Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution: University of Wolverhampton
Unit of Assessment: 25 Education
Title of case study: Transforming teaching in higher education – making it inclusive
1. Summary of the impact
Impact in this case study focuses on developing an inclusive culture; changes in academic development programmes; and influencing national policy on inclusive learning and teaching in higher education. While student diversity has increased over the last twenty years or so, teaching methods have changed little in response. This has had a knock-on effect on student engagement and success. Research outlined here has influenced how university teachers reframe their understandings and practices of teaching and engaging diverse students. This work has reshaped continuing professional development in university teaching in the UK and internationally and has influenced national policy on inclusive learning and teaching.
2. Underpinning research
Christine Hockings is Head of the university's Doctoral College. She joined the university in 1993 and has been Professor of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education since 2008. She was Principal Investigator for the three key projects that form the basis of this case study.

a. Learning and Teaching for Social Diversity and Difference in HE (2006-2008, funded by ESRC/TLRP RES-139-25-0222)

The aim of this project was to understand what engages and disengages mixed groups of students. The research team worked closely with university teachers and their students in two different types of university (post-1992 and Russell group) in Biology, Business, Computing, History, Nursing, and Social Work. A key feature of this research was the collection and fine-grained analysis of video-recorded classroom sessions over several months, making this research unique in the study of widening participation pedagogy. This led to the following key findings and impacts (Section 4c):

- For some teachers, there is a difference between their espoused views about addressing diversity and their actual teaching practices. Inclusive teachers are reflexive and culturally sensitive. They coordinate interaction between students to maximise intercultural learning, address inequalities, handle tension, and deal with sensitive issues.
- Pedagogic strategies that harness students' experience and knowledge tend to enhance the academic engagement of students in mixed groups. Propositional knowledge and theory then take on relevance within the context of the lives of all students.
- Students do not fit simplistic constructions of the 'traditional' or 'non-traditional' student. Any inclusive strategy must be formulated to stretch and academically engage *all* students within a safe and collaborative learning environment.

b. Research Synthesis in Inclusive Learning and Teaching (2010 funded by the HEA)

In 2010 Professor Hockings was commissioned to carry out a synthesis of the research in inclusive learning and teaching to support the work of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) in this area (http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/evidencenet/Inclusive_learning_and_teaching_in_higher_education_synthesis). Eleven principles for inclusive policy and practice were derived from this synthesis. Implications for key stakeholders in institutions included:

- reviewing systems and procedures and changing those that inhibit inclusive learning;
- coordinating the efforts of academic and student support departments;
- ensuring resources are aligned with supporting inclusive learning and teaching development
- changing academic development and training programmes to mainstream equality, diversity and inclusive learning and teaching principles.

This was the first synthesis of inclusive learning and teaching. It drew on research across a wide range of associated fields of study, making this a particularly useful resource for the HE sector (see section 4a).

c. Learning to Teach Inclusively- Open Educational Resources Project (2010 funded by HEFCE through HEA & JISC)

This project responded to the call from the HE sector for an open educational resource (OER) designed specifically to support the development of an inclusive HE curriculum. The OER package developed at Wolverhampton drew directly on the research projects outlined above. A key innovation of the OER package was the collection of original video recordings of authentic

classroom practice to illustrate principles in practice and stimulate discussion of inclusive learning and teaching issues. Several HE institutions have embedded these resources into academic development programmes to influence practice (See section 4b).

3. References to the research

Research Grants

2011   HEA Commissioned OER phase 3 project (20k) *Embedding Inclusive Learning and Teaching* (ELTI).

2011   HEA/ JISC commissioned case study: *Active Engagement: A case study of the development and impact of OER on inclusive teaching and academic engagement at the University of Wolverhampton* (£2,000)

2010   HEA /JISC Open Educational Resources Phase 2 OMAC project *Learning to Teach Inclusively* (£37,000)

2010   HEA commissioned Research Synthesis in Inclusive Learning and Teaching (£5,000)

2007   National Teaching Fellowship Award (NTFS) (£10,000)

2006-8 Principal Investigator ESRC Teaching and Learning Research Programme project: *Learning and Teaching for Social Diversity and Difference* [RES-139-25-0222] (£300,000)

Evidence of the quality of the research outputs

There have been several peer reviewed research papers published from the 3 projects outlined in section 2. These include papers 1, 2 and 3 which been submitted to REF 2014, while papers 4 and 5 were submitted to RAE 2008.

1. Hockings, C., Brett, P. and Terentjevs, M. (2012) Making a difference - inclusive learning and teaching in HE through open educational resources. *Journal of Distance Education*, 33, 2: 237-52. Article Views: 878; Article citations 3.

2. Hockings, C. (2011) Hearing voices, creating spaces. The artisan teacher in a mass higher education system. *Critical Studies in Education*, 52, 2: 191-205. Impact Factor: 0.868; Article Views: 202; Article citations: 3.

3. Hockings, C., Cooke, S., Yamashita, H., McGinty, S. and Bowl, M. (2009) 'I'm neither entertaining nor charismatic…' Negotiating university teacher identity within diverse student groups. *Teaching in Higher Education* 14, 5: 470-483. Impact Factor 0.545; Article Views: 310; Article citations: 5.

4. Hockings, C., Cooke, S., Yamashita, H., McGinty, S. and Bowl, M. (2008) Switched off? A study of academic dis/engagement in university classrooms. *Research Papers in Education,* 23, 2: 191-202. Impact Factor 0.646; Article Views: 99; Article citations: 10

5. Hockings, C. Cooke, S., Bowl, M. (2007) 'Academic engagement' within a widening participation context - a 3D analysis. *Teaching in Higher Education,* 12, 5-6: 721-73. Impact Factor 0.545; Article Views: 270; Article citations: 11.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

In terms of reach, the findings from this body of research have been presented at over 30 academic and practitioner conferences and workshops, and a small number of policy dialogue events in the UK. Professor Hockings was also invited to disseminate this work in a series of public and keynote lectures and seminars in South Australia directed by the Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education. In terms of impact, the focus is on three key areas:

a. Inclusive Learning and Teaching Principles: Developing an inclusive culture

Since 2009 Professor Hockings has been working with the Higher Education Academy (HEA) Inclusion Team disseminating and promoting inclusive practice in HE. The Synthesis of Research in Inclusive Learning and Teaching (Hockings, 2010) was developed specifically to support the work of this team and over 30 HEIs in England, Scotland and Wales engaged in programmes of change. They formulated action plans and initiated changes in their policies and procedures, and revised their CPD programmes to take account of the principles in the synthesis (See section 2b). These cases were subsequently published in a collection edited by the HEA (Thomas & May 2010, *Inclusive learning and teaching in higher education*).

The synthesis is essential reading in several academic development programmes. While systematic evidence is not yet available on its impact on students' success, there is evidence of impact on the development of an inclusive culture in a number of institutions. For example, the

Director of Learning and Teaching at Sheffield Hallam University wrote:

'I did my session on Inclusive Practice last week and we discussed your HEA EvidenceNet paper (Hockings 2010). You are my key resource re inclusive practice for Professional Standards unwrapped, for everyone doing FHEA, SFHEAs and in my writing retreats as a physical resource for staff writing their HEA applications. I also use your synthesis in my teaching session on inclusive practice. Your principles on inclusive practice fed into the Action Research conference [...] and were reinforced by the PVC Learning and Teaching who concluded 'I think as an institution we have moved forward this week.' (emails from Director of Learning & Teaching, Sheffield Hallam University)

Since then Professor Hockings has run workshops and seminars on inclusive practice in several universities. She is an advisory group member of the HEFCE, Paul Hamlyn Foundation and the HEA programme 'What Works – Students Retention and Success', in which groups of institutions work towards institutional change for the engagement, success and retention of all students.

b. Open Educational Resources: Changes in academic development programmes
This OER package, 'Learning to Teach Inclusively' was released in August 2011 (see section 2c above and www.wlv.ac.uk/LTImodule). Since then there has been a high level of user engagement in UK and abroad with the resource and the research on which it is based (section 2a and b). Data indicates that the resources were accessed in 54 countries and in 210 UK towns and cities between August 2011 and October 2013 (http://www.wlv.ac.uk/default.aspx?page=27792). The video resources had been viewed 3599 times by September 2013 (http://dspace.jorum.ac.uk).

Qualitative feedback from institutions in UK and Australia suggests that this resource and associated research are being embedded in institutional programmes and contributing to the thinking and development of academic teachers. Feedback from Australia includes Department of Further Education Adelaide, Charles Sturt University, Bathurst New South Wales, and University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland. In the UK, feedback from the Universities of Bath, Roehampton, Salford, Sheffield Hallam and Sussex has indicated various uses made of the resources. For example, Salford University uses them:

'... as self-study resources on the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice and specifically on the Learning and Teaching in Higher Education module. We have also used specific units for specific themes. The modules and the videos have been a fantastic resource to trigger conversations about classroom practice and teaching observations. The Inclusivity OER has been invaluable there and specific units have been integrated fully into the Teaching Essentials programme [... and] in classroom discussions and debates about issues linked to inclusive learning and teaching (email, Academic Developer, Salford University)

c. Impact on National Policy: shaping inclusive learning and teaching
In May 2013 Professor Hockings was invited to take part in a series of roundtable discussions with experts and stakeholders led by HEFCE and OFFA with a view to shaping national policy on national strategy for access and student success. Her contribution on inclusive learning and teaching and academic development has been included in page 3 and 4 of the final report (http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/hefce/content/whatwedo/wideningparticipation/currentworktowidenparticipation/nationalstrategy/roundtable_synthesis_report_final.pdf).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact
- Emails - Dr Sally Bradley, Senior Lecturer in curriculum and professional development, Sheffield Hallam University (section 2b & 4a)
- Emails & evaluation feedback - Professor Mick Healy, Educational Consultant (section 2c & 4b)
- Email – Professor Jude Carroll Education Development Consultant (section 2b)
- Emails & external evaluation report – Dr Chrissi Nerantzi, Academic Developer, Salford University (recently moved to Manchester Metropolitan University.) (sections 2c & 4b)
  Professor Trevor Gale, National Centre for Equity in Higher Education, South Australia (Currently at Deakin University) (Section 2a & 4 introduction)
- Professor Liz Thomas Higher Education Academy Retention and Success Team (section 2b & 4a)
- Sarah Howells HEFCE Head of Student Opportunities & convenor of Round Table on National Policy for Widening Participation (Section 4c)