SUBMISSION FROM LEARNING AND TEACHING SCOTLAND

Experience of Engagement with China

1. I am currently seconded to Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) where I am Head of International Education. My substantive post is in the University of Glasgow where I am a Professor of Educational Research, Policy and Practice and Director of the International Education Consultancy in the Faculty of Education. My responsibilities in LTS include the development of 8 Confucius Classroom Hubs in 14 local authorities in Scotland and an Online Confucius Classroom Hub which all 32 local authorities can access through GLOW.

2. I am on the Board of the Scottish China Education Network (SCEN) and I am a member of the Cross-Party Group on China.

3. My official engagement with China directly began when I was invited by the Scottish Government’s International Team to a meeting, held in Edinburgh on 23 October 2007. The meeting was chaired by Graham Donaldson (HMIE) and attended by government officials. The purpose of the meeting was to meet a delegation from the Hanban (The Office of Chinese Language Council International) headed by the Chief Executive, Xu Lin to discuss cooperation activities related to education. At the end of the meeting I was asked to sign a ‘Letter of Cooperation Intent’ on behalf of Learning and Teaching Scotland with the Hanban. The letter stated, ‘For the purpose of improving mutual understanding and friendship between the people of Scotland and China, developing the teaching and learning of Chinese language and culture in Scotland, Learning and Teaching Scotland and the Hanban agree to co-establish a Confucius Classroom.’

4. Following this meeting with the Hanban all the local authorities in Scotland were invited to attend a meeting about the Confucius Classroom initiative. The local authorities were invited to submit expressions of interest regarding setting up a Confucius Classroom Hub to LTS. Eight expressions of interest were received from 14 local authorities:
   - Perth & Kinross
   - St George’s & Edinburgh City
   - Ayrshire (East, North and South)
   - Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus & Moray
   - Glasgow
   - North Lanarkshire
   - West Lothian
   - East Dunbartonshire

5. The aim is that the Confucius Classroom Hubs will:
   - Act as a hub for pupils, teachers, community members, other schools and local authorities to stimulate learning and teaching Chinese language and culture
   - Act as a hub for teachers, schools and local authorities to see examples of practice and enable them to participate in specific professional development activities
   - Provide and develop resources for the teaching of Chinese language and culture
6. **Examples of intended activities of the Hubs:**

- Organise activities to stimulate the teaching of Chinese language
- Facilitate the teaching of Chinese language and culture in primary and secondary schools
- Organise CPD related to the teaching of Chinese language and culture for teachers and the local community
- Host Chinese cultural activities and competitions
- Develop and provide resources to support teaching and learning in Chinese
- Participate in learning community with other Confucius Classrooms in Scotland, China and other countries in the world.

7. A celebration of the intention to set up 8 Confucius Classroom Hubs in Scotland was held in Perth High School on 20 March 2008. The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning presented the keynote speech. The celebration included presentations from pupils from Perth High School about their experiences of a study visit to China, Chinese music, dance and calligraphy.

8. I was invited to join the Cabinet Secretary’s delegation to China in April 2008 along with LTS’ Chief Executive Officer, Bernard McLeary. The main aims of the visit to China for LTS were to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with The Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban) concerning the development of 8 Confucius Classroom Hubs in Scotland and to demonstrate the online hub developed by LTS to enable every school in Scotland to access resources and activities to support the teaching and learning of Chinese language and culture. Following the presentation by LTS at the Hanban on 7 April 2008 Madame Xu Lin said that the Confucius Classrooms in Scotland provided an excellent quality model for the development of Confucius Classrooms around the world. The Hanban were particularly interested in the use of GLOW.

9. The MOU sets out an agreement to set up the 8 Confucius Classrooms and a number of other activities including facilitating study visits for education personnel to China, national and regional conferences and seminars about Chinese language and culture and the development of joint research and development projects.

10. The visit to China also enabled us to visit schools in Beijing, the Research Council, a Teacher Education Institution, a university, officials from the Municipal Education Commission in Shanghai and key personnel from the British Council and Scottish Development International in Beijing and Shanghai. This enabled links with key people to be established to facilitate the future engagement between Scotland and China in relation to educational activities.

11. Within a few weeks of us returning from China four officials from the Hanban visited LTS in Glasgow. They particularly wanted to know more about how the Online Confucius Classroom Hub would work through GLOW. They were impressed by the technology and the vision of GLOW and the online Confucius Classroom Hub concept.

**Views on the Government’s China Plan (published 7 May 2008)**

12. My comments about the China Plan are in the main about the objectives which relate to education.
It is helpful to have the priorities and the purpose of Scotland’s relations with China set out. It is particularly useful to see the objectives set out in the Plan in order to see the other agencies involved and the range of activities. This should aid partnership working and joint activities to realise key outcomes.

13. The Plan’s reference to ‘… developing a long-term relationship with China’ is helpful. A significant increase in understanding and awareness of Chinese language in Scottish schools will take time because we need to develop the number of teachers available with the necessary expertise.

14. I welcome the clarification that the Plan ‘…sits as one element within the International Framework…’. Similarly, the Confucius Classroom Hub initiative sits within LTS’ development of international education through a Curriculum for Excellence in Scottish schools. The development of Chinese language and culture sits within a broader framework of developing our young people’s knowledge, skills and understanding of a range of cultures and countries to prepare them for life and work in a global society.

15. I confirm that I was consulted by the Scottish Government’s International Team when the Plan was being development. This was helpful as it had a direct link to the work that we are doing in LTS.

16. Points 8 and 9 of the Plan concern the benefits for Scotland and China. In relation to education while our young people have the opportunity to learn about a different culture and different ways of working, the Chinese are able to learn about different pedagogical approaches in the teaching of languages specifically and the development of creativity and enterprise in Scottish schools generally. We are developing ideas that will see exchanges of teachers, joint curriculum projects on a number of topics (including environmental issues/eco schools). This will help build knowledge of Scotland amongst pupils in Chinese schools at an early age. Some of these pupils may be interested in visiting Scotland or studying here in the future.

17. I support point 17 and 18 of the Plan in relation to Objective 1. Increase Chinese language learning and learning about China in Scottish schools. LTS has a key role to play in achieving this objective and the activities that we are developing will be delivered through a Curriculum for Excellence. These are clearly linked to Plan where it says:

‘The main aim is to prepare young people with a range of knowledge and skills with which to engage in today’s increasingly multicultural and globalised society, where young people travel widely for jobs and speak a variety of languages. It will also ensure that young people develop respect for different traditions, attitudes, religions and beliefs, and in so doing, become more accepting and understanding individuals. Creating a supportive environment for Chinese language teaching and learning and stimulating an interest in China at an early age will contribute to delivering on the commitment for Curriculum for Excellence. (Point 17, The China Plan).

18. I welcome the Government’s support for a range of initiatives particularly those set out in Point 18:

- Strengthening opportunities for teachers and pupils to learn about Chinese language and culture through a cooperation agreement between Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) and the Office of Chinese Language Council
International (the Hanban). This will include the establishment of Confucius Classrooms in Scottish schools, visits and language courses for teachers, summer schools and joint school projects;

- Development of an online hub to support teaching of Chinese language and culture in Scotland;
- Sharing of expertise in teaching of Chinese language and culture through joint projects on pedagogical approaches between schools and teacher education institutions in Scotland and China.

19. Objective 2 concerning the Government’s support for an increase in Sino-Scottish collaboration at college and university levels is appropriate. Greater collaboration between the school, college and university sectors would be beneficial and the Plan offers the potential to facilitate this. For example, senior school pupils could have the opportunity to undertake vocational training in China encouraging them at an early stage to consider university courses available to support further learning in relation to China. In setting up opportunities for senior pupils to carry out vocational placements in businesses in China the support of SDI would be welcomed.

20. I am pleased to see that Point 22 indicates, ‘The promotion of Scottish education, including our cutting edge approach to eco-schools.’ LTS has published a guide to support the development of Sustainable Development Education policies in schools and this area offers a number of possibilities for collaborative work. LTS would wish to support this wherever possible.

21. I also welcome the opportunity mentioned in Point 22 to find out more about the education system in China. Benchmarking activities are essential because they enable policy makers and practitioners to reflect on the quality of education in Scotland by comparing teaching and learning approaches.

Refreshed Plan in comparison to the former Scottish Executive's China Strategy

22. My main comment is in relation to Objective 1 which concerns the increase in Chinese Language learning and learning about China in Scottish schools. The refreshed Plan makes clear reference to the work of LTS, the MOU with the Hanban and the development of Confucius Classroom Hubs. This work is new and innovative and was not mentioned in the previous plan. It will have an impact on the achievement of Objective 1 because LTS is working with local authorities across Scotland to support the development of Confucius Classroom Hubs which is already increasing awareness and interest amongst pupils and teachers in Chinese language and culture. The hubs which are already launched are providing a range of resources and professional development activities for teachers to support the two targets set out in the plan:

- Increase the number of students studying Chinese language in Scottish schools by 2011
- Increase understanding and awareness of China, its language and culture in Scottish schools by 2011.

23. LTS is well placed to do this work as it works with local authorities and schools in relation to Curriculum for Excellence. The development of international education and the Confucius Classroom Hubs is embedded within a Curriculum for Excellence. The development of the Confucius Classroom Hubs enables
Scotland’s young people to develop as successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens in a globalised world.

Further general points in relation to engagement with China


- Confucius Classroom Hub Launches – 2008/9
  
  **St. George’s & Edinburgh City**
  Hanban Visit in October 2008.
  Linking also with Balerno High, Firhill High, Broughton High, James Gillespie’s High, Leith Academy, Dean Park Primary, Carrick Knowe Primary, Currie High, Trinity Academy.

  **Perth & Kinross**

  **East, North & South Ayrshire**
  Based in Grange Academy – proposed Launch date – 12th January 2009

  **West Lothian**
  Based in Bathgate Academy – proposed Launch date 30th January 2009.

  **East Dunbartonshire**
  Based in St. Ninian’s High School – proposed Launch date 13th February 2009

  **City of Glasgow**
  Based in Hillhead High School – proposed Launch date 27th February 2009

  **North Lanarkshire**
  Based in Our Lady’s High School – proposed launch date – March 2009

  **Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Moray & Angus**
  Based in Hazlehead Academy – proposed launch date March 2009
  On-line Confucius Classroom Hub will be further developed. New Case Studies of innovative practice will be sought and added to the Website as well as items of news and hub events.

- Activities within the hubs

  All hubs except East Dunbartonshire have Chinese Language Teachers/ Assistants working to support and deliver Chinese Language Teaching and Cultural Activities. This is a huge asset to the development of the hub and at the moment the hubs are heavily reliant on this expertise. A teacher of Chinese Language working within each hub will be essential to ensure consistency and quality development of the language teaching offered. Across the hubs senior staff within the schools are beginning to look at ways of formalising the teaching of Chinese language and offering more options within the curriculum.

  Many of the hubs are now beginning to develop greater links into their local Chinese community and some are exploring opportunities for business links.
• Chinese Language Assistants

In this academic session, there are 13 Chinese Language Assistants working in Scottish schools. They are in Angus (2), East Ayr (1), Edinburgh (4), Falkirk (1), North Lanark (1), Perth & Kinross (3), Scottish Borders (1).

Concluding Remarks

25. There is increasing interest among pupils and many staff for Chinese language learning. It is particularly interesting to note the motivation among pupils, particularly boys.

26. Local authority and school staff have indicated that they appreciate the sense of a network of hubs that has been established by LTS and they welcome opportunities to further develop their professional links across the hubs. This is a real strength of the 8 hubs. This approach to the development of the Confucius Classrooms is view positively because it stimulates and provides opportunities for professional dialogue.

27. Local authority and school staff have indicated that they appreciate the support of LTS in facilitating this development within their local authorities, for the CPD and awareness-raising opportunities offered. They have said that the support and guidance helps to maintain and increase the motivation of all involved.

28. There is growing enthusiasm as the hubs develop and professionals share experiences and practice regularly with one another. This is important for the sustainability of the hubs/activities in the long term.

29. The provision of teaching staff to take forward the teaching of Mandarin in hubs/schools is essential. There are very few teachers to support this at present and some hubs are concerned that they may offer courses that they will be unable to sustain long-term especially if there is a growth in demand within schools.

Professor Kay Livingston
Head of International Education
Learning and Teaching Scotland
21 November 2008