Chapter 5
'Research Use' in Education: Conceptualising the Teaching Profession Within the Policy–Research–Practice Nexus

Sølvi Mausethagen and Hege Hermansen

Abstract In this chapter, we examine 'research use' as a concept that informs the role of the teaching profession in the policy–research–practice nexus. As a policy construct, research use has gained significant attention over the past decade. However, the concept and particularly its translation to practice are often left undefined, both regarding the meaning of 'research' and of 'use'. In this chapter, we examine how the specification of these terms contributes to producing particular manifestations of the policy–research–practice nexus. We pursue two lines of argument. The first line of argument is that the approaches to defining, operationalising, and discussing research use have implications for the construction of the policy–research–practice nexus. The second line of argument is that the characteristics of this nexus will inform the understanding of the role of the profession in simultaneously relating to education policy, researchers, and the development of professional practice. Finally, we present an analytical framework that aims to advance a multidimensional approach to studies on research use, which provides opportunities for developing more profession-sensitive understandings of research use. The framework also facilitates analytically unpacking relations between policy, research, and practice.

Keywords Research use · Teaching profession · Policy-research-practice nexus

In this chapter, we use the notion of 'research use' as an analytical entry point for exploring manifestations of the policy–research–practice nexus. Education policy in the past two decades has seen an increased emphasis on the development of research-based teacher education and the use of research to strengthen relationships

S. Mausethagen (✉) · H. Hermansen
OsloMet, Oslo, Norway
e-mail: solvim@oslomet.no; herm@oslomet.no

between research knowledge and teachers' professional practice (Burn & Mutton, 2015; Cordingley, 2015; Kvernbekk, 2014; Winch et al., 2015). A general assumption underlying policy initiatives and considerable research is that research use is important for strengthening educational quality in schools and improving educational outcomes. Many policy initiatives have also aimed to strengthen teachers' performance and legitimacy. These policy initiatives have comprised attempts to increasingly hold teachers accountable for their performance and professional development efforts and an intensification of the production and use of research. While the teaching profession often resists accountability measures, strengthening teachers' use of research-based knowledge—and thus the scientific knowledge base for teaching—has been a better fit for the profession's agenda for professionalisation (Mausethagen, 2013). However, the kinds of knowledge that teachers should prioritise and utilise remain contested (Biesta, 2007; Bridges & Watts, 2008; Slavin, 2008). The call for 'research-based knowledge' also challenges the more traditional notion of teacher knowledge as primarily experience-based and contextual (Larsen, 2016). A key debate has been whether professional autonomy decreases with the use of evidence-based programmes and standardised teaching methods (e.g. Prøitz & Aasen, 2018).

These policy developments and their contested nature make the notion of research use a fruitful empirical entry point for exploring manifestations of the teaching profession in the policy–research–practice nexus. In policy documents, descriptions of the notions of research and evidence are typically in rather general terms, often offering impressions of alignment and transfer between educational research and professional practice. In existing research on the use of evidence and data on student performance, there are great variations in the approaches to describing and discussing this relation (e.g. Penuel et al., 2017; Schildkamp et al., 2017). For example, an evaluation paradigm and empirical studies on improvement and effectiveness have tended to dominate research in the Anglo-American context, while research in the continental European context has adopted a more critical stance (Prøitz et al., 2017). Such differences are related to different research traditions but also to different educational systems, including different positions for the profession within the systems.

Rational-linear conceptions that envisage research use as a one-way process from production (researchers) to use (policy and practice) have characterised both policy discourse and research over time (e.g. Weiss, 1979). Such conceptualisations are problematic because they do not sufficiently account for the heterogeneity of teachers' knowledge base and the need for teachers to integrate different kinds of knowledge sources in their everyday work (e.g. Grimen, 2008; Shulman, 1987). Such linear conceptions also tend to downplay the complexities of both educational policymaking and professional practice, as outlined in the introductory chapter to this volume.

In summary, debates surrounding research use trigger fundamental questions regarding the knowledge base, autonomy, and responsibilities of the teaching profession and the interrelationship between educational policies and professional practice. The concept of research use therefore represents a fruitful entry point for

unpacking the complexities of the policy–practice nexus. We are particularly concerned about how the notion of research use acts as a mediator between policy and practice and how this concept contributes to legitimising certain perspectives on professionals and professional work. This analytical focal point recognises that expressions of the policy–practice nexus are often constitutive of the teaching profession itself, for example, by highlighting particular forms of agency or the formation of the profession through specific policy initiatives. At the same time, researchers themselves play a mediating role in the formation of relationships between policy and practice through the ways in which the researchers theoretically and empirically frame such relations. As we proceed with our argument by analysing existing research on the phenomenon of research use, we find it fruitful to expand the notion of the policy–practice nexus to the *policy–research–practice nexus*.

We pursue our argument as follows. We start by reviewing some existing perspectives on research use in policy and practice. We then proceed to examine, using three illustrative studies, how the conceptualisation and operationalisation of research use legitimise particular perspectives on professionals and professional work. Finally, we aim to expand existing analytical perspectives on research use by introducing a multidimensional framework for analysing research use and analytically unpacking the role assigned to professionals in this particular expression of the policy–research–practice nexus.

Generations of Research on Research Use in Policy and Practice

Taking a historical view, Boaz and Nutley (2019) outlined three generations of thinking on evidence use and research use. The first generation emphasises rational-linear models and one-way processes from production (researchers) to use (policy and practice). The second generation emphasises relational approaches, examining interactions between people in networks and partnerships as they create and use evidence. However, the second generation also incorporates rational-linear principles of dissemination and diffusion. Third-generation thinking highlights systems-wide approaches, acknowledging that the diffusion and dissemination processes and relationships are shaped by and embedded in structures that mediate the ongoing interaction. The developments that Boaz and Nutley described are also illustrative of how the field of education has addressed research use. Despite the movement towards a third-generation thinking, an ongoing systematic review of research on research use in education shows that there remain significant amounts of first- and second-generation thinking: Several recent publications have adopted a rational-linear view and several have focused on research use in partnerships (Niederberger et al., 2022). This indicates that it might be more precise to describe the field in terms of parallel developments rather than sequential generations.

These contributions provide a solid foundation for thinking about research use with a specific focus on research use in public policy and governance. We can also employ a complementary perspective from the sociology of professions to describe policy initiatives to increase research use as 'professionalisation from above' (Evetts, 2003). Professionalisation from above describes government initiatives aimed at convincing professionals to perform in ways seen as appropriate and effective. In the Nordic and German contexts, however, researchers have characterised professionalisation by an interconnectedness of impetuses from above—that is, from the state—and from within the professions themselves (Larsen, 2016; McClelland, 1990). Professionalisation from within describes initiatives within the profession to develop and construct an identity in ways that can secure and maintain its autonomy and discretionary power.

It is possible to also make an analytical distinction between performative and organisational dimensions of research use. Research use in education arguably has two different aims: to strengthen students' learning and to strengthen teachers' professionalism. These two aims are interrelated but also distinct: while research use directed towards improving teachers' practice—thereby having an impact on student learning—has a primarily performative focus, research use directed towards developing teacher professionalism has a more organisational emphasis. While the performative dimensions of professions concern professional practice, the organisational dimensions involve the ways in which the profession maintains and develops its autonomy and trust in society. A contested aspect of the organisational dimension, from both historical and contemporary perspectives, has been whether, and how, to strengthen the scientific knowledge base of the profession.

Positioning the Teaching Profession in Research on Research Use

So far, we have demonstrated why and how research use, both as a political construct and as a concept discussed in educational research, remains contested. An underlying reason for this contestation is that policymakers (and researchers) use the notion of research use to initiate changes within the profession. Such changes will typically be associated with a normative understanding of what the profession should be and how teachers should develop their professional practice. Analytically, we have shown how such research use can relate to different understandings of the role of research (e.g. instrumental, conceptual, or symbolic) and different approaches to constituting the phenomenon of research use (rational-linear, relational, or systems approaches). Other conceptualisations relate more explicitly to the profession itself, including the notions of professionalisation from 'above' and 'within' and the performative and organisational dimensions of the profession. We will now employ these analytical categories to explore contestations related to research use in more depth, emphasising the implications of constructions of research use for

perspectives on the profession and professional work. We examine three published studies to illustrate variations in how notions of research use can inform conceptualisations of the teaching profession.

We selected these studies on the basis of a preliminary analysis of an ongoing systematic review on research use in education (Niederberger et al., 2022). The studies exemplify three distinct ways of positioning the teaching profession as a consequence of particular conceptualisations and operationalisations of research use: (a) research use as representing the closing of a deficit among professionals, (b) research use as representing the 'maturation' of the profession, and (c) research use as a communicative endeavour between professionals and researchers.

Research Use as a Means to Close a Deficit in the Profession

The framing of several studies on research use highlights what can be described as a 'deficit': Professionals in education are not using enough research. For example, Lysenko et al. (2014) adopted a deficit framing in their study of the predictors of Canadian school practitioners' (N = 2425) use of educational research. They argued that despite considerable efforts, unsystematic use or non-use of educational research in professional practice still deters the progress and success of educational development efforts, with references to Hattie (2009) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. They presented a model examining practitioners' limited use of educational research in relation to four factors. Out of these, 'opinions about research' had the most explanatory power and 'research expertise' was the second most important determinant of use. Such expertise includes the abilities to read, understand, and assess the quality of research; to use information technology to access research; and to translate research into practice. They found that practitioners had used research of any sort an average of only once or twice in the previous year. Overall, the authors described the results of the survey as challenging.

Lysenko et al.'s (2014) study primarily foregrounded individual factors through an analytical focus on teachers' perceptions and practices related to research use. An implication is that to address the identified deficit in the profession, there must be changes in individual perceptions and practices. However, the authors concluded by also calling for a more systemic approach involving teacher education, knowledge brokering institutions, and the improved dissemination of research findings. Academics working in teacher education have particular responsibilities for supporting the teaching profession to address challenges with research use. The article is mainly related to the second and the third generations of research on research use. Although the conclusions and recommendations highlighted some organisational factors, the study design clearly had a performative focus, and the authors advocated professionalisation from above is critical to increase teachers' use of research and the role of researchers in this endeavour.

Research Use as the Maturation of a Profession

A framing that we term 'maturation' was also prominent in several studies, particularly in the early contributions on research use. The term maturation denotes that the profession has not yet realised its full potential in terms of research use. In some studies, the authors accomplished this by means of comparing different professions. For example, Hemsley-Brown and Sharp (2003) asked if medical practitioners make greater use of research findings than practitioners in the teaching profession and what the reasons might be for discrepancies between the two professions. In this much-cited, early contribution to the field, they took as a starting point a well-known call from Hargreaves, who in a keynote address to the Teacher Training Agency Annual Conference in 1996 suggested that teaching could become an evidence-based profession if educational researchers were more accountable to teachers. The authors' concern with examining what existing research says about improving the impact of research on education aligns somewhat with Hargreaves' call to develop the profession.

Hemsley-Brown and Sharp (2003) concluded that there appear to be common barriers to research use in medicine and education and that creating cultures in the public sector that support and value research is a general challenge. They argued, however, that several factors seem specific to education due to the approach to constructing research knowledge in the social sciences, particularly concerning the context, generalisability, and validity of the research. For these reasons, the authors argued, the development of communication networks, links between researchers and practitioners, and greater practitioner involvement in the research process have emerged as important strategies for improving the impact of research. While the starting point for this study, in particular the reference to Hargreaves' lecture, places the study within the first generation of research on research use, the authors' main argument can related to the second generation of research.

This study, and the notion of maturation more generally, reflected an idea of research use as a matter of historical development, in which the authors—either through a comparison between education and other fields or from a historical perspective—asserted that the teaching profession is on a path to mature as a profession. The study emphasised the organisational dimension by highlighting the importance of establishing networks and links between researchers and practitioners, and on professionalisation from above by emphasising the need to create cultures in the educational sector which greatly supports and values research.

Research Use as a Communicative Endeavour Between Professionals and Researchers

In a review article, Coburn and Penuel (2016) analysed so-called research-practice partnerships, defined as long-term collaborations between professionals and researchers organised around problems and solutions relating to educational

practice in schools and school districts. Their main interest in the study was to investigate existing knowledge of the degree to which such partnerships foster research use among professionals and thus support educational improvement. The review suggested that many interventions developed in the context of partnerships had shown positive outcomes in this regard. However, while several studies have provided evidence that participation in partnerships is associated with greater access to research, there is mixed evidence to support whether participation in partnerships is associated with increased use of research for decision-making: Some studies have shown extensive use, others have shown limited use, while still others have shown that research use varies within and between school districts.

Although building capacity within educational systems to engage in research-informed development work is a key goal of partnerships, the authors noted that existing research has investigated to a limited extent whether participation builds a deeper understanding of the research process or the research findings, an appreciation for the value of research to inform decision-making, the capacity to engage in research-informed practices and policies, or the use of research as a part of continuous development work in collaboration with researchers.

This way of conceptualising research use relates to both the second and third generations of research use. It addresses both organisational and performative dimensions, and although there is a focus on professionalisation from above in terms of the role of researchers in the partnerships, the direction of 'use' is somewhat different than in the first two examined articles: While the first two evinced somewhat more linear conceptions of research use, the latter represents a more nonlinear relationship in terms of roles, responsibilities, and respect for various knowledge forms—at least in theory.

Across and Beyond Deficit, Maturation, and Communicative Endeavours

We do not intend for our notions of deficit, maturation, and communicative endeavours to be definite or exhaustive categories. Rather, they illustrate the more general point that constructions of research use matter to the conceptualisation of the teaching profession's role. For example, whether a study relates to a particular generation (as per Boaz & Nutley, 2019) informs whether the framing of research use is as a one-way or bidirectional process, or whether the analytical emphasis is on individual teachers or the broader networks and systems of which they are a part. Such distinctions have implications for the positioning of professionals either as receivers or implementers of research or as agentic participants that co-create research use within broader social and organisational structures.

The studies differ in terms of their emphasis on performative and organisational aspects. This has implications for whether the ascribed responsibility for improved research use mainly falls upon teachers, in either their individual or collective

capacities, or upon the organisational, political, and epistemic support structures that surround them. Finally, we find variations in whether the studies recognised research use as professionalisation from above or below. Such nuances have implications for the agency and autonomy of the teaching profession in the development of their knowledge base and professional practice.

In summary, the overall framing and analytical and methodological operationalisation of research use emerged as an important mediator of the conceptualisation of the teaching profession in existing research. These studies often positioned researchers as performing the important role of improving the state of research use in the school sector. These findings have motivated our suggestion that we can fruitfully expand the notion of the policy–practice nexus to the policy–research–practice nexus. Put briefly, researchers inform the construction of policy–practice relationships both through the research they produce about research use and the role that they themselves play in developing teachers' research use.

These findings imply that there are different conceptions of the profession among researchers depending upon both what research tradition they adhere to and their national and local contexts. For example, the three articles discussed above differed in whether, and how, they included a conception of the profession. Such differences might also reflect how the researchers themselves view the policy–research–practice nexus itself. These findings lead us to ask how we can address this variation analytically. As the 'use' in research use directs attention to processes in which the profession plays a key role, there is a need for more in-depth analysis of studies on use, including identifying how the researchers frame, analyse, and discuss research use in education. Moreover, we argue that there is a need for a more nuanced and multidimensional analytical approach to the study of research use that acknowledges empirical variations that exceed temporal and spatial dimensions (i.e. Boaz & Nutley, 2019; Weiss, 1979) and that incorporates an analytical focus on the role of the profession and professional work within the policy–research–practice nexus. In the final section of this chapter, we propose a multidimensional framework intended as a methodological contribution to further advance this research agenda. Although the focus here is on research use, this framework is applicable to other policy concepts in the field of education.

A Multidimensional Analysis of Research Use

We propose that investigating five aspects of research use is particularly important to develop a fuller understanding of this concept and how the notion of research use is constitutive of the role of the teaching profession:

- Definitional aspect: How do researchers define research use?
- Discursive aspect: How do researchers talk about research use?
- In-action aspect: Where and how does research use take place?
- Power aspect: Who is participating in research use and in what roles?
- Phenomenological aspect: How do researchers understand research use?

These analytical dimensions are intended for the analysis of studies that have empirically examined teachers' research use. Analysing these aspects in relation to each other yields deeper insights into the conceptualisation of the profession in studies on research use. As a starting point, the term 'use' implicates the profession since teachers are the actors intended to do the using. It therefore becomes important to examine on what terms and under which conditions the conceptualisation and enactment of this use occur and who has the power to shape different aspects of use. Additionally, the analytical gaze of the researchers' conceptual position provides an additional layer in the constitution of research use as a phenomenon. The above questions guiding the analysis are intended to shed light on the complex and multifaceted context in which research use occurs. We now apply this analytical approach to two studies, both published in 2018 in the journal *International Journal of Educational Research*—one conducted in England and the other in the Netherlands.

Example One: Research Use as Professionalisation from Above

In the first article, titled 'Exploring the Impact of Social Relationships on Teachers' Use of Research: A Regression Analysis of 389 Teachers in England', Brown et al. (2018) aimed to examine the extent to which social influence affects teachers' research use, how such social influence relates to teachers' perceptions of whether they work in a trusting environment, whether school leaders encourage the use of research in their schools, and whether there is encouragement for teachers to innovate. Regarding the definitional aspect, they defined research use as follows:

> Research-informed teaching practice refers to the use of research evidence by teachers in order to improve how they teach and, as a result, student learning outcomes. The use of research by teachers is considered both beneficial and desirable (a situation we describe as optimal rational). As such, research-informed teaching should be both encouraged and facilitated. At the same time we are still to discover the most effective ways of supporting and fostering teachers' engagement with research. (p. 36)

Use here concerns improvement in teaching practices, which influence student learning. In this sense, it depicts quite a linear relationship; word clusters, such as 'improvement', 'outcomes', and 'effectiveness', constructing a discourse throughout the article support this. The discourse thus primarily addressed the performative dimension of professionalism and did not address the organisational dimension, despite analytical interest in social relations within organisations. Moreover, the use of analytical perspectives on so-called rationality types and an optimal rational position matrix strengthened the individual and performative aspects.

Turning to the in-action aspect, or how research use takes place, the authors' hypotheses, which they tested in a survey ($N = 828$), were (a) whether teachers' research use increased if and when their colleagues' use of research increased, (b) whether teachers perceived that they worked in a trusting environment, (c) whether teachers perceived that they worked in an environment that supports research use, and (d) whether teachers perceived that their school encouraged them to experiment

with new ways of working. The results show that although all four factors had some relevance for the teachers, by far the most influential factors were how the teachers experienced the supportiveness of their school in encouraging them to use research findings and the extent to which teachers reported that research played an important role in informing their teaching practice.

Thus, societal ties emerged as crucial for mobilising research use. Based on this finding, and also by shedding light on the power dimension, the authors drew the implication that besides encouraging research use from the top down—including ensuring that teachers have opportunities to share and engage in research-informed learning conversations—there should be a focus on using social network approaches increasingly to support research use, for example, by identifying teacher 'opinion formers' to lead local processes towards increasing research engagement among their colleagues. If we then turn to the phenomenological aspect, this study mainly depicts teachers as recipients and users of research to be enacted in their practice, and the focus was mainly on the factors that could enhance research use. The findings, however, identify the teachers themselves as key drivers in the enhancement of research use in schools, recognising the need for the agentic position of the profession.

Despite concluding by recognizing the need for an agentic position of the profession, the study can be mainly placed within a broader discourse emphasizing improvement and implementation. Using the multidimensional framework assisted us in getting a deeper insight into how the teaching profession in this study was positioned.

Example Two: A More Agentic Perspective

In the second article, titled 'Barriers and Conditions for Teachers' Utilisation of Academic Knowledge', Schaik et al. (2018) presented a definitional starting point regarding research use that differs from the article in example one above:

> Yet the expertise of teachers is mostly based on insights they have acquired in their own practice, whereas knowledge from educational research hardly plays a role. Although teachers' practical knowledge and expertise are valuable for everyday classroom practice, new and innovative teaching practices can benefit from educational research. (…) This gap between research and practice is commonly acknowledged; researchers claim there is a knowledge base that teachers can use, but the latter experience barriers to access it. (p. 50)

The definitional aspect here is more tension-oriented as the authors took as their starting point the characteristics of the knowledge forms that characterise the profession as well as teachers' work. As such, it delimits itself from more linear conceptions of research use; at the same time, the authors emphasised the need for the increased use of research as it is likely that it will benefit teaching and, in turn, the students.

Following from the definitional aspect, there was a greater emphasis in the discourse in the article on the profession, its knowledge base, and how teachers learn

and develop. At the same time, the framing of the study, in terms of its literature review, evinced a deficit discourse as the literature offered reasons as to why teachers do not use research, such as time constraints, limited access to research, competence concerns, and so forth.

Turning to the in-action aspect, the article, on the basis of a systematic review, identified that research is increasingly showing structural collaboration—such as school–university partnerships and innovative communication networks—to be a promising strategy for improving teachers' utilisation of research knowledge. Moreover, the authors identified barriers and conditions for research use. They found that barriers at the individual level were related mainly to accessibility and competence, while a positive opinion about and interest in research knowledge were important conditions for research use. Concerning barriers at the research knowledge level, research has often shown both the content and form of research communication difficult to access and understand. Organisational factors, however, matter more than individual factors, particularly a supportive organisational structure. However, creating the right structures is not sufficient if doing so fails to create a culture for broadening knowledge sources seen as relevant. At the communication level, many articles emphasised the importance of effective communication between teachers and researchers while citing as barriers limited opportunities to meet researchers and the tensions that often arise when they do meet.

The authors of this article compared their results of Hemsley-Brown and Sharp's (2003) study and emphasised how the barriers to the use of research knowledge at all of these levels appear to be similar. However, they pointed to one specific shift—namely, that of the increased communication between teachers and researchers—as well as the call in several studies to establish more such structures to foster teachers' research use. While the authors emphasised this as a promising strategy, they rarely addressed its power aspects. There are clearly power aspects to discuss regarding relationships between researchers and teachers, in terms of both institutional structures and knowledge forms. Concerning the phenomenological perspective, however, teachers clearly had a more agentic position in research use than in example one.

Through this analysis, we have gained insight into the studies' depictions of the profession, and how it partly differs from the first article (Brown et al., 2018), upon which we further elaborate in the following discussion.

Conceptualising the Teaching Profession Within the Policy–Research–Practice Nexus

The multidimensional analysis of research use showed variations in the ways in which the two articles, published in the same year and in the same journal, depicted the profession (Brown et al., 2018; Schaik et al., 2018). In example one, the main emphasis was on improvement and implementation, and in example two, the article gave the profession a more agentic position. Despite these differences in the

framing, the two articles' in-action aspects pointed in similar directions in terms of the characteristics of teachers' research use: The main conclusion in both articles was that increased collaboration between teachers and researchers—including the importance of establishing structures where, for example, teachers serve as key innovators—is the way forward to increase the use of research in education. Although the two articles framed the positioning of the profession quite differently—from a more top-down professionalisation from above perspective in the first article to a stronger focus on professionalisation from within in the second article—this difference was not clearly reflected in the conclusions of either article in terms of a discussion about what this means analytically about how we understand and also then should understand research use. Put differently, when confronted with actual practices and knowledge, the key characteristics of the profession became visible—but the authors only addressed this to a limited extent in the discussion and implication parts of the articles.

Greater attention to the profession's conceptualisation in studies on research use could have led to the inclusion of perspectives that would have contextualised the conclusions differently. Including such a conceptualisation would also have consequences for the outline of the practical implications concerning how best to stimulate teachers to make more use of research in their daily work. This involves the relationship between professionalisation from above and professionalisation from within, both in terms of the performative and organisational dimensions. For example, previous research suggested that professionalisation processes benefit from a fruitful interaction between policy initiatives, and in the case of research use, it also refers to research initiatives and local development processes.

On the basis of this analysis, and going back to Boaz and Nutley's generations of studies on research use, we propose that there is a need for considering the development of studies that could represent *a fourth generation* of studies on research use—a generation of studies including a conception of the teaching profession to develop more profession-sensitive concepts and analytical perspectives. We argue that this is a necessary development to advance the research and discussions on research use and to encourage fruitful research use in professional practice, both in performative terms (how research use can contribute to developing professional practice) and in organisational terms (how research use can contribute to strengthening the professional collective).

Professionalisation from above has arguably gained another meaning in the case of research use in this chapter as it is the researchers who have the great responsibility to enhance research use. The concept of research use has thus been a fruitful entry point to enhance our understanding of the challenging area of relations between policy, research, and practice. Although researchers have often used the term 'nexus' to describe the ambivalence in different viewpoints over problems and solutions in education, they have described it only to a limited extent (see introductory chapter). The analysis of research use has shown that although policy presents it as a somewhat ideal way to develop professional practice and the profession, the conceptualisation of the profession can be decisive for its integration, and the

creation of more detrimental tensions, into professional practice. Research use can be an idea, a theoretical place, a meeting point, and an intersection where, ideally, different fields, actor groups, practices, or theoretical constructs meet in a productive manner. We argue that research on research use, including the conceptions of researchers working with professionals to encourage research use, requires a conception of the profession in order for research use to be a phenomenon where policy, research, and practice share some similar viewpoints. Otherwise, it could be an example of a nexus where different worldviews do not come together and therefore have limited influence.

Concluding Remarks

As the analysis in this chapter has shown, definitions of research use often utilise other terms and framings, and studies often investigate research use in terms of how we as researchers talk and write about it. A key question to ask is, 'What kind of research use develops the profession?' Yet there is also a need to scrutinise how the researchers using this term conceptualise it. Only with a conceptualisation of the profession can we develop a fuller understanding of the policy–research–practice nexus. A multidimensional analysis of studies on research use can assist us in getting a firmer grip on this problem by asking questions such as the following: 'How do researchers define research use?' 'How do researchers talk about research use?' 'Where and how does research use take place?' 'Who is participating in research use and in what roles?' 'How do researchers understand research use?' Studying teachers' research use by including a conception of the profession within this policy–research–practice nexus will contribute to the development of more profession-sensitive analytical concepts for both studying research use and employing research use in professional practice. Such a development is essential for developing research on research use, policymaking on research use, and actual research use in professional practice.

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