

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Glasgow (UofG)		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 23 Education		
Title of case study: Developing and supporting teachers as learners		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2008–2019		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): (1) Kay Livingston (2) Vivienne Baumfield (3) Ian Menter (4) Moira Hulme (5) Alison Devlin (6) Dely Elliot (7) Stuart Hall (8) Jon Lewin (9) Kevin Lowden	Role(s) (e.g. job title): (1) Professor of Educational Research Policy and Practice; (2) Professor of Pedagogy; (3) Professor of Teacher Education; (4) Senior Lecturer; (5) Honorary Research Fellow; (6) Senior Lecturer; (7) Research Officer; (8) Research Information Officer; (9) Research Officer.	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: (1) 2007–present (2) 2007–2015 (3) 2004–2012 (4) 2006–2016 (5) 2005–2020 (6) 2005–present (7) 1992–2010; 2012–2013; 2010–present (8) 1998–2016 (9) 1987–present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2013–2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact Successful implementation of curriculum change in schools requires improved teacher education. However, insufficient attention has been given to supporting teachers' individual professional learning needs during curriculum reform. Research led by Livingston: (1) increased understanding of teachers as individual learners; (2) underpinned the development of a structured 'peer-mentoring model' that supports teachers' individual professional learning within the context of their pupils' learning and curriculum reforms. This work has made a significant impact on: (i) policy recommendations on teacher education being implemented in Scotland; (ii) the way support for teachers' learning is provided at local levels in Scotland and internationally; (iii) policy guidance on individualised teacher education at EU level; (iv) the approach to policy implementation in teacher education in 10 EU countries.		
2. Underpinning research		
2.1. Identifying the individual learning needs of teachers when curricula are reformed The impacts described below arise from a body of research and development work on teacher education and curriculum reforms in Scotland and internationally, carried out by Livingston with policy and practice communities since 2001. The findings of research projects (2001–2007) showed that while there have been shifts in teachers' practice to improve support for the individual learning needs of pupils, gaps remain in taking account of teachers as individual learners when implementing curriculum reforms. That is, teachers differ in their readiness to implement curriculum reforms and professional learning. Opportunities offered to large groups of teachers do not take sufficient account of this. Livingston's research has sought to understand teachers as learners during curriculum reform in Scotland (2013–2019), and to develop new approaches to teacher education through partnership with local councils and schools.		
2.2. Analysing teachers' readiness for curriculum reform In 2009, UofG-led research (Baumfield, Livingston, Menter, Hulme, Devlin, Elliot <i>et al</i>) analysed teachers' views about their readiness to implement Curriculum for Excellence in Scottish Schools. The curriculum reforms necessitated changes in teachers' practice, including increased levels of professional judgement within the curriculum to design learning to suit the individual needs of pupils. The research evidence identified considerable diversity in how ready teachers felt they were to implement the reforms. Their professional learning needs and the contexts in which they worked also differed considerably. This diversity presents a challenge for those providing teachers' professional development during major reform processes—and in sustaining their development. The findings confirmed that one-size-fits-all professional learning for teachers is insufficient to implement change in every classroom. In the provision of professional development, teachers cannot be considered as a homogenous group in terms of their		

knowledge, skills and beliefs about learning and teaching and in their readiness to implement curriculum reforms.

2.3. Developing new 'individualised' professional learning processes

Building on the earlier research, a series of collaborative research projects (2013–2016), led by Livingston with local authorities in Scotland, developed a new partnership approach to teachers' professional learning in the context of curriculum reform and the Scottish Government policy on closing the learning gap in pupil attainment. The emphasis on partnership in the change process enabled stakeholders within policy and practice communities involved in curriculum reform to understand individual teachers' professional learning needs from teachers themselves, rather than making assumptions about the types of learning they required. This changed the thinking of those involved in the partnership model about how best to design and implement tailored professional learning for *all* teachers during curriculum reform.

Working with local authority education managers and teachers in Scotland, Livingston led the design and piloting of a new professional learning approach which provided a training programme supporting structured dialogue between teachers. Teachers were able to develop their communicative competence through peer-mentoring which enabled them to identify and address their individual learning needs in their own schools, in relation to their own pupils' learning progression. This work has been extended internationally—the structured dialogue approach has been adopted to develop new partnership models with policymakers and other education stakeholders to take greater account of individualised teacher learning across a teacher's career—in Denmark, Austria, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain and Turkey.

2.4. Key research findings

The key findings from this body of research in relation to the impacts claimed (in section 4 below) are as follows:

- Teachers need individualised support for their own professional learning in relation to their pupils;
- Tailoring support for all teachers as individual learners effectively is a policy, resource and expertise challenge, requiring a re-visioning of approaches to professional development in schools;
- Partnership models of teacher education involving multiple stakeholders (e.g. universities, local authorities and schools) are needed to develop and sustain differentiated approaches in the context of teachers' career-long professional learning;
- Focused and structured peer-mentoring can meet teachers' individual professional learning needs. However, specific preparation and guidance is required for teachers to engage in a structured dialogue approach and enable them to develop the communicative competence to support and challenge each other effectively through peer-mentoring.

3. References to the research

3.1. Baumfield, V., Livingston, K., Menter, I., Hulme, M., Devlin, A.M., Elliot, D., Hall, S., Lewin, J. and Lowden, K. (2009) [Curriculum for Excellence Draft Experiences and Outcomes: Collection, analysis and reporting of data: Final report](#). Project Report. Learning and Teaching Scotland, Glasgow, UK. [available on request from HEI]

3.2. Livingston, K. (2016) [Pedagogy and curriculum: teachers as learners](#). In: Wyse, D., Hayward, L. and Pandya, J. (eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment*. SAGE Publications Ltd.: London, pp. 325–340. ISBN 9781446297025. [available on request from HEI]

3.3. Livingston, K. (2014) [Teacher educators: hidden professionals?](#) *European Journal of Education*, 49(2), pp. 218–232. (doi: [10.1111/ejed.12074](https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12074))

3.4. Livingston, K. and Hutchinson, C. (2017) [Developing teachers' capacities in assessment through career-long professional learning](#). *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice*, 24(2), pp. 290–307. (doi: [10.1080/0969594X.2016.1223016](https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2016.1223016))

3.5. Livingston, K. (2012) [Teachers as learners at the centre of system, culture and practice change](#). In: Madalinska-Michalak, J., Niemi, H. and Chong, S. (eds.) *Research, Policy and Practice in Teacher Education in Europe*. Series: Teacher education policy in Europe network. University of Lodz: Lodz, Poland, pp. 27–41. ISBN 9788375258097. [available on request from HEI]

3.6. Livingston, K. and Shiach, L. (2019) [Development of a new partnership model of teacher education: opportunities and challenges](#). In: Al Barwani, T., Flores, M. A. and Imig, D. (eds.) *Leading Change in Teacher Education: Lessons from Countries and Education Leaders around the Globe*. Series: Teacher quality and school development. Routledge: Abingdon, pp. 161–175. ISBN 9781138310988. [available on request from HEI]

Evidence of research quality: Outputs **[3.3]** and **[3.4]** were published in high-ranking, peer-reviewed education journals. Output **[3.2]** was an invited contribution to a prestigious peer-reviewed edited collection. Output **[3.5]** and **[3.6]** were invited contributions to international peer-reviewed edited books. Output **[3.1]** was an influential research report that influenced curriculum writers to make amendments to Curriculum for Excellence implemented in schools across Scotland in 2011.

4. Details of the impact

4.1. The implementation of national teacher education policy

In 2010, the Scottish Government established a review of teacher education in Scotland, which made specific policy recommendations on mentoring in the [Teaching Scotland's Future Report](#) (2011). Based upon the underpinning body of research, Livingston was subsequently commissioned by Education Scotland (2013–2014) to lead a pilot model of teacher education in the context of career-long professional learning (working in partnership with local authority managers and teachers in Aberdeenshire and North Lanarkshire) (confirmed by the project summary reports **[5A]**). Further impact has been achieved through: (i) the roll out of a 'peer-mentoring model' developed in these projects to other local authorities; (ii) the implementation of subsequent policy guidelines on partnership models of teacher education. Details of these impacts are outlined below:

4.2. Changes to policy and practice at local authority and school levels

Livingston's pilot project (outlined in section 4.1 above) underpinned the development of an innovative peer-mentoring model and the implementation of tailored professional development for teachers. This approach has changed teachers' practice through individualised structured mentoring conversations, which focus on analysis of pupils' work in relation to specific learning intentions. This allows mentees to focus on pupils' learning needs, provide more specific feedback and plan their next steps in learning and teaching accordingly. The process simultaneously improves pupil learning while focusing on specific areas of teachers' professional development within the context of Curriculum for Excellence. The impact on school leaders and teachers is exemplified in evidence provided by one of the Headteachers from North Lanarkshire. He called his engagement in the mentor training his "*Einstein moment*" and endorsed the partnership model as: "*the very thing I was looking for [...] a framework which allowed me to change my practice, quite significantly*" **[5B]**. Since 2015, the mentoring model and training initiated through the research has supported the embedding of mentoring as a means of professional learning, which is now sustained by Local Authority Officers in North Lanarkshire Council (confirmed by statement **[5C]**, North Lanarkshire Policy Officer).

The peer-mentoring model was also implemented with 1,193 teachers in all 169 schools in Aberdeenshire between 2014–2019. The Quality Improvement Officer at Aberdeenshire Council assessed the impact of Livingston's research, which changed the local council policy of support to include releasing some mentors full-time to work with case-loads of teachers. She wrote: "*there is clear evidence that those who have undertaken the role of full release mentor over a period of time have not only benefitted from the quality of input from Professor Kay Livingston in*

terms of developing their skills and knowledge, but have also gained in confidence [...] The strong team ethos has also meant that “good practice” is shared in a way that is both sustainable and adaptable’ [5D]. The mentoring model is now self-sustaining. Mentor Support Officer A confirms that: *“In my new role this session I have been able to apply the content from my mentor training to benefit a broader area across the whole of Aberdeenshire supporting School Based Mentors”* (statement from Mentor Support Officer A [5E]).

Following on from successful piloting in Aberdeenshire and North Lanarkshire, the research led to the provision of peer-mentor training in partnership with 122 teachers and school leaders in Stirling Council and 40 headteachers/teachers in Aberdeen City Council. This work resulted in practice changes in the schools’ approaches to tailored teacher learning through structured peer-mentoring. In other areas, the model was adopted as a ‘whole-school’ approach to curriculum reform in relation to the Scottish Government policy on Closing the Attainment Gap. For example, in one primary school in Clackmannanshire, all 15 teachers were trained in peer-mentoring alongside the School Leader. He reported: *“The scaffolding of teachers’ professional dialogue was important because focused dialogue about learning was not always taking place between teachers without the conscious stimulus that mentoring provided [...] All teachers recognised an impact on their own capacity to reflect upon practice, with conversations providing a clear focus on specific aspects of pupil work”* (statement from School Development Plan Report [5F]).

4.3. The implementation of peer-learning and mentoring internationally

Based upon the underpinning research, Livingston was invited by the European Commission to coordinate a series of intensive peer-learning events held with policy representatives from 10 different EU countries in Vienna (2014), Tallinn (2016), Leuven (2017), Zagreb (2019), Cyprus (2019) and Dublin (2020). These events led representatives from Hungary, Denmark and Malta to invite Livingston to work directly with school leaders, teachers and teacher educators to provide training to implement the peer-mentoring model through partnership. For example, the Director of Education of Køge Local Council, Denmark, wrote: *‘[Livingston’s training] hit them right between the eyes, where they needed knowledge and challenge [...] Both my staff and the headteachers have been trying out the mentoring approach [...] We have made it part of one of our procedures’* (statement from the Director of Education of Køge Local Council [5G]).

4.4. Informing policy guidance on individualised teacher education at EU level

Livingston’s work on partnership models of professional development has also shaped policy changes in teacher education internationally. Keynote speeches on her research at European Presidency Conferences in Dublin (2013) and Lithuania (2015) led to membership of the European Commission’s Strategic Education and Training 2020 Working Group on Schools. This work led Livingston to be invited to contribute to the publication of *Policy Guidelines on Shaping Teacher Education for the European Commission* (2015) and *Supporting teacher and school leader careers: a policy guide* (2020) (Livingston’s contribution and research is recognised in both documents [5H]). These guidelines summarise five years of intensive policy co-operation and reflection, involving more than 35 European Education Ministries. The Executive Summaries are translated into all 24 official languages of the EU and have been widely disseminated to policymakers and stakeholders in teacher education.

Policy Officer B of the European Commission wrote: *‘Professor Livingston’s contribution over recent years has been instrumental in shaping the dialogue and the presentation of results by ensuring both scientific robustness and relevance for policy-making across education systems in Europe and beyond. She has ensured that the voice of teacher educators is part of European policy co-operation on school education. Her research and development work in relation to teacher education, and in particular her work focusing on teachers as learners in the context of career-long professional learning, has truly enriched this work.’* (confirmed by statement [5I]).

4.5. Informing the implementation of teacher education policy in EU countries

In 2017, Livingston was invited by [European Schoolnet](#) to work with policy representatives from 10 EU countries (Austria, Greece, Estonia, Hungary, Spain, Portugal, Malta, Turkey, Slovakia and Lithuania). As part of the TeachUp project, Livingston wrote a series of practical Country Dialogue Lab Guidelines based on her underpinning research. This work has shaped policy representatives’ understanding of teachers as learners. It also led to the implementation of a

partnership approach to policy development in teacher education through a series of structured dialogue labs involving 826 teachers, teacher educators, researchers and policymakers. The Principal Adviser for Research and Innovation at European Schoolnet wrote: *'Professor Kay Livingston's research has played an important role in the development of new teacher education models [...] This work has enhanced policy representatives' understanding of teachers as individual learners and changed their understanding in several ways. One of them is the adoption of the Country Dialogue Lab (CDL) model by partners of the TeachUP project in their repertoire of practice to develop dialogue between policy-makers and teachers in other contexts'* (confirmed by statement [5J]).

4.6. Beneficiaries

Livingston's research primarily benefits practitioners and policymakers. It demonstrates that teachers are learners throughout their careers, and that it is necessary, in reform and development processes, to support their individual professional learning in their own schools—and most importantly—in relation to the pupils that they work with. In this respect, pupils are the secondary beneficiaries of this work. As Teacher C from Aberdeenshire acknowledged: *"It's mentoring for pupil learning [...] everything we're doing [...] with Kay [Livingston] is to improve pupil learning"* (confirmed by statement [5K]).

4.7. Next steps

Based upon the underpinning research, Livingston was invited to provide guidance and advice for a 30-month EU-funded project on 'Implementing an Effective Induction System for Novice Teachers in Flanders', which began in May 2020. Designing induction guidance as part of the professional continuum (from initial teacher education to continuous professional development) is key to the Flemish government's objective of retaining teachers in all schools in order to address the issue of teacher shortage. The project, which uses the Dialogue Lab model established by Livingston for the development of new approaches to teacher education, looks set to generate significant impact beyond the REF2021 period.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[5A] Collated evidence: (i) Livingston, K. and Shiach, L. (2013) [Teaching Scotland's Future, Mentoring Pilot Partnership Project](#). Summary Report. Education Scotland, Livingston, UK; (ii) Livingston, K. and Shiach, L. (2014) [Teaching Scotland's Future: Further Developing and Sustaining a Strengthened Model of Professional Learning through Mentoring Processes in the Context of Career-long Professional Learning](#). Summary Report. Education Scotland, Livingston, UK [PDFs available].

[5B] Headteacher, North Lanarkshire Council (transcript of quote from audio recording) [PDF available] [audio recording available on request from HEI].

[5C] Testimonial from Policy Officer, North Lanarkshire [PDF available].

[5D] Testimonial from Local Authority Officer, Aberdeenshire Council [PDF available].

[5E] Testimonial letter from former full-release mentor now responsible for supporting and sustaining mentoring model in Aberdeenshire Council [PDF available].

[5F] Menstrie Primary School Development Plan Report from School Leader [PDF available].

[5G] Testimonial letter from Director of Education in Køge Local Council [PDF available].

[5H] Collated evidence: (i) Policy Guidelines on Shaping Teacher Education (2015) for the European Commission (Livingston's contribution to the Policy Guidelines identified in the Acknowledgements); (ii) Supporting teacher and school leader careers: a policy guide (2020) (Livingston's research embedded in document on pp. 40–49) [PDFs available].

[5I] Testimonial letter from Policy Officer, Schools and Multilingualism, European Commission (Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture) [PDF available].

[5J] Testimonial letter from Principal Adviser for Research and Innovation, European Schoolnet (confirms the 10 EU countries involved with examples of uptake provided) [PDF Available].

[5K] Collated evidence from interviews with teacher mentors – Quote from full release mentor Aberdeenshire Council [PDF available].