CHAPTER 5

Research and Practice in the Professional Development of School-Based Teacher Educators

Comparative Insights from the International Forum for Teacher Educator Development (InFo-TED) 2021 SBTE Survey

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Abstract

Though teachers in schools are increasingly being asked to take responsibility for the education and training of prospective teachers, little empirical research has been undertaken into the support that school-based teacher educators (SBTEs) require to perform their duties as teacher educators. This chapter presents some initial findings drawing on the largest international survey (n = 1680) examining the professional learning needs of this group of teacher educators. This research, from the International Forum for Teacher Educator Development (InFo-TED), aims to provide insight into the professional role of SBTEs, identify their professional learning needs in different national contexts and to discuss the policy implications with regard to the development of adequate support measures for this heterogeneous group. This chapter explores their professional learning needs in six of the twenty countries involved in the survey (Austria, England, Israel, the Netherlands, Portugal and Scotland) with a specific focus on practitioner-based research activity, and scholarly reading and writing.

Keywords

school-based teacher educators – professional development – professional learning – teacher education – comparative research

1 Introduction

Evidence, enquiry and evaluation lie at the heart of what it means to be both a teacher and teacher educator. Research contributes not just to the professional development of teacher educators, but to the knowledge of the profession and to teaching and learning in general (Loughran, 2014; Willemse & Boei, 2017; Murray et al., 2019). This point is powerfully made in the foreword to the BERA-RSA Inquiry into Research and Teacher Education:

> Research and enquiry has a major contribution to make to effective teacher education in a whole variety of different ways; it also contributes to the quality of students' learning in the classroom and beyond. Teachers and students thrive in the kind of settings that we describe as research-rich, and research-rich schools and colleges are those that are likely to have the greatest capacity for self-evaluation and self-improvement. (BERA, 2014, p. 3)

However, many school-based teacher educators (SBTEs) not only struggle to see themselves as teacher educators but, depending on their trajectory within the teaching profession, find they are ill-equipped to carry out research. Those that do engage in research are often confronted by institutional values that are unsympathetic to those seeking to pursue professional learning opportunities through involvement in research. This relative isolation can exacerbate an already challenging employment context, requiring SBTEs to juggle the competing demands of teaching, mentoring and administration (Vanderlinde et al., 2021; Czerniawski et al., 2019). Drawing on the largest international study on the professional learning needs of SBTEs, this chapter explores some of the research-related challenges they face in becoming teacher educators. The chapter begins by casting a spotlight on the relationship between research-based knowledge and scholarship and examining how both can inform the professional learning and practice of teacher educators. A description of the research design for the study is followed by a summary of the findings for six of the participating countries (Austria, England, Israel, the Netherlands, Portugal and Scotland). The findings are presented and discussed in the context of SBTEs' academic interests, the professional learning activities SBTEs value with regard to those interests and the factors that affect their participation in such activities. While the qualitative data collected as part of the study will not be presented in this chapter, it will be alluded to in the discussion. The findings emphasise how much more needs to be done to recognise, address

and champion SBTEs' learning needs in relation to the rapidly changing socio-economic and technological contexts that underpin all education systems.

2 Literature Review

In what has been described as a 'pendulum swing' away from the dominance of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) towards a greater role for schools and teachers in the training of early-career teachers (Murray & Mutton, 2016; Mutton et al., 2017; White & Swennen, 2021), increasing attention is being paid to the shift in policy, internationally, towards more school-based teacher education models (Boyd & Tibke, 2012; Lunenberg et al., 2014; White, 2017). However, there is little evidence that this shift is leading to a rise in commensurate and dedicated professional learning opportunities for school-based teacher educators (i.e. relating specifically to their role as teacher educators). One aspect of the role of teacher educators working in universities, or to use Murray and Male's (2005) term 'second-order practitioners', is the expectation that they will engage in research. There is a growing body of literature that stresses the importance of such second order practitioners as researchers (BERA, 2014; Loughran, 2014; Keltchtermans et al., 2017). The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines a researcher as:

> Professionals engaged in the conception or creation of new knowledge. They conduct research and improve or develop concepts, theories, models, techniques instrumentation, software or operational methods. (OECD, 2015)

However, little academic attention has been given to teacher educators working in schools (i.e. as both first- and second-order practitioners), the extent to which they can and should engage in research and the implications such engagement might have for their professional learning. As the next section indicates, that lack of attention must be addressed.

2.1 *SBTEs as Researchers*

While research plays an important role in the work of teacher educators, the dual identity of SBTEs (being both teachers and teacher educators) adds complexity when it comes to understanding the sorts of professional activities that are of most value to them (White & Timmermans, 2021; Smith & Flores, 2019). That complexity is exacerbated by the troubled history that has dogged

school-based practitioner research, with teachers being "disenfranchised" within traditional educational research communities (Elliot, 1988, p. 157). This inequitable relationship was identified by Rudduck (1987), who claimed that:

> There is an urgent need to analyse the structures that govern the production and distribution of research knowledge and the right to engage in research acts. Teacher research is, at one level, a means of countering the hegemony of academic research which teachers are often distanced by. (Rudduck 1987, p. 5 – cited in Hammersley 1993, p. 434)

And yet there is a significant international tradition of championing teachers as researchers; this includes many powerful voices. 'Classroom inquiry', 'action research', 'close-to-practice research' and 'teacher research' are just some of the terms that have been used over the last seventy years to describe, in different ways, school-based research by teachers (Rudduck, 1987; Hammersley, 1993; Wyse et al., 2018). Early advocates of this type of research activity include Corey (1949) in the United States, described by Hammersley as "one of its most influential advocates" (Hammersley, 1993, p. 425) and Stenhouse (1975) in the UK who championed practitioner research as an invaluable mechanism to improve teaching and learning. Most teacher educators working in universities, many of whom are ex-teachers, do engage with research in one way or another, formally and/or informally, when planning and preparing teaching, presentations, reports and publications. Their reading includes almost any form of publication that is informed by research (e.g. journal articles, textbooks, blogs, policy documents). This preparatory scholarly activity can be identified as 'research', albeit research with a small 'r' (Murray et al., 2014). Akin to Boyer's (1990) notion of the 'scholarship of teaching', this type of research can take the form of reading to inform (and hopefully enhance) personal and professional practice and, as such, is an activity undertaken by most teachers in schools as part of their daily professional practice. But as 'smart consumers' of research, teacher educators, Cochran-Smith (2005) argues, need to do more than just critically read and understand the epistemological background of research articles and reports. In addition to this scholarly approach, they also need to be capable of conducting research into their own practices and programmes:

> taking our own professional work as educators as a research site and learning by systematically investigating our own practice and interpretive frameworks in ways that are critical, rigorous, and intended to generate both local knowledge and knowledge that is useful in more public spheres. (Cochran-Smith, 2005, p. 220)

As both first- and second-order practitioner researchers, far from just being research consumers, SBTEs can, as we have seen above, generate new forms of knowledge – they undertake research with a capital 'R'. This form of engagement with research and knowledge production has been inherently linked to the improvement of teacher educators' own practice and the development of a public knowledge base for teacher education (Loughran, 2014; Tack & Vanderlinde, 2014). Mindful of the significance Cochran-Smith (2003) accords to the social, historical, cultural and political context in which professional practice is situated, research of this nature can improve daily practice through systematic and critical inquiry. However, Willemse and Boei (2017) identify both agentic and structural features that, they argue, can influence the extent to which teacher educators become researchers. First, for many school-based teacher educators, finding space, time and resources for research can be a huge ask when they view themselves primarily as teachers rather than researchers. Second, while their first-order expertise (Murray & Male, 2005) is teaching, many SBTEs may or may not have a Master's-level qualification, let alone a doctorate, and may therefore lack research experience.

However, in their transition to becoming second-order practitioners (teaching about teaching), SBTEs can often find themselves working alongside university colleagues whose first-order experience is likely to be in research i.e. working with colleagues with subject expertise within or outside education e.g. sociology and psychology (Smith, 2015). As they try out new and emerging values born of the experience of being teachers, teacher educators and novice researchers, their polyvalent role informs and enriches their professional learning, both formally and informally. Willemse and Boei's (2017) third and final focus is the extent to which dedicated structured support is available to foster teacher educators' professional development with regard to research (including the existence of a clearly defined research culture within the school). In some cases, the structures do exist e.g. the emergence of new research related job roles in schools (e.g. Research Leads and Research Advocates in England) and the rise of grass roots teacher-led organisations (e.g. ResearchED). But the existence of such structures in turn raises important questions around the purpose of educational research and who, why, how, when and for whom it is carried out.

The current study aims to explore SBTEs' attitudes and involvement in research, the types of research-related professional learning activities they value, how they view their school's attitudes towards research, and the effects of different contextual variables on their decision to participate in professional learning activities against the background of national policies.

3 Methodology and Methods

This is an exploratory study drawn from a wider project. It presents analysis of the results of a quantitative multi-national survey against the background of teacher education policies and practices in six of the twenty participating countries namely Austria, England, Israel, the Netherlands, Portugal and Scotland. For the purposes of this chapter the Research Questions are:

1. What role does research play in SBTEs' professional development?
2. To what extent do SBTEs value research in their professional development?

3.1 *Participants*

1680 SBTEs from twenty countries took part in this survey: 1075 (75.9%) female and 341 male (264 participants did not identify their gender). This chapter focuses on just 934 participants from the six countries mentioned above. The median age group was 45–54 years old, and that was also the most frequent age category, comprising 36% of the sample. Half of the participants had a Master's degree, 39.4% had a Bachelor's degree, 8.4% had a PhD, and 2.1% did not have an academic degree. About half the participants (48.9%) had high school teaching qualifications, 22.9% elementary school, 16.4% post 16, 14.1% special education and 4.7% preschool teaching qualifications. The median number of years of experience prior to being appointed as SBTEs was between 6 and 10, and that was also the median category of their experience as SBTEs. 46.4% worked with student teachers, 12.9% worked with qualified in-service teachers, and 40.7% worked with both groups. Most of the participants (88.4%) were in full-time employment. However, 77.7% reported that their work with teachers took 20% or less of their time, and 69.9% reported spending a similar amount of time on instructing student teachers. Table 5.1 presents the background characteristics of the participants from the six countries analysed in the current study.

3.2 *The Survey*

The survey is based on a questionnaire used by Czerniawski and his colleagues (2017) to explore the professional development needs of higher education-based teacher educators. Participants were asked about their professional learning preferences (30 items); attitudes towards research and research experience (18 items); variables considered before engaging in a professional learning activity (9 items); and role description and background information (15 items). Most of the items (58) were multiple-choice questions with a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (= not at all) to 7 (= very much). Twelve items had other multiple-choice options, and four items were open questions.

TABLE 5.1 Participants

Variable	Austria	England	Israel	The Netherlands	Portugal	Scotland
N	**220**	**159**	**151**	**123**	**143**	**138**
Gender % female	77.6	77.9	86.2	69.9	6.6	72.5
Age group (Median)	45–54	25–44	45–54	45–54	45–54	45–54
Years of experience (Median)	6–10	6–10	6–10	6–10	6–10	6–10
Degree						
Non-academic	11.0	–	–	0.8	–	–
BA	40.6	55.8	19.2	39.0	39.7	66.7
MA	43.4	38.1	67.7	56.9	40.4	28.2
PhD	5.0	6.2	13.1	3.3	19.9	5.1
% work with student teachers (Median)	11–20	11–20	1–10	11–20	11–20	1–10
% work with qualified teachers (Median)	1–10	11–20	1–10	1–10	11–20	11–20

3.3 *Data Gathering*

The survey was translated into the participating countries' local languages and distributed online to SBTEs. SBTEs included teachers who mentored student teachers, interns and early-career teachers, as well as leading teachers who facilitated their colleagues' professional learning.

3.4 *Data Analysis*

In order to converge the data into a representative set of factors, we performed factor analyses on the whole sample for three separate sections of the survey: participants' professional learning preferences, attitudes towards research and research experience, and variables that may affect participants' decisions about taking part in professional learning activity.

Three factors were associated with professional learning preferences:

– Academic Interests: research-related activities such as attending and presenting at conferences and scholarly writing (9 items, Cronbach's alpha = .88).

– Pedagogical Interests: acquiring knowledge and skills relating to teaching and mentoring (7 items, Cronbach's alpha = .84).
– Working with colleagues: observations of and by colleagues and informal conversations with them (4 items, Cronbach's alpha = .74).

Three factors described attitudes to and experience of research:
– Personal Attitudes. This factor described the importance participants attributed to research when improving their knowledge and practices (6 items, Cronbach's alpha = .88).
– Actual Involvement in research: for example, experience with conducting and publishing research (7 items, Cronbach's alpha = .82).
– School Attitudes towards research. This factor explored the interest of school leadership and staff in research (3 items, Cronbach's alpha = .84).

Two factors concerned variables that could influence participants' decisions to engage in professional learning:
– Internal Factors, such as the providers and the content of activities (5 items, Cronbach's alpha = .77).
– External Factors, such as their location and cost (3 items, Cronbach's alpha = .71).

We used a mix of exploratory and confirmatory analytical models (EFA and CFA respectively). For the EFA, half the data were selected at random and used as a training sub-sample; and for the CFA the other half of the data was used as a test sub-sample (Osborne, 2015; Hefetz & Liberman, 2017). Overall, seven items were dropped due to multiple loadings (less than 0.2 difference between items' factor loadings).

The findings for each country are interpreted in the relevant context, and general trends and policy implications are dealt with in the discussion.

4 Results

The research questions will be dealt with separately for each country, starting with the national context and policies related to SBTEs' research, and moving on to address the survey results in relation to that context.

4.1 *Austria*

Context: In Austria, SBTEs include those who are mentoring novice teachers and supervising student teachers; such individuals are often appointed because

they are experienced teachers. Since 2013, the New Teacher Education (*PädagogInnenbildung Neu*) reforms and the new Service Code (*Dienstrechts-Novelle*) for teachers introduced mentors in Austrian schools and envisaged the development of accredited training programmes and certification for SBTES (Federal Law 2013, No. 211). Specifically, mentors are required to support newly qualified teachers during their first year of service (i.e. induction phase) providing them with advice, supporting their professional development, observing their lessons, drawing up their development profile and ultimately evaluating their performance by providing their expert opinion to the school principal. To qualify as mentors, teachers need to have five years of teaching experience and must complete a mentor training course at a University College of Teacher Education, which can range from 15 ECTS for primary school teachers to 30 ECTS for secondary school teachers. The Lower Austria University College of Teacher Education has developed a Master's programme on mentoring (90 ECTS, MEd), which it has delivered since 2013. Other universities are in the process of developing similar programmes.

Findings: SBTES in Austria identified themselves as mentors but did not actively characterise themselves as teacher educators. Most respondents (161, 73%) indicated that they had received specific training to prepare them for their mentoring roles. Their mean level of satisfaction with the professional learning opportunities they were presented with is medium-high (M = 4.69, SD = 1.23). Austrian SBTES placed high value on learning opportunities that involved working with colleagues (M = 5.32, SD = 1.09) and activities that fostered their interests as educators (M = 5.04, SD = 1.04). To a lesser extent, they valued professional development that enhanced their academic knowledge and skills (M = 3.83, SD = 1.19).

Overall, Austrian SBTES' personal attitudes towards research were at a medium level (M = 3.61, SD = 1.33), while their actual involvement in research (M = 2.52, SD = 1.36) and their perception of their schools' attitudes towards research (M = 2.74, SD = 1.54) were low. Although they generally valued the information provided by research (e.g., international exchanges, attending conferences), SBTES showed a stronger preference for informal conversations with colleagues and observation of each other's teaching.

4.2 *Israel*

Context: In Israel, most SBTES are teachers who support student teachers, mentors of teachers during their first two or three years of teaching and facilitators of teachers' professional learning communities (PLCS). SBTES in the latter two groups are certified teachers with at least four years of teaching experience. Mentor teachers are required to participate in a two-stage (pre-service

and in-service) course, although in practice, only about half of them had done so. Mentoring courses do not address involvement with research or the use of research in teaching. Facilitators of teachers' PLCs are recommended by their school principals and participate in a two-year preparatory course. They are supported in their work by a professional institute chosen by the Ministry of Education. PLC facilitators are expected to help teachers study their own practices and collaboratively analyse examples of teaching (such as videoed lessons and students' assignments) during PLC meetings.

Findings: Unsurprisingly, most of the participants (131, 89%) received some type of preparation or support for their role. A specific teacher education programme was the most common type of preparation, and had been attended by 89 (60%) of the participants. The structured and compulsory nature of SBTEs' preparation and support may explain why internal (M = 4.25, SD = 1.36) and external (M = 4.02, SD = 1.66) factors have only a weak influence on Israeli SBTEs' engagement with professional learning activities.

Overall, Israeli SBTEs' level of interest in academic activities (M = 4.26, SD = 1.39) and attitudes towards research (M = 4.10, SD = 1.61) were medium. Interestingly, levels were significantly higher among SBTEs who supported both student teachers and in-service teachers than among those who only supported student teachers. Levels for SBTEs who only supported in-service teachers were between those for the other two groups. However, Israeli SBTEs' actual involvement in research (M = 2.33, SD = 1.43) and their perceptions of schools' attitudes towards research (M = 2.97, SD = 1.68) were low, with no differences between the groups.

4.3 *The Netherlands*

Context: In the Netherlands, SBTEs are mostly involved with supervising student teachers and in-service teachers (predominantly early-career teachers). SBTEs are generally experienced teachers. Schools increasingly work in partnerships between what are known as school educators and workplace mentors; the former play an overall role in the facilitation of student teacher learning in schools and collaborate closely with teacher education partners, while the latter focus on mentoring student teachers. Most SBTEs receive some form of formal preparation for their role; this is often provided by teacher education institutes. These courses focus primarily on (learning to) supervise (student) teachers rather than on research. Nationally, school-based educators increasingly follow the Dutch Teacher Educators Association (Velon) process, which leads to registration as a teacher educator. The process brings school-based teacher educators together to reflect collaboratively on their practice. The aim of this is not to foster research but to encourage informed reflection on their practice as teacher educators through engagement with research literature.

Findings: The majority of SBTES in the Netherlands (92.7%) received some sort of support: the largest group (45.5%) indicated that they were following a specific pathway for school-based teacher educators. Overall, the influence of internal factors on participation in professional learning were stronger (M = 4.69, SD = 1.04) than external factors (M = 3.69, SD = 1.41); this may be due to the voluntary nature of professional development.

Dutch SBTES' interest in academic activity was at a medium level (M = 4.06, SD = 1.00), as were their attitudes towards research (M = 4.42, SD = 0.59). This may be the result of a range of factors, but also of their perception of schools' (lack of) interest in research (M = 3.58; SD = 1.34). Whereas SBTES' attitudes towards research were at medium levels, their involvement in research was low (M = 2.43; SD = 1.37). This may be due to lack of opportunity or time for involvement in research (projects).

4.4 *Portugal*

Context: In Portugal, most SBTES supervise student teachers (in their capacity as cooperating supervisors); they also lead INSET (In-service education and training of teachers) activities for in-service teachers (in which context they are usually known as trainers) especially at Schools' Association Training Centres. According to the existing legal framework (Decree-Law nº 79/2014), cooperating supervisors are selected on the basis of the following criteria: (1) appropriate formal training and experience and (2) at least 5 years' teaching experience in a given subject area. Cooperating supervisors usually hold a Master's degree in Supervision. The vast majority of the Portuguese participants in this study (69.2%) held a postgraduate degree (e.g. academic specialisation (11.9%), Master's degree (40.4%) or PhD (19.9%)). As such, most of them had research knowledge and skills. SBTES involved with formal training for in-service teachers also generally have post-graduate level qualifications (usually a Master's degree and sometimes a PhD). A Master's degree is required for entry into any teaching sector in Portugal (from pre-school to secondary school). However, the teacher shortage is now a reality, especially in certain subjects (including ICT, Portuguese, Physics and Chemistry, and History) and the government has announced that it will be introducing as yet unspecified changes to initial teacher training.

Findings: Not surprisingly, Portuguese SBTE displayed a high level of interest in academic activities (M = 4.85, SD = 1.24) and had positive attitudes towards research (M = 5.51, SD = 1.34). However, their actual involvement in research is medium (M = 3.56, SD = 1.74); this may have been related to their perception that schools have a lack of interest in research (M = 3.31, SD = 1.69) and to heavy workloads and time management issues. In general, Portuguese SBTE

did not see themselves as teacher educators, mostly describing themselves as "school-based supervisors", "trainers" and "INSET leaders". In terms of preparation for the role, they mentioned specialist teacher education study programmes (e.g. Master's degree in Supervision) (56.6%); support/training from a local university (short-term INSET activities) (45.5%); formal participation in collaborative learning with teacher educator colleagues (44.1%) and informal participation in collaborative learning with teacher educator colleagues inside or outside of their schools (44.1%). The Portuguese participants also demonstrated a high level of interest in education-related activities (M = 5.25, SD = 1.38) and in working with colleagues (M = –4.99, SD = 1.23). Internal factors (M = 5.28, SD = 1.26) had a greater influence on SBTEs' participation in professional learning activities than external factors (M = 4.51, SD = 1.61); this may be more a function of intrinsic and emancipatory motivations rather than INSET being a prerequisite for career advancement.

4.5 *Scotland*

Context: The Scottish data presented in Table 5.1 might suggest that low numbers of teachers support the development of other teachers, however in Scotland, all school teachers are expected to take on the role of SBTEs. All teachers must have a relevant degree (or equivalent) and a recognised teaching qualification, and are required to uphold the professional standards set by the independent professional and regulatory body for teaching, The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS). These include the requirement that teachers "work collaboratively to contribute to the professional learning and development of colleagues, including student teachers" (GTCS, 2021). This means that, in Scotland, relatively inexperienced teachers can be SBTEs and indeed of the survey respondents (n = 138), 25% had less than two years' teaching experience, 25% had a Master's degree and 5% had doctoral degrees. However, there is no mandatory formal qualification or professional learning for teachers wishing to become SBTEs. On the other hand, the GTCS requires teachers to maintain a reflective record of professional learning and development with regard to its professional standards, as part of a five-yearly professional update process. The professional standards also require all teachers to engage with, and in, research and professional enquiry (GTCS, 2021). In this context then, SBTEs can be expected at least to engage *with* research as part of their practice even if they do not engage *in* research.

Findings: SBTEs in Scotland mostly preferred the term mentor over SBTE. However, that might be influenced by the use of mentors: teachers who support the development of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in their induction year (supported first year of employment as a qualified teacher) to help with

NQTs. The results for Scotland showed that the academic interests of SBTEs are medium to low (M = 3.37, SD = 1.03), which was a lower level than the other countries explored in this study. However, interest in education issues (M = 4.68, SD = 1.07) was medium-high, similar to other countries in this study. Personal attitudes towards research ranked as medium (M = 4.23, SD = 1.36) whilst SBTEs' perception of school attitudes towards research was slightly less favourable (M = 3.68, SD = 1.83) and actual involvement in research was low (M = 2.43, SD = 1.07). This might suggest that personal interest in research is not being supported or engaged with at school level. The support most valued by SBTEs in Scotland was working with colleagues: similar to most other countries, this was ranked highly (M = 5.22, SD = 0.96), with observing colleagues being of particular value. In Scotland there is clearly a willingness to engage with colleagues, but it is less clear how that might lead to the creation of opportunities to engage with or in research, despite the requirement within the professional standards to do so.

4.6 *England*

Context: In England, schools are replacing universities as the decision makers on who can and who cannot be recruited into the profession. The UK Government's 2022 Initial Teacher Training (ITT) market review (DfE, 2022) announced that a total of 179 providers (including schools and universities) had been accredited to deliver ITT courses in the "reformed market" with effect from the 2024/2025 academic year (DfE, 2022). That announcement did not, however, convey that of the original 240 providers currently in existence, a third of school-based initial teacher trainers (SCITTs) and one in seven universities in England failed to gain accreditation (Schools Week, 2022). The marketisation of teacher training exemplified in England means a variety of pathways into the profession and a variety of types of school (e.g. Grammar; 'Specialist'; 'faith' and independent) are available to those choosing to train as teachers. In addition to traditional university ITT routes, pathways include school-centred Initial Teacher Training schemes (SCITTS); employment-based routes (EBITTS), School Direct, Teach First and 'teaching schools'. SBTEs will often be tasked with organising some or all aspects of professional learning for both pre-service and in service teachers. This work often includes the recruitment of trainee teachers, the design, implementation and evaluation of course components, and assessments at the end of training plus any continuing professional developmental activities that might be provided for more experienced colleagues (White, Dickerson, & Weston, 2015). Delivery models vary but many SBTEs work independently and/or with private providers and/or school networks while others work with universities and HEI-based teacher

educators. As the findings from this survey indicate, working with different providers can be a source of confusion, leading to differences in the ITE curriculum and assessment processes on the part of different providers.

For many SBTEs, the above context would seem to provide little or no opportunity to engage in research activity. CPD for teachers in England, including SBTEs, is largely unregulated, beyond the inclusion in the inspection framework of an obligation for school leaders to 'focus on improving staff's subject, pedagogical, and pedagogical content knowledge' (Ofsted, 2019, 'Leadership and Management' section). Indeed, the word 'research' does not appear once in the UK government's most recent (2021) update of its 2011 Teaching Standards and 'scholarship' is mentioned just once (DfE, 2022). And yet practitioner research is widespread in English schools, as is broader discussion of 'research informed' as opposed to 'scholarship informed' teaching (Gewirtz, 2013). The growth of academy chains (state funded schools that are independent of local authorities) has been accompanied by a renewed interest in school-based practitioner research; this was accelerated in 2016 by the growth of 'research schools' set up in partnership with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF, the Institute for Effective Education (IEE) and backed by the Department for Education (DfE). Grassroots teacher research organisations (e.g. ResearchEd), learned institutions (e.g. British Educational Research Association) and the widespread take up of Professional Doctorates in Education (EdDs) by teachers across the country means that there is a vibrant and growing research culture in many (but not all) schools in England.

Findings: The majority of SBTEs described themselves as "mentors" (n = 102) with 45.3% of the sample (n = 159) attending a 'specific teacher education study programme'. However, this included mentor training which many universities in England offer their partnership schools automatically and often only takes up just a half or full day in any given academic year. The level of English SBTEs' interest in academic activities (M = 4.09, SD = 1.11) and their attitudes towards research (M = 4.80, SD = 1.49) were at medium to medium-high levels. While their actual involvement in research was statistically low (M = 2.80, SD = 1.43) this level of involvement was the second highest within the group (just below that of Portugal). Despite its medium score (M = 4.17, SD = 1.84), school attitudes to research in the English sample were the most positive within this group of countries, indicative perhaps, of the contextual factors relating to research as described above. SBTEs placed high value on learning opportunities that involved working with colleagues (M = 5.27, SD = 0.98); activities that fostered their pedagogical interests (M = 4.77, SD = 1.24) scored medium to high.

5 Discussion

This chapter has highlighted the relationship between research-based knowledge and scholarship, and how both can inform the professional learning and practice of SBTES as smart consumers and producers of research. The chapter has also drawn attention to the historic legacy and growth of school-based practitioner research as an invaluable mechanism for improving teaching and learning. But bringing these two strands together in ways that can provide impactful forms of professional developmental for SBTES is challenging. Our findings indicate that many SBTES receive some sort of professional development in relation to part of their role as teacher educators; however, such learning activities do not, in most cases, target research and scholarly activity.

Reflecting on different models of professional development and their appropriateness to school-based settings must be the starting point for discussions with SBTES and those who manage them; it is important to seek SBTES' views on the forms of professional learning they might value in their careers. But the efficacy of such discussions rests on the understanding that SBTES are a heterogeneous group of professionals. Factors determining such heterogeneity include location of employment; type, structure and level of school; career stage (e.g. early- or mid-career); teaching experience and teacher educator experience; and the extent to which SBTES work within higher education institutions. These factors align with the structural features identified by Willemse and Boei (2017) as influencing the extent to which SBTES are, or can be, active researchers. Our findings indicate that there are both structural and agentic differences in SBTES' views about the role of research in teacher education and about their research capacity. These differences are partially but not exclusively dependant on the participants' national contexts; their career stage (i.e. early-career; mid-career; experienced SBTES) and the level of support they receive from the schools that employ them. There is a marked difference across all participants in this study in terms of their attitudes to research and their involvement in research. Greater encouragement of practitioner engagement in research by funding agencies would boost teachers' agency by raising the status of practitioner research and enable more teachers to become both knowledge consumers and knowledge producers (MacPhail et al., 2022). It is noteworthy that Portugal recorded the highest positive personal attitudes towards research and the highest actual involvement in research, and this is almost certainly associated with the country's legal framework (Decree-Law nº 79/2014) and rigid selection criteria for SBTES as described above. It is also explained by the qualifications of the Portuguese participants in this study,

the vast majority of whom held a Master's degree or a PhD (in total around 60%). But it is also notable that there was a significant statistical gap between the desire to undertake research and the actual pursuit of research. While our study draws attention to just how much school-based teacher educators in general value educational research and opportunities to engage in such research, that desire is not necessarily shared by the colleagues they work with, including, in many cases, school leadership teams. Difficulties in engaging in research are also linked to heavy workload and time management issues. To varying degrees, SBTEs in all countries commented on the need to develop their research skills with regard to writing and research methodology. However, in the qualitative data collected for this study but not presented in this chapter, SBTEs repeatedly referred to the lack of time to engage in meaningful professional development, whether that meant reading the latest research, attending conferences, or even having staff available to provide cover for such activities.

Reducing the gap between theory and practice is often referred to as a motivation for schools' greater role in educating student teachers as well as practicing teachers (Mutton et al., 2017; White & Swennen, 2021). However, as the findings of this study suggest that the cost of this may be the elimination of research from teachers' training and professional development. Without research skills, and funds and support for teachers' research, teachers will be prevented from developing their expertise, leading to further de-professionalisation of teachers.

Acknowledging the value of practitioner-based research in professional learning, Murray (2011) called for the "re-framing of the place of research in induction and professional development in teacher education" (p. 121). Over a decade after this call, and at a time when many countries are increasing their provision of school-based teacher education, our findings are timely and indicate just how much more needs to be done by those in leadership positions in schools and higher education in terms of critically reflecting on the supply and quality of support they provide for SBTEs' research aspirations. This does, however, pose a wicked policy problem (Roberts, 2000) for any government whose auditing mechanisms only address research output from universities. To what extent such mechanisms should be introduced into schools is a discussion that goes beyond the remit of this chapter. Nevertheless, in order for this reframing to take place, we hope that policy makers, subject discipline and research associations, and leadership teams in schools, colleges and universities can reflect on the implications of this study for the professional development of all teacher educators and not just those based in schools.

6 Conclusion

In this chapter we have explored the complex relationships between research and practice in the professional development of SBTEs as well as the many challenges they face in becoming teacher educator-researchers. But the efficacy of this exploration would be undermined if we did not acknowledge its policy implications and the need for more effective interactions between research, policy and practice (Menter & Flores, 2021). Colleagues have written elsewhere (Czerniawski et al., 2018) about their fears with regard to the potential diminution of the role played by research in the quality of ITE, teacher educators' professional learning and teacher professionalism. To some extent, this chapter offers complex hope by casting a spotlight on the substantial involvement in research activity acknowledged by many SBTEs in this survey. Our survey also shows that SBTEs' attitudes towards research are positive. But SBTEs require not only research skills but also greater support and resources (including time and CPD opportunities) to develop and strengthen an inquiry-based approach to teaching and teacher education. However, in most of the countries we examined, policymakers and schools do not provide the infrastructure to support research. It is important to acknowledge this lack of provision in light of the significant evidence on the role that research and enquiry plays in effective teacher education, professionalism and the quality of student learning (BERA-RSA, 2014). Learning from Portugal, it seems that supportive legislation should be brought forward, and budget and assessment criteria developed, to ensure that SBTEs are research-literate practitioners providing high quality education to their mentees and who can play an active role in the development of their profession.

Taken together, the findings presented here highlight the need for more targeted and authentic professional development focusing on the skills needed to undertake school-based research, if more SBTEs are to engage in research activity. For policymakers, this finding is important because, as Gewirtz (2013) argues, the danger in talking about research-informed teacher education is that this merely reinforces a reductionist, techno-engineering model of teacher education where prospective teachers simply implement 'what works' uncritically rather than reflecting on their practice, and its impact and rationale. In a similar vein, at the TEPE conference in 2022, Rachel Lofthouse expressed fears that there is a danger that research will be reduced to focusing on the 'what', the 'where', and the 'why' – but not the 'how'. The nurturing of SBTE's scholarly and researcherly inclinations (Tack and Vanderlinde 2014) must, therefore, be a prerequisite for authentic and enduring professional learning

and professional development. It is also a prerequisite for future practice in teacher education that will help a new generation of teachers to go beyond 'what works' and engage in a genuine educational transformation of the system and its learners.

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