



Sandbank Primary School and The Open University in Scotland

**Working in partnership to support teachers'
professional learning and school improvement
(Final report)**

**Dr Lore Gallastegi
Ms Moira Dunworth**

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For further information, please contact:

Dr Lore Gallastegi

Education Staff Tutor

Faculty of Education and Language Studies

The Open University in Scotland

10 Drumsheugh Gardens

Edinburgh

EH3 7QJ

Lore.gallastegi@open.ac.uk

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Executive Summary

During the 2013-2014 school year all the teachers at Sandbank Primary School (Dunoon, Argyll & Bute) had the opportunity to develop their professional practice and learning as participants in a practitioner enquiry / action research project in partnership with the Open University in Scotland. The project cultivated the teachers' professional values and skills, promoted an interest in and understanding of research, encouraged informed reflection on the teachers' everyday activities, allowed collaboration amongst the teachers in the school as well as with other practitioners in Scotland, and fostered a culture of critical consideration of different developments in education. The teachers in this project engaged with and promoted the themes and values underpinning the GTCS Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning¹ and acted as reflective enquiring professionals who were keen to improve their practice for the benefit of their learners and their own professional development.

For the Open University in Scotland, this project provided an opportunity to explore a partnership model with schools which do not have a university in their local area, based on the specific needs of the school and the education authority, and supported by the expertise of OU academics and resources developed by the OU.

For the OU Associate Lecturer (AL) supporting the teachers, this project represented good Continuous Professional Development, (CPD) as well as being a part of 'professionalising' the role of the AL. For the Open University in Scotland it represented a good example of partnership working in both developing an effective strategy as part of 'work based learning' and the 'widening participation' agenda. For the school it was an effective way to encourage Professional Learning in a structured 'whole school approach', and as importantly could then be directed at 'whole school improvement'. Participants not only were introduced to, and carried out, independent research, but also quickly became involved in 'collaborative learning' between participants.

From the school's perspective, the project provided staff with a quality of CPD that was focussed over a period of time and provided support and critical challenge in terms of research activity. Teaching staff were supported in pursuing more knowledge and understanding around an academic area that they felt passionately about and able to review theory and apply aspects to their practice in the classroom. The time, space and support that were given to staff was appreciated and fundamental to the success of the project. In some cases, it has transformed practice and provided a deep learning experience. It has given staff a voice in terms of leading their own CPD and sharing practice with each other and developing confidence in talking about and supporting learning, along with a valuable opportunity to engage in current research. It has also provided the school with future goals for further improvement across the school and into the wider community. Impact on pupil learning is still continuing and there have been benefits in terms of raised pupil confidence, focus and tracking of attainment.

¹ <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/web/FILES/the-standards/standard-for-career-long-professional-learning-1212.pdf>

The current report includes information on the project, as well as a summary of responses from the participating teachers and the head teacher to evaluation questionnaires completed in May 2014 and April 2015.

Dr Lore Gallastegi (Education Lecturer, OU in Scotland)

Ms Sandra Clarke (Head Teacher, Sandbank Primary School)

Mr Pete Clarke (Associate Lecturer, OU in Scotland)

Project Aims

Project Aim 1 - Bringing about school improvement at Sandbank Primary School

Project Aim 2 - Impacting positively on the learning and teaching practices in the classroom

Project Aim 3 - Developing staff competency and increase confidence in research

Project Aim 4 - Delivering good quality staff CLPL through their participation in AR

Project Aim 5 - The development of OU in Scotland resources for future use in school improvement AR

Project Aim 6 - The development of practices and processes for the future delivery of AR by the OU in Scotland in the school environment

Project Aim 7 - The enhancement of, and assistance to, the partnership development of the OU in Scotland with schools and Education Authorities

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: In 2016 follow up the teacher participants to assess their level of engagement in academic reading and/or research which would support their teaching practice and professional update.

Recommendation 2: Future projects should involve this 'bottom up' approach, where teachers identify the topic or aspect of their practice they want to enquire about.

Recommendation 3: Pupils should be involved in future evaluations, where possible.

Recommendation 4: Make explicit the underpinning theory and research when providing developmental opportunities for teachers.

Recommendation 5: Continue the level of support provided by the OU in Scotland in future projects.

Recommendation 6: Future projects should consider including an explicit meta-cognitive approach.

Recommendation 7: Further evaluation of this kind of work in schools might consider some data collection by means of semi-structured interview in order to ensure that the most relevant feedback is collected and recorded.

1 Background

Schools in Scotland are subject to a revised inspection framework by Education Scotland². A focus of their revised inspection framework (Education Scotland 2011) is to investigate the scope and quality of the Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) of school staff and its connection to the school's improvement plan. The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), in line with the recommendations of the 'Teaching Scotland's Future' Donaldson report (Donaldson, 2010), has established a Professional Update process³ for teachers to maintain their continued professionalism and this came into force in 2014. This process is based on the premise that the best educational systems support practitioner enquiry as professional learning; practitioner enquiry which should lead to 'deep transformative learning' to the ultimate betterment of the educational impact on teaching and learning in Scotland's schools⁴.

The Open University in Scotland (OU in Scotland) is committed to fostering partnerships that both serve the needs of the teaching profession in Scotland and deliver positive outcomes in terms of the university's 'Work Based Learning' agenda and its commitment to encouraging quality research. This project, therefore, represents a bold step towards the application of the principles of

- Professional Update of the teaching professional and of
- enhancing work-based learning and research as part of the mission of openness of the Open University in Scotland.

In the context of staff and school development, the Head Teacher of Sandbank Primary School (Dunoon, Argyll and Bute) approached the OU in Scotland to assist her in supporting a practitioner enquiry project, in the form of action research (AR), that would involve members of her teaching staff investigating particular areas of the school's improvement plan with the aim of having an impact on learning in the classroom. Such projects have been encouraged by Education Scotland, the GTCS and the Scottish Government and several universities in Scotland have contributed their resources to support the development of school staff CLPL and school improvement through AR.

Additionally, with the advent of new teaching standards issued by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS, 2014) and the Donaldson report (Donaldson, 2010), qualified teachers are now expected to re-engage with professional study in the form of structured CLPL to fulfil the Professional Update requirements of the GTCS. Many Universities have been preparing and sharing resources with schools to assist in furthering this end.

² Education Scotland was established on 1 July 2011 by the Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning as a new public body, charged with supporting quality and improvement in Scottish education and thereby securing the delivery of better learning experiences and outcomes for Scottish learners of all ages.

³ <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-update/about-professional-update.aspx>

⁴ <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-update/practitioner-enquiry/what-is-practitioner-enquiry.aspx#nature>

In the context of the school's existing relationship with the OU in Scotland, the Head Teacher, with the support of her Director of Education in Argyll and Bute Council, requested that the university undertake a pilot project with the school to develop an AR approach to school improvement. Specifically it was hoped that the project would support teachers in the following expectations which are embedded in the GTC's Professional Update process⁵:

- Engagement in ongoing self-evaluation against appropriate GTC Scotland Professional Standards,
- Discussion of this engagement and the impact of this, as part of the PRD (Professional Review and Development) process.

2 Project summary

During the 2013-2014 school year, the OU in Scotland developed and facilitated a series of workshops and individual surgery meetings to assist teaching staff at the school in developing skills to undertake action research (AR). The Head Teacher took the decision to use all the time allocated to CLPL during the school year to concentrate on this project. The Education Authority provided additional funding to the school to support cover to enable the release of teachers from teaching duties for this project. The OU in Scotland developed and delivered a series of workshops in that timeframe to assist teachers at the school in undertaking AR. Those workshops focused on:

- Action Research and its purpose
- AR in the context of the schools improvement plan
- Planning, organizing and managing expectations of AR
- Undertaking a literature review
- Ethical frameworks for undertaking research with human participants

The OU in Scotland provided support to the school's engagement in this form of CLPL through the delivery of these workshops and support to the Head Teacher and the class teachers in managing the process of AR. The project ran until May 2014 after which an initial interim report was prepared and circulated (February 2015) to the OU in Scotland, Argyll & Bute Education Authority, as well as other education stakeholders including Education Scotland, the GTCS and the Scottish Government. A further evaluation was undertaken in May 2015 in order to gauge the impact of the project on the teachers, their practice and, more broadly, on the wider educational practice at the school.

The anticipated project outcomes were:

- school improvement through improved educational practice at Sandbank Primary School
- improvement in the learning and teaching practices in the classroom
- development of staff competency and increased staff confidence as reflective practitioners and researchers

⁵ <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-update/about-professional-update.aspx>

- delivering good quality staff CLPL through participation in AR
- development of OU in Scotland resources for future use in 'school improvement' AR projects
- development of practices and processes for the future delivery of AR by the OU in Scotland in the school environment
- enhancement of partnership working between the OU in Scotland, schools and Education Authorities.

3 Evaluation Methodology

Evaluation of the outcomes of this project was conducted in two stages and written questionnaires were used (Appendices 1 to 4). All seven teacher participants (100% of the group) completed the Stage 1 interim evaluation questionnaire (May 2014) and all but one, who was on maternity leave, completed the final Stage 2 questionnaire (April 2015). The Head Teacher completed a questionnaire at both stages. The missing questionnaire at the final evaluative stage was from a teacher (on maternity leave) who had worked in partnership with another on their project and so no project information is missing from the overall evaluation. The first questionnaire asked attitudinal questions in relation to educational research and theory as well as questions about the teachers' roles and attitudes to theory, research and teaching practice. The Head Teacher was not directly involved in AR within the project and was asked, in her separate questionnaires, about the impact she perceived the project has had on her teachers, pupils and on the school community in general. The second questionnaire centred around the impact of the project on the teachers as well as the outcomes of their individual projects and effect on their practice.

The responses in the completed questionnaires were collated and analysed within the framework of the project aims. This final report addresses the impact of the project on the teachers, the school and the pupils, as well as considering links between the teachers' reflection on their involvement in the project and the GTCS standards for Career Long Professional Learning (GTCS, 2012).

4 Project Participants

4.1 Gender, age and experience

All of the teachers of Sandbank Primary School participated in this project. Of those seven, five were female and two were male. The Head Teacher is female. The teachers were mixed in terms of age range, date of qualification, teaching experience and length of service in this particular school. Their age ranged from 20-30 to 'over 50'. The Head Teacher had been in the school for two years and had over ten years' experience in promoted posts in other schools.

There was no discernible difference in outcomes based on gender, age or experience of the teachers.

4.2 Experience of Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL)

From the Stage 1 questionnaire responses, it is clear that staff were accustomed to CLPL being aimed at providing practical support for teaching with immediate relevance to their practice in the classroom. There was little evidence of CLPL which involved research or academic reading. Nonetheless, a picture of general support for broad CLPL within the school emerged at the interim stage and is reflected more strongly in the final evaluation responses.

4.3 Attitudes to research

Prior to engaging in this project the participants did not identify 'research' as having much impact on their day-to-day work in the classroom. Academic reading was seen as belonging to another period in their professional lives. Lack of time was most commonly cited as a barrier to having more current engagement with research. Some of the teachers had established their own ways of keeping up to date professionally; when they did have time to read research papers they found those with a direct application to teaching practice to be most useful.

Most of the teachers reported that their attitudes to research had changed in the course of their engagement with this project. For some teachers this change was closely connected to interest level. They were able to choose their own AR topics and so were working in areas that interested them.

While this project enabled teacher participants to develop their knowledge and their research skills, fewer than half of them reported a change in their professional identity at the Stage 1 evaluation stage; they mostly still saw themselves as 'passers on of knowledge'. '*First and foremost I am a teacher*' ran (implicitly or explicitly) through responses to this question in the Stage 1 evaluation; they saw themselves as educators, rather than as educationalists, in the way illustrated by the GTCS in Figure 1.

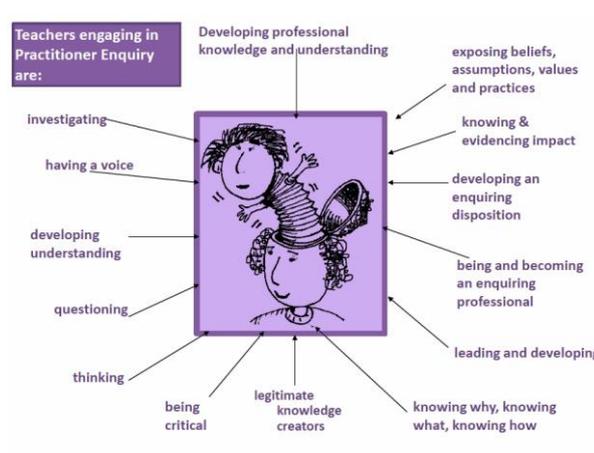


Figure 1: 'Teachers engaging in Practitioner Enquiry are:' (from www.gtcs.org.uk)

While the Stage 2 questionnaire did not ask specifically about professional identity in terms of research, half of the teachers still answered questions from the perspective of their own teaching practice. The other half (3) framed their answers in terms of the principles behind their research, the professional development of colleagues and meta-cognition, higher-order thinking or thinking about thinking,

'We made time to play in my classroom and don't feel guilty for it!' (Teacher W)

All of the teachers engaged with the wider teaching community, either in person or online, as part of their projects and three of them continue to contribute to the shared body of knowledge in their specific subject or practice areas. They are operating as creators of knowledge, even if they do not always articulate their engagement with others in that way.

5 Topics

A wide range of practical topics was chosen for the individual research projects. Personal interest and perceived need were the determining factors in the choice. Each topic selected has the potential to inform future teaching and learning and will be of interest to other practitioners who were not able to be involved in this study.

The Head Teacher allowed each teacher to decide on a specific aspect of their practice which they wanted to research. The alternative would have been for the Head Teacher to choose an aspect of teaching and learning related to the school improvement plan that could be researched by all the teachers, looking at the topic from the perspective of their class stage. She, the Head Teacher, felt that allowing autonomy in topic selection would encourage more engagement from the teachers, and a whole school research on a specific topic could be a second stage that would come out of this initial project.

The Action Research studies undertaken within this project were:

1. A study into the importance of play in the early years classroom.
2. A study of the need for differentiation in active learning and creating choice-making opportunities to promote autonomy in learning for children with additional support needs.
3. A study into the Assessment & Tracking of Maths
4. The study of the involvement of parents in their children's education through online resources.
5. A study into the embedding of the outdoor curriculum indoors, through the 'Adventure Schools' framework.
6. A study into the effectiveness or necessity for dyslexia and dyscalculia screening in the primary school.

All of the school's teachers were involved in this project; two teachers worked collaboratively on one of the AR projects.

6 Support from the OU and the Employer

6.1 Workshops

The OU in Scotland, through the input of an Associate Lecturer (AL) and support from the Staff Tutor (Education), facilitated a series of workshops on research skills as well as individual surgeries with each teacher or team to discuss the development and outcomes of their research. These sessions were offered at the school in twilight

sessions. The AL designed the workshops based on his experience of academic research with the OU. The workshops were:

Workshop 1: Introduction to Action Research and the project – August 2013

Workshop 2: Literature Review - October 2013

Workshop 3: Review of work to date and 'next steps' – February 2014

Workshop 4: Ethics and fieldwork – February 2014

Workshop 5: Data analysis - May 2014

Workshop 6: Writing up and presentation - September 2014.

Feedback on the relevance and usefulness of the workshops was positive with no respondent finding any session 'not very useful'. The session that had its focus on the literature review had less appeal than the others and this may be simply because this is not something that teachers saw as having a direct practical application for them on a day-to-day basis. This finding mirrors the comments by the participants on their view of the relevance of research to their work at the interim stage. Many of these teachers did not see research as being an integral part of their professional identity or their work prior to the project or at the interim evaluation stage.

Feedback from the Head Teacher suggested that these workshops, by providing a space for teachers to discuss their work with each other, contributed positively to the development of the learning community within the school. As well as being a supportive and developmental opportunity for the teachers, both individually and as a group, the workshops afforded the Head Teacher an opportunity to get to know her staff better in terms of their professional strengths and areas for development.

6.2 Individual surgeries

As well as group workshops, teachers were offered individual surgeries with the Open University Associate Lecturer (AL) to develop and discuss their own research. The individual surgery sessions focused on the individual research projects and were particularly appreciated by the participating teachers. One quote, in particular, sums up the feedback on this aspect of project support:

It was extremely useful to get some feedback on my project and the surgeries helped me get a clearer understanding of exactly what I had to do next. After my first surgery, I did feel a little daunted by the prospect of what was before me and then I realised that this was because I had chosen to focus an area which I didn't feel passionately enough about. [...] I was delighted when I was given the ok to change my project at that late stage. It highlighted to me the importance of teachers choosing their own research topics, and finding a topic which they are enthusiastic about. (Teacher W).

6.3 Presentation opportunity

When the projects were complete, each of the teachers presented their work to each other, representatives from The Open University, the employing local authority, the

General Teaching Council for Scotland and trades unions as well as teacher colleagues from other schools. This process enhanced, for the teachers, the validity of their research and improved their confidence in themselves as researchers and presenters of that research. Several of the teachers were also invited to present their findings at Education Authority or national level and Sandbank School's participation in the wider education community in this way increased considerably as a direct result of this project.

Furthermore, the project was reported in the Times Education Supplement (Hepburn, 2015). This article focused on the educational research aspect of the project and quoted the Local Authority as calling the project 'ground-breaking'. This published report on the work undertaken at Sandbank School added considerably to the status of the process and further encouraged the teachers in their new research-minded approach to teaching.

7 Impact

The impact of this project can only be measured indirectly, through feedback from the teachers involved. This feedback was provided through written questionnaires. The Head Teacher's feedback offered a whole-school perspective and, like the individual teachers' feedback, was positive in relation to the impact of the project on pupils, teachers and the school as a whole.

7.1 Impact on Pupils

In the initial questionnaire (Appendix A) the teachers were asked:

How do you think your involvement in this project has impacted on the children in your classroom?

The project did not involve gathering any feedback directly from the pupils and only three of the six respondents who provided an answer to this question, commented on the impact on the students themselves, rather than on other changes (to methods of teaching or teacher's knowledge). The majority of the teachers' responses on this topic related to the children's specific response to the work that was the focus of the Action Research. Some teachers also wrote about the pupils benefitting more broadly from the project. The reported impact on the pupils was that they had greater confidence (1), stronger awareness of own level of attainment (1), enhanced ownership of their own learning (1) and more pride in their work (1).

They (learners) enjoy their learning a great deal and they remember more of what they have learned. (Teacher Y)

The Head Teacher felt that the projects had improved communication between the staff and between the staff and parents. This would undoubtedly have had a positive impact on the pupils. Her comments about this in the final questionnaire were even more strongly positive,

We went from a defensive and frustrated response in some practice with children and interactions with parents to sharing what we were learning and doing in

response to issues and changing our approach to pupils' support, to seeing children adapting their behaviour and parents being incredibly supportive of what we were doing which has made all the difference. (Head Teacher)

7.2 Impact on teaching practice.

The teacher respondents were asked for their views on the impact of the project on their role as a teacher in the initial questionnaire (Appendix A). Specifically they were asked to give any examples of changes in their practice as a result of their engagement in the project. The analysis of the responses and examples is illustrated by Figure 2 (three of the five teachers who provided information on this issue presented more than one impact). The majority of responses included developing new skills as an important impact of this project on their teaching practice. Those skills included evidence gathering, progress tracking and presentation of ideas, demonstrating a broad understanding of the term 'teaching practice'.

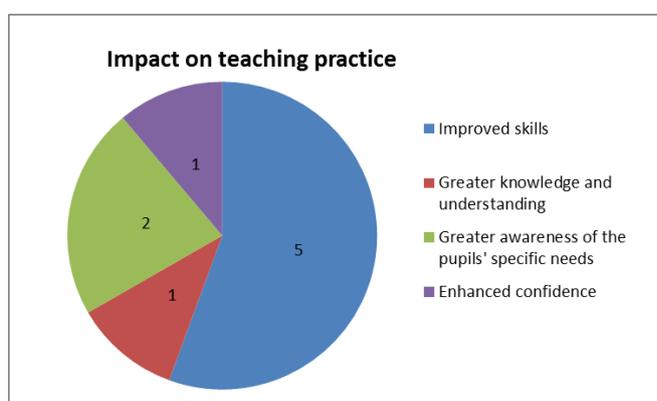


Figure 2 How the project impacted on teaching practice

For teaching practice to continually improve it is necessary for it to be informed by recent research and current debates. This project's contribution to this element of school improvement can, at present, only be measured by the self-reporting of research-mindedness and openness to reading about new developments and discourses.

Of the seven teacher participants, two reported that they had been actively engaged in academic reading about teaching prior to this project. Six of the seven reported that involvement with this project had increased their research awareness and their engagement in academic theory. Only two expected, at the interim stage, this engagement to continue; one of those teachers had high engagement prior to this project. The final questionnaire data, however, suggested that research awareness remained high for all of the teachers in the project.

In general (5 of 7), the teacher respondents reported an enhanced understanding of the relevance of academic reading to their work. Even among those five most positive responses, the pressure of time was cited as an obstacle to the embedding of this attitude to CLPL. The following extract is representative of six of the seven comments on this area,

I maybe appreciate its role in professional development more now. I still feel that it is not something teachers have time to indulge in unless time is made for it, as it was in our school this year (and it's clear to me that time should be made for it, as the benefits for individual professional development and whole school improvement are abundant).

In the final questionnaire (Appendix C) answers, there is clear evidence that three of the six teachers who responded at that stage have changed their teaching practice as a direct result of their work in this project. The other three have changed how they work, but that is related to new systems or tools, rather than being a change in how they think about their own practice as a teacher.

Outdoor learning has given me the chance to actually meet professional researchers in the field and to discuss issues face to face, which has been very interesting and has given me the confidence to believe that what I'm doing is the correct way to go about it (Teacher U).

More focussed attention from me in everyday class work has improved general literacy skills. (Teacher Y)

My colleagues are now aware of many excellent online resources available to them to help support the children of their class. These resources have become a core part of their teaching in school and setting as homework tasks. They have clearer guidelines and expectations of what teachers have to submit to the website developer to keep the website up to date. (Teacher Z)

The more instrumental responses to the issue of teaching practice are also constructive and positive, for example,

This [newly created document] would allow teachers to easily track pupil progression throughout the school. It would also be an effective document for teachers to use when handing over a class to a new teacher, allowing the new teacher to clearly identify where pupils' needs are and help pupil progression in their learning (Teacher V).

Through the Maths Recovery Programme I have observed learners, who had previously not enjoyed maths sessions and struggled with their understanding of number, adopt a much more positive attitude to the subject. By accurately assessing their understanding of number, instruction is guided to their specific needs. (Teacher X)

7.3 Impact on the School overall

One clear change that was mentioned in many of the survey responses, at both stages of the evaluation, was the sharing of good practice and new ideas among the staff group

and externally. One teacher suggested that her project had improved relationships with parents and it was hoped that the development of the role of parents as partners with the school would continue and become embedded in whole-school practice.

Data reported under project outcome 1 below details a considerable weight of evidence of meeting the objective of improving whole school performance. Additionally, the connections with other schools and other teaching professionals, made by the teachers in the course of their research, have enhanced the professional standing of Sandbank Primary School within the educational community. The teachers' presentations to conferences and the Times Education Supplement (TES) article about the project have built on those inter-school connections and benefitted the whole teaching community because of the sharing of resources and ideas.

The sharing of the projects throughout the process and the end conclusions reached also helped them to have a better understanding of other issues in education covered by their colleague's projects. (Head Teacher, final evaluation)

8 Outcomes

The outcomes of the project included 'harder' and 'softer' elements in relation to the project aims. The measuring tool used in the Stage 1 evaluation (Appendices A and B) was a written questionnaire in which the outcomes of the project were self-reported by the participating teachers and the Head Teacher. Similarly the Stage 2 evaluation used written questionnaires as the research tool (Appendices C and D). Both evaluative stages included detailed written comment by the Head Teacher which incorporated considerable evidence of the project aims being met, as well as evidence of some unintended outcomes.

All the teachers in Sandbank PS participated in a professional learning project which engaged them in identifying an aspect of their teaching they wanted to investigate further to improve their teaching practice and the learning of the children in their class. Their participation in the project clearly promoted the themes and values underpinning the GTCS Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning⁶ and the principles of practitioner enquiry as stated in the Standard:

Underpinning the Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning are the core principles of practitioner enquiry. In practice, this involves teachers having an enquiring disposition at the core of their professional practice. This means thinking critically and questioning their own educational beliefs, assumptions, values and practices. They will create knowledge to enhance, progress and lead the learning experiences of all their learners and work collaboratively with colleagues. The teacher as an adaptive expert is open to change and engages with new and emerging ideas about

⁶ <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/web/FILES/the-standards/standard-for-career-long-professional-learning-1212.pdf>

teaching and learning within the ever-evolving curricular and pedagogical contexts in which teaching and learning takes place. (GTCS, 2012, p.4)

All the participating teachers set some research questions at the beginning of the project. Of the seven teachers who engaged in this AR project, only two reported that they changed their research questions during the process. One teacher refined the research questions to make them more practical in application. The other teacher only stated that the questions 'evolved'; as she did not supply the original questions it is not possible to suggest what changed was involved.

Project Aim 1 - Bringing about school improvement at Sandbank Primary School

Feedback within the final questionnaire data suggested that this expectation was fulfilled. From the evidence in the Stage 1 questionnaire feedback, it had been clear that the attitude and involvement of the staff was very positive and enthusiastic. Most, if not all, of the AR projects had a positive impact on classroom engagement and on relationships with parents at that point. The reported improvement in parental engagement with the school as an outcome of particular AR projects was expected, by the Head Teacher, to continue and to transfer to other elements of the school's work. The final questionnaire data indicate that this expectation was indeed fulfilled.

The encouragement to present and discuss their research with colleagues in a structured way led to professional discussions among the teachers, enhanced knowledge within the staff group, improved systems for some of the classroom-related processes, greater awareness of the wider research knowledge about the areas being researched and connections with other schools.

The involvement of ASN (Additional Support Needs) staff was vital in ensuring the implementation of my findings, not just in my classroom, but throughout the school. I shared my experience in visiting [another school] as part of my research and discussed how a similar programme to the one I observed there could be rolled-out in Sandbank. I then arranged for two colleagues to visit [that other school] and speak to those who run the support programme. Other support staff observed my Maths Recovery assessment interviews and I planned for them to lead teaching sessions afterwards. I also headed a session with teaching colleagues during which I was able to feed-back on a CPD conference I attended during my research. This led to the staff reflecting on their own practice in meeting the needs of children with autism and other additional support needs. I believe that my research has had a whole school impact and altered the way in which ASN assistants work with the learners and class teachers (Teacher X).

My colleagues are now aware of many excellent online resources available to them to help support the children of their class. These resources have become a core part of their teaching in school and setting as homework tasks (Teacher Z).

Our enthusiasm and understanding for outdoor education, our creative approach to play in the infant classroom and the future development of the school website

will all continue to feature in our school improvement plan next year. (Head Teacher, final evaluation)

This change in approach to pupil support and parental engagement is seen by the Head Teacher as signalling a very important shift in the whole school practice. Sandbank has been asked to share some of the project work with other schools and so is able to contribute to school improvement at a wider level than that of the individual school.

The project has involved engagement with other schools and with the wider educational community. The benefits of this are reported by the Head Teacher as being part of the whole school improvement which is clear to her,

I know I can walk into the school and I can see the impact of some of this work on a daily basis. (Head Teacher, final questionnaire)

That teachers are requesting visits to other schools as part of their individual PRD is reported by the Head Teacher as evidence of their wider engagement in educational practice; she attributes that change directly to this project. That one of the teachers has been invited to help the Director of Education to gain an overview of an Authority lead project for the future reflects well on the school, its practice and the impact of this project.

Teachers were given the opportunity to read, research, visit other schools and discuss with colleagues the issues around their areas of study and apply this into their own classroom. (Head Teacher, final evaluation)

Project Aim 2 - Impacting positively on the learning and teaching practices in the classroom

The Stage 1 questionnaire data suggested that the project already had some impact on learning and teaching. The final questionnaire data demonstrate that this impact grew and that changes in practices are being embedded.

Collaboration between learners is encouraged in the classroom within a Curriculum for Excellence. I have found, however, that interaction between learners need not solely occur in a large class group. Small group or one-to-one work, if implemented while mindful of interpretative listening strategies, can allow children to benefit from collaborative learning. (Teacher X)

Parents now have the ability to support their children with their Gaelic spelling homework through the resources created on the school website. Children are excited about taking part in spelling activities and maths as a result of the changes to the website. (Teacher Z)

I saw a change of practice almost immediately ... (Head Teacher)

I saw an overnight transformation in the practice by the school. (Head Teacher)

Project Aim 3 - Developing staff competency and increase confidence in research

This project aim is in two parts. Feedback data offer strong evidence of enhanced staff competency and some evidence of increased confidence in research. All of the teacher responses at the final questionnaire stage focused on their own teaching practice, rather than research practice.

In the final questionnaire, all six teachers who responded reported a permanent change in their own practice and/or their self-awareness as professionals. For three of those teachers, the change was practical in terms of having found or developed a new resource or procedure. For the other three it was about their own teaching practice.

I have radically changed my practice in meeting the needs of all learners. I have developed skills in assessing a learners 'way of thinking' and used this to help them construct their learning. Previously I had perhaps tried to impose my way of thinking and only gave value to learning which reflected that. (Teacher X)

I'm confident that my classroom practice reflects the aims of the National Play strategy for Scotland and the early years curriculum with regards to how I utilise play to enhance learning (Teacher W).

Participation in the project has given me a great insight into the resources available online to support children in their learning in and out of the classroom. These resources are used on a daily bases and I use them to enhance different types of learning for the different types of learners in my classroom (Teacher Z).

Responses in the section of the interim questionnaire which examined the attitude of the participants towards research before and after this project suggested that most of the teacher participants are more research-minded than they were before engaging in this project, see Figure 3. In spite of the majority of the teachers reporting that they did not think that they will be able to maintain that increased level of academic engagement in their area, mainly due to time constraints, for some of them, the change in their professional self-perception was transformative,

I now believe that in order to be an effective teacher I must also consider myself a researcher of educational theory. This project has shown me that research is an integral part of continuous professional development and not the 'add-on' that it was previously. (Teacher X)

I would like to think that I am now more of a researcher and have picked up some techniques with regards to how to research effectively (Teacher T).

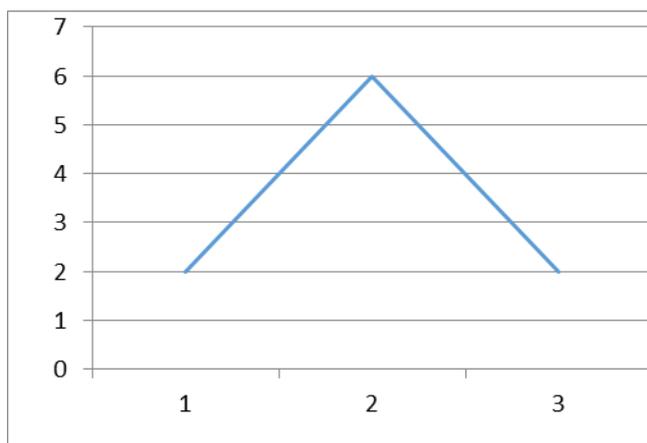


Figure 3 Self-reported levels of academic engagement before (1), during (2) and after (3) the project (at interim evaluation stage)

An analysis of the final questionnaires reveals a strong on-going engagement in practice in other areas of the country. This is research-mindedness, as illustrated in the following insightful quote,

So the research is still continuing to change as we look for our own path to making outdoor learning an ongoing and equal opportunity for each pupil in our school. As we said at our presentations; the work doesn't stop here. The real task is to make all these projects and theories a reality for all the pupils, present and future, at Sandbank Primary. Only then can we stand back and say that the action research was a true success and showed a real benefit to our young customers (Teacher U).

The Head Teacher reported seeing an increased awareness of the importance of research, both from literature and from other colleagues, schools and from engagement with the wider education community,

Her knowledge and confidence in this area are a particular strength and she is still reading, learning and applying. (Head Teacher, final evaluation)

Project Aim 4 - Delivering good quality staff CLPL through their participation in AR

Teachers were fully involved in the CLPL associated with their AR and were highly positive about the role played by the OU Staff (Associate Lecturer and Staff Tutor) in the workshops and surgeries. Most of the teacher participants found the workshops very useful to their teaching practice, their development in research skills and the progress of their project.

Several of the teachers have gone on to contribute to the CLPL of their school colleagues, colleagues in other schools as well as to educational colleagues at conferences and at Education Authority level,

The findings and recommendations of my project would only be effective if all staff understood the principles behind this research and I have helped deliver staff CPD to this end. (Teacher X)

The teacher has presented at an authority level and has been widely acknowledged as having completed a study of exceptional quality that has had a positive impact on learning. (Head Teacher, final evaluation)

Project Aim 5 - The development of OU in Scotland resources for future use in school improvement AR

Staff were very positive about the role played by the OU in Scotland in the project. This means that the workshop structures and content can confidently be re-used.

Project Aim 6 - The development of practices and processes for the future delivery of AR by the OU in Scotland in the school environment

The success of this pilot suggests that there is a good foundation with robust resources and systems in place for future delivery of Action Research by the OU in Scotland in other schools or Education Authorities

Project Aim 7 - The enhancement of, and assistance to, the partnership development of the OU in Scotland with schools and Education Authorities

There were very positive comments from the participants about the whole experience and about the developing partnership between the school and the OU in Scotland. In particular, the Head Teacher provided positive feedback on the wider impact of the project on the whole school ethos and their relationships with families.

9 Reflection and Recommendations

9.1 The evaluation process

Reflecting on the process of this Action Research project is important in understanding its impact and its implications for future collaborative AR work in schools, and between the OU and schools.

The evaluative data present a strong picture of a positive engagement by both partners in this project, the school and the University. The Head Teacher, in particular, valued the process as an opportunity to take forward new ways of working together and to embed research-mindedness in the teaching staff group within the school. The support offered by the University was appreciated by the teachers involved and the Head Teacher was more than happy at the outcomes in terms of working relationships, raised levels of academic discussion among her teachers and the positive impact on the whole school.

While one-to-one evaluative interviews might have enhanced the evaluation process, it may not have been the most effective use of resources and, mostly likely, would not be replicable in future projects of this kind.

The response rate to the written questionnaires was 100% at the interim stage and, excepting the teacher on maternity leave, was also 100% at Stage 2. This may reflect the quality of the partnership between the OU in Scotland and the school. It is noteworthy that, in spite of their busy workload, the teachers made time to think about the outcomes and impact of the project and to share those views.

9.2 The on-going research role of teachers

The teachers involved in this study were very positive about the whole project at both evaluative stages. The process element, with the input from the OU Associate Lecturer and the Staff Tutor, the workshops and surgeries, was well received and beneficial. The experience of doing the research and the impact on teachers and teaching was also beneficial.

The Head Teacher notes, in her final questionnaire, that the research-minded aspect of the project was very important and strengthened its impact,

It was a powerful journey that in itself would have been worthwhile, but the expectation that they were going to submit in a research paper meant that they had to organise their reading and actions professionally and draw conclusions and offer recommendations regarding their work (Head Teacher).

Teachers' responses to the final questionnaire suggest that the outcomes of the research project are important to them in terms of

- impact on their teaching practice
- resources available to pupils, parents and teachers and
- awareness of external resources, literature and debates.

While the project focused on the teacher as enquiring practitioner or researcher, half of the participants seem to value most the practical application of resources which they developed or discovered, rather than a change in teaching practice or approach. As the profession continues to develop, particularly in the light of the Professional Update requirement by the GTCS, teachers will be able to use their experience in this project to see that they too have a role in the creation of knowledge, as well as in its consumption.

The true test of the research-mindedness goal of this project will be if the participating teachers are still engaged in practice related academic reading and Action Research in a few years' time. A move from this position,

I used educational books and looked at educational researchers for my dissertation at university but since then I haven't engaged much more. I did find them very useful and insightful (Teacher T),

to evidence of on-going research-mindedness would complement the evidence of on-going engagement in the wider context of the teachers' areas of interest. That evidence is illustrated in the following quote,

I now believe that in order to be an effective teacher I must also consider myself a researcher of educational theory. This project has shown me that research is an integral part of continuous professional development and not the 'add-on' that it was previously. (Teacher X)

Recommendation 1: In 2016 follow up the teacher participants to assess their level of engagement in academic reading and/or research which would support their teaching practice and professional update.

9.3 The whole school perspective

For the Head Teacher this project was a good way of encouraging and supporting staff to engage in professional reflection and dialogue, and to develop their knowledge and action research skills. One of the strengths of this project was the fact that each individual chose their topic and so had the opportunity to research something that they valued and were interested in. This ownership and relevance has had an impact on the learning for the school, the individual teachers, the pupils and parents.

Recommendation 2: Future projects should involve this 'bottom up' approach, where teachers identify the topic or aspect of their practice they want to enquire about.

The suggestion from the Head Teacher to involve pupils in evaluation processes would be an interesting approach and one very much in line with the principles of Curriculum for Excellence.

Recommendation 3: Pupils should be involved in future evaluations, where possible.

At the interim stage some regret was expressed by the Head Teacher that the teachers had not had opportunities to share their work more widely than with their school colleagues. These opportunities arose after that stage of the project and the final questionnaires provide evidence of several such opportunities, some at quite high levels, both professionally and organisationally.

I shared my experience in visiting XX Primary as part of my research and discussed how a similar programme to the one I observed there could be rolled-out in Sandbank. I then arranged for two colleagues to visit XX and speak to those who run the support programme. (Teacher X)

I also headed a session with teaching colleagues during which I was able to feed-back on a CPD conference I attended during my research. This led to the staff reflecting on their own practice in meeting the needs of children with autism and other additional support needs. (Teacher X)

9.4 Role of and impact on the Local Authority

One of the findings at the interim stage suggests that there was little evidence of teacher participation in CLPL which involved explicit reference to research and/or academic reading,

I would describe myself as passing on useful information/knowledge rather than creating it. (Teacher W).

This area of CLPL might be something for the Local Education Authority to consider in the future. Adding an explicit element of theoretical justification for schemes such as 'Big Writing,' for example, might make more evident the links between research, theory and practice. The integration of theory and practice in this way might enable teachers to become more engaged and feel more confident about academic reading, research and theory to support their own teaching practice.

Recommendation 4: Make explicit the underpinning theory and research when providing developmental opportunities for teachers.

The work and outcomes of this project have been welcomed by the Local Authority in a number of ways,

The project relating to developing the use of the school website to support pupil learning has been described by officers in the authority as 'sector leading'. (Head Teacher, final evaluation)

They [the participating teachers] all received a personal letter from the Director of Education thanking them for their work and some education officers have indicated that they would like them to present to other HTs and schools across the authority. This support and recognition has been appreciated by staff. (Head Teacher, final evaluation)

One of the outcomes of teacher participation in this project has been a new engagement with each other and with external colleagues in relation to their teaching practice. This has been encouraged and facilitated by the Head Teacher and the Local Authority. The individual teachers found unexpected enthusiasm and support for their Action Research from their peers and their managers,

Our colleagues have given us valuable feedback which we have used to create our document. The TLC meetings have been extremely useful in the planning process as they have given staff ideas of good practice in tracking maths and hopefully benefit future professional learning of all staff. (Teacher V)

We have been asked to share some of this work with other schools as the area PT was impressed by it and we will continue to try to improve our work in this way. (Head Teacher, final evaluation)

9.5 Role of and impact on The Open University

Feedback from teacher participants and the Head Teacher indicated considerable appreciation of the input from the Open University AL and the Staff Tutor and this seems

to have been helpful in supporting staff to sustain and complete their Action Research projects.

Recommendation 5: Continue the level of support provided by the OU in Scotland in future projects.

The focus on 'product over process,' is something that might be explored in more depth and perhaps a future project could have more of a meta-cognitive approach with a more explicit focus on *what and how* the teacher researchers were learning as opposed to, what they were learning *about*? Such a project could provide the skills and confidence for staff to consider further learning via the resources of the OU.

Recommendation 6: Future projects should consider including an explicit meta-cognitive approach.

Recommendation 7: Further evaluation of this kind of work in schools might consider some data collection by means of semi-structured interview in order to ensure that the most relevant feedback is collected and recorded, though this would have resource implications which would have to be considered carefully.

10 Conclusion

All the teachers (seven) undertook Action Research (AR) projects in one school in rural Scotland. The topics covered a range of areas and teaching approaches, and had been selected by the teachers themselves. The overall project was supported by six workshop sessions which provided guidance on AR and discussion of issues arising from this work. These workshops provided an opportunity for teacher participants to share ideas and questions and were supplemented by one-to-one support sessions with an AL from The Open University.

Feedback on the project was collected by means of written questionnaires which asked each teacher participant and the Head Teacher for comment on the process and outcome of their engagement in this project.

The project was perceived to have been useful, interesting and professionally developmental. The outcomes reported were new ways of thinking about teaching practice, learning new skills, learning to use new methods, better engagement with families and an enhancement of teachers' relationships with their pupils. In addition this project has contributed more widely to the knowledge and expertise in education in Scotland. Several of the participants have been invited to share their growing expertise with other schools, within the Education Department and at professional conferences.

The evidence indicates that the practical and process outcomes of the project were positive. Some recommendations are included in this report in the hope of supporting the process of embedding the positive changes which occurred during this project.

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Appendix A: Teachers Stage 1 questionnaire; May 2014

Sandbank Primary School Action Research Project Teacher's Questionnaire

This questionnaire is part of the evaluation of the Action Research project you have been involved in. The OU in Scotland is undertaking this evaluation and some or all the information will also be shared with Argyll and Bute as funders of the project. Some of the information could also be used at future conferences or articles coming from the project. However, all the information you provide will be made anonymous before sharing it with external audiences.

Please complete this questionnaire with as much detail as possible, and return it to me by **Monday 19th May**. The questionnaire will be confidential between you and the OU member(s) of staff collating the responses (Mr Pete Tarrant and myself). No members of staff in your school or other participants of the project will have access to your responses.

Although this is not compulsory*, it would be useful if you could indicate your name, personal email address and telephone number to allow us to contact you if we would like further clarification on any matters you have provided.

*If you do not want us to contact you to discuss this questionnaire further, you do not need to include your telephone number and email address, and please put a cross here:

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me on lore.gallastegi@open.ac.uk

Please return this questionnaire to lore.gallastegi@open.ac.uk by **Monday 19th May**.

Lore Gallastegi

1. Personal details:

1a. Name and Surname:

1b. Title:

1c. *Personal email address:

1d. *Telephone number:

1e. Age range: 20-30 31-40 41-50 over 50

2. Your university and teaching qualifications

2a. What is your teaching qualification? (B.Ed, BA in ...+ PGDE, Post-Graduate...)

2b. Which university (or teacher training college) did you complete your teaching qualification in?

2c. When did you complete your teaching qualification?

2d. Do you hold any other university qualifications? (Please indicate below the qualification, the university and the date you completed it in)

3. Your teaching experience

3a. Did you do an induction year? If the answer is YES, can you indicate where this was and when?

3b. Did you teach in other schools before Sandbank P.S.? Please complete the table below with the details of your previous teaching experience. (If you need more rows, feel free to add them at the end of the table)

Years during which you taught at the school	School name and Local Authority	Classes you taught	Any specific responsibilities you had in the school or promoted posts

3c. When did you start teaching at Sandbank P.S.?

3d. Which stages have you taught at Sandbank P.S.?

3e. As well as being a class teacher, do you have other responsibilities or do you hold a promoted post at Sandbank P.S.?

4. Your own development before starting the Action Research project

4a. Before embarking on the Action Research Project, identify up to 5 continuous professional development opportunities you have engaged in during your teaching career which you found most useful. (Provide as much detail as you can for example: the topic of the event; was it organised by the Authority, the school; did you find it yourself based on your own interests; was it a whole day event...)

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

5. You and Educational Research before embarking on the project

5a. Before the project what was your attitude towards educational research, journal articles and books on educational theory?

5b. Has this changed since then? If so, in what way?

5c. At the start of the project would you have considered yourself to be a researcher or creator of knowledge?

5d. Do you still feel the same way? Please comment.

6. You and the Sandbank Action Research Project

6a. Why did you decide to take part in this project?

6b. What do you hope to get out of the project for you as a teacher?

6c. What is your own project about?

7. The Sandbank Action Research Project workshops and seminars

7a. As part of the project, you have attended a number of workshops, how useful did you find them?

	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Not very useful
W1-Introduction to the project (28/08/13)			
W2- Carrying out a literature review (30/10/13)			
W3- Review and next steps in your project (12/02/14)			
W4- Ethics and field work (20/02/14)			

7b. Please use the space below to provide further explanations of your responses.

7c. As part of the project you also had a number of individual surgeries to discuss your own project and progress. How useful did you find these?

Very useful

Somewhat useful

Not very useful

7d. Please use the space below to provide further explanations of your response.

8. Initial reflections on the impact of your involvement in the project

8a. How do you think your involvement in this project has impacted on your role as a teacher? (If you can, please provide one or 2 examples of things you do differently now as a result of your participation in this project)

8b. How do you think your involvement in this project has impacted on the children in your classroom? (If you can, please provide one or 2 examples to illustrate this impact)

8c. How do you think your involvement in this project has impacted on the whole school community? (If you can, please provide one or 2 examples to illustrate this impact)

Please return this questionnaire to lore.gallastegi@open.ac.uk by Monday 19th May.
Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!!

Dr Lore Gallastegi (Education Lecturer and Staff Tutor)

Appendix B: Head Teacher's Stage 1 questionnaire; May 2014

Sandbank Primary School Action Research Project Head Teacher's Questionnaire

This questionnaire is part of the evaluation of the Action Research project your school has been involved in. The OU in Scotland is undertaking this evaluation and some or all the information will also be shared with Argyll and Bute as funders of the project. Some of the information could also be used at future conferences or articles coming from the project. However, all the information you provide will be made anonymous before sharing it with external audiences.

Please complete this questionnaire with as much detail as possible. The questionnaire will be confidential between you and the OU member(s) of staff collating the responses. Although this is not compulsory*, it would be useful if you could indicate your name, personal email address and telephone number to allow us to contact you if we would like further clarification on any matters you have provided.

*If you do not want us to contact you to discuss this questionnaire further, you do not need to include your telephone number and email address, and please put a cross here:

Please return the questionnaire to me by Monday May 19th.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me on lore.gallastegi@open.ac.uk

1. Personal details:

1a. Name and Surname:

1b. Title:

1c. *Personal email address:

1d. *Telephone number:

1e. Age range: 20-30 31-40 41-50 over 50

2. Your university and teaching qualifications

2a. What is your teaching qualification? (B.Ed, BA in ...+ PGDE, Post-Graduate...)

2b. Which university (or teacher training college) did you complete your teaching qualification in?

2c. When did you complete your teaching qualification?

2d. Do you hold any other university qualifications? (Please indicate below the qualification, the university and the date you completed it in)

3. Your teaching experience

3a. Have you been a Head Teacher in other schools before Sandbank P.S.? Please complete the table below with the details of your previous teaching experience. (If you need more rows, feel free to add them at the end of the table)

School name and Authority	Period of time

3c. When did you start as a Head Teacher at Sandbank P.S.?

3d. Are there any other promoted posts at Sandbank P.S.?

4. Your teachers' development before starting the Action Research project

4a. Before embarking on the Action Research Project, identify up to 5 continuous professional development opportunities you have organised for the teachers at Sandbank P.S. (Provide as much detail as you can for example: the topic of the event; was it delivered by the Authority, an external organisation; did you find it yourself based on your own interests; was it a whole day event...)

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

7c. How do you think your teachers' involvement in this project has impacted on the whole school community? (If you can, please provide one or 2 examples to illustrate this impact)

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!!
Please return the questionnaire to me by Monday May 19th.

Dr Lore Gallastegi (Education Staff Tutor)

Appendix C: Teachers Stage 2 questionnaire; April 2015

Sandbank Primary School Action Research Project Teacher's Questionnaire (Stage 2)

This questionnaire is part of the evaluation of the Action Research project you have been involved in. The OU in Scotland is undertaking this evaluation. Some or all the information will also be shared with Argyll and Bute as funders of the project and could be used at future conferences or articles coming from the project. However, all the information you provide will be made anonymous before sharing it with external audiences.

Please complete this questionnaire and return it to me by **Wednesday April 15th**. The questionnaire will be confidential between you and the OU member(s) of staff collating the responses. No members of staff in your school or other participants of the project will have access to your responses.

Although this is not compulsory*, it would be useful if you could indicate your name, personal email address and telephone number to allow us to contact you if we would like further clarification on any matters you have provided.

*If you do not want us to contact you to discuss this questionnaire further, you do not need to include your telephone number and email address, and please put a cross here:

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me on lore.gallastegi@open.ac.uk
Please return this questionnaire to lore.gallastegi@open.ac.uk by **Wednesday April 15th**.
Lore Gallastegi

1. Personal details:

1a. Name and Surname:

1b. Title:

1c. *Personal email address:

1d. *Telephone number:

1e. Age range: 20-30 31-40 41-50 over 50

2. The Focus of your specific Action Research project

2a. What is the title of your action research project?

2b. What were the research questions you set at the beginning of the project?

1a.

2a.

3a.

4a.

5a.

6a.

2c. Did your research questions change throughout the project? (Delete the answer that does not apply)

Yes, they changed (please complete questions 2d and 2e)

No, they did not change (go to section 3)

2.d. If your questions changed indicate below your **final** research questions

1b.

2b.

3b.

4b.

5b.

6b.

2e. If any of your questions changed, can you indicate the reasons why?

3. The outcomes of your project

3a. For each of the **final** research questions, can you add in the table below a short summary of your findings?

Research Question	Findings
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

3b. **Sharing and disseminating your findings in the project:** There are different ways in which the outcomes and findings of an action research project can be shared with other practitioners or published.

Have you shared your findings with others: Yes/no

Do you plan to share them with others in the future? Yes/no

3c. How did you decide to format the findings of your work? Did you create a poster, a video, an online resource, write a report or an article in a local newsletter, email findings to colleagues...? Please indicate below when and how you have shared your findings with others and/or any future plans you have to share them.

If you have shared, or plan to share, your findings, when did you do that in relation to the timing of the research? As you went along? Immediately? Some weeks/months later? ...	How: format: poster, article in a newsletter, video, parents' meeting, a conference...	To whom: school or authority colleagues, parents, teachers...

4. Impact of the project on you as a practitioner

Based on GTCS Professional Recognition questions

<http://gtcs.org.uk/professional-update/apply-for-professional-recognition.aspx>

4a. How do you think your involvement in this project has enabled you to develop as a practitioner?
(If you can, please provide one or 2 examples to illustrate this)

4b. How have you applied what you have learned in this project? (If you can, please provide one or 2 examples to illustrate this)

4c. What is the impact of your work on the learners and their learning? (If you can, please provide one or 2 examples to illustrate this)

4d. What is the impact on your colleagues' professional learning? (If you can, please provide one or 2 examples to illustrate this)

4e. How will you take this forward in your development as a practitioner?

Please return this questionnaire to lore.gallastegi@open.ac.uk by **Wednesday April 15th**.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Appendix D: Head Teacher's Stage 2 questionnaire; April 2015

Sandbank Primary School Action Research Project Head Teacher's Questionnaire (Stage 2)

This questionnaire is part of the evaluation of the Action Research project you have been involved in. The OU in Scotland is undertaking this evaluation. Some or all the information will also be shared with Argyll and Bute as funders of the project and could be used at future conferences or articles coming from the project. However, all the information you provide will be made anonymous before sharing it with external audiences.

Please complete this questionnaire with as much detail as possible. The questionnaire will be confidential between you and the OU member(s) of staff collating the responses. Although this is not compulsory*, it would be useful if you could indicate your name, personal email address and telephone number to allow us to contact you if we would like further clarification on any matters you have provided.

*If you do not want us to contact you to discuss this questionnaire further, you do not need to include your telephone number and email address, and please put a cross here:

Please return the questionnaire to me by Wednesday April 15th.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me on lore.gallastegi@open.ac.uk

Name:

Email address:

Phone Number:

1. Practitioner enquiry

The GTCS website includes this quote on Practitioner Enquiry:

“Practitioner Enquiry should lead to deep transformational learning which significantly informs and influences professionals’ understandings, practice and subsequent impact.”

Do you think the action research project the teachers at Sandbank Primary School have been involved in has met the aspects included in the quote above? Can you provide 1 or 2 examples to support your answers below?

1a. Has the project led teachers to **deep transformational learning**? How?

1b. Has the project informed and influenced **the teachers’ professional understandings**? How?

1c. Has the project informed and influenced **the teachers’ practice**? How?

1d. Has the project informed and influenced **the teachers’ impact on children**? How?

2. Reflections on the impact of the teachers' involvement in the project

2a. How do you think your teachers' involvement in this project has impacted on their role as a teacher? (If you can, please provide one or 2 examples of things you are aware they do differently now as a result of their participation in this project)

2b. How do you think your teachers' involvement in this project has impacted on the children in their classroom? (If you can, please provide one or 2 examples to illustrate this impact)

2c. How do you think your teachers' involvement in this project has impacted on the whole school community? (If you can, please provide one or 2 examples to illustrate this impact)

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!!

Please return the questionnaire to me by Wednesday April 15th.

Dr Lore Gallastegi (Education Staff Tutor)