

Institution: University of Hertfordshire		
Unit of Assessment: 23 – Education		
Title of case study: School-based Teacher Education: informing policy and developing professional practice for educating new teachers in schools.		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2012 – 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Dr Elizabeth White	Principal Lecturer	2005 – present
Dr Claire Dickerson	Research Fellow	2007 – present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2016 – 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>School-based teacher education, where experienced teachers have responsibility for the professional learning and development of student teachers, has increased markedly in recent years. University of Hertfordshire (UH) research exploring the challenges facing school-based teacher educators (SBTEs) and identifying their professional development needs has had an impact on policy and practice in the UK and overseas. The research shaped key elements of new national standards, published by the UK Government, to improve the consistency and quality of school-based mentoring for trainee teachers, and a new professional framework for teacher educators, published by a national association that reaches 10,000 trainee teachers. UH's White and Dickerson translated their insights on challenges experienced by teacher educators into novel online professional development resources that have been widely used by SBTEs, teacher education providers and their partner schools, and practitioner associations internationally. This has resulted in qualitative evidence of significant impact on professional practice and learning. Adapted for Dutch speakers, these resources have also influenced teacher education practice in the Netherlands.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Following far-reaching educational reforms introduced in 2010, the UK Government has relocated 50% of initial teacher education from Higher Education Institutions into schools in England (Department for Education (DfE), 2017). A similar shift towards school-based teacher education also occurred in other OECD countries. This has led to an increase in the number of school-based teacher educators (SBTEs), who have been asked to assume greater responsibility for the professional learning and development of student teachers and mentors. SBTEs have a particularly complex dual role of teaching both pupils and student-teachers, often without access to a community of practice. While SBTE roles have diversified in response to these rapid structural changes in teacher education, many countries have no relevant professional learning policy. The European Commission's 2013 report <i>Supporting Teacher Educators for better learning outcomes</i> observed: '<i>Teacher educators are crucial players for maintaining – and improving – the high quality of the teaching workforce... Yet they are often neglected in policy-making, meaning ... teacher educators do not always get the support and challenge they need ... in terms of their education and professional development.</i>'</p> <p>Responding to this policy context, and recognising that SBTEs significantly influence the quality of teacher, and therefore classroom, education, White and Dickerson led a research programme exploring the learning and practice of professionals responsible for educating new teachers in schools. Their qualitative research sought to first understand the wider issue and then provide practical, deliverable solutions. Studies identified the experiences and learning needs of SBTEs, and those working in partnership with them, through interviews, questionnaires, reflective journals, student-teacher focus groups and stories of practice. The findings made the following contributions to the knowledge base: SBTEs need different professional knowledge from teachers and from university-based teacher educators; and dialogue is more effective than providing written resources alone to support their understanding of effective teaching approaches with student teachers [3.1].</p>		

The research indicated personal benefits of the teacher educator experience: building their capacity to lead continuing professional development (CPD) for their colleagues by growing their confidence; re-igniting a passion for pedagogy through increased engagement; and improving their classroom practice through becoming more reflective practitioners [3.2]. It also revealed the value that student teachers place on the complementary contributions of teacher educators from school and university to their learning, but there were concerns over the lack of recognition of the SBTE role. Developing professional knowledge is more challenging for SBTEs than university-based teacher educators as they may not have the requisite professional support through a teacher educator community of practice. This indicated a need for such a community whilst SBTEs are developing their new role [3.1]. The research made it clear that the dual role of SBTE and teacher adds greater complexity for the development of teacher educators' identity and confidence. The findings suggested that in developing high quality initial teacher education it is more important to focus on the development of the teacher educators than to be concerned about who employs them or the location of their work, and to recognise that all teacher educators have development needs and benefit from working together [3.3, 3.4].

These findings led to collaborative research, from July 2017, with Dr Miranda Timmermans, Applied Professor at Avans University of Applied Sciences (Breda, Netherlands) and Chair of the Dutch Association of Teacher Educators (VELON); similar issues exist for Dutch and English SBTEs. The team collected teacher educators' narratives on challenges experienced 'on the ground' in their professional practice [3.5, 3.6]. The stories revealed complexities of working across institutional borders with multiple stakeholders. Many teacher educators sought their own solution rather than discussing the challenges with others in the partnership. The stories provided authentic teacher educator voices for use as a professional learning tool in developing collaborative practices in initial teacher education partnerships [3.5, 3.6].

3. References to the research

- 3.1** White, E. (2013). Exploring the professional development needs of new teacher educators situated solely in school: pedagogical knowledge and professional identity. *Professional Development in Education*, 39(1), 82-98. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2012.708667>
- 3.2** White, E. (2014). Being a teacher and a teacher educator – developing a new identity? *Professional Development in Education*, 40(3), 436-449. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2013.782062>
- 3.3** White, E., Dickerson, C., & Weston, K. (2015). Developing an appreciation of what it means to be a school-based teacher educator. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(4), 445-459. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2015.1077514>
- 3.4** White, E., & Dickerson, C. (2016). Supporting the re-balancing of initial teacher education within university and school partnerships. In *Journal of the World Federation of Associations for Teacher Education* (2 ed., Vol. 1) http://www.worldfate.org/docpdf/journal_01-02.pdf
- 3.5** White, E., Timmermans, M., & Dickerson, C. (2020). Learning from Professional Challenges Identified by School and Institute-based Teacher Educators within the Context of School-University Partnership. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 2020, [1803272]. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2020.1803272>
- 3.6** White, E., Timmermans, M., & Dickerson, C. (2020). Learning from Stories about the Practice of Teacher Educators in Partnerships between Schools and Higher Education Institutions. In A. Swennen, & E. White (Eds.), *Being a Teacher Educator: Research-Informed Methods for Improving Practice* (pp. 126-141). Taylor & Francis.

4. Details of the impact

Research by White and Dickerson into the role, experiences and learning needs of SBTEs has informed policy frameworks at European and national level that facilitate the professional development of teacher educators. Their findings were translated into learning resources and tools that have supported English and Dutch-speaking SBTEs in developing their practice to enhance the quality of school-based teacher education. Beneficiaries of the research include:

DfE policymakers; SBTEs; further and higher education institutions; initial teacher education providers; national and international teacher education associations.

Informing the development of national-level policy

In 2015 the Secretary of State for Education asked an expert group, chaired by the Teaching Schools Council, to develop new national standards to bring greater coherence and consistency to school-based mentoring arrangements for trainee teachers. In response to an invitation, White and Dickerson submitted written evidence based on the research in 3.3. In their submission, White and Dickerson identified the key skills and attributes that mentors need. These included approachability; sensitivity for working with adults of differing personalities and development needs; an ability to support trainees to critically reflect on their own practice [5.1, p19]. They highlighted the benefits to mentors from having this role. These included: the opportunity to deconstruct and articulate their practice for their own professional development; develop transferable skills in lesson observation, feedback, mentoring and coaching; engage with the research community to further improve their practice [5.1, p20]. The resulting *National Standards for school-based initial teacher training mentors*, published by the Government in July 2016, incorporated key elements of the UH evidence [5.1]. The document included: ‘... *effective training supports mentors to further improve their practice by training them in how to deconstruct and articulate their practice*’ [5.1, p7]. It said: ‘*Trainees should use the standards to ... develop transferable skills, for example, in lesson observation and feedback*’ [5.1, p10]. The Standards specified that mentors should ‘*be approachable*’ and ‘*encourage the trainee to reflect on their practice*’ [5.1, p11]. They also said mentors should engage with academic research to develop their own mentoring practice and enable trainees ‘*to access, utilise and interpret robust educational research to inform their teaching*’ [5.1, p12].

The research led by White ‘*made a significant contribution*’ to a new policy framework designed by The National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT) to enhance the professional development of SBTEs [5.2]. NASBTT is a registered charity that represents School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) providers, School Direct Lead Schools, Teaching Schools and HEIs. It has more than 200 members representing in excess of 10,000 trainees; its members include 96% of accredited SCITTs [5.2]. Based on her research, White helped NASBTT to develop its *Professional Framework for Teacher Educators* in 2019, which underpinned NASBTT’s subsequent publication of practical tools and resources (further details in the next sub section on developing practice). This marked ‘*the first time NASBTT has provided courses, resources and a framework specifically to support the professional learning of school-based teacher educators, and this provision is unique within England*’ [5.2]. The UH research was also cited in a 2017 report by not-for-profit advocacy organisation Cambridge Primary Review Trust that sought to present evidence for strengthening initial teacher training in primary schools. *Policy and Research Evidence in the ‘Reform’ of Primary Initial Teacher Education in England* cited 3.2 and 3.3 seven times throughout the report [5.3].

Developing the professional practice of school-based teacher educators

White and Dickerson used their research findings and insights to create a novel, evidence-based, online CPD resource *For Learning in Teacher Education (FLiTE)*. This resource comprises a set of 12 stories that cover challenges in practice in initial teacher education partnerships; the stories represent real scenarios (collected from teacher educators during the research process) designed to provoke reflection, facilitate discussion, and support development of professional practice. Each story is cross-referenced to the DfE’s national standards. The FLiTE platform is aimed at both practitioners and training/education providers and has four main objectives:

- Inspire critical reflection on school-based practice in teacher education;
- Deepen the professional learning and development of teacher educators;
- Develop collaborative working in initial teacher education partnerships;
- Enhance the quality of learning opportunities for student teachers.

White and Dickerson publicised the FLiTE resources through social media, professional associations and teacher educator networks. Between its launch in December 2018 and 31 December 2020 there were 1,107 direct downloads of the resources from the FLiTE website [5.4]. White worked with NASBTT to develop a suite of Teacher Educator Programmes (TEP) designed to provide professional development for teacher educators at all stages of their careers. The FLiTE resources were used for the TEP Level 3 Programme, which focuses on developing the skills of senior mentors who train other teacher educators in the TEP Level 1 and TEP Level 2 Programmes [5.2]. The Level 3 mentors reported that they would use FLiTE resources in the Level 1 training [5.2]. The Level 3 programme lead said that delegates '*really liked the stories*' and '*could see that the stories would be good [for] Level 1 ... (i.e. mentor training) ... [t]hey felt that the scenarios provided a helpful alternative approach*' to role playing [5.5]. She felt that the FLiTE resources '*...provoked the teacher educators' thinking about their understanding of the mentor role and the role of training trainees*' [5.5]. NASBTT's *Professional Framework for Teacher Educators* (covered in the previous policy sub section), which White helped to develop, underpinned the Association's Teacher Educator and Mentoring Zone (TEMZ), launched in April 2020. Made available to all NASBTT members, TEMZ houses a suite of professional development materials and signposts to the FLiTE resources [5.2].

The resources were used in workshops hosted by the International Professional Development Association; Association for Teacher Education in Europe; the UH Network of Teacher Educators (a 68-member community of practice launched by White); Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers; and European Association for Practitioner Research on Improving Learning. Feedback included: '*Narrative: so specific but in the same time so general. It touches us all. We could all identify/contribute*'; '*...has certainly made me reflect on this situation – would I handle it differently now?*' [5.6]. In 2019, SBTEs working with UH (over 500 schools, 465 active in 2019) evaluated the resources. Comments included: '*...liking the focus on professional development and quality assurance*'; '*...working through one of the FLiTE stories...has been absolutely fantastic. The quality of discussion that it provoked, and the thinking has just been invaluable to the professional mentors*' [5.6]. During a professional conversation for mentoring certification, an assessor noted: '*looking at research and case studies [FLiTE resources] enabled deep thinking about [mentor's] own actions leading to modified actions*' [5.6].

In addition to the direct impact of FLiTE, White's two books for practitioners underpinned by her research in 3.1 and 3.2 resulted in an invitation to co-lead, since 2014, annual *Becoming a Teacher Educator* workshops run by the Teacher Education Advancement Network for university-based teacher educators in the UK. The most recent workshop in 2019 saw 69 teacher educators participate, with a similar number attending in each of the previous years [5.7]. This represents the induction of about 40% of newly appointed university-based teacher educators each year in the UK [5.7]. The FLiTE resources have become an important part of these training workshops. The training lead said: '*We recommend these [FLiTE resources] as valuable and relevant resources during the workshops each year and encourage participants to use them in their mentor training*' [5.7].

Influencing mentor training policy of Initial Teacher Education providers

At the 2016 Initial Teacher Training Provider Regional Network, facilitated by the National College of Teaching and Leadership, White shared her research findings about needing to recognise SBTEs and support their CPD. Four training providers attended UH to discuss these issues. White then worked with The Pilgrim Partnership, a school-centred initial teacher training provider, to recognise their mentors' work through developing existing UH Coach-Mentor Certification and aligning it with the *National Standards for school-based initial teacher training mentors*. This certification was further developed to include mentors working with UH through partnership schools. Since 2017, UH has awarded certification to 89 mentors [5.8].

Facilitating collaborations with practitioner associations overseas to effect policy and practice change

Through the research collaboration with Timmermans, the FLiTE resources were developed into a book and published in Dutch on *Platform Samen Opleiden en Professionaliseren*, a Dutch Government-funded support tool for teacher educators across the Netherlands. Between its launch in October 2020 and December 31, 2020, the book of resources was downloaded more than 700 times, making it the most popular download on the website [5.9]. A copy of the book was distributed to all 106 school-university partnerships in the Netherlands and used in an online conference attended by 25 teacher educators [5.9]. Feedback demonstrated that the book is used by both school and university-based teacher educators during CPD activities and is well received 'because of the practical usefulness' [5.9].

The research led to invitations for White to contribute to annual meetings (Brussels, 2016; Edinburgh 2017) of the International Forum for Teacher Educator Development (InFo-TED) and participate in the establishment of an international network to support teacher educators' professional learning [5.10, p1 and pp3-5]. InFo-TED is a partnership of eight university teacher education institutions in Europe that promotes the professional learning and development of teacher educators. White, recognised by InFo-TED as a key person in research on professional development of teacher educators, contributed to the increased discourse and culture change in this field, which drove changes in policy and strategy. Thus, InFo-TED's White Paper, *The Importance of Teacher Educators: Professional development imperatives* (2019), called for more formal support systems for teacher educators' learning and dedicated financial support for SBTE CPD programmes [5.10, p12], and the DfE's *Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy* (2019) included a breakthrough commitment to 'fully funded mentor training' [5.10, p40].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

5.1 National Standards for school-based initial teacher training mentors, UK Department for Education, July 2016. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-training-government-response-to-carter-review>; PDF copy of UH's written evidence provided.

5.2 Corroborating statement from the Executive Director, National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers.

5.3 McNamara, O., Murray, J. & Phillips, R. Policy and Research Evidence in the 'Reform' of Primary Initial Teacher Education in England, Cambridge Primary Review Trust, 2017. <https://cprtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/McNamara-report-170127.pdf> (1 citation on p23; 3 citations on p27; 3 citations on p28).

5.4 Analytics report (available as PDF) detailing FLiTE Web and Twitter stats.

5.5 Corroborating email from the lead of the Level 3 and Level 4 Programmes for NASBTT.

5.6 Evaluation report detailing feedback from users of the FLiTE resources.

5.7 Corroborating statement from an Emeritus Professor of Professional Learning, University of Cumbria.

5.8 Coach-Mentoring certification data, UH Centre for Educational Leadership, 2017-19 (PDF).

5.9 Corroborating statement from Avans University of Applied Sciences on the reach of the adapted FLiTE resources for Dutch speakers.

5.10 Compilation report: invitations to InFo-TED meetings; InFo-TED White Paper; DfE's Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy (2019).