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**Learning to work as a Gaelic-medium  
teacher:  
*the role of universities in  
developing skills in bilingual pedagogy  
and professional Gaelic***

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&  
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# Outline of presentation

- Capacity, Opportunity, Desire: the challenge of minority language medium education for revitalisation is also challenge for teacher education for this sector
- Background to Gaelic-medium education
- Challenges for GME teacher education
- Current ITE and CLPL provision
- Role of universities in ensuring capacity, opportunity and desire: perspectives of the first cohort of GI/T students
- Implications for future provision

# Capacity, Opportunity, Desire

“*Capacity* development is the development of personal language proficiency and language use, through both formal teaching and informal transmission of the language; *opportunity* creation is the development of domains in which use of the language is natural, welcome, and expected; and *desire* involves creation of investment in learning the language, because proficiency in it brings certain rewards.”

(Lo Bianco & Peyton, 2013)

What are the implications for the provision of initial teacher education and career long professional learning for teachers working in Gaelic-medium education?

# Growth of Gaelic-medium education

1985 – 24 pupils in 2 Gaelic medium primary providers

2014 – 2818 pupils in 59 Gaelic medium primary providers  
1202 pupils in 32 Gaelic medium secondary providers

(MacLeod 2003, Galloway 2015)

• Growing nationally, with greatest growth associated with wholly Gaelic-medium primary schools.

## Contexts for growth

• Gaelic-medium education has been shown to be **effective**, with parents choosing it for this reason, and also as an expression of a Gaelic cultural heritage. (Johnstone et. al. 1999, O'Hanlon, McLeod & Paterson 2010).

• Research conducted in 2012 showed a **demand** for GME, with 10% of people 'very likely' and a further 15% 'likely' to choose GME if it was available locally. Current uptake is ~1%. (O'Hanlon et al. 2013)

• Gaelic has **cross-party political support**. (Hepburn, 2014)

# Limitations on growth of GME

- **Teacher supply** – General Teaching Council for Scotland (1999)
  - Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (2005, 2011)
  - Education Scotland (2015)
- **2014-15 school year:** 193 Gaelic-medium primary teachers  
106 GM secondary teachers (66 Gaelic, 40 other subjects)  
(Bòrd na Gàidhlig, 2015)

## Secondary School Stage (2011-12 school year):

- An average of 17% of curriculum through the medium of Gaelic at the lower secondary school stage, 70% average in Primary 7
- Only History and Geography taught by 4 or more of the 33 secondary schools teaching Gàidhlig (fluent speakers) as a subject at middle secondary school stage.  
(O'Hanlon et al. 2012, p.32)
- There has been a focus on **supply** of Gaelic-medium teachers between 2005-6 & 2012-3
- 91 Primary and 52 Secondary teachers have graduated ... but **net gain** of only 21 primary and 28 secondary teachers.
- Loss of Gaelic-medium primary and secondary teachers through retirement, but also through a move to the English-medium sector. Need to also focus on **retention**.

# Gaelic-medium teachers by medium of school instruction 2013-14

School stage	Able to teach through Gaelic	Teaching through Gaelic	Percentage
Primary	264	173	66%
Secondary	145	91	63%

- Primary School Stage:
- Age:

Age band	% in GME
Under 25	73
25-29	72
30-34	67
35-39	74
40-44	64
45-49	59
50-54	52
55 or over	63
Total	66

- Secondary school stage:
- Subject

Proportion of GM teachers teaching in Gaelic	Subjects
100%	PSE, Geography, Religious Education, Modern Languages, Biology
80%	Gaelic
60%	Home Economics
50%	English, French, Maths, History, Modern Studies
25-40%	Art and Design, PE, Music, Technical Education, Physics
0%	Chemistry, Science, Computing, Learning Support, Business Education

(Scottish Government 2014)

# Challenges of teaching in GME

Pedagogy	Language
Immersion Education	Advanced Grammar
Development of biliteracy	Subject-specific terminology
Supporting pupils with Additional Support Needs in GME	High level fluency in social and professional contexts
Strategies for teaching composite classes	

(Milligan et al., 2012; Landgraf, 2013)

(Also acknowledged by HMIE 2011, Education Scotland 2015)

- [Milligan et al. \(2012\)](#) noted that only 30% of Gaelic-medium teachers (from a sample of 74 teachers) felt that their initial teacher education experience had adequately prepared them for teaching in Gaelic-medium education.



# MA Gaelic and Primary Education

## The University of Edinburgh

4 year course: for students with at least a Higher in Gaelic upon entry

5 year course: for students with little or no Gaelic competence upon entry

# GME Initial Teacher Education

## ITE for Gaelic-medium education

- (1) *Edinburgh*      Gaelic & Primary Education (fluent speakers) (4 year MA)  
Gaelic & Primary Education (learners) (5 year MA)
- (2) *Strathclyde*      Primary Gaelic Medium Education (4 year BA)  
Primary Gaelic Medium Education (1 year PGDE)  
Secondary Gaelic as a subject (1 year PGDE)  
Secondary GME subject specialists (1 year PGDE)
- (3) *Aberdeen*      Primary Education (4 year MA)    [*With Sabhal Mòr Ostaig*]  
Primary Gaelic Medium Education (1 year PGDE)  
Secondary Gaelic as a subject (1 year PGDE)  
Secondary GME subject specialists (1 year PGDE)
- (4) *UHI*      Gaelic and Primary Education (4 year BA, with Aberdeen)  
Primary Gaelic Medium Education (1 year PGDE)  
Secondary Gaelic as a subject (1 year PGDE)  
Secondary GME subject specialists (1 year PGDE)

# ITE: MA Gaelic & Primary Education, University of Edinburgh

## Gaelic language development:

- Gaelic language & culture
- Gaelic for professional purposes
- Gaelic for research purposes

## Gaelic-medium instruction:

- 1/3 of programme in Year 1
- 1/2 of programme in Year 2
- 2/3 or more in Years 3 & 4

*Overall, in accordance with GTCS (1999) recommendation that Gaelic Teacher Education courses be at least 50% in Gaelic.*

Students on the 5 year Learners' degree also do a one-year Gaelic immersion year.

## Bilingual Pedagogies:

### Adaptations of:

- Primary Studies 1, 2 and 3
- Placement: 2/3 in GME
- Dissertation preparation
- Dissertation

## Additional courses:

- Education and Gaelic in Scotland
- Theory and Practice of Bilingual and Immersion Education
- Child bilingualism: language and cognition

# Career-Long Professional Learning for prospective and current GME teachers

## **CLPL for learners:**

*Strathclyde:* Gaelic Immersion for Teachers (GIfT)

PG Diploma, 9 months full-time, 120 credits

## **CLPL for fluent speakers:**

*Aberdeen:* Streap

PG Certificate, 12 months part-time, 60 credits

# Development of GiFT

- [McPake et al. \(2013\)](#) reviewed successful provision for teacher education for minority language (ML) medium classrooms, in Wales, Catalonia, the Basque Country and New Zealand and identified the following critical factors:
  - *critical mass*, in terms of the numbers of ML speakers;
  - *popular support* for the introduction and expansion of ML medium education;
  - *significant funding* to recruit teachers and support professional development;
  - *teacher commitment* to the language revitalisation project;
  - *long-term vision* for the revitalisation of the ML, and recognition within this of ML medium education as a significant factor in growing the next generation;
  - *willingness to adapt and develop* support for MLM teacher education over time.

# GlFT

- First cohort 2014-2015: one year full-time course for qualified and practising English-medium primary and secondary teachers with intermediate level Gaelic and a desire to transfer to GME
- Aim: to produce teachers who are linguistically and pedagogically competent to teach in GME classrooms, through six modules:

	Gaelic	Pedagogy
1	Grammar, pronunciation and everyday conversation	Language learning and teaching
2	Developing fluency	Gaelic-medium education: provision, policy, practice
3	Advanced professional competence	Understanding, supporting and promoting bilingualism

- and three placements: two in GME schools and one community placement to improve social and professional Gaelic fluency in adult contexts.

# COD: the challenge for universities providing GME teacher education

- Universities offering teacher education for minority language medium education need to address issues of capacity, opportunity and desire (Lo Bianco & Peyton, 2013):
  - *capacity*: GME teachers need to be fluent speakers of Gaelic, to a standard where they can act as language models for primary and secondary pupils
  - *opportunity*: they need opportunities not only to acquire academic competence but also social, cultural and ‘real life’ competence
  - *desire*: they need to want to use the language at every opportunity, to be proactive in encouraging and supporting others to use the language, and to act as language champions

# Capacity

- A need to expand language provision for PGDE.
- Sector should establish entry requirements and provide exit certification.
- Professional language standards should be linked to language standards expected of pupils.
- A need for structured ongoing professional language development (cf Welsh Sabbaticals).



# Opportunity

- Tensions between the need for more structured provision and the development of tailored and flexible approaches which support development of independent language learning skills
- Need to develop language skills for practical activities as well as academic contexts (e.g. cookery, aerobics – relevant to primary practice, running of after school clubs, etc.)
- Social events for Gaelic and GME students across universities (quizzes, ceilidhs, book groups, etc.); and Gaelic social hubs (cf cofaidh is craic)

# Desire

- Need for outreach: making links with high profile learners to act as role models; encouraging 'native speakers' to speak Gaelic with learners
- National strategy for deployment of GME teachers, with pay and promotion matched to demands of sector
- Mentorship and continuing professional engagement beyond GfT and Streap
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# Conclusions:

## Implications for GM Teacher Education

- Increase in numbers of 'new speakers' becoming GME teachers requires a review of linguistic components of GM teacher education.
- A need for a national strategy for ITE, CLPL, mentorship and profile raising, building on existing structures (Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Education Scotland, Storlann).
- Collaboration amongst universities making provision for GME teacher education, working with local authorities, schools, practitioners and communities associated with schools, to ensure comprehensive, relevant education to meet needs and aspirations of expanding school sector and wider revitalisation initiative.

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