

Strathclyde Enhanced Partnership Initiative Evaluation Report

August 2013



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Strathclyde Enhanced Partnership Initiative: Evaluation report

Part 1 Setting the scene

1. Background

The Strathclyde Enhanced Partnership Initiative (SEPI) is one of ‘a ‘family’ of pilots in the west of Scotland taking forward recommendations from *Teaching Scotland’s Future* (Donaldson 2011).¹ The thinking behind this pilot built on previous pilot projects developed by Glasgow University with Glasgow City Council and North Ayrshire Council which were evaluated in Professor Ian Menter’s reports of 2011 and 2012². The pilots in Strathclyde and Glasgow universities both focus on developing partnerships between university, education authority and schools to support students’ professional development and assess their progress during placement.

The detail of SEPI is outlined in part1 of this report. In simple terms it seeks to modify the traditional ‘apprenticeship’ arrangements for placement where a student learns from one or more teachers, and university tutors visit periodically to gather the school’s views, assess the student’s capabilities and provide advice.

SEPI allocates more students and therefore more tutor time to a cluster of schools to improve partnership relationships through more regular contacts between tutors, teachers and students, and to bring together the evidence from tutors and teachers to provide better ongoing and summative assessment of the student.

Peer observation and reflection aim to harness teamwork and learning together in discussing practice and reaching a shared view on improvements needed. Cross-sector sessions are designed to emphasise the many shared elements of practice across sectors.

¹ Donaldson, G. 2011. *Teaching Scotland’s Future*. Edinburgh: The Scottish Government.

² Menter, I., Baumfield, V., Carroll, M., Dickson, B., Hulme, M., Lowden, K. and Mallon, W. 2011. *The Glasgow West Teacher Education Initiative: A Clinical Approach to Teacher Education Evaluation report*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow; Menter, I. and Lowden, K. 2012. *Teacher Education Clinical Model 2012: Final evaluation report*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow.

SEPI was piloted in two learning communities within Glasgow City Council. The schools involved were Shawlands Academy and four associated primary schools (Langside, Shawlands, Blackfriars and Cuthbertson) and Smithycroft Secondary School and six associated primaries (Avenue End, Sunnyside, Wallacewell, Carntyne, Cranhill and Royston). In the two secondary schools a total of 15 PGDE students across a wide range of subjects took part during two placements in Feb–March and April-May 2013. In primary schools, 13 PGDE and 16 BEd3 students piloted the initiative on placement during April-May 2013.³

A wider partnership across the family of pilots was also fostered through discussions and sharing practice within a ‘Teacher Education Reference Group’ (TERG) convened by Professor Graham Donaldson with senior representatives from Glasgow City Council and both universities. The set of pilots share common aims and features and seek to communicate and promote good practice across the wider partnership.

The roots of the pilots in the philosophy of *Teaching Scotland’s Future* meant that the broad principles underpinning the pilots were shared. Significant features common to all of the pilots are set out on Page 11.

³ We would like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to all the tutors, teachers, students and Glasgow education authority colleagues involved in SEPI for their openness and willingness to share their practice and views with us during the evaluation.

2. An influential strand of the literature on partnership: from learning rounds to peer observation and post observation dialogue

The second chapter of Ian Menter's evaluation report of 2011 (footnote 2) provides an overview of selected collaborative approaches to partnership in teacher education. It sets these in the changing context of teacher education in the United Kingdom and across the world, with a particular focus on developments over the last thirty years. It summarises, and briefly evaluates, the literature on partnership development that draws on a diverse range of partnership models. Ideas from this literature influenced *Teaching Scotland's Future* and the subsequent Glasgow University and Strathclyde University pilots.

It is not intended to repeat such an overview here but one strand of the literature which became influential and prominent in the Glasgow University pilots, and which was changed and customised further in shaping SEPI is examined in depth. This strand of the literature relates to the 'clinical model' of teacher development with its accompanying activity of 'learning rounds'.

"Privacy of practice produces isolation; isolation is the enemy of improvement." Richard Elmore

Learning rounds apply the ideas used in clinical rounds in hospitals to the professional development of teachers and to school improvement. Their use in education stemmed from the work of Richard Elmore at Harvard, aiming to add to 'isolated' professional thinking about practice with shared inquiry and dialogue based on direct observation. In Scotland, the (then) national CPD team, the Scottish Centre for Studies in School Administration and *The Scottish Teachers for a New Era* project at Aberdeen University all promoted learning rounds. The approach has been adopted in several education authorities, some universities and many schools.

The practice of learning rounds is still at an early stage in Scotland. The valuable idea of groups of teachers observing and discussing practice together has been applied and adapted in different contexts. The approach is often valued as a way of activating shared inquiry at the point where it matters most, in the classroom where learning and teaching is taking place. Positive, though impressionistic, evidence from teachers using the approach has propelled its dissemination. Adaptations have resulted in

different versions of practice⁴ claiming the title of ‘learning rounds’. There is currently a lack of published evidence evaluating learning rounds so that their dissemination has depended on teachers welcoming the broad, underlying principles, rather than on empirical evidence about their impact on practice or learners.

The extract below⁵ illustrates how Richard Elmore developed the idea of learning rounds across the wide canvas of a ‘network’ of schools and describes several of its features as applied in this context.

The basic process is relatively simple. A network of superintendents, principals, teachers, and central office staff agree to meet at regular intervals, usually monthly, each time at a different school. They spend the morning circulating around classrooms, observing the teaching and learning that takes place there. Then, in an afternoon meeting, they debrief what they have seen. To prime their observations, they are asked to address a “problem of practice” the school has committed to solve, such as improving math proficiency or literacy, within the context of a “theory of action” the school has identified to achieve the goal. Theories of action might include increasing teacher knowledge, upping the complexity of the material students [that is, pupils] are asked to learn, and/or changing the way students are asked to learn that material. In the debriefing meeting, members are further asked to take four steps:

- Describe what they observed in class
- Analyse any patterns that emerge
- Predict the kind of learning they might expect from the teaching they observed
- Recommend the next level of work that could help the school better achieve their desired goal

Though the concept of rounds may seem straightforward, in reality, it is an extremely difficult program for participants to execute. The difficulty starts

⁴ Oates, C. 2012. *Learning Rounds: to what extent does the theory of Learning Rounds relate to practice in Scottish schools and theoretical models of professional learning communities?* Glasgow: University of Strathclyde.

⁵ Blanding, M. 2009. *Treating the ‘Instructional Core’: Education Rounds*. Accessed 19 August 2013 at <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news-impact/2009/05/treating-the-instructional-core-education-rounds/>.

with the challenge of describing what they see without being judgemental. “In order to learn how to do it, they have to unlearn certain other things,” says Elmore. “People are used to making snap judgements and saying what they like and don’t like.” Stepping back and determining what is actually happening in a classroom before judging what should be happening, however, is a crucial step to changing instruction for the better.

“Rounds puts everybody in the learning mode and says we all need to figure this out together,” says Elizabeth City, director of instructional strategy for Harvard’s Executive Leadership Program for Educators. “It says let’s take the evidence before us, see where we are, and see what we think we need to do next to make progress, instead of people with formal authority who are supposed to have all of the answers”.

Several features of this approach in this context are worth highlighting. Observations are over a half-day in several classes in order to build up a sample of practice relating to the problem or issue under scrutiny. Visits to each class are relatively short with a focus on evidence-based *description* of features of practice rather than on making judgements. The intention is to identify *patterns across classes* to enable aspects of practice to be linked with observed positive responses or outcomes from learners so that these can be used to form ‘theories of action’. Essentially the approach asks teachers to leave aside their existing notions of good practice and derive fresh conceptions from first principles using observation and analysis to identify patterns and take action.

A key question in developing professional learning during students’ placements is how this approach might be used or adapted *in the particular context of placement* rather than within a whole school or learning community approach to professional reflection and improvement described above.

Many features of a learning rounds approach have significant potential for improving students’ learning on placement. Observations are made at the point where learning is taking place in the classroom, where the authenticity and complexity of practice is in sharp focus as theory meets reality. Discussions between experienced colleagues and developing teachers have the potential for extending the traditional staff development repertoire to include a blend of questioning, observation reflection and advice, paralleling the activities of clinical rounds in hospitals. The idea of

shared observation and reflection is simple and powerful: it marks a healthy shift from the reflections of the individual professional to harness the power of thinking, enquiring and learning together. It sits very well with current approaches to collaborative learning, improvement through self-evaluation and reflective practice. It encourages collegiality and teachers' increasing involvement and responsibility for their professional development. Using a defined aspect for observation makes the process of lesson observation and discussion more manageable and more focused for student teachers. A focus for observation can also be negotiated and designed to target specific areas of need for individual students or groups of students. A clear emphasis on shared discussion of the next steps in improvement helps to induct students into the improvement process. It is beneficial to make full use of these significant strengths in making adaptations to approaches based on observation and dialogue in developing student learning.

Adaptations to Elmore's use of learning rounds need to be made because some of its features do not sit easily within a student placement. One practical constraint is that shared observations of practice during current placements are usually too small in number and range to support an open-ended approach to identifying and describing *patterns across classes* and relating these to learner responses. A second constraint is that student teachers are inexperienced, and need support in quickly describing features of practice and seeing patterns. This is not to argue that established notions of good practice should not be scrutinised critically by student teachers or teachers in the light of their observations and experience: they should. But there is currently insufficient time and support on placement for students to observe a sufficient sample of practice, identify patterns and relate these to differing learner responses in order to derive good practice and theories of action from first principles.

Given these constraints during placements, dialogue and *evaluation* using existing notions of good practice inevitably and appropriately enters the practice and discussion surrounding shared observation. In Scotland, curriculum advice, HGiOS, AifL and GTCS standards provide sound reference points for discussion and evaluation of good practice.

The use of an approach based on learning rounds in the Glasgow University pilots provided a useful basis of experience for SEPI discussions. In these pilots an individual student taught part of a lesson and was observed by 2-3 students, a tutor and a teacher from the school. The observers had a particular focus for their observations and after the

observation would withdraw to carry out a discussion. The emphasis in the discussion was on describing in a clear and agreed way what had been observed and the evidence that supported comments, and on considering next steps. The evaluation report is clear that:

It was to be emphasised that neither the noted observations nor the subsequent discussions were to have any element that could be construed as judgemental about the performance of the student under observation.

This approach retained positive features of the clinical model but was not a purist application of that model and it evolved as experience of piloting increased. It received very positive comments from those involved in the Glasgow University pilots. Students benefited from discussions grounded in observed practice and from a sense of collaborative enquiry. A particular benefit cited by student teachers was that they observed others at the same stage of development experiencing similar successes and facing similar challenges.

The Glasgow University pilots also varied from the Elmore approach to learning rounds. The activity in placements focused on an individual lesson rather than on identifying patterns from a sample of lessons. Next steps related more to the needs of students than to whole school improvement aspects. Although the role of evaluation was circumscribed as indicated in the quotation above, there were signs of variation in practice in the extent to which a distinction between description and evaluation was maintained. Some students reported confusion between 'an assessment visit' and 'a learning round', suggesting a lack of clarity about their experience of the separation between description and evaluation. There was subsequent debate about whether it is possible in practice to promote improvement without making evaluative judgements about strengths and development needs. This suggested that the role of evaluation during discussions following lesson observations needed revisiting. Dialogue and debate around these issues set the context for the design in SEPI of what were termed 'shared observations'.

3. Setting direction for the SEPI Pilot

Professor Donald Christie, the head of the school of education in Strathclyde set up a small steering group to develop SEPI. This group consisted of colleagues from the University of Strathclyde with a Quality Improvement Officer (QIO) from Glasgow City Council. University colleagues teach on the B.Ed, PGDE Primary and PGDE Secondary courses at the University. The QIO was experienced in working with universities and in developing successful induction programmes for newly qualified teachers (NQTs). Beginning in June 2012, the steering group held a series of meetings. After some time a tutor was designated as 'Director of school and local authority partnership'. This had a major positive impact on the processes for decision-making and communication, and on promoting consistency of approach during the pilot.

The group agreed that any new model should evolve in realistic stages, which would be manageable for school staff and university tutors. It was intended that the Strathclyde initiative would contribute towards a national model of partnership. The steering group's goal was to promote genuine partnership with local authorities and schools by identifying core elements which were considered to be important in a new model and which could then act as a springboard for discussions with partners in schools. The detail of how the pilot would develop in practice would be informed by discussions between partners to promote a genuine sense of engagement and ownership.

The SEPI proposal paper⁶ sets out its key elements clearly, they are:

- Enhanced communication and contact between University and school staff leading to collaborative and shared assessment of students on placement
- Facilitating a vehicle for discursive professional development through self-evaluation, reflective practice, collegiality and individual responsibility for professional learning.
- Providing opportunities to discuss issues arising from self-evaluation and collegiate reflection e.g. twilight groups, seminars, exchange forums.

⁶ SEPI Proposal Paper: School of Education, University of Strathclyde. The SEPI flowchart is included as Appendix B.

These elements are highly consistent with the approach used in the Glasgow University pilots. Significant common features include:

- an extended period of student placement in a school
- the location of university tutor support in the school/cluster
- the use of shared observations, enquiry and discussion of practice by student teachers, NQTs, and more experienced teachers or tutors, in small groups
- cross-sector reflection and enquiry together in discussions
- a formative and collaborative approach to a cumulative assessment by school and university based staff as advocated in *Teaching Scotland's Future*.
- a shared summative assessment at the end of placement recorded in one, jointly constructed, written report.

The experience and evaluation of the previous pilots provided a strong basis for continuity and consistency of approach between the universities: a consistency that will be beneficial to schools and education authorities. Reflections on the pilots and their evaluation also led SEPI to incorporate a number of distinctive features.

First, following discussions of the Glasgow University pilots, SEPI developed a version of 'shared observation' which was more specifically tailored to placement experience. It eschewed the terminology of 'learning rounds' and adopted generic terminology, with 'peer observation' and 'post observation dialogue' replacing 'learning rounds'. Key similarities were retained in the idea that small groups (of two or three students) would work together to lead and observe a lesson, focus on an aspect of practice and discuss their observations and suggestions for improvement with a tutor. As in the Glasgow University pilot, SEPI encouraged description rather than evaluation of practice during lesson observations.

A second distinctive feature related to the role of subject tutors in secondary school placements. A debate arising from the Glasgow University pilots had highlighted the issue of the respective value of contributions from school-based tutors, subject tutors, and subject teachers in secondary placements. Strong views were expressed in both universities on who should provide generic and subject specific expertise in supporting and assessing student teachers. These were echoed in schools, where strongly held views about the value of subject tutors in student support and assessment were voiced (and continued to be expressed in responses to the SEPI evaluation). The SEPI steering group gave careful consideration to this issue and decided to take a stepped

approach to changing the blend of subject and generic input. This worked effectively in increasing 'buy in' to the project.

There is a high level of consensus about the capabilities that student teachers need to develop and these are set out in the GTCS (2012) Standard for Provisional Registration⁷, and in the assessment proformae designed by universities to track student progress. Many of these capabilities are generic across different teaching contexts, for example, skills in building relationships, motivating and involving learners, promoting positive behaviour, explaining and questioning, sharing learning intentions and providing feedback to learners. All university tutors and teachers are able to support and assess the development of these generic skills: the key requirement to do so is to be able to recognise and promote the ingredients of good learning and teaching, ethos etc. The SEPI proposal stressed the role of the school-based university tutor (termed the "embedded tutor") in supporting students in these generic areas.

In addition, it recognised that student teachers need to develop subject expertise relevant to their teaching; a clear view of progression in knowledge and skills; and of appropriate standards and expectations for the stage(s) taught so that learners are appropriately supported and challenged and their needs are met. In addition, many tutors argued that there are distinctive subject pedagogies in different subjects and for different stages. Expertise in these specific areas resides in university subject tutors or subject teachers and PTs in secondary schools.

Ways of deploying staff expertise to provide specific subject support and assess students' progress can take various forms and is likely to develop in different ways over coming years. At one end of a spectrum, university subject tutors take lead responsibility for specific subject support, through visits and assessments in liaison with subject teachers. At the opposite end of a spectrum, responsibility rests with subject teachers in schools with access to university tutors when required.

The notion of partnership endorsed by SEPI implies a shared responsibility: shifting the emphasis more towards the school⁸, than was

⁷ GTCS 2012. *Standard for Provisional Registration*. Edinburgh: GTCS.

⁸ The thinking in *Teaching Scotland's Future* is clear on this: "Suitably trained school staff should have the prime role in the assessment of students whilst on placement."

the current practice, in partnership with the education authority but maintaining an input through visits from the university subject tutor. SEPI complements this shift in emphasis with an aspiration for tutors to develop networks and support roles across schools. For example, university subject tutors could develop a wider role working with education authorities and schools in capacity building by maintaining a network of subject leaders in schools. Tutor-led activities could include providing CPD/Career-long Professional Learning in supporting and assessing students and teachers at the early phase of their career with a focus on subject knowledge and understanding, pupils' standards of attainment and progression through subject skills and understanding.

SEPI sought to take account of the debates about these roles. It decided, for the short-term at least, to complement the generic role of the school-based tutor with a continued but reduced contribution through visits from subject specialist tutors:

“In secondary there will be 2 subject specialist visits, one in placement 1 and one in placement 2 or 3, depending on individual circumstances⁹.”

Thirdly, Strathclyde University has a tradition in its BEd courses of encouraging students on placement to add value to the work of the class or school as a ‘payback’ for the support that they receive. SEPI endorsed this commendable practice of encouraging student teachers to make an impact beyond the personal requirements of their placement¹⁰.

Fourthly, SEPI grasped an opportunity to offer the teachers and tutors places on a university course *Supporting Teacher Learning* which was designed to encourage critical thinking, reading and writing about practice and lead into ideas of coaching and mentoring. It offered places free of charge to teachers taking part in SEPI as a contribution to ‘priming’ the partnership.

Finally, as in the previous pilots, cross-sector sessions were planned to encourage students in different sectors to share their practice. SEPI did not take up the focus on themes used in the Glasgow-Glasgow pilot and used a more general approach which encouraged students in different sectors to reflect together on their experience of success and problems.

⁹ The reference to ‘individual circumstances’ was to indicate that a visit would take place if a particular need was identified.

¹⁰ We have included some examples of additional impact as Appendix C of our report.

The steering group set out its aims and purpose in broad terms which would allow flexible development of its core aims.

Purpose

- To co-construct a continuum of teacher education from ITE, through induction and beyond, in full partnership with stakeholders including universities, local authorities, schools, teachers and policy makers
- To explore ways of developing, improving and enriching the experience of Teacher Education in the early stage of Professional Learning
- To respond to the report of the Review of Teacher Education in Scotland, Teaching Scotland's Future
- To respond to "student voice" as expressed through a range of channels
- To work towards establishing a national approach to the student placement experience.

Aims

- To improve the success and achievements of learners through improvements in the quality of learning and teaching during placement
- To enhance and strengthen existing partnerships with local authorities and schools
 - To identify, and evaluate, particular benefits for Professional Learning which emerge from the pilot.

4. Our approach to evaluation

The evaluation of SEPI aimed to set it within the evaluation of a family of pilots using a similar approach to teacher placements, whilst being flexible enough to take account of distinctive features of the Strathclyde pilot and of its stage of development. The common and distinctive features were outlined in the previous section.

SEPI evaluators took the view that there was sufficient commonality of approach to make a strong case for gathering evaluations of each pilot in a way that retained the potential to build up evidence of the series of pilots as a whole as they developed in different contexts.

The evaluation aimed, therefore, wherever possible to use common 'instruments' and approaches for gathering and recording evidence. For example, the Glasgow university evaluation team had designed questionnaires to gather statistical data of participants' views. These questionnaires, slightly adapted, were used in the SEPI evaluation¹¹.

Our evaluation was designed to be different from the two previous evaluations in two key respects. Firstly, it aimed to take account of distinctive features, already outlined, of the Strathclyde pilot and to take account of the strengths, differing contexts and stages of development of its work with the authority and its schools.

Secondly, it aimed to gather stakeholder data from SEPI and triangulate it using a solid evidence base from *direct observation* of the activities taking place and students' responses. The previous evaluations had gathered substantial evidence of stakeholder views through questionnaires and interviews but were lighter touch in qualitative evaluation based on direct observation¹². It was decided therefore to extend the evidence base by sampling shared observations followed by discussions; consult and review meetings between tutors, teachers and students; joint assessment meetings; and cross-sector sessions. In this process of direct observation

¹¹ The SEPI team are grateful to the support of Glasgow University in enabling this sharing. In turn we hope that this report will be useful to Glasgow University colleagues.

¹² Evidence for the first evaluation included only one direct observation of 'learning rounds' and the second evaluation report acknowledges that:

"It was not possible for direct observations to be carried out and so this evaluation relies entirely in evidence provided in spoken or written form by participants."

it sought to sharpen the focus and deepen the evidence around issues that had emerged from previous pilots and from subsequent debates within SEPI and TERG, such as the effectiveness of different forms of shared observation and enquiry and shared assessment practice.

The evidence base was designed with these aims in mind. The evaluation team observed:

- Nine lessons in primary schools where groups of students (and occasionally another teacher) and the class teacher shared in the observation of a lesson led by a student
- Ten lessons in secondary schools where groups of students and the class teacher shared in the observation of a lesson led by a student
- Nine discussions that followed peer observation in primary schools. The discussions were led by the tutor and attended by the students (and occasionally another teacher) who had observed the lessons
- Ten discussions that followed peer observations in secondary schools. The discussions were led by the tutor or by the observing students without a tutor
- Eight 'consult and review' meetings involving tutor and student, tutor and teachers or tutor, teacher and student
- Six 'shared assessment' meetings
- Three end-of-day cross-sector sessions.

This provided a solid basis of observational evidence. We designed our sample to include all of the schools and school-based tutors and a good cross-section of teachers and students.

The team also held informal discussions and semi-structured (i.e. following a set agenda of discussion topics) interviews with teachers, a sample of headteachers and others with responsibilities for students, groups of students and individual students. We held an evaluation session for all students to provide group responses at the final cross-sector meeting. Individual semi-structured interviews were held with the four school-based tutors and with two secondary subject tutors. A Quality Improvement Officer from Glasgow City Council responsible for working in partnership with the project contributed her views at an 'end of pilot' meeting.

Questionnaires¹³ were issued to all teachers¹⁴ and students who had taken

¹³ A full set of collated responses to the questionnaires is included as Appendix A.

¹⁴ Unless otherwise qualified in the text, 'teacher' is used in our report to include headteachers and other promoted staff as well as class teachers.

part in the SEPI pilot. A breakdown of survey respondents is provided in the tables below.

Table 1.1 Breakdown of teachers by sector

Sector	No.	%
Primary	14	36
Secondary	25	64
Total	39	100

Table 1.2 Breakdown of teachers by job role

Job role	No.	%
Depute Head/SMT	6	15
Faculty head	4	10
Principal teacher	3	8
Class Teacher	26	67
Total	39	100

Table 1.3 Breakdown of teachers by role in pilot

Role in pilot	No.	%
Directly involved in supporting placement student teachers	29	76
Indirectly involved in supporting placement student teachers	2	6
Role in managing the initiative in school	7	18
Total	38	100
Missing information	1	

Table 2 Breakdown of student teachers by course studied

Course studied	No.	%
Primary PGDE student	8	32
Primary BEd student	11	44
Secondary PGDE student	6 ¹⁵	24
Total	25	100

The evaluation team set out and shared a set of principles and objectives to guide its activities. The paper is included as Appendix D. One of the principles was that the evaluation should be ‘formative during the pilot’ and ‘share emerging messages from observations and evidence.’ As part of this approach, we provided early and interim feedback to the head of the school of education and the director of school and local authority partnership to inform their considerations of developments in placements for the following academic year.

¹⁵ Where response rates were lower we tested any messages against our other sources of evidence, for example from interviews with individuals and groups.

Part 2 Evaluation of the SEPI pilot

1. Change management, communication and consultation

Change management issues affect the success of partnership working. Success in managing change depends on forming positive relationships and a sense of involvement, convincing those involved of the value of changes, and clear communication with attention to detail. The way that decisions are made and arrangements communicated, the development of roles of different partners in areas such as support and assessment, the provision of advice, protocols and training, contribute to the degree to which all partners feel a sense of ownership of changes. SEPI stimulated some rapid changes in emphasis in roles and responsibilities across a large number of students, tutors and teachers within a tight timescale. Such changes heightened the need for clarity, discussion, empathy and a willingness to revisit arrangements with partners.

Our interactions with participants in SEPI found effective communication about the project with teachers and students. The broad messages about changes and the rationale for making them were quickly communicated and well understood by those involved. The university organised meetings for school staff to discuss the changes to placement and invited school staff to contribute their ideas to shape the changes. Although not everyone involved was able to attend these meetings, they were successful in presenting the broad picture of the changes and their underlying principles, and were well received by those attending. For example, a regent in a secondary school praised their success: “A good partnership tone was established by the initial meeting between the university team and school staff. This was a successful meeting.”

The school-based tutor working with regents in secondary schools, and headteachers and other senior managers in primary schools, then had a crucial role in discussing the changes in more detail with those involved. The combination of the initial meetings and explanations in school worked well in most cases. However, a large minority of secondary teachers were critical about the information received prior to the placement with five highlighting a lack of communication by indicating in questionnaires that they ‘*did not receive any information*’ before placement started.

These tended to be subject teachers whose sole involvement was in supporting a student and contributing views to a mentor. They were often not involved in the initial meetings. Reaching the wider group of teachers working with students, whether their contribution is large or small, will be integral to the future success of the project in improving placement experience.

The role of school-based tutors, regents and those with responsibilities for students in primary schools, continued to be important in explaining and supporting changes as they were implemented and adjusted¹⁶. Those with responsibilities for students in schools commented positively about the way that tutors kept in touch with them, their supportiveness and helpfulness and their success in establishing good rapport and positive relationships in a short time. The students echoed this. Relationships between tutors, teachers and students during placement were generally very positive. Many students expressed very high regard for their tutors in comments such as, “She is an amazing tutor” and “Managed to take me from panicking to confident”. Some expressed concern about some of their other tutors taking on the role of a school-based tutor, one commenting perceptively that “tutor variability is more important than structures”. In turn, tutors valued the closer relationship and deeper professional dialogue with school staff about students’ progress and learning and teaching issues.

Given the extent of change, its rapid timescale and some quite detailed adjustments to arrangements, unsurprisingly there were misunderstandings and glitches in communication, particularly about the clarity of the detail and timing of arrangements. These are likely to diminish with more time and experience.

In this fast moving pilot, some tutors also took time to develop a clear understanding of their new, at times challenging role as an ‘embedded tutor’, and to the detail of new arrangements. As the pilot progressed, formal and informal meetings, briefings and clearer written advice, such as flow diagrams and prompt sheets helped to address uncertainties. As a result, there was greater consistency and clarity later in the pilot.

Some from the wider team of university tutors expressed concerns about the changes to placement and particularly about the role of the subject

¹⁶ The authority Quality Improvement Officer made a positive contribution in encouraging schools to develop supportive and collaborative relationships and to grasp the opportunities available to them through the pilot.

specialist in supporting and assessing students. In preparing for the pilot, their concerns were listened to and debated and a measured approach to change helped in creating an ethos which maintained a professional tone and willingness to consider alternative approaches. Unfortunately, poor communication with subject specialist tutors for subject visits, including for example transfer of information to them from previous assessments of their students, unnecessarily countered some of the benefits.

Teachers sampled in evaluation discussions, and particularly those with responsibilities for student teachers, reported that they had been well consulted about the initiative and that their role as partners had been encouraged. Most of the teachers who responded to the survey indicated that the information received prior to placement had been useful. Headteachers in primary schools and regents in secondary schools felt particularly well briefed about the initiative. School staff generally supported the broad direction of proposed changes and were content at this point to 'go with the flow' of the initiative rather than 'shape it'. A few teachers and senior managers expressed concerns about workload. Tutors were responsive and assiduous in minimising bureaucracy and the expression of workload concerns reduced as the pilot progressed.

Having reflected on their experiences during the SEPI pilot, teachers in both sectors may now be better placed to suggest adjustments and more actively shape future developments. Throughout the pilots, tutors' willingness to listen and adjust arrangements successfully encouraged a genuine sense of partnership.

Primary students were more positive than secondary students about the way that changes were communicated to them. In part this may be attributable to the later start to primary placement and to increased clarity about the details of changes that was achieved by that stage. In part it was due to more extended communication and discussion for the primary students prior to the placement experience. Secondary students gained a good overview from a single briefing session¹⁷; primary students often showed a deeper understanding of ideas as a result of more frequent discussions. One primary student summed up her changing feelings as a consequence of increased communication: "After initially being petrified by being placed on SEPI, I have felt more and more confident about the opportunity that we have."

¹⁷ Some secondary students suggested that PGDE course leaders/ managers should have played a greater role in explaining the changes to them.

A key measure of the success of change management is the extent to which changes are understood and, further, how far the experience of piloting convinces those involved of their value. It was reassuring that teachers and students were almost always able to explain the reasons behind the SEPI changes, even where they disagreed with some of them.

Most primary students and half of the secondary students who responded were positive about the new approach and regarded it as an improvement on previous placement experience. Questionnaire responses showed that some student teachers were less satisfied than others with aspects of change management. For example, eight (32%) students were equivocal about the usefulness of information received ahead of placement, with a few commenting that this had led to a lack of clarity about what could be expected from the initiative. One primary student who did not “feel well informed” but who otherwise felt that the initiative had been “extremely beneficial and helpful” recommended “a booklet outlining what would be involved”. Many students responding to the survey did recognise that an important aim of SEPI was (as another student put it) to establish “greater collaboration between schools, universities and students [... leading to] a more balanced assessment of the student teacher”. The extent to which this aim was achieved is suggested by the 80% of students and teachers who agreed (and more frequently strongly agreed) that SEPI had *been successful in promoting improved communication/ shared understanding across all those involved (for example, greater consistency of messages that the student teacher receives from tutors/ teachers)*.

The views of the four school-based tutors involved in the pilot varied from “highly enthusiastic” to one who was “positive with reservations” about the extent to which SEPI achieved an improved experience for students. Tutors referred to numerous examples of improvements to their work with students and teachers. One commented:

Overall evaluations are the best that I have seen; ongoing feedback and ongoing assessment has led to real improvement. I knew these students better than I have known any others.

Some tutors also cited benefits to their own work as tutors, for example one tutor reported: “I experienced benefits to my own professional development. It was a more satisfying experience interacting with a range of students.”

It is clear that not everyone was convinced by the new placement experience. Some students, teachers and tutors still have significant reservations about aspects of the changes. Lessons from the pilot will prove invaluable in directing change management as the pilot is extended to a wider canvas of schools and authorities. As procedures settle, an accessible information leaflet(s) and material available in digital form and on websites will help information to reach its new and wider audiences. Face-to-face dialogue and relationship building will remain crucial to success. Continued dialogue, and engaging students, teachers and tutors in openly evaluating the changes, highlighting their successful impact and value, and issues which need to be addressed will ensure that change management continues in the effective partnership style established so far.

Overall, this is a positive picture of change management within a tight timescale. It was very evident to us that the pilot was successful in achieving a sense of partnership across stakeholders with only a few exceptions even in context where different views were held. Indeed, from the surveys, most students and most teachers agreed that SEPI had *promoted collaboration between the University and the schools involved*. By the end of the pilot, a strong majority across all stakeholder groups also regarded the changes as worthwhile indicating considerable success in winning 'hearts and minds'.

2. Increased tutor support and student teamwork in the schools

i. Increased tutor support

SEPI allocated more students and therefore more tutor time to a cluster of schools, aiming to improve partnership relationships through more regular contacts and teamwork between tutor, teachers and students.

Arrangements for tutors to carry out planned activities with individuals and groups of students and meet with teachers provided increased opportunities for more continuity in relationships and advice. They also aimed to facilitate more brief unplanned supportive interactions where school-based tutors were more accessible for professional advice and pastoral support.

In a previous placement, the first time that I saw the tutor was when he arrived for the 'crit' lesson. (Student teacher)

A more joined-up approach to teacher training. (Teacher)

I liked having the university tutor on hand especially when needing extra support. (Mentor)

I am pleased about the increased contact between school and tutor, against the trend of recent years. This is a big improvement on 'flying visits' by tutors. (Primary headteacher)

In interviews, both secondary school regents were clear that they valued having a tutor in school for a longer period, feeling that this helped the tutor to get to know the students better. They argued that this impacted more on the quality of support to students than on school staff during the pilot, though they anticipated potential longer-term benefits to teachers. Our observations support their view and recognise the scope for growing benefits for schools in the future. Primary headteachers and teachers commented on the significant positive impact of an increased tutor presence and this impact was evident in our interactions with tutors, students and teachers. A primary headteacher enthusing about the new arrangements represented views expressed by several other primary headteachers:

Tutor presence is the biggest benefit. She has provided strong pastoral support to students, and class teachers are very happy with the relationship and support.

School-based tutors were also convinced of the benefits of their additional time in school. One tutor was convinced that, as time progressed, interactions were working better than in the early stages of the pilot, commenting that, “Students are dropping in regularly for advice and support.” Some tutors reported pressures of other time-specific demands and of the number of students to cover (and in the case of primary, the number of schools). Where tutors had multiple priorities, with tight deadlines, they sometimes reported that they were struggling to achieve fully the expectations of students and teachers in SEPI.

Teachers’ views of increased tutor support were largely positive. For example, in an interview with the evaluation team, a principal teacher in one of the secondary schools explained that she was at first unsure that the school-based tutor would be able to advise “meaningfully” on the assessment of students across a range of subjects. However, her experience was that an ongoing dialogue between the department and the tutor was quickly established, meaning that the end-of-placement report was ultimately informed by the combined opinions of the tutor and the PT (who was also the subject mentor). In this way, a more holistic view of the student’s performance was revealed, which, she argued, tended not to be the case during traditional placements where she described contact with the visiting subject specialist tutor as “sporadic”. The principal teacher also valued the consistency of assessment across departments that was afforded by the comparative judgement of the tutor in school. As the following comments from the survey reveal, teachers also appreciated the increased presence of the school based tutor in supporting the exchange of ideas ‘on the spot’, as well as the more structured discussions that were required for the development and assessment of students:

I feel that having a tutor more readily available in the learning community is definitely a positive. Joint discussion between the tutor, the student and the school was also beneficial. (Primary teacher)

I was able to ‘pick up’ some ideas from the tutor [...] which would allow me to understand better some actions taken by the student during the lesson. (Secondary teacher)

More opportunities for discussion with the university tutor throughout the placement. Tutors and teachers can share information about the student’s progress throughout the placement and about the observed teaching session. (Primary teacher)

Closer liaison with university staff has built stronger links: better

quality of placement experience. (Senior manager in primary school)

Excellent support. Always available, positive, enthusiastic. All staff got to know the tutor by now (half the battle won!). (Secondary teacher)

Although a small number of teachers did identify problems, generally relating to doubts or uncertainties about the role of a school based tutor, most (82%) agreed that this feature of the pilot *had provided students with greater support from tutors*.

Most students supported the view that “one constant tutor is a big advantage” with 84% agreeing, with a high proportion agreeing strongly, that the pilot *had provided students with greater support from tutors*. Contrasting SEPI with previous experience on placement, one secondary student commented on “being lost” in a previous placement and others felt that opportunities for discussion with tutors and with peers had been lacking in previous placements. Primary students appreciated the benefits of increased accessibility of tutors who were quickly responsive, even though they had to spread their time over several schools.

To justify their positive view, many students cited benefits related to the increased presence of a tutor in the school. They gave us convincing examples of how they had taken advantage of opportunities for more informal, immediate and responsive communication. Some students reported successfully resolving very significant personal or professional issues which were pivotal to their continuation on the course through in-school tutor support. Others appreciated accessing prompt practical advice on specific aspects such as planning, pedagogy and promoting positive behaviour. They cited several small examples of the kind where a student “took the opportunity of the tutor being in the school to ask if I had understood the school’s approach to subtraction”. The extent to which a school-based tutor was seen by students as an improvement over previous arrangements varied with individual student’s prior experience: where this had been very good they reported little change; where it had previously been poor, it represented considerable improvement.

A few secondary students identified problems related to the role of a school based tutor such as uncertainty about who to approach for advice, their subject tutor or the school based tutor, particularly if the school based tutor was not in school when a need arose. By the end of the secondary placement there was also a mismatch between some students’ early

expectations of tutor contact in the classroom and their actual experience, with students expecting for example more regular, informal observation of their practice. Some secondary students who were positive about the pilot commented on disappointment at the mismatch between their expectations and their actual experience. One commented on a tutor being unavailable because of the frequent pressures of other commitments and concluded: “I have been disappointed. I thought that the tutor would see us even briefly every week. It hasn’t been much different from the first placement”. It is important and fair to students that they are given a clear picture of what they should expect and that this is realised in practice.

Early on in the secondary placements, tutors were uncertain about the use of time and made themselves more available than turned out to be necessary, in case students or teachers needed to consult them. Later on they were much more in demand. Their experience will be valuable in planning the rhythm of time requirements for future placements. Tutors in the primary pilots set out very clear expectations of their levels of engagement with students and met them in practice.

Although more tutor time in schools does not of itself improve quality, it facilitated improvements in quality during the SEPI pilots. Tutor time in schools is costly, it has been reduced over recent years and is likely to continue to be under pressure. Clustering tutor deployment in SEPI and reducing travel time for tutors to widely dispersed schools made more tutor support time available for the core business of supporting students directly and working with teachers in supporting students. We found that time was generally very well used in SEPI in activities designed to meet the objectives of improved placement experience and that these brought significant benefit to students. This was therefore an effective redeployment of time. Our observations of the tutors, confirmed by comments from many teachers and students, were that tutors were usually extremely busy and sometimes ‘chasing their tails’. It is unlikely that the benefits of tutors’ school-based support could be maintained with reductions in the level of time invested in SEPI, though some redeployment from activity to activity may be possible. As one primary headteacher observed:

“It is important that tutor time is protected in scaling this up.”

ii Student teamwork in school

SEPI allocated larger groups of students to a school than on traditional placements. Locating teams of student teachers in schools is intended to

promote a layer of informal professional development through mutual personal support, teamwork in small groups, and learning from each other through dialogue. Peer observation and reflection aim to harness teamwork and learning together in discussing practice and reaching a shared view on improvements.

Students reported good examples of informal mutual support through discussion of their practice and exchange of ideas and comments. Larger numbers provided a 'critical mass' for discussions and proximity for therapeutic and informal lunchtime and end-of-day professional discussions. Programmed meetings and sometimes-shared travel also promoted good teamwork and mutual support. In the questionnaires, most students (84%) and most teachers (82%) thought the pilot *facilitated the sharing of teaching ideas and concepts between students*. For many students this was a new and improved experience, for others it was similar to their positive experience on previous placements.

Peer observation and follow up discussion sessions provided a very good form of planned teamwork by students with a focus on developing their understanding and skills in practice. Some secondary students sought more opportunities for them to talk together in small groups beyond the weekly meeting with tutor and regent. Some students from both sectors argued that there was scope for them to work in teams more independently and frequently. Strathclyde University has a strong reputation for encouraging students to take high levels of responsibility for some features of their learning. We would endorse the value of building on this strength for SEPI to promote student-led teamwork and create more opportunities for collaborative professional learning by students.

Such teamwork opens up potential for small groups to collaborate across stages, across subjects and across schools. For example strong links with subject departments and time spent in subject bases is an important strength of placement in secondary schools. Yet it can also reinforce subject 'silo thinking' and barriers to understanding across subjects. Primary students can narrow their thinking to particular stages. Peer observation is one useful way of helping small teams to understand the commonalities of good learning and teaching across subjects and stages. There is scope to encourage other sorts of small team activity to

complement ‘apprentice learning’ with ‘shared professional inquiry’¹⁸. We make some suggestions below.

Student-led teamwork may often work well independently, though it may sometimes need access to advice and mentoring. Teachers, mentors and regents volunteering to support students in such activities gain valuable staff development experience.



Growth point¹⁹: Student-led teamwork in shared professional inquiry

The ideas of staff and students could be used more innovatively in student-led teamwork. Time could be allocated for small groups of students from different subjects or stages to carry out shared investigations or assignments on placement. Examples could include:

- exploring and testing with small groups of students the practical application of an idea introduced in the university course, perhaps based on a reading;
- asking two students, or a student with an NQT, from different primary stages to plan a lesson, teach it and evaluate it collaboratively;
- asking two secondary students, or a student with an NQT from the same subject to plan a lesson, teach it and evaluate it collaboratively, and
- pairing students from different subjects to investigate aspects of literacy or numeracy or explore how cooperative learning is used in their subjects and present their findings to other students.

iii Cross-sector teamwork

The team of school-based tutors facilitated three cross-sector sessions at the end of school days, one for each secondary school and its associated primary schools and one for the whole SEPI student group. There was some input from tutors, for example where a tutor presented inspection evidence raising interesting questions about differences in practice

¹⁸ Some radical models of placement seek to replace ‘apprentice learning’ with ‘shared professional inquiry’. In SEPI, both were used within a mixed economy of approaches.

¹⁹ Our growth points are intended for consideration by colleagues in the education authority and university.

between primary and secondary schools. However, the main purpose of these sessions was to provide opportunities for students from different sectors to share their experiences in 'what have we learned sessions'.²⁰

Good chance to share experiences, beneficial to S1 teachers to know what P7 have covered. (Student cross-sector discussion group)

"Have a focus!!" (Student cross-sector discussion group)

Students' views on cross-sector sessions were mixed. Responses to questionnaires indicate that the majority (60%) of the students found them useful. There was however a significant minority (around a third) for whom they appeared to yield little or no benefit.

The sessions had a positive tone. Students used them well to talk about their successes and problems; share practical advice; provide emotional support to each other; and broaden their understanding of similarities and differences in practice across the sectors. They shared examples of successful techniques, examples of learners' work and formats for planning and recording learners' progress, and exchanged views on the support that they were receiving during placement. Useful discussion topics included behaviour management, differentiation, and assessment and record keeping. These meetings promoted a sense of empathy and partnership across the students. Other uses of cross-sector gatherings could include engaging students in a task or examination of practice across the sectors or make explicit links between themes from the university course and the fresh experience of practice.

Earlier discussions had emphasised the potential for teachers to join after-school sessions alongside students. It was our impression that the very demanding changes on SEPI school-based tutors made the numbers involved, and content and organisation of these sessions daunting and teachers were not involved in these sessions during the pilot. There is value in including teachers in this sort of professional learning activity and several teachers expressed an interest in participation: the design of the sessions would have to ensure challenging content for teachers as well as students.

²⁰ SEPI proposal paper, see footnote 6.

Our view of the SEPI cross-sector sessions is that they were partly successful and ‘what we have learned’ elements remain useful for developing understanding across the sectors. More structured content could further improve their potential and make them more attractive to teachers. The weekly seminars in the Glasgow University pilots were more thematic and those on assessment, evaluation and communication strategies in class were particularly successful. Other generic topics relating directly to learning and teaching (for example ‘meeting learners’ differing needs’, ‘learning support and challenge’ or ‘teaching for understanding’) could also make an impact on the quality of learning and teaching. Specific aspects relating to progression through the curriculum also have potential for these sessions. For example, how do teachers promote children’s skills in reading or writing for information or talking in groups at different stages/ sectors? How does curriculum guidance in the experiences and outcomes on these aspects influence progression?

Finally, issues of content should be considered alongside the themes of sessions for students organised by the schools so that an overall programme is manageable and coherent. Sessions organised by schools in the SEPI pilot included aspects such as Curriculum for Excellence, Health and Wellbeing, Support for learning, Support for behaviour and English as an Additional Language.



Growth point: further development of cross-sector sessions.

Ways of combining ‘what we have learned’ elements with more structured content could be planned for these sessions and the sessions could be opened up to teachers.

3. Progress towards shared assessment

SEPI aimed to achieve a set of inter-related improvements in the quality of assessment of each student's progress and developing capabilities as a teacher. More ongoing evaluation and feedback to students would help to improve the quality of formative assessment, reduce students' anxiety around 'crit' lessons and encourage their own reflections on their progress. Tutors and teachers, working towards a single shared summative assessment of how well students were meeting the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) standards, would improve the quality of the evidence base on which judgements were made. In turn, this would lead to fairer and more consistent judgements and a shared understanding of the criteria for success.

I found it very encouraging as the class teacher to participate in the joint assessment, knowing that my opinions and experience of the student, over the whole placement, would be taken into account.
(Primary teacher)

I think that this process of assessment was great. It allowed for the 'bigger picture' to be considered and also student progress throughout the entire placement. Joint observation was much more effective and gave opportunity for more detailed feedback to be given, coming from both teacher and tutor opinions. (Primary teacher)

Good to discuss the progress of the student with other professionals.
(Secondary teacher)

It allows a class teacher to reflect on things that they do. (Secondary teacher)

Primary teachers were very positive about the SEPI changes in assessment, frequently citing improvements in assessment as a key achievement of SEPI. Most (84%) responses to primary questionnaires agreed or strongly agreed that SEPI *provided a more accurate way of assessing students' teaching abilities*. Almost all (92%) agreed that they *provided more opportunities for reflection and self-evaluation for students*; and *improved the efficiency of feedback from university tutors* (92%). Their views were more divided on whether student anxiety concerning assessment had been reduced. Some primary teachers described a tension between evaluating students professionally and developing a

supportive personal relationship with their student. One reflected on her personal progress, through the joint assessment experience, in providing honest and constructive feedback to develop the qualities required to teach a future class of children:

I feel that it has made me much more aware of the need to be very honest with students from day one. It has also given me the confidence to provide constructive criticism.

A majority of responses (57%) from secondary teachers also agreed or strongly agreed that SEPI provided *a more accurate way of assessing students' teaching abilities*, a positive though more mixed response. Some argued that they had existing good arrangements to assess students which worked well, and so change was unnecessary. There were more positive than negative responses about *providing more opportunities for reflection and self-evaluation for students; improved the efficiency of feedback from university tutors and reducing student anxiety concerning assessment*. Some disagreed that these aspects had improved through the pilot, and around a third of responses were 'not sure' across the assessment questions. The variation from very positive to critical responses here may be partly explained by the occasional suggestion that teachers or tutors sometimes implemented the idea in an unclear or half-hearted way: "Was not really a joint assessment. I was told to do the assessment and tutor made some informal comments." (Secondary teacher)

Teachers interviewed generally welcomed the shift towards their greater involvement in the assessment process. A few teachers expressed concerns about workload but these tended to abate as the pilot progressed the process and as dialogue with tutors clarified expectations, for example about paperwork.

Responses from student questionnaires painted a positive picture of improvements in the assessment process. Most (80%) agreed or strongly agreed that SEPI *provided a more accurate way of assessing students' teaching abilities*. Most (80%) also agreed that they *provided more opportunities for reflection and self-evaluation for students*; and *improved the efficiency of feedback from university tutors* (76%).

This was confirmed in interviews where most students reported that greater fairness and reliability in assessing their skills and progress had resulted from the partnership approach, a very significant achievement.

The new arrangements had improved reliability through more discussion of their teaching by the school-based tutor with the teachers in school, and more ongoing observation of their 'typical' practice. Alongside better reliability the approach reduced, as intended, the emphasis on 'crit' lessons. Nevertheless, students continued to feel strongly that features of a 'crit' persisted whenever a tutor and teacher observed their lesson together. This indicates that changes in culture and perception around observation of students' practice will take continued effort to achieve and time to take effect. Moreover, as long as such visits are a significant component in decisions about whether or not the student meets the standards required to become a teacher, changes in culture and perception are likely to remain constrained.

For secondary students, a summative assessment involving a subject specialist was included in the final placement. Students and teachers placed high value on these visits. The two school-based tutors, both also subject specialist tutors in their own right, acknowledged the value of subject expertise in evaluating subject practice. Both were confident in evaluating across different subjects but commented that they sometimes met, for example, specific aspects of methodology such as techniques for shaping plastics in technology or the way that imagery was presented in a particular poem in English where they felt less able to comment on the approaches used. One observed that a school-based tutor might feel confident in evaluating and supporting around 80% of the aspects of the lessons observed. The tutors were reassured by the collaborative arrangements for evaluation and support so that their generalist focus was complemented by a subject specialist visit and by an effective contribution from subject teachers in schools.

The arrangements for the pilot to include visits from subject specialists reduced, but did not eliminate teachers' concerns about subject specialist input. For example, several teachers still expressed apprehension about a reduction in their contribution, or emphasised their importance, with a few rejecting notions of engaging school staff more fully in assessment. "In my opinion, the university subject specialist should still have the final say and not school staff." (Secondary faculty head)

Professional dialogue involving class teachers in commenting, coaching, questioning and providing perspective to students on their day-to-day teaching is a vital part of formative assessment during placement experience. It provides students with the material to build their skills and understanding and develop confidence that they are succeeding as new

teachers. In primary schools, many students praised the quality of feedback as part of ongoing formative assessment from teachers but some were concerned at a lack of frequency and depth in discussions about their teaching. Some said that this was exacerbated where class teachers were deployed excessively to duties related to other school priorities at times when the student had responsibility for the class. It would be helpful for the education authority to clarify its broad expectations in this area.

Stakeholder views on progress towards shared assessment as expressed in questionnaires and interviews, therefore present a very positive picture of progress in primary schools with a more modest response from secondary schools. Our direct observations of practice confirmed some aspects of this picture but also reached some different conclusions.

Our observations of joint assessment meetings and discussions in primary and secondary schools, confirmed that the tutor-teacher-student partnership established a professional tone and brought together a broader and better evidence base for assessing student teachers' progress. Tutors promoted a collegiate relationship which reduced perceptions of hierarchy and empowered many teachers to contribute with confidence. Tutors and teachers encouraged students to voice their reflections and feelings about their progress as teachers, valuing student's comments on their strengths and development needs and on the responses of pupils in their lessons. The experience that students gained as a result is vital to their progress as evaluative and self-evaluative teachers. Discussions between tutors and teachers included evaluative comments supported by specific examples, descriptions of typical and untypical practice observed in lessons, moments of success and aspects for development. This quality of evidence, used to support assessments, justified the views of teachers and students that this was a major improvement on the evidence base from 'crit' lessons.

However, we found considerable variation in the quality of discussions at primary consultation and review meetings and at shared assessment meetings leading to a single assessment of progress. The majority of primary teachers provided thorough and thoughtful summaries of individual student's progress to supplement the ongoing feedback that they had discussed with the students. However, in a significant minority of cases, teachers made very general or superficial comments on a student's progress; appeared unfamiliar with the criteria under discussion; and commented without using notes or any other evidence of preparatory

thinking. Such a lack of clarity, detail and a clear framework for discussing progress is also likely to have reduced the quality of formative feedback by these teachers to their students. One consequence of this was that ongoing assessment didn't always provide early warning of problems²¹ and when some students faced problems they complained about lack of early and reliable feedback from their class teachers. Some primary teachers will need more CPD and support to help them to play a fuller part in supporting and assessing a student's progress. Future developments will need to give this priority if teachers are to play successfully the fuller role envisaged in *Teaching Scotland's Future*.

We observed greater consistency in the quality of preparation at shared assessment meetings in secondary schools. Meetings were thorough, presenting complementary perspectives professionally, and achieving a consensual view of the student's strengths, needs and progress. 'Mentors' observed had worked very well to coordinate the range of evidence of progress from the different secondary subject teachers who had observed the student teacher. They gave high priority to gathering and collating evidence from the teachers involved. The mentors prepared for meetings with notes relating to the key elements on the agreed recording form. These notes were used in discussion with tutors to form a single shared record of each student's performance. Despite some critical comments from secondary teachers about the shared assessment process, these arrangements worked very well in the practice observed in the two secondary schools²².

There will continue to be occasional differences of view between teachers and tutors about a student's competence or readiness to teach. One case of a strongly felt difference about aspects of a student's subject expertise²³ raised issues about procedures for resolving such situations in an evidence-based way. It showed how the agenda could move quickly from perspectives of sharing complementary evidence, to resort to positions of authority and debate about whose perspective should carry most weight. Such differences and some inconsistencies in the way that shared assessment was sometimes implemented suggest a need to be clearer about the nature of the assessment partnership.

²¹ SEPI now plans to avoid joint assessment visits late in the final placement as a precaution against the impact of this on a student's final summative assessment.

²² There may well be more variation in practice in other schools. For example, one student commented, "I never met my mentor in my last school".

²³ We did not observe a meeting in this case.

The assessment partnership within SEPI is a partnership based on equal value and equal respect for *different* contributions towards a single summative assessment. The contributions of tutors and teachers are complementary in determining a student's readiness to teach; they share common aims and criteria but their roles are not the same.

A tutor's distinctive contribution resides in expertise in benchmarking students against the GTCS standards. Observing large numbers of students in different contexts provides valuable experience in forming judgements about a student's capabilities as a beginning teacher. Tutors are currently more experienced, and were observed to be more effective than teachers, in applying criteria based on the standards and relating evidence of the student's practice to them, though the gap may narrow as teachers gain more experience. Teachers acquire stronger evidence of the student's performance in the particular context of their school and their sample of observed lessons, either as a class teacher or as the team of teachers in a department is a larger and broader sample than a tutor normally observes. Their evidence is also less susceptible to the impact of a 'good or bad day'. This larger sample combined with a clear focus on evidence and standards should increase the reliability and validity of judgements. Therefore the two sets of evidence from tutors and teachers should fit together very well as part of a very strong evidence base for determining a student's readiness to teach.

In the few cases of continuing disagreement, it is important to avoid stances about which *person or establishment* should carry most weight and to continue to debate the nature of the evidence and discuss which *evidence* should carry most weight. To be fair to the student and to future generations of learners, all involved in 'borderline cases' need also to remain open to seeking additional evidence.



Growth point: Supporting teacher development towards a more active role in assessment by:

- ensuring that expectations about roles and contributions are clear;
- providing staff development for teachers who are unfamiliar with the criteria used in assessment;
- delivering staff development, including coaching on the application of the criteria to support and assess a student's progress.

4. The involvement of student teachers in their own learning, development and assessment through shared observation and dialogue.

One of the prominent features of the SEPI approach is the intention to promote professional collaboration during placement experience through: "The use of shared observations, enquiry and discussion of practice by student teachers, NQTs, and more experienced teachers or tutors, in small groups." SEPI proposal paper

i Observation of experienced teachers

"The support that I have had within the department has been fantastic."
(Secondary student)

Student teachers in 'traditional' placements have valuable opportunities to observe the practice of experienced teachers, be observed by them, receive feedback, engage in dialogue with them and seek their advice. These opportunities continued in SEPI as an important aspect of students' professional learning. The students clearly placed high value on learning from experienced teachers, finding out how they teach their stage and subject, how they develop a positive ethos and relationships with children at different stages; set expectations for their work and behaviour; and interact with them to motivate and organise them to learn. As the students grappled with their own teaching skills and issues of planning, assessment and appropriate pace and differentiation in learning and teaching, they observed and discussed how experienced teachers translate curriculum content into learning and teaching practices in the classroom. They also learned to talk with teachers about individual children's progress in a professional way, moving from general comments about the child to focus on learning priorities.

The students were concerned to show their developing competence to their colleagues in schools, to impress them with their skills and expertise in the aspects outlined in the preceding paragraph and their knowledge of individual pupils. In addition, they aimed to show that they could show the skills and knowledge relevant for particular stages and subjects. Examples would include the expertise to organise learning through play or promote reading at the early stages of primary school or the subject knowledge and aspects of pedagogy which were seen as subject-specific in secondary schools.

The support and advice of their experienced colleagues was vital in developing this challenging set of capabilities. Primary students formed close bonds with their class teachers through sustained interactions over the placement. Secondary students forged strong links and a sense of common identity with subject departments in the schools through their shared work with subject teachers and through spending breaks and lunchtimes in staff bases. Many commented that their first source of advice about their teaching on placement would be their subject mentor in school.

Observing experienced, and sometimes expert, teachers in action can be both immensely valuable and daunting. Observing and being coached by a skilful role model can be formative and inspirational in a student's development as a teacher. It can allow the thinking behind classroom actions to be understood and examined and enable teacher and student to learn together. One student contrasted a negative experience of peer observation with positive experiences in her department: "The unhelpful emphasis on POs [peer observations] and PODs [post observation discussions] has in fact detracted from my far more helpful relationships and experiences within the English department."

However expert practice can rarely be simply observed and imitated, just as watching an expert ice skater may not help a beginner to glide across the ice. Students therefore also valued the opportunities on placement to complement observations of experienced practitioners by observing those at a similar stage of development as beginning teachers through the arrangements for peer observation and post observation dialogue sessions. This also created valuable opportunities to observe teaching and learning beyond their stage in primary and subject areas in secondary, opening them up to other approaches and ideas and to become familiar with features of effective learning and teaching common to all stages and subjects.

ii. Views of peer observation and post observation and dialogue sessions

Peer observations were useful in enabling students and teachers to identify examples of good practice, share expertise and discuss ideas for development. It was also useful to have a focus for each observation. (Primary teacher)

I think it made the student really break down what she was trying to teach the children. (Secondary teacher)

Students and teachers in both primary and secondary placements recognised the value of students observing each other's practice, and learning and inquiring together into features of it.

The views of primary students in questionnaire responses were consistently positive. Most (84%) agreed, with a majority (60%) agreeing strongly, that students had benefited in *sharing teaching ideas and concepts* with other students. Most also thought that peer observations had *enhanced students' abilities in reflecting on and evaluating their own practice*. Peer observations also aim to show the relevance of theory by highlighting its application in practice and almost all agreed or agreed strongly that *theory relevant to practice* had been promoted. For one primary respondent, peer observation was "the most useful part of the initiative". Some students drew confidence from seeing similarities in the practice of peers, while others could reflect on the value of teaching approaches and methods that were different to their own.

Helped improve my confidence as saw that myself and my peers were developing on the same level.

It allowed you to question the areas you had identified as areas for development, consider your own practice in relation to these and think of next steps.

Encouraged me to examine my practice more and focus upon specific areas.

Seeing other stages within school is good – can see where children have come from; adapted strategies; different approaches. PODs are reassuring to see tutor, talk about what you are working on – makes the learning contract seem 'real' not just more paperwork.

The following two quotations illustrate the range of variation in the value that secondary students placed on peer observation as it was implemented in the pilots. This was evident both in questionnaire data and in our interactions with the students.

I feel that having a focus to the observation helped with my own reflection of my teaching practice. It also provided a confidence boost.

I personally did not get a lot out of these. Lessons observed were very different to my subject which meant that I did not find observation particularly useful. Needed to be longer – 20 minutes

not enough.

Some secondary students appreciated observing how teachers organised practical work in different subjects such as science, technology and art. Others expressed reservations about observing in very different subjects, arguing that they would gain more from observing a similar subject to their own or more lessons within their own subject. Most cited benefits in important aspects such as affirming their own approaches and practices and seeing their fellow students apply them and in confirming that others shared similar strengths and problems to their own. One group of secondary students considered that “the biggest benefit is reassurance” perhaps reflecting their anxieties as they approach the induction year. These features should not be undervalued but peer observation and discussion also has potential to achieve more in developing students’ understanding of curriculum, learning and teaching and assessment.

Primary and secondary teachers were positive in questionnaire responses about factors that relate to the purposes of peer observation and discussion sessions. Most (82%) agreed or strongly agreed that students had benefited in *sharing ideas and teaching concepts* with other students and had *enhanced their abilities in reflecting on and evaluating their own practice* (87%). Most primary teachers and around half of secondary teachers agreed that theory relevant to teaching had been promoted.

Taken together stakeholder views represent a resounding endorsement for peer observation and discussion in primary schools and a positive though more mixed view in secondary schools. More development work will be required in secondary schools to realise the benefits of peer observation and dialogue, though the potential is just as high in secondary schools.

In our evaluation activities, we observed the benefits of peer observation in encouraging mutual personal support, informal learning and teamwork across students. Observations of student-led lessons provided a real and highly relevant context for shared discussions close to the point of practice. Students were motivated to observe and learn from each other by a common agenda of interest in issues of classroom organisation and management, promoting positive behaviour and dealing with difficulties. They shared a sense of urgency and priority in aiming to develop their competence in these aspects.

iii. Features of peer observation in practice

- Preparation and the experience of observations

Evaluator: "What are you hoping to get out of this lesson?"

Student: "I don't really know." (Evaluation notes on a secondary peer observation)

I did not gain anything from the POD. The lesson I observed lacked any enthusiasm so there was not much to discuss afterwards. (Secondary student)

As a result of the discussion, I am now more confident about deciding the time to move on, consolidating learning when it is needed, not just ploughing on. (Secondary student)

Prior to an observed lesson, students were asked to identify a focus for their observations that related to their current development needs: "... the framework for these observations will be chosen by the students and NQTs with reference to their chosen development needs and relevant reading." (SEPI proposal paper). The approach was well designed, deploying three powerful interrelated principles to maximise the learning potential of peer observations. First, a clear focus would make the process of observing manageable; second, directing it towards the individual student's view of their current needs would make it directly relevant to their prior learning and needs; third, relating their current needs to 'a reading' would ensure that their thinking was linked to, and informed by, theory or research from the course. Implemented well, this gained maximum benefit from the observations. In practice, there was inconsistency between sectors and schools in how this worked, and how well it worked.

Secondary students did not use readings in preparing for observations. Some did not know what their focus for observation was at the start of a lesson, responding that they were 'not sure'. Most of the secondary students that we observed had decided on a worthwhile focus for observations, such as 'safety in practical work', 'classroom management', 'assessment is for learning', 'questioning techniques', and 'the similarities and differences in teaching approach between subjects'. Some of these led to valuable observations and discussion. Others did not feature prominently in the lesson observed or in the post observation dialogue, and other issues which were key to the quality of the observed lesson were missed.

Primary students all identified and shared a reading from a research publication, academic journal, or coursebook related to their focus. Consequently, they were clear about their focus for observation, though sometimes readings were circulated at the very last minute causing problems to fellow students in preparing. Again they often selected broad aspects such as 'differentiation', 'learning through dialogue', 'creativity', 'higher order thinking skills', and 'assessment', as well as more specific aspects such as 'questioning', 'giving instructions during teaching' and 'the use of praise'. The readings were an inspired and very successful idea. They added considerable quality to their post observation dialogue and provided an explicit and highly successful means of exploring theory through practice. One student captured the added relevance of readings related to placement experience:

When I look at readings in university, it is to write an essay or follow up a lecture for an exam. The readings here are to help me improve my practice in the classroom and they are on issues that I have identified. They mean so much more.

Students in primary placement observed for 'most of an entire lesson'²⁴. Those leading the lesson and the observers valued the insights that this provided into the development and structure of lessons, and sometimes to changes in learner responses during different parts of a lesson. In secondary placements, there was variation in the extent of lessons observed. In some cases observations lasted a full lesson: in others for about 20 minutes. Whereas a period of 20 minutes had the practical advantage of enabling a discussion immediately after an observation, most students viewed the period as too short to witness the development of the lesson and to observe learners' responses to activities that followed teaching. We observed instances where a short period did work well, for example where an observed part of a Home Economics lesson captured well the focus for observation and dialogue. In general, however, our observations support the view that those students who observed for a longer period found the experience more effective, though the discussion then required additional time.

Part of the process of learning to become a teacher is to begin to make explicit the criteria for good learning and teaching and for a 'good lesson'. Although all of the students had significant experience of participating in lessons from their own education, they found the process of observing,

²⁴ The SEPI proposal paper is clear that "Peer observation will last for most of an entire lesson."

analysing and reflecting in observed lessons challenging²⁵. For example many secondary students said that they needed more support in defining what they might learn from a lesson in a different subject and in developing the skills to analyse, and reflect on a lesson in order to improve their practice.

Some students were unsure about how to interact when visiting classes led by fellow students, for example should they sit quietly and observe from a corner (which most did) or help learners if they needed support or sometimes circulate to look at children's work? When they observed from a corner, they sometimes made invalid assumptions that learners were responding well to tasks or that tasks were meeting children's needs because they saw that learners seemed to be working quietly. Preparation for visiting classes would help them to become better observers who can maintain low levels of intrusion into the teaching and learning activities.

During the lessons, students observed teaching carefully and thoughtfully, and often made notes about their observations. Although some tended to be over positive, most were successful in picking out salient strengths of the teaching observed and to justify their comments with examples. They also observed the responses of learners well, where they were overt, and were able to relate these to aspects of theory in subsequent discussions. Teachers observed the lessons and almost always adopted an unobtrusive role, occasionally intervening quietly where they thought that support was needed.

On the evidence so far, peer observation and analysis of classroom practice is a hugely promising feature of SEPI. It will need both preparation and development through coaching to achieve its full potential. For example, some preparation of students in analysing lessons could be carried out in advance of the placement, possibly involving some school regents or mentors, using video recordings of lessons or cameras on live classrooms as a basis for discussion. The various options for structuring observations used in the SEPI pilot should also be considered as an aspect for development for the next stage. A focus for observations was very useful for students who are at an early stage in their experience of analysing practice. At its simplest, a focus can be on one key aspect of practice in a series of observed lessons, such as how different children's learning needs are met, how good behaviour is promoted, the success of teaching for understanding, or the organisation of practical work. Tutors

²⁵ Some teachers in both sectors, including senior managers, also commented that they needed support in evaluating lessons and in establishing an agreed focus for evaluation.

now also have experience of the advantages and complexities of more personalised foci. Readings pioneered so successfully in the primary schools should be tried out with secondary students: again at its simplest a common reading could be shared, or, more ambitiously, each student could identify an individual reading. A further possible strand of innovation could be opened up where teachers are willing to play a more active part in the observations. For example, a teacher could talk to the student leading the lesson about the focus and the reading, and later join the post observation dialogue (as will be discussed below).

- Post observation dialogue and feedback

In secondary schools, post observation dialogues varied in the extent that they achieved their potential. When a tutor led the dialogue, the quality was generally very good: discussions were effectively led and highlighted points about effective practice. One tutor experimented well with a discussion that brought together different groups. The tutor circulated while each group of students discussed their own observed lesson and then asked the students to share key messages with the other groups.

In our sampling, it was more common for secondary students to lead their own post observation discussion. Discussions usually included valuable comments. One student's high quality modelling of performance in dance led an observer to determine to think about how she could demonstrate enthusiasm and quality of modelling in teaching her own subject. A student's comment that, "that's not how I would teach language" following another lesson led to a rich discussion about the role of language in learning within a different subject context. However, other student-led discussions were brief or lacked depth and in many cases missed opportunities to highlight or debate observations.

A facilitator would have undoubtedly added value to many of these student-led, post observation discussions. A facilitator can often quickly elicit key features of good practice in a lesson or direct attention towards them, ask challenging questions and aid reflection on improvement. One student observed the difference where a tutor led the discussion: "Where it is facilitated, it is brilliant!" It is not surprising that student teachers need support in self-maintaining such a discussion, particularly when their focus for observation was sometimes unclear. The advantage of using a facilitator has to be balanced with its costs in tutor or teacher time. Selected school staff who wish to facilitate lesson observations and follow-up discussions could be encouraged and supported through CPD opportunities.

In primary schools, the overall quality of dialogue following observations was outstanding: several examples of superb professional dialogue were observed. The following brief composite extract gives a flavour of the discussions between two observing students and a tutor. The student leading the lesson was not present.

Student A: I'm getting one-word answers (*in my teaching*) and I'm not making them think enough.

Tutor: What did you see to help you in the observed lesson?

Student A: She (*referring to the student leading the lesson*) used open-ended questions well.

Student B: And openers like "Tell us how you did that" to get them to explain their thinking, and she asked them to extend some of their answers by saying things like "Can you tell us a bit more?" I thought that that was good.

Student A: Some of her questions led to different sorts of thinking.

Tutor: Remember, we talked about classifying different sorts of thinking that children show in their responses and comments.

Brief discussion on classifications

Tutor: What about closed questions, did you see any examples?

Student A: Yes. Sometimes worked well when she was trying to keep the children together and break her teaching into small steps but some were like mine. She asked the children, "What's that a picture of?" and gave the answer herself after a second, "It's a tree".

Student A is grappling with a real and complex problem of practice. She is aware of some relevant theoretical ideas such as the use of dialogue to promote different sorts of thinking; the role that different sorts of questions can play in encouraging thinking; and the use of dialogue in 'control' during teaching. She is benefiting in using the observations and discussion in planning adjustments to her own use of questions during teaching. The tutor acts as an unobtrusive but skilful guide to the dialogue and student B makes a useful contribution and clarifies her own thinking through the discussion.

One issue that needs to be clarified in relation to observations and dialogue is *the role of evaluation* in the discussions following an observed lesson. Although discussion sessions often opened with a reminder that 'we are not evaluating the student's teaching', the descriptive voice quickly slipped as evaluations and references to good practice entered post observation dialogues. Without a sufficient sample of lessons to identify patterns across lessons, a shift towards evaluative comment was

inevitable in making the best use of the student's observations. Evaluative comments enriched the discussions in the situations where they took place: a reliance on description alone would have become arid without some kind of follow up to generalise links between described practice and the quality of learning and teaching.

Rather than proscribe evaluation from post observation dialogue, it is useful to define the purpose of evaluation in observed lessons as:

- to contribute *formatively* to the development and progress of the student's taking part, as against
- making a *summative* judgement of the capabilities of the student leading the lesson.

Making it clear that the lesson will not play a part in the summative assessment of the student leading the lesson reduces tension and encourages that student, if they wish, to 'try things out in a safe context'. Establishing a purely formative and supportive purpose also reduces the disquiet of students at commenting on a fellow student who was not present in a post observation dialogue. Focusing on this purpose allows the dialogue to consider the practice and development needs of the observing students and the needs of the learners in the class. It opens up useful dialogue about strengths and alternative approaches, relating both to theory and a body of ideas about good practice, which have been developed during the university course, and can now be considered afresh against the experience of practice.

"I don't know how you can develop from it if no one gives you feedback."
(Secondary student)

SEPI guidance is clear that the class teacher should provide *feedback* to the student leading the lesson²⁶. We endorse that view and recommend that this SEPI advice is implemented more consistently. Some teachers may have been cautious about giving feedback because they were aware that a detailed discussion of the lesson was taking place elsewhere. In practice, some teachers provided specific feedback on the observed lesson; some included the lesson in general feedback; and some provided no feedback at all on the lesson.

Many teachers commented that their involvement in post observation discussions would enhance their feedback to students on observed lessons. Involving class teachers is likely to support the quality of their

²⁶ "For the student leading the teaching, the purpose is to receive constructive and focused feedback from the class teacher." (SEPI proposal paper)

ongoing formative feedback. Those teachers who were included praised the value to them of participation in these discussions. Including teachers in post observation discussions will present logistic difficulties, particularly in secondary schools but, wherever it is feasible, teachers should be included in these discussions.

Provision for student-student feedback to students leading an observed lesson was not built into the SEPI model. Some students provided 'unofficial' comment at the end of a day or at lunchtime, sometimes worrying that they were not 'supposed to' comment on what they had observed and discussed. In contrast, one tutor allocated time at a meeting for informal feedback from observers to those leading lessons. Informal feedback from student to student should be encouraged as a contribution to an ethos of shared evaluation and mutual support.



Growth point: Taking forward peer observation and dialogue.

This is a key strength of SEPI. To maximise its potential benefits, staff development for tutors, teachers and students should follow from the development of a clearer framework of practice by considering the following aspects:

- ensuring that all engaged in an observation have a clear and shared focus for observation and evaluation.
- clarifying the purpose of evaluation in contributing *formatively* to the development and progress of the students taking part
- separating peer observations and discussions from evidence gathering for summative assessment
- including teachers in the post observation dialogue wherever feasible, encouraging them to volunteer to facilitate the observation in classes and to provide consistently formative feedback to those leading an observed lesson.

Part 3 Concluding thoughts

This concluding section summarises the key evaluations from our report so far and presents a telling set of evidence from questionnaires comparing students' views of the new approach to placement with their views of 'traditional' placements. We conclude with a discussion of two broad themes which have important relationships with quality in the post-pilot stage once immediate changes have been made.

i. Key evaluations

The evaluation of the Strathclyde Enhanced Partnership Initiative shows a high degree of consistency across the views of tutors, teachers' and students' views of the pilot experience and these were largely consistent with our first hand evaluations. The implementation of the pilot and the majority of its features were successfully achieved, with 74% of teachers and 80% of students agreeing that SEPI had *generally promoted students' professional learning and development as a student teacher*.

However, survey responses also indicate that some students and teachers had reservations or seemingly conflicting views in their perspective on aspects of the new arrangements. For example, 36% of teachers were unsure and 24% of students disagreed that the initiative had *provided students with effective teaching skills*; 46% of students were unsure or did not feel that their *confidence to teach* had increased as a result of taking part in SEPI; and 46% of students were unsure or disagreed that their ability to plan lessons had in fact been promoted by SEPI.

Such tensions may be symptomatic of the way that the views, knowledge and development of students are shaped by the university's programme and activities but are also partly formed as a 'product of the activity, context and culture in which it is developed and used'²⁷. No model of school placement or partnership working will necessarily result in enhancements to learning, teaching or collaboration unless it is conceived as a basis for continuing development, dialogue and adaptation to context. The improvement of learning conditions 'always asks for contextualised

²⁷ Brown, J. S., Collins, A. & Duguid, P. 1989. Situated Cognition and the Culture of Learning. *Educational Researcher*, 18(1), 32-42.

judgements rather than for general recipes²⁸. The SEPI approach is well positioned to bring more closely together the university model of professional education with a deeper understanding of day-to-day realities of learning and teaching in classrooms.

The implementation of SEPI was effective in taking account of personal qualities, local practices and collegial relationships. **Change management, communication and consultation** were successful in developing partnerships between stakeholders, with most students and most teachers agreeing that SEPI had *promoted collaboration between the University and the schools involved*. Relationships between tutors, teachers and students during placement were generally very positive, and the broad messages about changes and the rationale for making them were quickly communicated and well understood by those involved. There were glitches in communication and misunderstandings and some secondary teachers were critical about the information received in the early stages of the pilot. Continued dialogue, and engaging students and teachers in evaluating SEPI, highlighting its successful impact and value in the classroom will continue to be important in winning teacher support for the changes and in maintaining partnerships between school and university in the effective style established so far.

More tutor time in schools facilitated improvements in quality during the SEPI pilots. Some students reported successfully resolving very significant personal or professional issues which were pivotal to their continuation on the course through in-school tutor support. Others appreciated accessing prompt practical advice on specific aspects such as planning, pedagogy and promoting positive behaviour. Teachers and students were largely positive about the benefits of **increased tutor support and student teamwork in schools**. Although a small number of teachers identified problems, mostly relating to doubts or uncertainties about the role of a school based tutor, most agreed that it *had provided students with greater support from tutors*. Most students supported the view that 'one constant tutor is a big advantage', agreeing that it *had provided students with greater support from tutors*. The SEPI approach *facilitated the sharing of teaching ideas and concepts between students*. Students' views on cross-sector sessions to share their experiences of teaching in different sectors were more mixed. Although the majority of students found them useful, there was a significant minority (around a third) for whom they appeared to

²⁸ James, D. and Biesta, G. 2007. *Improving learning cultures in further education*. London: Routledge.

yield little or no benefit. Students used the sessions to talk about their successes and problems; share practical advice; provide emotional support to each other; and broaden their understanding of similarities and differences in practice across the sectors. In general, the SEPI cross-sector sessions were partly successful. They would benefit from including teachers and developing the content of the sessions.

The pilot's approach to **shared assessment** brought together a broader and better evidence base for assessing student teachers' progress than traditional arrangements including 'flying visits' by tutors. Stakeholders in primary schools were very positive about the shared assessment arrangements, with more mixed views from secondary schools. Most primary teachers and a majority of secondary teachers agreed that SEPI had *provided a more accurate way of assessing students' teaching abilities*. Some secondary teachers argued that they had existing good arrangements to assess students which worked well, and so change was unnecessary. Most students agreed that SEPI had provided a more accurate way of assessing their teaching abilities and *provided more opportunities for reflection and self-evaluation for students*; and *improved the efficiency of feedback from university tutors*.

Shared assessment involved constructive professional discussions involving students, teachers and tutors. Tutors and teachers encouraged students to voice their reflections and feelings about their progress as teachers, valuing student's comments on their strengths and development needs and on the responses of pupils in their lessons. There were more weaknesses in the quality of shared assessment meetings in primary schools than in secondary schools and CPD will be needed to help some teachers to play a fuller role in the shared assessment process.

Peer observation and the discussion of classroom practice which followed them **to involve student teachers in their own learning, development and assessment** is a hugely promising feature of SEPI. In primary schools peer observation had many strengths and the overall quality of professional dialogue following observations was outstanding. There was more variation in quality in secondary schools and development work will be required to realise the significant benefits in secondary schools. In secondary schools, post observation dialogues were sometimes led by students and sometimes by tutors. When a tutor led the dialogue, the quality was generally very good.

Stakeholders provided strong endorsement for peer observation and discussion in primary schools, with a positive though more mixed view in

secondary schools. Most primary students agreed that they had benefited in sharing teaching ideas with other students. Most also thought that peer observations had enhanced their abilities in *reflecting on and evaluating their own practice*. Some secondary students appreciated observing how teachers organised practical work in different subjects but others argued that they would gain more from observing a similar subject to their own. Primary and secondary teachers were positive about factors that related to the aims of peer observation and discussion sessions. Most felt that students had benefited in *sharing ideas and teaching concepts with other students* and had enhanced their abilities in *reflecting on and evaluating their own practice*. Most primary teachers and around half of secondary teachers agreed that *theory relevant to teaching had been promoted*.

2. Comparing students' views of new and traditional placements

Questionnaire responses to: 'Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements regarding the potential difference between the current Initiative and pre-existing approach.'

Compared with the pre-existing arrangement/model of teacher education the Initiative has:	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Not sure %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %
Provided student teachers with greater support from tutors. (N=25)	64	20	12	4	-
Provided student teachers with greater support from school teachers. (N=25)	24	24	20	28	4
Provided a more accurate way of assessing student teachers' teaching abilities. (N=25)	32	48	4	8	8
Reduced the potential for anxiety concerning assessment. (N=24)	46	34	4	8	8
Improved the efficiency of feedback from university tutors. (N=25)	60	16	8	4	12
Provided more opportunities for reflection and self evaluation for student teachers. (N=25)	52	28	12	-	8
Provided more opportunities for sharing of ideas/techniques between primary/secondary student teachers. (N=25)	48	44	8	-	-
Promoted collaboration between the University and the schools involved (N=25)	56	28	12	4	-

In the section of the questionnaires above, we asked students to rate aspects of the quality of their SEPI placement experience *in comparison with* their experience of previous placements. In order to help them to judge whether the pilot was beneficial to them, we encouraged them to use their previous placements as a benchmark for their responses to questions about SEPI. Did they find the new approach better or worse, and in what

respects? Was SEPI a success for them? We regard their responses here as an important summary of their views on the changes.

Their responses provide a very strong endorsement of the relative quality of their new placement experience with most students (around 80%) rating their SEPI placement as a better experience. Moreover, key aims of SEPI (in italics beside the bullet points below) match very closely to specific features that they rated as improved. This provided powerful evidence, at least from the perspective of the participating students, that the aims of SEPI had been successfully met. Most agreed or agreed strongly that improvements had been achieved in the way that SEPI:

- provided students with greater support from tutors and promoted collaboration between the university and the schools involved (*allocating more tutor time to improve partnership relationships*)
- improved the efficiency of feedback from university tutors and provided a more accurate way of assessing students' teaching abilities (*progress towards shared assessment*).
- provided more opportunities for reflection and self evaluation for the students (*improvements through peer observation and dialogue*)
- Even the cross-sector sessions, where students expressed more mixed views about their usefulness, earned positive ratings in promoting more opportunities for sharing ideas and techniques between primary and secondary students (*cross-sector sessions designed to emphasise the many shared elements of practice across sectors*).

So, by and large, students who experienced the changes are convinced of their value. That provides a very healthy starting point for a discussion of the slightly longer-term future of placements and partnerships within Strathclyde University with Glasgow City Council and other authorities. In framing this discussion we recognise that challenges for change management remain across other stakeholders. Some of the changes and the need for them are contested, particularly by a group of staff in schools. Although our survey suggests that the teacher's comment below would be a minority view, it is not a lone voice, and it is unlikely to be changed by a further year of piloting.

Am still not sure why the system needed to be changed at all. I found the previous system ok and it seemed to work with minimum hassle for all. Now a lot more folk involved and this becomes a workload issue for staff. (Secondary faculty head)

And there may be some similar views among the wider group of university tutors.

3. Looking to the horizon

As part of our report we have commented on the considerable successes of SEPI, made some comments on aspects for improvement and mapped out growth points for consideration by colleagues in the education authority and the university involved in extending the pilot in the coming year. Some of these growth points relate to immediate improvements in consistency or communication. Others involve building on strengths, for example to develop aspects of practice such as teamwork, shared assessment or peer observation and dialogue. Addressing these with a wider team and range of schools and authorities will create a busy agenda and absorb thinking and development energy over this academic year.

Although we recognise that this agenda will be challenging, we conclude with a discussion of two broad aspects of the SEPI vision, which should be considered in the drive to promote quality over *the next few years*.

i. Developing educational theory through practice

For many decades, teacher educators have dwelled on the thorny relationship between theory and practice. Most recently, *Teaching Scotland's Future* returned to the issue to stress the need to avoid a separation where theory is considered on campus, and practice is the domain of schools. Rather theory and practice “should be seen as interlinked, with connections being the means of developing educational theory through practice.”²⁹ This is not a new stance, and more teachers nowadays seem well disposed towards it, but it has proved difficult to achieve in practice. Reservations about ‘theory’ still persist as shown in this student’s comment: “some of it fits, some of it is about ideal scenarios, you learn more on the job through more practical experience”.

Placement provides some of the richest opportunities to link theory and

²⁹ Page 42, See footnote 1.

practice in ways that show the relevance of such links; apply and test ideas; and promote well thought out and evidenced views. Students do not see such links automatically; they often need to be highlighted or made explicit through dialogue. There is much to be celebrated in SEPI in linking theory and practice but scope to highlight links more frequently.

In section 2.4, we gave an illustration of a post-lesson dialogue where primary students discussed ideas from their university course in the light of their classroom experience in order to develop their questioning to improve children's learning. As a further example, we observed a secondary PE student during an excellent reflective discussion with the school-based tutor exploring the application of ideas about his teaching approach. His aim across a set of lessons had been to encourage the pupils to learn through 'guided discovery', an approach advocated on the university course and supported by some theories of learning. The student contrasted the benefits of 'guided discovery' in several of his lessons in comparison with teaching using more instructional approaches. However, during a particular athletics lesson outdoors, he had observed problems with safety and with pupils struggling with exploratory methods and switched to a more instructional approach. He reflected that he was now more open to the view that different learning and teaching approaches suited different contexts, and to responding to his observations of learners during teaching: both valuable developments of his thinking.

Experiences like this are signs of considerable success in developing thinking about practice which takes account of theory. They also prompt the challenge: How can SEPI engender more thinking of this quality which applies theory in practice and tests it out in the process?

We observed four features of SEPI where this sort of link sometimes took place and indicate how they might be consciously developed further to foster connections between theory and practice.

- In formal and informal dialogue students should be encouraged to 'refer back' to ideas introduced on the university course and tutors should keep reminding students of aspects of theory and research during discussions of practice.
- When a student identifies a 'reading' to inform thinking about practice, it should be shared with the school-based tutor, class teacher and observing students, used to direct observations of practice to test the usefulness of its ideas, and discussed in post-observation dialogue.

- Post observation dialogue should be used for in-depth discussion and evaluation, focusing on examples of theory applied in the observed lesson.
- Tutors, teachers and students should use shared assessment and extended discussions of students' progress to encourage understanding about the capabilities expected of students and their application in practice.

In turn, developments in placement practice can create leverage to develop elements of the campus course. For example in Section 2.2, we made suggestions for increased student-led teamwork in shared professional inquiry during placement. These ideas could be used to introduce, develop or explore aspects of coursework to investigate links between ideas from taught modules and practice in schools. Students analysing and reconciling their understanding of theory with their classroom experience, for example through testing out together ideas from their readings or more generally from course modules will raise questions for them, both about aspects of the university course and about classroom practice.

This should result in 'washback' from placement experience to the development of 'on campus' university courses. We observed students using ideas from some aspects of their on campus course during placement but these tended to be about curriculum or methodological components. They also discussed these in terms of their effectiveness in preparing them to teach. For example, some primary students commented on imbalances in the extent to which they felt prepared for different areas of the curriculum comparing ample preparation for religious and moral education with gaps in their preparation for science. Despite well-founded rationales for the place of the psychology, sociology and philosophy of education in illuminating teaching, the application of ideas from these fields was rarely evident in students' discussions. This kind of evidence provides potentially useful data for evaluating and developing courses. Can links be made more explicit? Is the breadth and balance of courses right? Do some courses need to be made more relevant? Are aspects of placement practice 'out of synch' with sound practice based on theory?

Greater tutor involvement in placement, particularly in developing the role of a school-based tutor with an overview of students' progress, has the potential to provide more effective iterative development between

placement experience and the university-based component of the course. School-based tutors could play a pivotal part in gathering very useful evidence and views about two key questions which could drive improvement:

- What does the placement experience tell us about the quality of our university course, and
- What does placement tell us about current practice in schools and its relationship with theory?

ii. Deepening partnerships

Partnerships thrive where each partner contributes fully and generously and their partnership brings reciprocal gains to each of the partners. This sub-section looks briefly at possible ways that students, teachers and tutors can build on the successes of SEPI and deepen their contribution, indirectly but ultimately benefiting learners.

SEPI placed strong emphasis on involving *students* as partners in their own learning. For example, opportunities were provided for students to work as teams and provide mutual support; identify readings and personalised foci for lesson observation; voice their reflections and feelings about their progress as beginning teachers by commenting on their strengths and development needs; evaluate the responses of pupils in their lessons during post observation discussions; and add value to the work of the class or school as a 'payback' for the support that they receive.

Students' involvement can be deepened further. They have considerable abilities and are highly motivated and committed to become successful teachers. We have made suggestions for enhancing their role in developing student-led teamwork in shared professional enquiry, in encouraging them to work in small teams more independently and frequently, and in providing informal feedback to each other. Preparing them more to evaluate lessons that they observe; self-evaluate their own lessons; and strengthening their partnership in the shared assessment process by taking stock of their own strengths, development needs and progress can all extend their role in self-assessment.

Teachers appreciated the pilot's significant benefits to students. Some felt, and we would agree with them, that the teachers' role had changed less than the tutors' role in supporting students. In addition, a recurring message from teachers was that attention to benefits to teachers and host schools seemed to end up 'on the back burner' during the pilot because of the understandable focus on students. How might the role of teachers

develop to benefit their own practice as teachers, and open up opportunities for them to support students more effectively?

SEPI has provided a good foundation to build on. Several teachers reported direct benefit to them in their role in supporting students, to their practice as a teacher or as a school manager.

As a class teacher it has encouraged me to reflect on my own teaching at a deeper level and developed my understanding of ways in which I can support and advise a student teacher.

As a practicing teacher, I got so much out of the POD. (Primary teacher)

As a manager, I feel it has encouraged deeper reflection and evaluation of teaching and learning, including monitoring procedures across the whole school. (Primary depute head/SMT)

The tutor comes in, asks you your views, offers help and asks how she can help. (Primary teacher)

More typically, however, teachers made comments like:

Impacts on students more than on the school (Secondary regent)

One thing that hasn't happened yet is sufficient spin off through CPD for class teachers. (Primary headteacher)

Staff are not trained in how to observe lessons. (Primary DHT)

Benefits for and from teachers and schools come in a variety of forms. We witnessed cases where the enthusiasm, skills and fresh ideas of students refreshed aspects of a teacher's or a department's practice, making a small contribution to changing the school's curriculum. The process of discussions with tutors, particularly around shared assessment clarified teachers' expectations and the steps needed for them to target support for students, leaving them better prepared to support students in the future. Teachers who attended the post-graduate certificate in *Supporting Teacher Learning* reported that their skills in analysis and their awareness of justifying and evidencing their comments had improved. In turn, many teachers and departments provided very effective support and challenge to their students.

There is also room to enhance the role of teachers particularly where they wish to extend their involvement in supporting students or work with

university tutors on aspects of curriculum development. As SEPI becomes established, changes in the role of students, teachers and tutors during placement experience needs to prompt the development of school practice as well as support for students.

In section 2.2 we advocated the involvement of teachers, mentors and regents in volunteering to provide support where students need it in teamwork activities directed towards shared professional enquiry. We also encouraged tutors to develop the nature of cross-sector sessions and open them up to teachers. Our growth points in section 2.3 focused on supporting teacher development directed towards a more active role in assessment, and recognised that priority would have to be given to improve some teachers' skills and confidence. In section 2.4 we argued that teachers could be encouraged to facilitate peer observation sessions and where feasible to join in post observation dialogue. This adds up to a challenging but worthwhile agenda for teacher development with potential 'spin offs' for the teachers and the school. Although some teachers are concerned with change and possible increases in workload, many teachers are keen to engage with this agenda. More teacher engagement could also facilitate 'trade offs' in tutor input to staff and curriculum development for schools

Opportunities for teachers to share their ideas on placements *across schools* were not designed as a SEPI activity but would assist them in sharing good practice and promoting quality. Teachers' responses to questionnaires made it plain that opportunities for 'sharing of ideas/techniques between teachers involved in the initiative schools' had not increased (just over a quarter agreed or agreed strongly with this statement). Such opportunities do not depend solely or even mainly on organisation by the university. In the course of development and liaison activity, teachers organise meetings with other local schools or schools taking part in similar projects. There would be merit, for example, in groups of mentors in different schools sharing their experiences of the pilot.

The team of *tutors* responded with skill and commitment as partners in piloting SEPI. Across the small team, they demonstrated an impressive range of expertise and skills and can take much credit for making the approach to placement work and for the successes of SEPI.

They also took some early and modest steps to achieve the wider aspiration for university tutors to develop a wider partnership working with education authorities and schools in capacity building. For example, they established good relationships and contacts with colleagues in the pilot

schools, provided advice, and made some offers of further help with CPD.

This wider vision of partnership with tutors sharing their expertise through CPD; working with teachers on aspects of curriculum development; developing networks of subject leaders in secondary schools; 'brokering' the engagement of university colleagues where useful; and supporting teachers at the early phase of their career remains challenging. The aspiration is sound and has potential to enrich the tutor's role as well as improve quality in schools. It will require some protected time to give it initial impetus.

In widening the group of schools and the tutors involved in SEPI, consideration will need to be given to the balance between the tutor's role in promoting consistency in practice and their freedom to innovate. We have mentioned aspects where inconsistencies between expectations of tutor support, peer observation or shared assessment caused difficulties during the pilot. It is important that students, teachers and tutors are all clear about core features of the approach and these should be consistently applied. As senior professionals, and for the longer-term health of SEPI, tutors need space and encouragement beyond this core to innovate and share ideas so that the creativity of learning together is fully harnessed.

This sub-section has discussed ways that the partnership role of students, teachers and tutors can be deepened. The promotion of partnership working between universities, education authorities and schools will be given further support and momentum by the recent announcement (below) that application for funding bids will be considered by Scottish government. The SEPI story has only just begun.

National Implementation Board (NIB) agreed at its meeting on 28 May that the Scottish Government should support local authority and universities to enter partnerships and establish new and sustainable methods of working. This support may include direct funding which could be used to support local authorities and universities, working with teachers' representatives, to drive the development of the partnerships.

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Appendices

Appendix A Statistical responses to survey of teachers and students

Teachers' responses to: 'Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements regarding the Initiative'.

Do you believe that the Initiative has:	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Not sure %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %
Generally promoted students' professional learning and development as a student teacher. (N=39)	25.6	64.1	2.6	7.7	-
Generally promoted students' ability to teach effectively in their chosen sector. (N=38)	18.4	55.3	18.4	7.9	-
Provided students with effective teaching skills. (N=39)	17.9	41.0	35.9	2.6	2.6
Facilitated the sharing of teaching ideas and concepts across the students. (N=39)	38.5	43.6	15.4	2.6	-
Enhanced students' ability to reflect on and evaluate their own practice. (N=39)	35.9	51.3	10.3	-	2.6
Promoted students' knowledge of theory relevant to teaching. (N=39)	28.2	35.9	33.3	-	2.6
Promoted students' knowledge of policy relevant to teaching. (N=39)	17.9	41.0	38.5	-	2.6
Increased students' confidence to teach. (N=39)	20.5	46.2	20.5	12.8	-
Promoted students' ability to plan lessons. (N=39)	10.3	56.4	23.1	7.7	2.6
Been successful in promoting improved communication/ shared understanding across all those involved (for example, greater consistency of messages that the student teacher receives from tutors/teacher)? (N=39)	41.0	38.5	7.7	10.3	2.6
Provided students with greater support from tutors. (N=39)	41.0	41.0	10.3	5.1	2.6
Provided students with greater support from school teachers. (N=39)	25.6	41.0	17.9	12.8	2.6
Provided a more accurate way of assessing students' teaching abilities. (N=39)	33.3	41.0	15.4	7.7	2.6
Reduced the potential for student anxiety concerning assessment. (N=39)	15.4	33.3	41.0	5.1	5.1
Improved the efficiency of feedback from the University tutors. (N=39)	33.3	41.0	15.4	7.7	2.6
Provided more opportunities for reflection and self-evaluation for the students. (N=39)	30.8	46.2	20.5	-	2.6
Provided more opportunities for sharing of ideas/techniques between primary/secondary students. (N=39)	7.7	38.5	46.2	5.1	2.6
Promoted collaboration between the University	30.8	51.3	12.8	2.6	2.6

and the schools involved. (N=39)					
Provided more opportunities for sharing of ideas/techniques between <u>teachers</u> involved in the Initiative schools. (N=39)	12.8	15.4	43.6	20.5	7.7
Developed a model for teacher education that should be widely adopted (N=38)	21.1	44.7	23.7	5.3	5.3
Provides a more effective model for Initial Teacher Education than the 'traditional' approach (N=39)	25.6	33.3	33.3	2.6	5.1

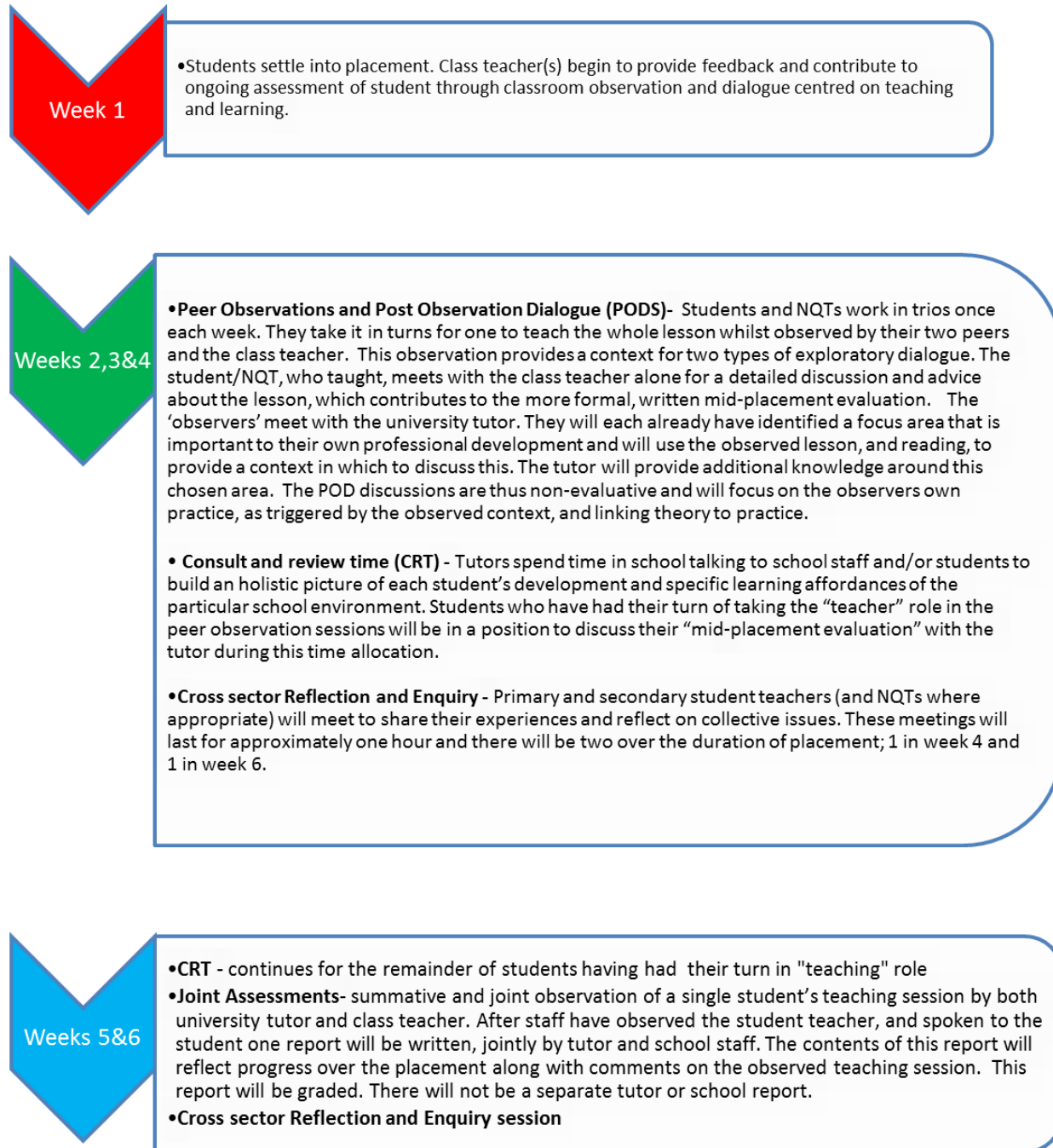
Students' responses to: Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements regarding the Initiative.

Do you believe that the Initiative has:	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Generally promoted your professional learning and development as a student teacher (N=25)	24.0	56.0	8.0	8.0	4.0
Generally promoted your ability to teach effectively in your chosen sector (N=25)	24.0	52.0	8.0	12.0	4.0
Provided you with effective teaching skills (N=25)	28.0	40.0	8.0	20.0	4.0
Facilitated the sharing of teaching ideas and concepts across your peers(N=25)	60.0	24.0	4.0	12.0	-
Enhanced your ability to reflect on and evaluate your own practice (N=25)	32.0	48.0	4.0	12.0	4.0
Promoted your knowledge of theory relevant to teaching (N=25)	28.0	52.0	8.0	8.0	4.0
Promoted your knowledge of policy relevant to teaching (N=25)	20.0	44.0	20.0	12.0	4.0
Increased your confidence to teach(N=24)	33.3	20.8	25.0	16.7	4.2
Promoted your ability to plan lessons (N=24)	8.3	45.8	29.2	12.5	4.2
Been successful in promoting improved communication/ shared understanding across those involved (for example, greater consistency of messages that the student teacher receives from tutors/teacher)? (N=25)	56.0	24.0	8.0	4.0	8.0

Appendix B SEPI Flowchart

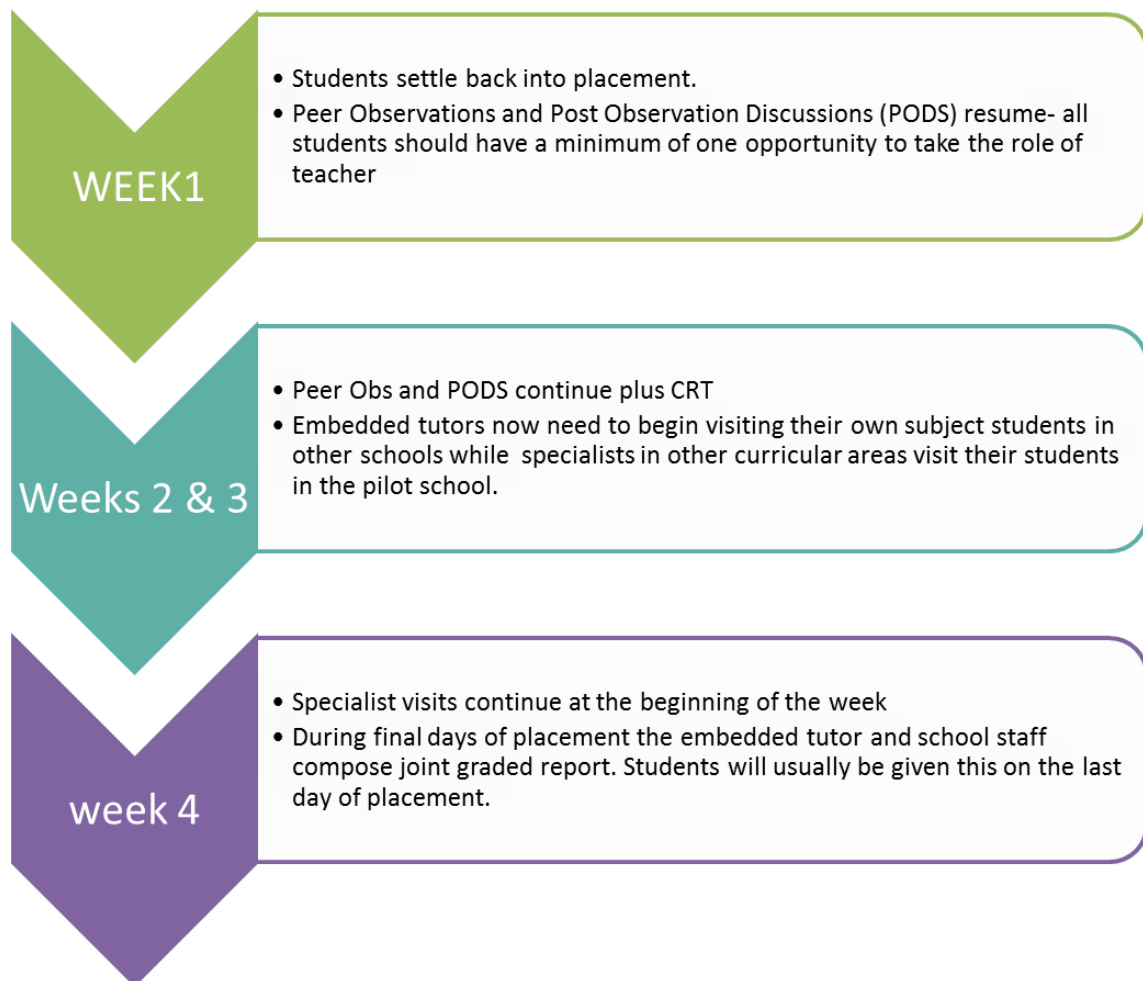
University of Strathclyde –SEPI (Secondary)

In preparation for placement 2, the embedded tutor will have discussed a student's progress with the university subject specialist. This discussion will contribute to the decision whether the subject specialist visit should be in placement 2, 3 or both.



Placement 3- secondary

Students who were observed by the embedded tutor in placement 2 must be observed by their subject specialist in placement 3. The observation will be a joint one with the class teacher. Students and tutors should have a discussion afterwards about the observed lesson- similar to usual discussions. The difference will be that students will not receive grades at this stage. The CT and specialist tutor should provide the student with written advice and comments on the usual tutor form. Diagnostic codes should be indicated on the E and NA columns, where appropriate. But grade boxes should have a line through them as they don't apply, at this stage. This assessment will feed into the final graded report which will be composed jointly by school staff and the embedded tutor (written and given to the student by the embedded tutor, on the old school report document). The embedded tutor will give a copy to relevant university colleagues.



Appendix C Examples of impact.

Impact takes various forms with each student making some impact in the classroom through the quality of their teaching. In some cases teachers praised a student's contribution as adding value to their own practice. At the other end of a spectrum, where a student's inexperience affected their capabilities, teachers worked to compensate learners for any impact on the progress of their learners.

We saw many signs during students' lessons of positive impact on learning and a few lessons where learning was not as effectively promoted. We were not able to evaluate the overall impact on practice of student's contribution during placement: that would require much more time than was available. It was commendable that students were encouraged to think hard about impact in evaluating their lessons and that tutors frequently raised it as an issue for discussion with them.

There were some highly commendable examples of students making an *additional* impact on provision in schools beyond their contribution through lessons. This helps students in developing their role as committed professionals contributing beyond basic expectations or to the wider life of the school despite their full programme of preparation, teaching and assessment. We list a number of examples below. Tutors encouraged this broader contribution and it was much appreciated by the pupils and teachers that they worked with in the schools.

Examples of impact in secondary schools. Individual students:

- used expertise to develop and implement a highly engaging and motivating short course in dance within physical education in the absence of school expertise on this aspect
- designed and presented a new unit in Home Economics to assist the department in developing courses linked to *Curriculum for Excellence*
- produced a thematic poetry magazine which was published beyond the school
- returned to school after placement to develop a technology project
- introduced or contributed to extra-curricular activities such as cheerleading and gardening
- Attended a mathematics weekend with pupils to promote their enthusiasm for mathematics.

Examples of impact in primary schools. Individual students:

- involved a friend who is a police officer in providing a talk to the class on an aspect of health education
- developed a 'CSI' thematic display to display a range of pupil work and scientific evidence generated and analysed by P7children
- mentored a senior pupil highlighted by class teacher to support the pupil to integrate into a school 'Friendship' group
- planned and delivered a series of poetry sessions for a lunchtime club, and published an anthology
- participated in extra-curricular activities such as cycling proficiency, gardening, drama, athletics, engineering (designing moving vehicles) new image rugby, and science/ sustainability
- took responsibility in the School Eco-Council for overseeing environmental audit of senior play environs
- created a 'twitter' feed for pupils to share feedback to each other and encourage them to provide feedback to each other on their learning. Both approaches for self and peer assessment involved pupils agreeing success criteria and devising and agreeing a protocol for posting and responding to each other through 'twitter'
- assisted a School Health Group's healthy eating workshop for pupils and parents.

Appendix D Evaluation principles: from theory to practice

The following ideas are intended for discussion in shaping the evaluation of the Strathclyde-Glasgow pilot. They propose some principles for evaluation and apply the broad notion of focusing on the core ideas from *Teaching Scotland's Future* and providing space to evaluate distinctive features and take account differing stages of development.

- Each pilot should be encouraged to develop a **statement of its aims**, its rationale for changes and the key strands of activity that will lead to improved experience for student and probationer teachers and for learners. This statement should shape evaluative activity.
- Although the main focus of evaluation will be on placement experience, evaluation should also be free to follow issues, if they arise, related to **the role of placements within the wider university course and the early phase of teacher education and the links made between these aspects.**
- The **involvement of partners** in shaping and implementing the project should be reflected by their involvement in evaluation: ways should be developed of engaging their views with a minimum level of intrusion on their time.
- **Continuity and consistency:** the objectives of the evaluation and strands of evaluation methodology used in the Glasgow-Glasgow pilot remain relevant i.e.:

Research and evaluation objectives

- To provide an account of the development of the project
- To incorporate a participatory dimension to the evaluation that will involve stakeholders in the analysis of the pilot project
- To evaluate the extent to which the aims of the pilot project are achieved
- To make recommendations for future developments

Methods

The strategy for research and evaluation has four strands as follows:

- Narrative
- Participatory research and evaluation
- Effectiveness for participants
- External review.

Within that framework, our discussions in Strathclyde and in TERG have suggested that some **areas of deeper emphasis** should be considered. These include:

- Within 'effectiveness for participants', an exploration of whether data are available to enable comparison of views on the approach used in the pilot with existing approaches to placement. The existing data provides satisfaction ratings and a representative selection of positive and critical comments identifying benefits and issues from the pilot experience. The report on the second pilot was also able to provide information on whether students, teachers and tutors were *more* positive and identified different strengths and issues than on existing approaches to placement. It is intended to use such information where students have experienced different placements over a session and, more generally, to consider sampling students' views of the impact of traditional placements on their development.
- Within participatory research, an increased emphasis on depth of observation and qualitative evaluation of key features associated with the project, such as shared observations, discussions/cross-sector sessions and assessment practice. A necessary condition for evaluating these features is an increased clarity about the features of quality practice in these areas. This should be promoted through professional dialogue to work towards a shared understanding by tutors and teachers.
- Collection of specific examples of impact on practice. Discussions at TERG have encouraged a shift towards a greater emphasis on impact. This approach is an established feature of the Strathclyde B Ed. Gathering and scrutinising these activities should provide an evidence base, which provides some indications of impact on teachers, schools and learners.
- The evaluation should be **formative during the pilot**. Evaluators should contribute to professional dialogue during the pilot and share emerging messages from observations and evidence.

- Evaluation should be sensitive to workload issues and adopt a voluntary opt-in approach where additional activities are suggested.

The **evaluation team** needs to reflect the partnership approach and **combine different skills**, for example in gathering, processing and interpreting data, in interviewing, in evaluating examples of impact, and in direct observation and evaluation of practice. A detailed plan of approaches and deployment should be agreed. The evaluation team for the Strathclyde-Glasgow pilot will be Chris McIlroy and Allan Blake, involving others as appropriate.