation? How these wider influential groups view Chartered Teachers will necessarily impact on how they forge, construct and are perhaps even denied identities as 'researchers', 'innovators'.

For Simon the constraints are all too obvious. There is evidence of him “playing the game” or perhaps even giving up the fight, as he sees the ways in which he is constrained by the dominant discourses of the managerialist agenda. Issues of performativity are rife and he is struggling to accept an identity as an action researcher, in fact it could be argued that he is actively resisting such an identity (a point I raise in his narrative). Simon positions himself as just an “employee” and locates himself within a technicist view of education and consciously tries to work as a technicist:

*in the end teachers want to be – tell us what we're meant to do. It's difficult because it's tell us what you want us to do, but don't do it in a dictatorial way... in the end **we're employees** and we're there to deliver what we're instructed to do and it's nice if we get to interpret how we do that,*

Simon actually illustrates for us the very real issue teachers face – the wider culture and educational community needs to be open to a different way of thinking and to understand Chartered Teachers as being different. They need to be understood and accepted as being and becoming action researchers and having a researcherly way of working/disposition.

Because if SQA, if I'm still judged on examination results then don't criticise me for teaching how to pass an exam, because that's what I'm being judged on. Now, I can teach the skills of how to pass the exam in a formative way and that's quite a good thing to do, I think it's quite a positive thing to do, but it's still teaching to pass an exam, it's still not... You know, my first priority is not responsible citizen, successful learner, you know, about the four capacities, it's not that, it's passing their exams, because that's all they care about, that's all the parents care about. And it's all actually league tables care about, it's all the government cares about, although they might talk a good game on Curriculum for Excellence. So there's that, as I say, that sort of dichotomy and that needs to be resolved, the dissonance there about what they're expecting from us.

It must then be questioned whether the changes and transformations which these Chartered Teachers experience are inherently positive changes. There are risks involved. The teachers themselves have expressed concerns about being isolated and devalued. There is frustration at not being able to ‘be’ the kind of Chartered Teacher

they wish to be. The personal struggles and tensions they must negotiate during this process are risky and uncomfortable. The impact of this may be felt across the educational community. I have already identified the ways in which this new way of being a teacher may disrupt and challenge traditional structures, within school, local authority and indeed at policy level. It may also disrupt the traditional balance (or imbalance) between the world of academia and research and the world of practice. If Chartered Teachers do negotiate, internalise and enact new identities and distinctly different ways of being a teacher, then a renegotiation of educational spaces, roles and practices may be required – this is an issue I explore further in the next chapter.

The teachers are caught in an ‘in-between’ space of being neither One nor the Other. If, as Maclure (1996) suggests, action research is a ‘boundary dweller’ then those teachers who are engaged in action research may become ‘boundary dwellers’, inhabiting this metaphorical space at the hyphen. Being and becoming a Chartered Teacher may well involve a process of alterity. However, I would argue that it is not about Chartered Teachers surrendering one identity (that of teacher) for a new identity (that of researcher). This would deny the complexity of action research and assume a singular notion of identity. Instead I think it is more helpful to expose and acknowledge the very tensions that these teachers are negotiating: being at once Other and Self; being both teacher and researcher; them and us. Instead, the representation of alterity *is* the space in-between. Being a Chartered Teacher *is* about negotiating a different way of being a teacher. It encompasses the teacher/researcher/practitioner/academic and forces us to consider the Chartered Teacher as a ‘hybrid’ – an identity of teacher, a way of being a teacher that is formed from the historical, cultural and social background of multiple histories. This hybrid identity is pushing at the boundaries of something different. It is a different way of being - and that requires a different space within which to work. What is required is a space that challenges the traditional and is open to blurred and shifting boundaries – a liminal space.

It is possible for us to regard action research as a potential *liminal space* for Chartered Teachers. It is a space defined by ambiguity, marginality and a space that

allows for/represents the 'in-between'. This 'in-between' space is a place where Chartered Teachers enact action research and become action researchers whilst simultaneously are being the 'teacher'. It is about shifting the limits/boundaries of what and who we were to what and who we are to be. It is the threshold of the old and new. These boundaries slip and shift, they are constant and fluid, they are not rigid linear and determined. This view challenges the labels and identifiers in school and within education, for example the defined roles and identities of who is a 'teacher', 'PT', 'Chartered Teacher', 'academic' and so on. Chartered Teachers may be seen as 'uneasy residents' in action research.

In this space, the teachers are perhaps presenting a feeling of dislocation or *enstrangement*. This notion of *enstrangement*, as described by Conroy (2009) emphasises being 'already strange from within' (2009:147) rather than looking to the external contexts and othering of self by making oneself strange from outwith. It is more about feeling that sense of dislocation and change, perhaps metamorphosis, of at once been/being/becoming/always already. The ways in which individuals will recognise, accept, reject and respond to these changes will vary, as indeed we have seen from the teachers stories presented above. However, what is common to each of them is a desire and drive to push at the boundaries of what is currently accepted as the work of a Chartered Teacher. It could be argued then, that Chartered Teachers are perhaps pushing at the edges of an accepted identity of teacher – a sort of 'embodied history' of what it is to be a teacher. If we accept that Chartered Teacher is potentially a distinctively different way of being a teacher then we will need a different space to enact this hybrid identity, an issue I explore in the following chapter.

Chapter 7: Creating and conceptualising Third Spaces

In the previous chapter I explored the teachers' shifting professional identities. In particular I identified the potential enstrangement the teachers may be feeling as they (re)negotiate their professional identities as teachers/Chartered Teachers/action researchers. This is a site of struggle, contestation and negotiation for the teachers. The terrain is complex. The teachers are located in an 'in-between' space: they are simultaneously teacher and researcher, yet the meaning of each of these 'roles' is now unclear and contested. Potentially the Chartered Teachers are sitting on the threshold of old and new spaces and ways of being a teacher. Arguably they are 'boundary dwellers' nudging at the edge of what it means to be a teacher. I introduced the idea that Chartered Teachers might be considered as a *hybrid*, as traversing and negotiating multiple identities and ways of being a teacher. I find Bhabha's (1994) discussion of culture and hybrid spaces particularly useful in helping to make sense of this issue. And in considering what this may mean for the teachers and the wider educational community. He suggests that within hybrid spaces

...the transformational value of change lies in the rearticulation, or translation, of elements that are neither the One... nor the Other... but something else besides, which contests the terms and territories of both.
(Bhabha, 1994:41)

This concept, I believe, is apposite for Chartered Teachers as they begin to negotiate their identities and question the nature and purpose of their role within educational contexts. The Chartered Teachers are 'in-between' spaces, in-between being and becoming a teacher/Chartered Teacher/action researcher. What it means to be a teacher or researcher is contested. The traditional and historical boundaries separating these identities are blurred. The teachers are becoming *neither the One nor the Other*. It is at these moments that I see interesting issues and tensions emerge for the teachers.

As the Chartered Teachers negotiate, traverse and shift within this in-between-ness of being/becoming an action researcher/Chartered Teacher, they report feeling unsettled, dissatisfied and somewhat at odds with their current professional being.

This is manifest physically, cognitively and conceptually. The teachers talk of physical spaces restricting their desire to act and work in different, more collaborative ways; they lament the missed, lost or missing spaces to share, talk and engage with others in meaningful ways. They are troubled by the culture they are operating within, which does not appear to value action research and an enquiring, researcherly way of being a teacher.

It is possible, then, to regard Chartered Teacher as providing an opening, or creating a rupture in the traditional culture of what it means to be a (Chartered) teacher in Scotland. No longer can we be satisfied with how things were, or always have been. It is no longer desirable to accept the apparent and taken-for-granted dualisms of: research and practice; teacher and researcher; practitioner and academic and so on. These binary concepts have been contested and debated in the literature and to some extent challenged in policy documentation, but the rhetoric of change appears to be more optimistic than the reality reported in schools by these teachers. It would still appear that the culture within schools is not fully supportive of, or open to, teachers engaging in research. Similarly, it is questionable to what extent the world of academia values and legitimises teacher action research, as Zeichner (2008) contends practitioner knowledge is too often marginalised and given ‘second class status’. It is for these reasons that I believe it is critical that we consider ways to challenge these assumptions and perhaps recognise Chartered Teacher as a conceptually different way of being a teacher. A renegotiation of educational spaces, culture, roles and practices will be required if Chartered Teachers hope to enact this different way of being a teacher. The concept of creating Third Spaces that support, promote and encourage new ways of being is a useful way to help us understand what this may be. It is to the idea of ‘Third Spaces’ that I now turn.

Throughout this chapter I intend to use Bhabha’s (1994) notion of the Third Space⁴ as a heuristic device to think, question and understand not only what it is like to be a

⁴ Bhabha refers to Third Space whilst Soja refers to thirdspace and others simply third space (without capitalising). For the purpose of this paper I shall assume Bhabha’s convention and refer to Third Spaces – the capitalisation reaffirming for me the importance and distinction of this space as a different way of thinking about teachers as researchers in education.

Chartered Teacher doing action research, but also what supports, structures and attitudes help promote this in the most meaningful ways. Although his work is located in post-colonial discourse and discusses the location of culture and ideas about 'nationness', I find his ideas applicable and meaningful in thinking about the 'culture(s)' with school/education. Nationness, in this context, shapes and influences one's identity and provides a way to make sense of and give meaning to who I am/ who I have become/ who I am not (now). Culture is also about a sense of identity. In education and in teaching specifically, it is about those common meanings and ways of being: it informs us how we (should) act as a teacher here and now. Third Space allows us to think about and negotiate what this culture might mean. Bhabha refers to the Third Space as a space:

...though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity of fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew. (1994:55)

The Third Space then is a *liminal* space. The liminal space is open, ambiguous and forces us to (re)think and (re)consider apparent dualisms, or fixed identifications (Bhabha, 1994). It allows for a notion of hybridity that does not impose or assume a hierarchy between concepts, in this case between research and practice; practitioner and academic; researcher and teacher and so on. Third Space thinking then becomes particularly useful when thinking about teachers as they negotiate their shifting identity(ies) and subtly traverse the researcher/practitioner boundaries.

Using ideas of Third Spaces as a heuristic requires me to consider the current cultural spaces the teachers occupy; what happens in these spaces, who inhabits them and for what purposes. It is important to understand how individuals perceive these spaces and their roles and identities within them. Several issues emerged from the data around these ideas, with one overarching issue becoming apparent. The relationship between teachers and academics and the perceived field of practice in contrast to the field of research and theory was a significant tension for the teachers in this study. Through this chapter I shall unpick and address some of the concerns and issues

within this, looking critically at what alternative spaces might look like that embody the ideals of a Third Space.

“Educational research is not my field”: the academic/practitioner divide

There is a perception that research and theory are somehow peripheral to the work of the teacher. Despite the fact that the teachers in this study have engaged in several action research projects, they still at times refer to research and theory as disconnected and external to their core practice. This is in particular reference to research work emanating from the ‘ivory tower’ and from ‘proper’ academic research. This appears to be the case for Simon who, like many teachers, regards research as something that ‘exists outside of them and as something done to them’ (Kuzmic, 2002:226). Simon distances himself from educational research and goes so far as to suggest that it is not “his field”. Indeed, he does not appear to even locate himself within the ‘educational establishment’:

...but if I've got time and space for myself to read I'm going to read American politics books or history books, I'm not going to sit and read educational research books because that's not my field. And I personally think this is what the education establishment is for and there needs to be a better joining.

He reinforces this position further and states in his final reflective comments that:

I do not consider myself an academic, any more than a mechanic considers himself a scientist....

The distinctions that Simon perceives between himself and academics, and between theory and practice, serves to create quite an explicit divide. Indeed, Simon, in his statement below, creates a distinctive ‘them’ and ‘us’ position. He highlights the tensions within the education community and describes how he perceives the divide. He removes academics from the world of practice and places them in ‘ivory towers’, suggesting they know “bugger all” about the realities of teaching. He does however, recognise that there is some value in the research and knowledge created in these ivory towers, but believes this needs to be more accessible to teachers:

There is an isolation between teachers who think that people sit in ivory towers and know bugger all about classroom and what it's like and they

*preach down these sort of edicts. And at the same time I think there's a kind of institutional inverse snobbery from teachers towards academics who kind of they feel, oh yeah, just because you went and did your masters or you did your PhD or something, you're clever, and, yeah, I don't think that helps either. There's fault on both sides in that respect. But actually, the sort of research you're talking about, what we could do with from academics is **them** to come up with these research projects and to publish them in easy to read accessible means for **us**, which happens every so often. [bold my emphasis]*

What I find interesting about Simon's position is that this attitude reinforces the separation and schism between academics and practitioners and between theory and practice. It is also only one particular view and understanding of the exchange of research knowledge. Rather than position himself as someone who is also able to create and share knowledge about teaching and learning from research, he locates himself, and his peers, as passive recipients of knowledge created elsewhere. Despite Simon's own action research work and his increased skill and knowledge - particularly in comparison to his non-Chartered Teacher counterparts - he still perceives research as external to his practice. It is not part of his (teaching) world. This is perhaps not surprising, after all this separation is reinforced in almost all spheres of the educational community. As Hagger and McIntyre state:

the important practical work has always had to be done in the schools, but so long as the universities were at the centre of teacher education, the theoretical work was almost inevitably done there, detached from the practical world of schools (2006:60).

This highlights the significance of finding ways to bring research and practice together in meaningful ways and perhaps Chartered Teacher provides that opening. As Simon asserts, even though he recognises the isolation between academics and practitioners, he suggests that there should be a better cohesion, or "symbiotic relationship" between the two. However this symbiotic relationship appears to be principally about the ways in which we can ensure distillation of knowledge created by academic research in small, digestible bite-size pieces. This, he suggests, is more necessary for his colleagues who are not Chartered Teachers:

The only other thing, when you talk about the need for this symbiosis between academic and the profession, I do think actually that it would be helped if

there was – I know it sounds patronising – but if there was a simplification of things and it was issued to teachers in a far more reader friendly... Because if I refer to a document by such and such, using a lot of terms, if I'm not a Chartered Teacher, that I'm not familiar with, I'll get through half a paragraph and think fuck this...

Like Simon, Maggie also raises issues about the ways in which the research done by academics is filtered, cascaded or made accessible to teachers at the 'grassroots' level. She asks:

So it's all that stuff that's getting researched? How does that get down?... How do we find out about it? How do we then say, 'Oh, that's a good idea. I'm going to try that in my practice and I'm going to make sure ...

This emphasises a significant rift between the elevated 'high ground' of academic research and the swampy low ground of practice that teachers inhabit. She, like Simon, values the knowledge being created in these research spaces that may inform and improve her practice (something not all teachers value) although she does reinforce the distinctiveness of the worlds of research and of practice. This is possibly indicative of the wider culture within education that has shaped what we understand and regard to be appropriate activities and knowledge for teachers and for academics. As Schön (1983) suggested, it is too easy for practitioners to 'descend to the swamp' and engage in the challenge of the messy practical context of teaching, relying more on intuition and forsaking the importance or need for theory, helping to create and sustain this theory/practice divide. It is accepted that the academic will engage in research activity and produce knowledge that somehow influences or informs the practical task of the teacher. This information *should* be filtered in accessible ways for teachers. What is silent in this view, is the work of the teacher as a researcher.

Valuing teacher action research

There are two interconnected issues influencing the way in which teachers' value (action) research and have their own action research valued. Firstly, we are faced with the challenge of attempting to gain legitimacy for teachers as researchers.

However, there is a further issue arising from a culture in schools that does not appear to value any research, let alone that which is conducted by other teachers.

Lorraine has been faced with this attitude in her school. She is often surprised by her colleagues' lack of engagement with research she has produced, even when it provides insights and information about pupils that all teachers in the school work with:

Yeah, it does. I put out an email at the end of the term, last year I put an email out saying we got the reading project results in and also a report for any member of staff who's interested. So by return of email, out of a staff of well over 100, I got requests from 12 people who were interested to see what the results were.

This apparent lack of interest in colleagues' research work may stem from several sources. One may be an issue of credibility. As Simon points out, teachers are questioning whether the action research done by Chartered Teachers is credible. Simon alludes to an attitude that does not necessarily respect or understand the role and work of a Chartered Teacher. He believes that there is insufficient credibility of Chartered Teacher status or of teachers doing action research to provide a perceived integrity to any knowledge he might produce:

Well, then you come, again, back to the point of credibility. You have to come back and say, well, do people really respect what I think as a Chartered Teacher or do they think right you jumped up little shit you've got an extra 8 grand and you're trying to tell me how to do my job, I've been doing it for 40 years. And that's the problem.

This is an issue partly related to his own perceptions of what he believes is a widely held perception by the 'profession' at large. It is based on his own experiences related anecdotally and some 'off the cuff' remarks from colleagues. It may of course also provide some insight into his beliefs in the value and worth of teacher action research. His comments do alert us to the fact that Chartered Teachers' action research is not wholly supported within the profession and cast shadows on whether they are or can be legitimate producers of knowledge. Doing action research is still

not 'core business' for Chartered Teachers and is easily dismissed when other pressures and time constraints come to the fore.

The issue is not just about whether Chartered Teachers could become legitimate creators of knowledge. There is also a further issue relating to the nature of knowledge produced through teacher action research, an issue I discussed in relation to the nature and purpose of action research in Chapter 5. For Simon, the purpose of doing action research appears to be about finding out 'what works' and therefore he believes that it is important to share this knowledge with colleagues. This places him in a position where, as a 'leader of curriculum development' (as identified in the previous chapter), it is his place to 'test' out new developments or initiatives and find ways to "roll these out" in the most effective manner for his school/department. Unfortunately, the problem with this model is that again teachers are being given diluted information (this time from colleagues instead of academics) and are not negotiating or understanding the primary underpinning of the initiative or development. Again, the research dimension is separated from the dimension of practice and teaching and teachers are only being encouraged to engage with the end product of 'what works'. This does little to help break down the traditional barriers between research and practice. But Simon argues that this practical 'what works' knowledge is what teachers want to hear – they are not interested in the theoretical and research side:

Well, it will be practical because they're not going to want to hear what I think about academic research. ...It will be practical. This is what you need. Here's your resources. Here's your outcomes. Here's your methodologies. Boom. Go. And there would be no academic background to it. I'm not going to give a background because it takes too long. I'm not going to say, 'As researchers have discovered this is how kids learn better, therefore this is what we're doing.' That's not what I'm going to do. Yeah, so that's...

This is simply perpetuating a cycle that denies teachers access to, and engagement in, research activity and serves to position them more as technicians. This further separates the worlds of research and practice. This is indicative, I believe of a wider cultural issue within education and a dominant view that locates teachers as passive consumers of knowledge rather than legitimate producers of knowledge. This is a

difficult view to challenge and break down. It is thus essential that we look at the opportunities that do exist for teachers to share their research and consider ways for them to engage in research communities and research spaces. Whilst action research is promoted as a legitimate and worthwhile activity for teachers - through initiatives such as Chartered Teacher, Schools of Ambition and the SQA - it would appear that this is not sufficient to promote the notion that teachers are legitimate creators of knowledge and researchers of their own professional contexts. At best, what we appear to have is a higher level of critical consumption of research knowledge - but of knowledge produced by others.

Still, for Simon, it appears that the two spaces of research and practice occupy very distinctive physical and conceptual spaces. The field of educational research is not, as he suggests above, 'his field' and if he were to engage in further research this would be done outwith school. He does believe that as a 'knowledgeable other' he is in a good position to undertake research but only if he was invited to, or seconded out to do so in a University partnership or with a funded body such as the SQA.

I'd be quite interested in it if someone said to me a day a week for a term you go up to Moray House and you research something

It is at this juncture that Maggie departs from Simon's stance and she begins to nudge at the traditional boundaries by asking:

And then your next step would be how do you feed that back [teacher action research] in to those who've done the research [published influential academic research]?

Maggie is referring to the kind of action research work that teachers appear to be engaging with – and which stems from larger initiatives such as Assessment is for Learning that have emerged from larger scale research work. Whilst she recognises the importance of both academic research and practitioner research, she realises that it is not sufficient for these two to remain disconnected. Importantly, she questions how we can share and promote teacher action research within both teaching and academic circles. Drawing on Third Space thinking, we might then question and

negotiate ways in which research can be shared with teachers, academics and others within the educational community working together in different, more researcherly ways. Some spaces do already exist and the teachers shared some of their experiences of these. It is to these spaces that I now turn.

The nature and purpose of collaborative spaces: from collaboration to critical engagement

The teachers talked about and shared numerous examples and experiences of engaging in a range of networks, groups and collaborative spaces that allowed them to share, discuss or carry out some action research activity. They each made reference to working collaboratively with others in some shape or form. These collaborations varied greatly in terms of the range and diversity of the membership of collaboration as well as its nature and purpose. Simon spoke of a very strong collegiate environment in his department (although not necessarily the most collaborative school across departments) and the close working relationship with Doug (a fellow Chartered Teacher) and Angela (his supportive and forward thinking PT). His immediate colleagues not only were ‘like minded’ people, forward-thinking and proactive professionals, but they were also friends. A strong social bond tied them as well as the immediate professional bond which helped to create this close-knit team.

Zoè. But yet you manage to have quite a collaborative team [despite lack of collaboration across the school in general].

Simon. That's because we're friends though. [laughter] It's because we go drinking afterwards. It's not...

Zoè. [laughter] Ah, but friends don't always make good collaborative partners though.

Simon. No. And actually, I would hope, though, I would expect that most departments would be able to foster that kind of relationship, you know, you're all subject specialists. The difference for us was that, coincidentally, at the same time, Angela was on her critical skills crusade and Pete and I were both taking on the Chartered Teacher thing, so we were very receptive to all the things she was telling us, at the same time as trying to get stuff ourselves. Because Juliet's not done Chartered Teacher, she's not done the sort of... When she looked at some of the stuff we were doing, this helped her because she

had no clue about, especially the academic stuff, she'd just learned it at a practical level. So that was a very symbiotic relationship there. So, yes, that worked. I can imagine, though, if you've got a department where there are some luddites and some reactionaries who are not going to...

Simon evidently works with a very proactive and engaged team of people and, as a result, he perhaps has less desire or need to further extend his collaborative activity. However, this in itself does not always lead to the most critical engagement and there is a danger of denying opportunities for the injection of new ideas or different ways of thinking. Lorraine also has a close working relationship with one particular colleague in her department. They share a similar outlook, enthusiasm and passion for education and are able to discuss and explore ideas at length. However this is only one person and she feels somewhat isolated within her school. Similarly, Maggie also reports a sense of isolation when she shares her experience of a changing professional context for the 'Service' [Visiting Teacher service], which has moved from a very collegial environment to one that does not allow or encourage collaboration with classroom teachers. It is perhaps for these reasons that Maggie and Lorraine appear to be explicitly searching for networks, collaborative groups and other spaces where they are able to share and engage in research.

Maggie talks of the many different groups and networks of which she has been part and reflects on the loss of collaboration since her working patterns have been changed. She feels more isolated from classroom teachers and feels also that there are fewer opportunities to share and discuss ideas. The kind of sharing she talks about is very much of a practical nature:

I miss it with our remit now. I was with my Primary 5 teacher this morning finishing off her creative dance. She says, 'Maggie, that's a good idea', so we tried that. I says, 'Oh, I would never have thought of making a car out of bodies like that.' And she said, 'That looks great.' I says, 'I know.' I miss it. I miss the collaboration.

It must be questioned to what extent these collaborative moments allow for a deeper and critical engagement of ideas, thinking and research. This kind of collaboration is not to be dismissed as it is vitally important. However, it is essential to recognise that

it is only one form of collaborative activity. It is, of course, necessary to share ideas at this level, which may then lead to a more meaningful and critical engagement, or may develop into discursive spaces that encourage action research and negotiation of ideas at a later stage. Maggie also talks about other spaces and collaborations of which she has been part and which, through small action research projects, have allowed for a more systematic engagement of ideas and sharing of learning.

So I had that and the arts group was very good. And then, of course, that ASG, the Associated School Group, was a fantastic – we did that last year. And again, most of the arts group, plus we got others in from the groups, in to that. So that was a good way to sort of say this is what... And just – I've got it here – [unclear 1:10:53]. And it was the whole sharing of our learning, just like you're saying. When you've not got that, actually, you realise how important that is. ...And in the days that lie ahead, and I don't really know how we might be used in that way.

Maggie believes that as a Chartered Teacher she should become more involved in this kind of activity and create opportunities for teachers to participate and develop these types of spaces. Spaces are needed that push beyond the boundaries of teachers sharing 'top tips' or what works in their own classroom. Instead, there needs to be a greater focus on critical engagement with research and ideas. Maggie, reflecting on her previous experience of a range of different groups, talked about some of the features that she believed would be necessary to create groups/spaces/networks that would be supportive for Chartered Teachers doing action research:

Well, definitely sharing practice, good practice. Learning from one another and learning about different practices Being open. It would be motivating as well. It would be motivating and, you know ... It would just be moving into new ideas. It would be a common, maybe common purpose.... You know, it would be, it would be that more that I talked about. It would be going into that more area, you know. Things like that. There's lots more I would think about but ...

The 'more' that she refers to is critical if we are to think about Bhabha's notions of Third Spaces. It is the unknowness of this 'more' that I find intriguing. This 'more' may hint at a different way of being a teacher and a different kind of space to engage in. It is a bringing together of others within the educational community to think

about, discuss, share action research. If Chartered Teachers are a hybrid then this idea of 'more' might be understood in terms of Third Spaces as something different - a different kind of interaction and space to in which to engage.

Lorraine provides an example that is perhaps somewhere between the space of sharing 'top tips' or simply rolling out the best ideas/activities and actually critically sharing research. Lorraine has had opportunity to share her research (the reading project described in her narrative) beyond the parameters of her own school. This is both rewarding and frustrating. She is finding support and interest in this project outwith her own context, yet her own colleagues show very little interest, even though this research potentially offer insights into the pupils they work with on a daily basis. To some extent, it is possible to empathise with this position given the demands placed on teachers. Numerous other factors could be affecting teachers' interest and engagement. For example is this lack of interest in this specific research and/or the topic; a lack of time to engage; or a lack of credibility of teacher action research amongst colleagues, which may itself be a wider reflection of the culture and interest in research activity in schools?

It does appear, however, that when a research project has particular currency or value for individual schools or groups of teachers then interest and engagement is higher. Lorraine was invited to speak with groups from local cluster primaries and other groups who were engaged in a similar project to hers. To some extent this sharing is about the product of the research (rather than the process or theoretical insights along the way.) However, it does go beyond simply focusing on 'top tips' for 'doing' the reading project. As Lorraine explains, she talks about the patterns that emerge and the insights she has drawn from the research about the success of the reading project. She shares the broad findings of the research but also is willing to discuss not only the research insights but also the practical application of the project.

So I make notes as the year goes on and at the end of it I usually, I get it together as a booklet, I put all the results in, I put my conclusions in and I send it out to interested parties. Sometimes what they've done is they've asked if they can come in and see either the reading project in action or they want to come in and talk to us about the results. So apart from reading it they want

to bring a group of teachers in from say primary schools or other secondaries to actually come and see the material and speak to pupils, speak to us, ask us questions that maybe they want to clarify something that we've written or something like that. Or they're going to set up their own reading project which is quite often what happens. They'll say, we've read all your stuff, we want to do this, can we come out and talk to you about how to set it up? So we either go out to the primaries and talk to them or they come in. I think there's about three secondaries that have followed our model...

This model of sharing is indicative of a more in-depth engagement with the research, although it is unclear to what extent the theoretical underpinnings of the work are shared, or the extent to which the insights from the project are negotiated, debated or discussed. It is encouraging, however, to hear about sharing and engagement that appears to go beyond 'what works'. The focus here appears to be more on sharing and discussing elements of the project so that others can then gain insights into how they might initiate a similar project. This kind of engagement is at least bringing groups of teachers together to discuss, somewhat critically, an aspect of teaching and learning and perhaps creates spaces for networks, collaborations or groups to develop further.

Whilst it is encouraging to hear these numerous stories of engagement, we must look carefully at the nature and purpose of these networks and spaces for collaboration and dialogue. It is essential that any dialogue that takes place within these Third Spaces does not simply rest on congratulatory or celebratory discussions of practitioner research, but instead there must be an openness to scrutiny and debate. As Alvesson and Sköldböck (2000:162) comment 'disturbances and contradictions will always be an element of every dialogue worth its name...'. They connect this to Lyotard's notion of paralogy and the need for what they describe as 'fruitful dissensus'. As Bhabha suggests, the Third Space is not simply a place where two cultures come together to share their individual outlooks, but it is a space where they must engage differently; it is about sharing but also (re)negotiating their understandings. For this to happen then we must move beyond the celebratory and move towards the critical.

It may also be questioned to what extent this sharing remains within groups of teachers or whether, as a piece of research, it is shared with other educational communities or groups – such as academics, or published in academic and/or teaching journals, books or other online research spaces. If teacher action research remains solely within the school domain, then it is possible that we in the educational community are missing important opportunities to share worthwhile and important research with academics, policy makers and other professional groups who may also be researching and working in similar areas. This level of engagement may encourage deeper and further cycles of research which continue to question and strengthen the work being done.

Spaces must be created that can be occupied by both practitioners and academics (and others) in meaningful and supportive ways. It is critical that a range of perspectives, experiences and skills are brought together. Teachers, despite any engagement in further masters-level study or courses that support research activity, will still only have access to their own immediate context. They will, inevitably, still have the implications of day-to-day teaching and learning to consider. They need the support, input and insights from academics engaged in the specialist areas which the teachers are researching, or who have significant knowledge or expertise in research methodologies. Similarly, the academics in these spaces need better engagement with those directly involved in the research contexts that can provide alternative viewpoints and insights. The importance of involving critical others in action research activity is an important issue, particularly if we are to consider a new type of Third Space.

Lorraine brings our attention to this issue as she reflects on her own involvement with a ‘critical friend’ who was part of her ‘reading project’. Lorraine’s project is particularly interesting in that it has been evolving over a considerable period of time now and she has already engaged with academic researchers, teachers, pupils, and colleagues both within and outwith the immediate school context. In this project Lorraine was able to work with a professor from an English university who was funded to act as a critical friend for their group. She spoke about this kind of

relationship as being a motivator for her doing her research and giving her confidence to continue. She described their interactions as 'stimulating'. This experience was invaluable for her and her colleagues, and it is worth quoting Lorraine at some length as she reflects on this:

I think one of the other things is, thinking back over the years some of the things I've enjoyed most is having somebody else as an outside observer talking to me about my plans. So like in the first year we did the reading project we had Professor A. come, he was employed by the school to oversee the project. It was fantastic to have him because when we were talking, he would let us talk away about what we were looking for, what attributes we were going to measure and how we were going to make sure that we knew whether the reading project was a success or not. And he would sit back quietly and let us talk away and then every now and again he came in with a statement or a question or a something making us think, you know, a bit of lateral thinking. It was really valuable to have him because we were so kind of running away with our own ideas, it was really good for somebody to have us grounded or if we were kind of searching for an idea and he would just put in a few words and that would be it, you know. And similarly, when Jane and I were working on some things, an educational psychologist was on the sidelines saying what about this and oh, I've read a bit about it. He would photocopy a chapter for us that would either support what we were thinking about or it would make us question what we were thinking about. So having somebody from the outside looking in because if you're getting all excited about this, here's what we're going to do, but having somebody who's not directly involved in it, but who knows about research and who would be able to give them their tuppence worth every now and then. It's either very stimulating or it's very grounding. You're either taking good advice, because you're going in the wrong direction or they're actually, they're promoting what you're doing and saying this is fantastic, go with it, you're doing the right thing.

The benefits of this working relationship were significant for Lorraine. However, she recognises and acknowledges some of the practical and logistical difficulties for sustaining and developing these kinds of relationships on a more regular basis. Funding and time are, of course, an issue, particularly for specific projects being set up within set time limits and projects reliant on specific funding. However, I believe this highlights a need to build better and more fluid relations with a range of other professionals.

It was Lorraine's positive experiences and belief in the importance of working with a range of professionals that encourage her to continue to seek opportunities to work with others and identify 'critical friends' to engage in her action research. Through informal connections and networks, she was able to enlist the help and support from the local authority school psychologist for one project. These serendipitous networks are vital but if there was a stronger relationship between universities, schools and policy makers perhaps these opportunities for emerging networks and critical friends would be easier to foster without having to negotiate obstacles of funding. Time will always be a further issue for any busy professional. However, part of the perceived problem, I believe, is also directly connected to how one perceives action research and the nature of the job of teaching (or research if one is an academic or policy making if one is a policy maker). A Third Space culture would promote a more open and accessible way of supporting this, but this would require a significant culture shift for all educational groups. It is essential that there is flexibility and fluidity so that action research, which is messy and complex, can be supported without unnecessary boundaries being placed on it. What is needed are ways to foster more fluid links between the different communities and support different levels and types of engagement.

Engaging with the wider educational research community

Opportunities do exist for teachers to engage with the research of others. This includes influential and international researchers whose work is impacting on education. These opportunities and openings frequently take the shape of events and conferences. These are either specifically designed and aimed at teachers or are bigger educational conferences being made more accessible for teachers. Similarly, some attempts are being made to make published research more available to teachers. For example, Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) has introduced a bi-monthly 'Research Round-Up' summarising a range of research papers and reports relevant to key issues/priorities in Scottish education. A brief review of the 'round-ups' indicates that there is a dominance of research reports emanating from government-funded projects across the UK. There are very few articles from peer reviewed academic journals and nothing summarising any of the valuable action

research being done by teachers in schools. Whilst it is apparent then that one particular kind of research is being promoted this is at least a beginning – one that will hopefully be developed further.

More research conferences are seeking ways to be more inclusive for teachers and there are several national conferences in Scotland designed for teachers. The Scottish Educational Research Association (SERA) and the British Educational Research Association (BERA) both have had a dedicated ‘practitioner day’. These have been arranged for Saturdays to allow teachers maximum opportunity to attend. These days provide a potentially valuable opportunity for teachers and academics to come together. In addition, there is the annual National Conference organised by the GTCS and an annual Chartered Teacher National Conference, which provides opportunity for Chartered Teachers to gather together and discuss issues critical to them as well as hear from some high profile academics. Maggie has attended the Chartered Teacher National Conference each year and believes it is a valuable opportunity and an exciting group to be part of:

...But it was like there at the weekend, I just sat and looked around that Saturday [Chartered Teacher National Conference 2008] and I thought what a buzz, what a buzz, you know, a learning community all together. I read about this somewhere and I can't remember what it was called. It's like this outer thing that's going on while you're changing and it's like we're connected somehow, but you can't actually see it.

There is also the annual Scottish Learning Festival (SETT), which brings together practitioners from all over Scotland to share practice, research and new initiatives. Invited speakers and keynote addresses from international academics and researchers, plus input from local authority and government, form a key part of the event. This potentially offers a major opportunity to bring together teachers, academics and policy makers. All teachers in this study attended SETT in some shape or form. Simon presented some of his action research in a session run by the SQA. Maggie was particularly engaged with one presentation and spent some time questioning and challenging one of the presenters, drawing on her own action research and knowledge built up from attending several educational research

conferences. Lorraine was particularly motivated and enthused after attending a session led by Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan. The ideas and issues they presented connected well with her and the difficulties she was currently facing in her own context. In addition to this Lorraine was also surprised and delighted to attend a session and find other teachers sharing research about a reading project similar to her own. This triggered for her a realisation that there must be numerous smaller pockets of work being done in various school contexts around the country but there is little opportunity or a systematic way in which teachers can share their action research:

And interestingly, I went to one at the SETT Conference last week and it was East Dunbartonshire and it was a couple of ladies were doing a reading project in a primary. And despite the fact that we've never met each other and we had nothing in common whatsoever, their reading project is almost our reading project... So it's really interesting to know that their reading project is really successful, as is ours, and yet without actually even meeting each other, we're doing the same kind of thing... But they are, they're doing it in East Dunbartonshire as we are doing here. So we're sharing it amongst our colleagues here and they're sharing it amongst their colleagues.... So there really ought to be a better forum for that kind of thing. If something like that goes ahead and it's successful we need to share it.

These conferences are excellent opportunities to bring together a diverse mix of professionals in a physical space. It begins to challenge the barriers and long held assumptions about teachers doing research and the world of academic research. Maggie, as I retell in her narrative, had a particularly transformative experience at BERA in 2008. She was inspired by Ken Zeichner's keynote presentation in which he spoke about the need for creating Third Spaces for educational research. She is now keen to question and consider ways in which we can create these spaces.

Creating and sustaining Third Spaces

Maggie believes that we (all those in the educational community) must work harder to bring together the two worlds of practitioners and researchers. She is challenging her own assumptions and beliefs about the status of these different groups and is trying to engage in different spaces. Indeed we may look at Maggie's stories and journey and learn some lessons that may help support more teachers (and academics) in traversing the divide. Maggie has engaged in a variety of spaces: networks;

conferences; lectures and, small group action research. She has read with interest a range of other successful stories of teachers engaging in research from sources such as the GTCs magazine and she has engaged in her own small-scale action research work. All of these small steps appear to be working together to convince Maggie not only of the need to engage in action research, but also to bring together the traditional spaces occupied separately by teachers and researchers and challenge traditional hierarchies:

Maggie. Well, I've been claiming it will need to come from the grass roots, but now I could even say after today's experience ... And as you said earlier on, I mean, questioning does it necessarily need to come from any, wherever it comes ... It shouldn't be that the grass roots is any more significant than coming from the uni. It's where do we get that third space?

Zoè. It's getting that meeting in the middle, getting that willingness.

Maggie. As long as the two are coming together to meet. It doesn't matter, oh, well, that bit's more important, that's got more weight than the uni part or the uni's got more than the ... It shouldn't be about that, it should be about coming ...

Maggie has revisited some of the literature she read as part of her Chartered Teacher study and found new meanings. She was then able to relate these to ideas of creating Third Spaces. Maggie suggested that the relationship between her and me and the work we were doing as part of this research was the start of an emerging Third Space way of working:

You see, educational researchers are beginning to go back – I think the Ken Zeichner here – “are beginning to go back to the schools, not to conduct commando raids but to work with teachers as colleagues” – and I think that's what we've done today, fabulous – “in a common quest and through such collaboration to rediscover “– which we've done today a bit – “the qualities, the complexities and the richness of life in the classrooms. We're beginning to talk with teachers, not only to teachers.” That was definitely what Ken Zeichner said at the BERA Conference.

She considers the work we have done together: me watching her teach, talking to her colleague, speaking with pupils and how she and I have had the opportunity to

discuss this – and it is this, she suggests, that is a nudge towards the kind of different ‘ways of being’ that would emerge in Third Spaces. I found this particularly intriguing as I had failed to realise at the start, that this research project might provide this kind of opportunity. I had assumed that because our meetings were for ‘my research’ that this would somehow not have mutual benefit to Maggie, other than me possibly offering advice/opinion about her action research, an unofficial critical friend if you like. She corrected me on this:

And even today – now, you see, we haven't done this before, so if I was to give you feedback on how it felt for me today, I felt there was something, a wee dynamic, that there was something, there was an equality in us, we were just sharing where you see how you've put there ... And I think this is what I must have said because this is probably what I was thinking at the time and maybe feeling, you see, we're down here. And Ken Zeichner did say that. I'm sure he did, about the ones and the practitioner level, research and the uni ones up there. And it's how we perceived the high school/primary thing, you know.... But I would say today, my perceptions of what we were involved in today in that sort of collaborative teaching sort of thing, I felt quite at home on an equal footing. That's how I felt. And even with the other teacher there, it was as if we were – we were all in there together, swimming about together.

I am excited by Maggie’s perception of our relationship during this project and believe that opportunities for university lecturers and researchers to work with teachers should be encouraged. However, I am also troubled by Maggie’s observations. She comments that she felt an ‘equality’ between her and me. Whilst this hints at a shift in her own perception of the teacher/researcher divide and the perceived status of teachers in the swampy lowlands with researchers occupying the higher ground in the world of academia, I find it particularly troubling that there is any perceived difference in status at all. It appears that this ‘them’ and ‘us’ mindset is all too common (See Simon’s comments earlier) and this is not helpful for building relations and developing Third Spaces. If teachers and academics (and others) are to engage freely within Third Spaces then there must be not only a shared understanding of the nature and purpose of these spaces but it is essential that there is an equality between all parties involved. We must find ways to dismantle these barriers.

At the heart of this issue of equality of status are deeper issues concerning the legitimacy of teachers as researchers and a much wider cultural shift in the educational community regarding the ways different educational groups interact with each other. As Usher and Edwards (1994:183) suggest, there must be educational spaces for the 'little narratives' of the excluded voices such as those of the teacher researcher. These, I contend, must be allowed and encouraged to question the dominant voices. Drawing on Lyotard's notion of paralogy allows us to understand these spaces as being open to all, promoting a questioning, a searching for a new or different meaning and presenting opportunities for productive resistance of metanarratives.

Therefore we need a view of AR that is about problematising and not seeking solutions to government-defined problems in the classroom or seeking the most efficient ways of delivering the latest initiative. Action research that serves to question is required. It, in turn, requires a space that encourages, legitimises and values this. Only if this happens can we expect to create 'Third Spaces' where teachers can articulate their voices. However, as Simon comments, despite the rhetoric of consultation, collaboration and even the emergence of Chartered Teachers as action researchers - the reality is often very different:

But there's this element of realpolitik which is that when we're doing Chartered Teaching in a very idealised form – well, of course we should all be collaborative, we should all be informing each other, we should be helping each other, sharing good practice and within that framework coming up with a coherent and effective curriculum that delivers on the core values being sent down from the government and meets with the school's vision, its development plan and all these other things. But in reality that's not what happens because in reality we're squeezed for time, there's petty empire building in various departments where people are not prepared to give up time or give up specialisation in their subject or whatever. And your voice gets kind of lost because although you're the voice of reason, I mean, we're not really consulted. Consultation is very hierarchical.

For Third Spaces to emerge, it will be required for us to question the very core of who is legitimised to speak, for what purposes and how dominant discourses are constructed and construct us within education. It forces us to question whose voice

counts, whose research counts and for what purposes. It should not be about allowing one group to have greater legitimacy or status. Instead it is about legitimising, recognising and valuing the different ways of knowing. We must promote the value of teacher/Chartered Teacher action research and the kinds of knowledge this can produce. It is necessary that it is allowed to be more than a useful reflective tool for an individual's personal professional development but instead becomes something that is rigorous, shared and promotes a deeper questioning of values, assumptions and beliefs in education.

This kind of Third Space forces different ways of working and thinking. The boundaries of what it means to be a 'teacher' and what it means to be a 'researcher' are blurred. Conceptually, it calls for different ways of acting. The local, particular and unique research stories from the classroom are valued alongside broader research undertaken by university researchers. Both are questioned, considered and problematised. These spaces value the knowledge created by all involved in education, in fact encourage those involved to be knowledge creators. This space might be seen as a way to facilitate the decentring of knowledge, by being more open to the 'little narratives' and valuing teachers as researchers. These ideas are entirely consistent with postmodern notions of multiplicity and that all knowledge claims are partial, local and specific, being inherently historical and constructed.

As I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, it may be possible to view Chartered Teacher as an opening; questioning what it means to be a teacher and challenging assumptions about the divide between teachers/academics and research/practice. No longer is it acceptable for teachers to operate within the silos of their classroom nor for educational researchers or policy makers to remain within their own distinctive domains. We must create a synergy between these groups. Conceptually, at least, we must always be open to notions of Third Space and negotiating what these spaces are - and might become - for teachers, academics, policy makers, parents and most importantly for the pupil.

Chapter 8: Closing Thoughts

The aim of this study was to explore what it is like to be a Chartered Teacher doing action research post-award. Teacher action research permeates a number of policy initiatives in the current Scottish context and the Chartered Teacher is one significant example of this. A core part of the Chartered Teacher scheme is teachers engaging in research. Therefore, it is essential to explore the complex, uncertain, challenging and potentially transformative nature of this teacher action research. We also need to develop a better understanding of and insight into, the kind of action research that is being done and teachers' conceptions of the nature and purpose of this. There is a paucity of literature and research exploring teachers' action research outwith the parameters of award-bearing study or formal funded projects. This study can be seen as beginning to address this gap. The insights drawn from this research offer some understandings that may help us to (re)consider and (re)frame the way in which we think about the teacher as researcher.

I have argued for the importance of the 'little narrative' and developing insights from the unique and particular stories of individuals (see Chapter Three). In Chapter Four I presented my narratives and interpretation of these teachers' stories. These went some way to introduce the individuals and provide rich insights and understandings into their experiences of being a Chartered Teacher and doing action research. I cautioned against making any generalisations from these case studies and oversimplifying or overstating the issues raised. However, there are commonalities amongst these teachers' stories that are worth emphasising. The partial, situated and complex understandings and interpretations developed from these stories raise questions, illuminate issues and offer different ways of seeing and understanding Chartered Teachers as action researchers. As I stated in Chapter Three (page 58) this research can be regarded as contributing to the 'shape of possibility'. The unique stories and insights that have emerged may well have significance and meaning for other Chartered Teachers and those who work with them.

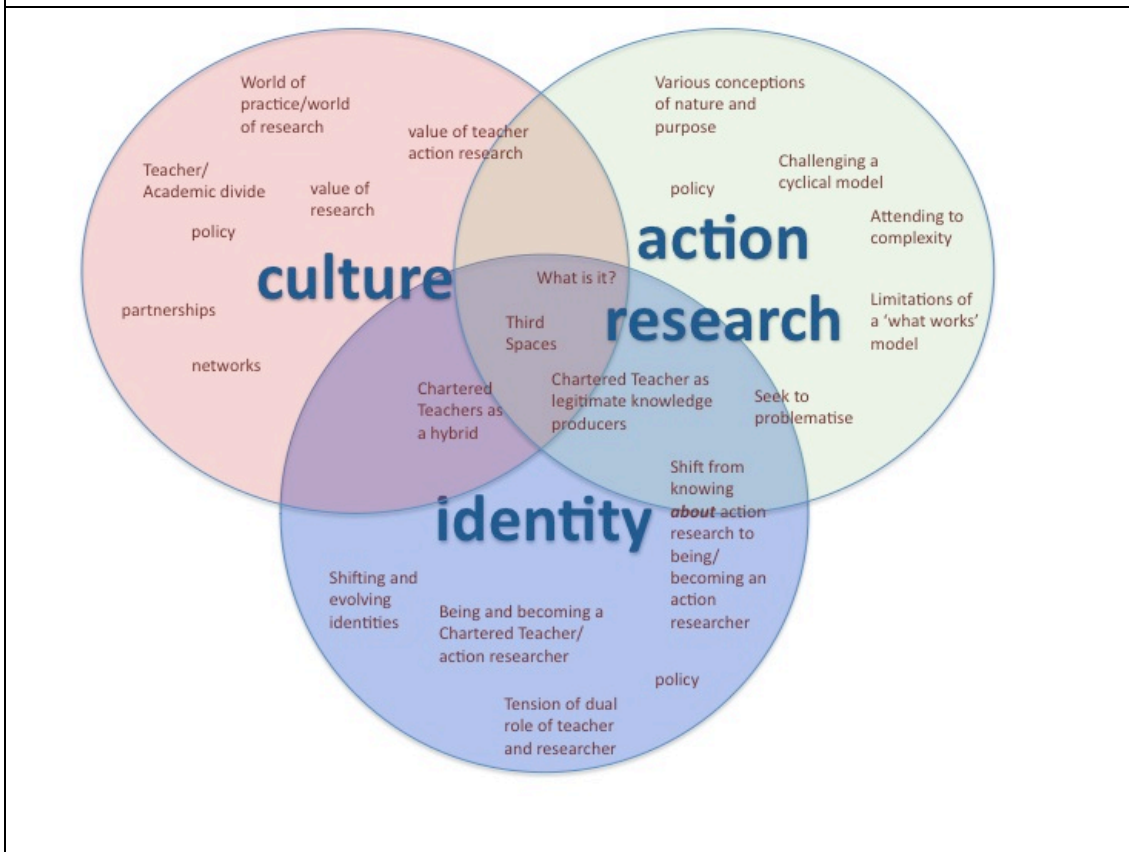
So, what is it like for these Chartered Teachers doing action research and what can we learn from these stories? Three significant themes emerged from the data: the importance of understanding the nature and purpose of action research; teachers' evolving identities as Chartered Teachers/action researchers; and the need not only to develop a conceptually different way of understanding being a teacher, but also to promote Third Spaces supporting this.

In Chapter Five I argued that traditional views of research were influencing the teachers' understanding and construction of action research and this was, arguably, limiting their research activity. This was particularly true for conceptions of research that were heavily reliant upon data that was more quantifiable in nature and seeking to 'prove' the effect/impact of a particular initiative (such as attainment scores in secondary schools to prove the merits of a particular teaching strategy/initiative). The methods, processes and purposes of this kind of research were, more often than not, incongruous with the daily practice of teaching.

Deeply interrelated with the teachers' understanding of the nature and purpose of action research was their identity as a teacher/Chartered Teacher/action researcher, and I explored this issue in Chapter Six. I argued that their identity(ies) is a site of struggle, contestation and negotiation and that the Chartered Teachers are in an 'in-between space': they are simultaneously teacher and researcher, yet they are neither one nor the other. I developed this idea further in Chapter Seven by suggesting that Chartered Teacher could be understood as a hybrid. I drew upon Third Space theory as a heuristic to understand Chartered Teacher as a distinctly different way of being a teacher and argued that a more complex view is required which promotes the dynamic and fluid nature of action research. This view somewhat challenges the taken-for-granted assumptions about teachers as researchers and the theory/practice divide evident in schools. It calls for a culture shift within the educational community.

These main themes can be summarised as thinking about issues of culture, identity and understanding of action research. Figure 2. below illustrates the overarching issues that emerged from the data and appeared common to each teacher.

Figure 1. Diagram illustrating the overarching themes from the research



The diagram in no way represents all the issues emerging or the only factors influencing Chartered Teachers being and becoming action researchers and doing action research. However, it does illustrate some of the common and significant issues; namely that understanding of action research, the teachers' identity and the culture in which they work, both at micro and macro levels, are all deeply interconnected, with each influencing and impacting on the other.

Understanding what action research is for Chartered Teachers

In Chapter Five I raised and explored in some detail the ways in which the teachers appeared to understand the nature and purpose of action research. I argued that a

traditional view of research, informed by a scientific model, appears to dominate. This view is somewhat narrow, appearing to only serve technical purposes and it limits the action research work that can be undertaken in schools. This construction of action research is more concerned with problem solving and does not legitimise action research as offering a distinct way of knowing about teaching and learning. As Hulme *et al* (2009) contend, action research does have the potential to transform, rather than simply add to what is already known in the academy about teaching and learning. What I find particularly troubling about the dominant traditional view is that it appears to mask the complexity of action research. Teachers are constrained by a model that seeks to ‘prove’ something and expects, possibly demands, quantitative data. This is simply not appropriate for small-scale action research and is at odds with the daily practice of teaching. As a result, action research conceived in this way is quickly dismissed as inappropriate and onerous. This was evident in both Lorraine and Simon’s stories.

When action research is framed within a technical perspective its purpose is narrowly conceived. Far from being an ‘empowering’ process for teachers to be involved in, it actually serves to limit the teachers professional autonomy. Action research which is subsumed within this paradigm arguably becomes a tool for performance management or at best a form of enquiry available to teachers in order to ascertain the best techniques or strategies to meet pre-specified goals or targets. This conception of action research does little more than reproduce and reflect the status quo, often serving the needs of the power elites rather than those of the teacher or indeed the pupils. However, action research focusing upon technical aspects can also be very worthwhile for teachers. It is potentially an enlightening process and is an important part of high quality professional development. It is, however, insufficient particularly for the work of Chartered Teachers engaging in action research post-award. Instead I argue that an interrogative stance is necessary for Chartered Teachers. Teacher enquiry and action research plays a critical role in developing this interrogative stance and allows opportunities to question and challenge, as appropriate, the underpinning purposes and philosophy of practice.

Action research within a technical perspective is not without merit and it must not be assumed that there is no place for the forms of enquiry and knowledge conceived within the technical perspective. At times it will be entirely appropriate to engage in action research to develop this type of knowledge and skill (Kincheloe, 2005). It potentially allows teachers an insight into a particular condition. However it must also be recognised that it tells them very little about the situations that have created that condition. Neither does it allow for the consideration of alternatives. It is important to find ways to improve and build on ‘what works’ but equally it is essential that teachers are able to develop a critical stance that allows them to understand and question why something may be worth improving or adopting in the first place. I argue for an understanding of action research that encourages a deeper, critical and problematising view that offers the potential of being a transformative experience for those involved, particularly within the Chartered Teacher scheme.

I believe it is essential that a critical and questioning approach is adopted. Whilst the teacher may not be able to tackle or address the global structures, or even wider school issues, they can challenge not only their own practices but also the practices being imposed upon them. Hagger and McIntyre (2006) contend that at the “core of action research is a questioning of the preconceptions that are implicit in one’s existing practice” (2006:175). Whilst I concur entirely with this, I also believe it critical that in this problematising of one’s own practice Chartered Teachers are able to make decisions about not just whether practice can be or how it should be improved/changed but also whether it *should* be improved. This questioning should examine the teachers’ own professional practice and knowledge, policy and other research.

It is important to note that I am not suggesting that all policy, research or initiatives/strategies emerging from government or the local authority are inherently problematic. Rather, I am foregrounding the need for Chartered Teachers to have the knowledge and skills and legitimately have the space to openly question, critique and interrogate practices, thus adopting a more critical stance to practice. It is critical that teachers’ own assumptions, beliefs and values are brought into examination as well

as specific practices, policies, initiatives and strategies. As I discuss in chapter Five, it is less that technical action research or action research focused on improvement is necessarily inappropriate for Chartered Teachers instead I argue that it is imperative questions are asked and issues considered in terms of who decides the parameters of the research, whose purposes these serve and for whose benefit. Above all, I believe it is imperative that regardless of the nature and purpose of the action research, individuals involved in doing any action research understand and make explicit the purposes of this research and understand the kinds of knowledge being produced and for what purposes.

Through the literature review in Chapter Two I offered Noffke's (2009) three dimensions of the Professional, Personal and Political, as a useful framework for interpreting and understanding the teachers' stories, experiences and understandings of action research. Alongside this I also highlighted Griffiths' (2009) argument that action research should be for/as/mindful of issues of social justice, these frameworks foreground the need for rigorous and systematic research that goes beyond the promotion of just aiming for technical change. They highlight the importance of making explicit one's assumptions, beliefs and understanding about the nature and purpose of the action research being done. They also provide sufficient latitude to allow multiple understandings of the nature and purpose of action research for teachers.

If we retain a focus on action research for/as/mindful of social justice then it allows for, in fact demands that regardless of the intentions and purpose of the action research, those involved engage critically and interrogate the research, policy and practice relevant to the focus. We must be open to ideas of provisionality and revisability of knowledge, as I state in Chapter Five (see page 142) and that the knowledge created is understood within particular, local and historic contexts. The processes teachers employ for their action research should consider who is involved, at what stages and for what purposes. Issues around whose voice is heard and why and whose voice is silent are critically important. The teachers' own assumptions and beliefs must also be open for scrutiny. Attention to these concerns begins to

acknowledge action research for/as/mindful of social justice. As I note in Chapter Two (page 39) by at least exposing and acknowledging issues of social justice, or employing processes that attend to issues of social justice, teachers will likely act in ways that are more, critical, interrogative, challenging and probing. It is important to recognise that this is not to assume that all action research should always focus on issues of social justice, such as enquiries about gender or racial issues within a school but more that by attending to broader questions of principles of social justice one will begin to act in more critical ways.

Doing action research is challenging for teachers and taking this interrogative stance helps to expose the mess and complexity of action research work. Often models of action research promoted to teachers follow a useful, but overly simplistic, model of 'plan-do-observe-reflect'. These cyclical or spiral models present a more linear process which does not take into account rich complexity of classroom practice. Through Maggie's stories, I became increasingly aware of this issue and her insights and experiences highlight the need to foreground the complexity of doing action research.

I argue, then, for a view of action research that is, in part, informed by complexity thinking. Considering action research through the lens of complexity allows us to recognise the numerous, diverse and multidimensional influencing factors and the non-linear nature of processes within any classroom, or indeed education system (Hoban, 2002). The individual teacher and class cannot be separated from the wider micro structures of school or from the macro structures of local authority, local and national policy, as well as from global influences. Action research within a complexity theory framework means the practitioner needs to be an 'analyst and critical interpreter' of what is happening, rather than attempting to directly control a situation (Radford, 2007). We must then understand action research as something that is dynamic, fluid, revisable and open to challenge and questioning. This understanding forces those engaged in action research to expose their own positions and negotiate explicitly the nature and purpose of their research. It is, therefore, about taking an interrogative stance to practice.

I stated in the Introduction (Chapter One) that I did not intend to provide a single definitive definition of action research. This was in part because I do not believe it is helpful to impose a single definition upon something that can legitimately be understood to have multiple purposes and dimensions. It was also partly because I intended to explore the various conceptions of action research from the perspective of the Chartered Teachers rather than impose a singular view upon them. I also highlighted that in the revision of the Standard for Chartered Teacher, the terminology used has shifted from ‘action research’ and ‘professional enquiry’ to now ‘practitioner research’ and ‘practitioner enquiry’. The underpinning principles, aims and professional actions of the Chartered Teacher however, remain faithful to the original Standard. It is difficult, then, to determine why the terminology has shifted and whether this is intended to influence the nature and purpose of the research work done by teachers. Further, within the wider Scottish context action research/professional (e)inquiry/practitioner (e)inquiry/teacher research/practitioner research are all employed in various policies and initiatives (for example through the GTCS Teacher Researcher Programme, Schools of Ambition, SQA funded projects etc.). These terms appear to be used interchangeably and synonymously with no explicit underpinning principles or philosophy to guide or advise the individual regarding the possible nature and purpose of the research activity.

I have made a deliberate choice to use the term action research throughout this study as I feel it is important to retain a focus on the notion of ‘research’. I concur with Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2004:605) suggestion that the term ‘inquiry’ may permit some slippage of the research dimension. Somekh and Zeichner (2009) also raise the importance of using the terms action research, suggesting that these two terms are somewhat incongruous in that they bring together two rather traditionally separate ideas: that of ‘knowledge generation’ and the ‘improvement of social action’. They argue that the term deliberately mixes discourses and in doing so serves to blur the boundaries between action and knowledge generation (2009:6). Foregrounding these blurred boundaries or ‘in-between-ness’ has emerged as a significant issue and is particularly apposite for this study. I have argued that Chartered Teachers are ‘in-

between' and this liminal space provides opportunities to rethink, renegotiate and reconsider what action research means and what it means to be a Chartered Teacher as action researcher. I maintain that it is critical, then, that teachers who are engaging in research/enquiry are able to expose, negotiate and challenge their assumptions and to be clear and explicit about the nature and purpose of their research.

This promotion of action research which seeks to problematise and question, legitimises teachers as knowledge producers. As I have already argued this calls for accepting Chartered Teacher as a conceptually different way of being a teacher – a researchy way of being a teacher. As Chartered Teachers are being/becoming action researchers they must (re)negotiate their professional identity(ies). For this to happen there must be a culture shift in education that supports this hybrid identity. Spaces must be created - Third Spaces - that allow for this distinctly different way of being a teacher and that brings together those in the educational community in meaningful ways. We must then look for openings and opportunities to support this.

Openings and opportunities

In the policy rhetoric at least, I believe openings and opportunities do exist that provide the latitude and spaces for Chartered Teachers and others to begin to nudge at the boundaries of what it means to be a teacher and enact this new identity of Chartered Teacher/action researcher. As I have already identified, teachers engaging in research is well promoted throughout numerous current Scottish educational policy documents – the Standard for Chartered Teacher; Standard for Initial Teacher Education; Standard for Full Registration; the variety of initiatives promoting action research (SoA, GTCS, SQA etc.); the recent Chartered Teacher Review; the SNCT Code of Practice for Chartered Teachers; and the most recent Professional Development Strategy for a Curriculum for Excellence (SG, 2009). However, the extent to which these opportunities are afforded and adopted by local authorities, schools and individuals remains to be seen. The rhetoric, of course, is open to interpretation. Arguably this means that Chartered Teachers, and the wider educational community, are in a fortuitous position where they might begin to shape, influence and direct what it means to be a Chartered Teacher/action researcher.

However, change will not happen in isolation, and as Carroll *et al* (2008:20) note:

teacher learning does not take place in a vacuum but within the current school, local authority and national culture. The new model of teacher learning requires a shift in culture in order that it can be fully supported at the individual level and effective at the systems level.

This shift in culture to which they refer must be acknowledged, addressed and supported within all spheres of the educational community. It will not happen if change remains solely with the individual. There must also be collective change (Reeves & Forde, 2004). As Chartered Teachers themselves embrace and negotiate this new hybrid identity, those with whom they work must also be prepared to engage with these new practices.

The need for this shift in culture is recognised in some of the recent policy rhetoric. The latest CfE discussion paper on professional development explicitly states that change must be cultural and not just technical. It promotes a broader understanding of who are ‘practitioners’ and explicitly brings together lecturers and teachers, thus arguably challenging the traditional academic/practitioner (teacher) divide. It goes further, suggesting the need for enhancing partnership across the educational community, stating:

partnership needs to extend beyond individual establishments to embrace the range of professionals who support learning in its broadest sense. (Scottish Government, 2009:5)

Stronger partnerships between teachers, schools, universities, colleges and local authorities, to name but a few, could help to challenge the apparent schism between: teachers and researchers; practitioners and academics; theory and practice and would allow for, indeed encourage, ‘boundary crossing’ (Zeichner, 2008). These apparent binaries are no longer helpful and new, more collegiate and collaborative practices are required. Chartered Teacher programmes of study potentially offer a way for teachers/academics to begin to nudge at these boundaries. As we have seen from the teachers in this study, engaging in academic study that forced them to engage in

action research and explicitly consider theory and practice and act as both teachers and researchers had a transformative impact on them and their teaching. This could be regarded as a first step towards nurturing different kinds of relationships between teachers/practitioners and researchers/academics. Of course this is just the first step and the focus for this research was to look beyond these formal programmes of study and consider what happens post award and what opportunities for continuing these relationships exist. I offer Third Spaces as a heuristic to help rethink and reshape the way we understand the relationships between all those in educational community and encourage a conceptually different way of being a teacher as enacted by Chartered Teacher.

Spaces must be created that foster and develop partnerships between different educational groups. These partnerships must be open and flexible. Opportunities for networks and partnerships to evolve and be created spontaneously and serendipitously are essential. They must also be understood as nomadic and temporary. It is critical to understand and conceptualise the Third Space as a transient space, like the Chartered Teachers themselves Third Spaces also represent an 'in-between-ness'. The metaphor of travelling is particularly helpful in understanding the necessary fluidity of Third Spaces. They cannot be permanently occupied and must always be considered as open and temporary spaces. It is therefore essential that individuals not only engage in Third Spaces but they continue to recognise and inhabit their own unique contexts.

Equally, it is important that these partnerships in Third Spaces allow for critical engagement and are a space for the (re)negotiation of ideas and understandings, allowing for a 'fruitful dissensus'. These spaces should bring together practitioner knowledge and academic knowledge in ways that challenge traditional hierarchies and do not privilege one over the other. All research should be valued and open to critical scrutiny and the flow of knowledge is multidirectional. We cannot risk the notion of Third Spaces becoming a conceptual *ghetto* for Chartered Teachers. A space only inhabited by Chartered Teachers where they are isolated and their work and knowledge is not valued or legitimised.

It is necessary to acknowledge that in addition to the possibilities offered through the concept of Third Spaces there are also potential risks. There is a danger that Third Spaces could become very lonely spaces for Chartered Teachers – if it is only other Chartered Teachers who engage with these ideas they may well become isolated from colleagues, peers and others in the educational community. This is potentially damaging to the individuals involved. Difficulties arise, as indeed the teachers in this study have reported, when the Chartered Teachers attempt to lead or engage in action research yet they lack any influence or legitimacy as knowledge creators in their own contexts and as result they report feeling devalued and demotivated. It is critical then that all those in the educational community recognise the importance and value of engaging in these conceptual Third Spaces to bring together ideas, knowledge and understandings about education. As Zeichner (2008) argues, debate and discussion about educational research must involve the wider educational community and focus upon the issues and insights gained rather than whether it is practitioner or academic research.

This view allows us to question and rethink practice and challenge the status-quo (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009:43). This may be viewed as a form of activism and Cochran-Smith and Lytle argue that it is those teachers who “rethink, resist, and re-frame the problems of education – that marks the most engaged and productive school cultures.” (2009:47). I maintain, then, that we should look to the Chartered Teacher scheme as an opportunity for teachers to be and to become researchers. This is not only for their own professional development and for immediate local gains for pupils in their classrooms, but also positions teachers as legitimate producers of knowledge who will contribute to and challenge what is known about teaching and learning.

For too long teachers have been the focus of research: it is time that they become originators of research, playing a leading role in the enhancement of teaching and learning through school-based and classroom-based research. If teachers were to respond to that expectation, the standard for Chartered Teacher could become a vehicle for the emergence of teaching as a researching profession (Kirk et al, 2003:28-29)

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Appendix A Overview of Participating Teachers

Appendix A Overview of Participating Teachers

Name	Local Authority*	Sector	Male/Female	AGE	Route to Chartered Teacher Status
Ruth	LA 1	Primary	Female	50-54	MTeach
Anne	LA2	Primary (Visiting Specialist)	Female	55-59	Module 1 (Edinburgh) + Accreditation Route with GTCS
Maggie	LA2	Primary PE (Visiting Specialist)	Female	50-54	Module 1 (Edinburgh) + Accreditation Route with GTCS
Doug	LA3	Secondary (history/ outdoor education)	Male	35-39	Module 1 (Edinburgh) + Accreditation Route with GTCS
Simon	LA3	Secondary (history)	Male	40-44	Module 1 (Edinburgh) + Accreditation Route with GTCS
Lorraine	LA1	Secondary (learning support)	Female	50-54	Module 1 (Edinburgh) + Pilot Modules (Edinburgh) + Accreditation Route with GTCS

* To help ensure anonymity I have removed the names of the Local Authorities in which the teachers work

Appendix B Overview of research process and timeline

May-June 2008

Interviews: Initial interview with teachers to discuss

- nature of the research
- negotiate the next steps of the research with teachers – including specific data and methods (including creation of research journals etc), boundaries (time, context, historical etc from T background and working context)
- relevant background info and possible key documentation
- sharing previous action research projects
- visual representation of them as ‘action researchers’ – share and discuss

Gather relevant policy docs

- begin to do a content analysis
- drawing on initial analysis from first meeting

- arrange for transcription of interviews

- begin initial analysis of interview – any key info/ themes emerging from within cases/ themes across cases

- initial analysis of visual representations – themes/ contradictions/ tensions for further exploration?

Transcript and summary to teachers

- verify, analyse etc as agreed

Sep-Oct 2008

Interviews: Individual loosely structured interviews with teachers. Discuss and share current action research and issues raised from interview 1. Sharing of selected artefacts including

- items relevant to their research project (perhaps observations, pupil work etc)
- research journal
- visual representations of their stories about the process so far (photos, drawings etc)
- negotiate next steps, any changes etc

Gather any other relevant documentation

Begin writing narratives about each teacher

- arrange for transcription of interviews

- initial analysis of interviews – within case/ across case, connecting to any issues from initial meeting

- analysis of visual representations – themes/ contradictions/ tensions for further exploration?

BERA 2008 -presentation drawing on Maggie’s narrative and complexity

Jun 09 – May 2010

Write up 3 case studies – write narratives of each teacher

Write main analytical chapters

Write methodology and Literature Review

Final narrative to each teacher for comment

- arrange for transcription of interviews

- initial analysis of 3rd interview

- analysis of all interview data – within case, across case, connecting to other data – themes, issues, tensions, contradictions etc

- analysis of visual representations – themes/ contradictions/ tensions for further exploration?

- Final transcripts and analysis to teachers

Transcript, summary and analysis to teachers

- verify, analyse etc as agreed

Literature (ongoing)

interviews inform literature review and literature will inform interviews and analysis/ interpretation

Feb-April 2009

Interviews: Final Individual loosely structured interviews with individual teachers

- discuss progress with action research
- share and discuss narratives
- any issues arising from literature/ analysis of prev data
- share any other ‘products’ of the research and other artefacts such as research journals etc
- share final reflection/visual representation of their action research story/them as researchers

Transcript and summary to teachers

- verify, analyse etc as agreed

ECER 2009 & CARN 2009

- action research & complexity
- Third Spaces

Observe Maggie teaching – Feb 2009

Action Research and Chartered Teachers



What is it like to be a Chartered Teacher doing action research?

The aim of this case study research is to find out what it is like to be a Chartered Teacher doing action research.

Through Chartered Teacher study you will have done some action research, you may also have experience of doing action research in other contexts/ for other purposes.

The following are the kind of questions we may address through this study:

- What are your previous experiences of doing action research?
- What is your understanding of action research?
- What purpose(s) do you see action research fulfilling?

- Why will you continue to do action research?
- How do you perceive yourself as an action researcher?
- What is informing, influencing your work as an action researcher?
- What impact, if any, is this having on you, your pupils, your school etc?

This research is meant to be open and collaborative. I hope that we will be able to work together to discuss the questions above over the next few months as you reflect on previous experience and begin to engage in and construct new experiences of doing action research. At our first meeting we can chat about the next steps for you as you participate in this study.

Some questions you may want to think about as the study progresses:

- what do I think action research is?
- why am I doing it and/ or want to continue doing it?
- what troubles me or interests me about doing action research?
- what's different (if anything) about doing action research now I have completed my Chartered teacher studies?



I am interested in knowing about what it is really like for you as a teacher to do action research and why you think doing action research is worthwhile. Please feel free to contact me at any time to discuss any aspect of the study. If you would like to read about some of the current issues and debates about action research and teachers as researchers I can send you some articles that may be of interest.

Contact details: zoe.williamson@ed.ac.uk 0131 651 6403

Appendix D: Examples taken from my reflective journal.
 Example one is from my case notes on Maggie:

EdD Thesis – individual case notes Zoe Williamson
Author

Title Author

*building on rather than always something new...
 You cant follow everything so some balls stay in the air for now.
This is quite different from the models of AR in books – it is not a straightforward cycle or spiral – there are stop critical points/ steps involved but it is not an attempt to make the process 'tidy' in fact it is to recognise the 'untidy' and complex nature of AR. Perhaps viewing AR as a broader process spanning longer periods of time. ?? Or maybe it is the process of being an action researcher/ teacher that is broad?*

connect this to ideas taken from the Cochran-smith and Lytle chapter on Practitioner inquiry?

Maybe one of the dots in the picture – as Maggie describes – I started doing some reading, then trying things out.

Risk - Maggie sees as risk - in seeing AR as linear as you're then 'controlling it' and you need to come out - no longer seeing it as a threat.... Asking the **risky questions "did I really...?"**

- refers to 'actual research' as her reading about research methods on the Chartered Teacher course

Maggie
Doug
Anne
Ruth
Simon
Lorraine

Example two is an extract from my methodological notes:

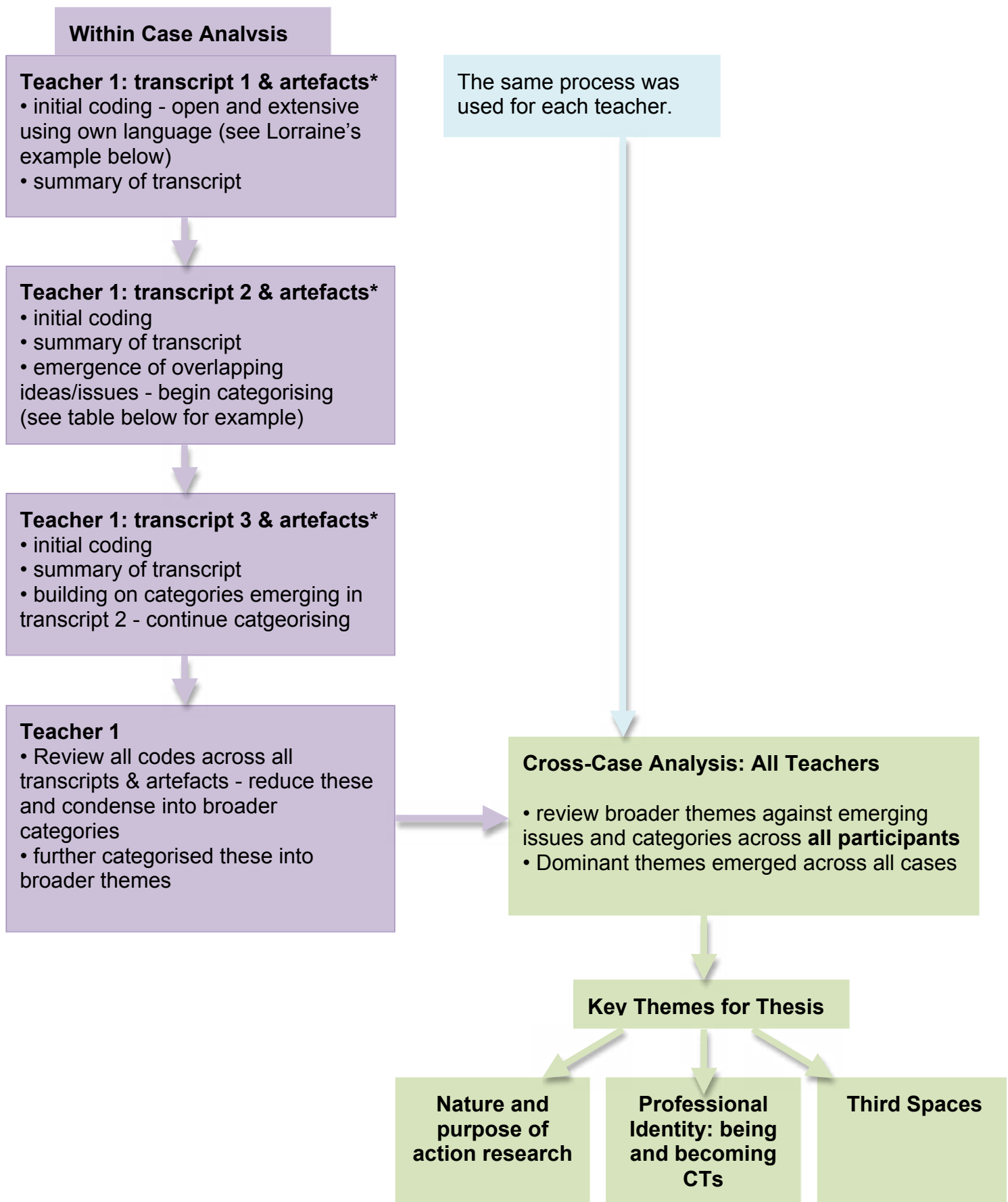
Reflections on my interviewing in light of reading some of Kvale – Oct 08

Pg 31 - Thus, presuppositionlessness implies a critical awareness of the interviewer's own presuppositions. In my case I feel that I perhaps did not think I could entirely bracket my presuppositions as I felt I had a fairly clear idea of what action research was, what Chartered Teachers should be doing with regard to it and the kind of things I wanted to know about what they were doing. But actually as I began the interviews – particularly the first round I found I was bracketing my own assumptions to quite an extent. While the teachers were talking I was perhaps thinking 'no I don't agree or but how can you say... etc.' but I did not share this. The interview was open – I felt it essential to hear what he wanted to say and tell me and their experiences rather than their responses to my knowledge and experience. Also particularly important given my previous relationship with them as tutor – with the 'correct version of what AR is'. I was/ am very critically aware of my presuppositions – in fact so much that my assumption about AR and Chartered Teachers experiences have been to some extent deconstructed and I am rebuilding/ reconstructing my understanding of it all in light of what they say. However the second round of interviews I have brought my assumptions and knowledge and opinions to the fore and used these to question and probe further what the interviewees are saying to me – not to get the them to say the right thing that will fit with my knowledge but as a way to challenge both their understanding and my own.

Issues re teachers as participants and co-researcher – directing research interview

Methodological
Planning
Theoretical
BERA
Ideas for CT/AR
complexity

Appendix E: Process of Analysis and Interpretation



* To simplify I have used artefacts to refer to all other data created by and produced by each teacher including written reflections, visuals and any observation data I created.

Appendix E cont.

Example of coding taken from Lorraine’s transcript 2

An extract from the initial coding of Lorraine’s second interview. This exemplifies the initial codes created and the section of the transcript to which this relates.

The screenshot shows a software interface for managing nodes and transcripts. On the left, a 'Nodes' pane lists various categories like 'Free Nodes', 'Tree Nodes', 'Cases', 'Relationships', 'Matrices', 'Search Folders', and 'All Nodes'. Below this are 'Sources', 'Nodes', and 'Sets'. The main area is titled 'Tree Nodes' and contains a list of codes such as 'AR should involve more than yourself', 'asking pupil opinion', 'being GIVEN research', 'benefits of critical friend', 'classroom enquiry v research', 'CTs being valued nationally', 'cultural thing re sharing', 'disappointed with colleagues commitment to research', 'disposition', 'feeling let down and disappointed', and 'feeling of letting me down'. On the right, a transcript window titled '<Internal>Interviews - wave 2' shows a reference with 1.17% coverage. The transcript text reads: 'I feel really disappointed. Well, I felt better for a while because I thought we're on the up and up. And we still are on the up and up, I'm not saying that we're not. But at one point everybody seemed to be focussed and people seemed to be signing up and there was an element of, there was a kind of a space at the end of the day where you can sit down and do things. And gradually, as the weeks have gone by, and I'm speaking to people and thinking am I the only one that feels I'm being hemmed in by all this? But I know that my colleagues are as well. I just feel kind of let down. It's like, you know, you get built up for a fall sometimes. And within my own department I feel kind of negative about it because we're so busy just trying to hold things together, that there's no time to do something else and about. What's starting now initiative, we'

Example of Simon’s broader themes, corresponding categories and initial codes from Transcript 2

<p>The nature, purpose and process(es) of action research (AR):</p>	Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What actually <i>is</i> AR? – not entirely certain what AR actually is • AR could be about assessing impact on learners • Unlikely to do AR again – unless it was formal ‘top down’ from SMT/PT asking to ‘evaluate’ something (course/initiative?) • Reflection or evaluation v AR – something about a hunch based on experience v empirical evidence to ‘prove’ • Evaluation is perhaps practical rather than theoretical (which AR is) • A sense that AR is too personal or unique to own situation
	Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainly to evaluate a curriculum development/ initiative/teaching strategy • In prev AR exposed the formative assessment ‘propaganda’ – teachers just being told what to do – only through AR did he start to challenge this • Allowed him to explore a popular and dominant strategy of formative assessment (traffic lights) and through AR it ‘exposed fallacies’ about these – he is now more informed as a result
	Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic side of AR – whilst necessary to pass Chartered Teacher submission – is not so valuable in practice/any ongoing evaluation or AR work – he looks for more ‘practical’ rather than ‘high falloutin’ academic stuff • He ‘trusts’ the academic reading – don’t question or challenge it • His use of theory that was more practical – i.e. case studies – these are valuable and easier to make connections to own practice • Case studies could also be useful for policy makers and academics to inform them