

SCEC meeting on the Logan Report

Wednesday 23rd September 2020, 4.30pm (online)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-technology-ecosystem-review/>

<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/independent-report/2020/08/scottish-technology-ecosystem-review/documents/scottish-technology-ecosystem-review/scottish-technology-ecosystem-review/govscot%3Adocument/scottish-technology-ecosystem-review.pdf?forceDownload=true>

Attendees:

Kate Farrell (KF)

Fiona McNeill (FMc)

Iain Thomson (IT)

Peter Donaldson (PD)

Alastair Irons (AI)

Quintin Cutts (QC)

Tommy Lawson (TL)

Greg Michaelson (GM)

Claire Griffiths (CGr)

Toni Scullion (TS)

Greg Reid (GR)

Brendan McCart (BMc)

Brian Clark (BC)

Sally Smith (SS)

Judy Robertson (JR)

Agenda:

Discussion to consult on SCEC's response to the Logan report.

Minutes:

FMc opened the meeting by saying there has been mixed feedback about the report, but it could be useful, with similar aims to SCEC

QC thinks Logan makes a good case. We've always been interested in ScotGov taking CS more seriously, and this helps that. There is still confusion between CS and digital literacy and ICT. The curricular framework is in place but the push isn't there. Until we get ScotGov to recognise there's something powerful and worth doing here, there won't be progress. Logan will admit he doesn't know everything, but he's certainly an advocate

FMc wondered if we can use the Logan Report as a way to get CAS Scotland running again.

CGr suggested we need consistency across schools.

PD said the defined CS curriculum in Scotland is stronger and starts earlier than many countries, but the difficulty is in the implementation of the entitlement to CS provision.

JR expressed reservation about using CodeClan as initial teacher education, suggesting a 16 week course does not provide sufficient subject knowledge.

GM wanted to know how universities can offer conversion courses like CodeClan, and work with CodeClan.

PD explained that knowledge of CS concepts is not the same as knowledge of how to teach those concepts. There's not as much PCK (pedagogical content knowledge) in CS education as in other subjects, such as textbooks on how to teach CS. Initial teacher education needs to include the effective pedagogies, how they are effective, and how to help learners when they struggle.

QC added the amount of CS required in a degree to apply for teacher training is very little. We should pick up on this. Neither the CodeClan nor the current recommendation is enough.

JR added there's not enough potential teachers out there. There's a recommendation in the report about getting more teachers on board but the pool of potential candidates is too small.

FMc but this is an opportunity to highlight JR's report for SDS on how to get more teachers.

QC suggested we need to start CS properly in Primary. PD added it's in the Primary curriculum as an entitlement. Primary often work in a project fashion. Could we work with Primary schools to develop some engaging projects?

KF do we need quality teaching material for BGE, that non-CS teachers and CS teachers can use, especially in S1-3. Teach CS guide for Secondary guide ready to roll out - would this fit the gap?

BMc said it would be good to respond to the objectives and issues, to support this, to say that these are long standing issues that need to be addressed. Senior phase is a real squeeze to get learners through the current courses with the limited experience in BGE. What is the expected end point for the Senior Phase? Logan says being ready to take part in placements in industry. Is this achievable or realistic, as that's not what the SQA courses are currently working towards..

QC added that unless schools devote time for this then we can't fix this. He was appalled during PLAN C to find schools are starting senior phase from a standing start, with no prior CS experience.

JR said there is anecdotal evidence that learners find the curriculum 'boring' but there are NPA qualifications in more interesting areas. We need to consult with teachers and learners though - it's vital they have a say in any changes.

QC asked how we can do exciting things if the learners don't even know the tools.

PD suggested we need to focus on improving the quality of implementation rather than the structures.

JR described the short, medium and long term recommendations of her report. Short term was a video for CS university students to be aware of CS teaching as a career. This has been done. #it would be good to fund the further recommendations.

GR pointed out it would cost £20-30,000 to put computer labs back into schools to replace labs that were lost. He added that SQA are designing courses based on learners having covered the BGE outcomes for CS, but they haven't.

PD suggested we could highlight the opportunity costs if we look at countries where they're having to fund putting that provision in when there is none. It would cost a great deal more to reintroduce CS if we fail to act and have a lag of 10-15 years.

GR pointed out that it's a big saving for schools if a CS teacher leaves, compared to a Maths teacher.

QC suggested we need to press on all parts of the pipeline. Primary is part of our pipeline. We need to have a mini curriculum - including the P6/7/S1 learners who are starting from scratch. We need to enable all learners to get a positive experience.

PD mentioned related research in digital literacy that shows children in more affluent areas are involved in more creative activities than learners in areas of deprivation (who did more consumption activities.)

CGr suggested that a side effect of lockdown is LAs and schools looking more carefully at learners having access to technology

FMc - our response could include that we need more research into equity in CS education and gender. We can point to RSE 'Taping talent' report

GM suggested that to make a positive effect in the next 2-3 years, we need to look at other areas. FM added that it's part of the pipeline. We need 'quick fixes' but also long term fixes to the pipeline.

TL suggested there is a move to gather resources nationally so that staff teaching online can have access to other people's resources, or teachers in schools covering colleagues have access to materials. One subject area being looked at is CS, although not in the first group of subjects to be looked at in the next few months. SEIC (South East Improvement Collaborative) has been tasked with gathering resources for delivery nationally. This is for the senior phase in the first place. If this works, it will be a positive start. It would be good for delivering in a school with no existing CS provision. Other subjects have been recording sessions over the summer, and should be going live in October.

Actions:

KF and FMc to pick out recommendations and make notes within a week and share.

AI to discuss with the Academy board SCEC having space on BCS website.

FMc to speak to William Hardie about RSE distributing information as well.

PD - suggested sending to MSPs directly. He thought KP would have an idea of receptive MSPs