

Institution: University of Winchester

Unit of Assessment: D36 Music Dance Drama and Performing Arts

a. Context

The Unit has always had a very strong public engagement profile across its research specialisms. Although historically it has been most highly regarded for its work in applied arts in local, regional and international contexts, there are newer areas of work that have begun to have high visibility, and that were noted as excellent in RAE 2008: theatre history, musical theatre and dramaturgy. These, along with an emerging group doing practice as research, have created impact through dissemination to the public and in the media and through interactions with professional communities of practice. The main non-academic user groups, beneficiaries and audiences of the work of this Unit are as follows (each category listing is followed by a couple of brief examples):

1) *Public audiences at performances and events in professional venues*

In 2013, the R & D process for Bonenfant's *Uluzuzulalia* children's performance involved over 300 children and almost 100 adults in testing and refining the work. The overall electronic reach of the project was above 15000. Boyce-Tillman's large-scale community and cross-generational projects have reached thousands of people. Boyce-Tillman was made MBE in 2009 for her contribution to music and education.

2) *Participants in applied arts projects (e.g. prisons, schools, health organisations, community groups, international development contexts)*

The work of the key practitioners in the applied field has an effect on the quality of life of the participants, on culture and society, and on public policy. It has also been disseminated in keynote lectures, public talks, and training for international development workers and teachers. It has fed into public policy in the areas of prison theatre, primary education and international development. For example, McKean has focused on how the experience of undertaking work in the Arts can be transformative for offenders in secure institutions. There has been recognition of the social or cultural benefit generated by these research activities at a national level, including the Koestler Trust Bronze award and the MacJannet prize for global citizenship. McKean was made a MBE for services to HE in 2010. The Centre for Arts as Well Being, led by Boyce-Tillman, has forged close links with national and regional health and well-being research organizations, and its contribution to this body of knowledge is widely recognized.

3) *Public policy makers especially in the areas of immigration and identity*

Specific reference has been made to Prentki's work in social and cultural policy in international TfD projects (see impact case study). Billingham was invited as a keynote panellist to a major international conference in Kosovo on Reconciliation and Peace Building (and the Arts) organised by the Kosovan Ministry of Culture, and the British and Norwegian governments (May 2013). McKean has spoken about her work in HMP Winchester and held screenings of documentaries at gatherings of academics, policy makers as well as on radio and TV.

4) *The general public through the dissemination of work in the mainstream media on television, radio and in newspapers and on the internet*

Simkin and Taylor both seek active engagement with non-academic communities to encourage debate and stimulate cross-disciplinary and sector interaction in different fields of popular entertainment: film violence and censorship (Simkin) and British pantomime and the musical (Taylor). This is exemplified, e.g., in Taylor's radio interviews about pantomime and musical theatre and Simkin's invited blog posts and online interviews re: *Straw Dogs*. His monograph on the film was cited in *The Observer* newspaper 6/11/11. Other examples include Jackson's book on Malcolm Arnold (cited by Melvyn Bragg as the impetus for his decision to commission a study for *The South Bank Show*) and his contribution to BBC4's *Dance Britannia* series (2008); Taiwo was interviewed on Slovenian national television after his keynote and contribution to a panel on 'Art and Demonstration: The Role of Street Theatre in Mass Protest'; Purkis contributed to the Tate website, launched Jan 2013, to Radio 4 broadcast *Rosa and Leos* 26/10/10 and YouTube webcast on Nietzsche in 2010. Bonenfant's web presence attracted the BBC *One Show* to contact him about making voice segments broadcast in 2012.

5) *The general public via dissemination at popular cultural events*

Zaroulia gave a talk and was interviewed at the Eurovision Song Contest 2011. Simkin organised and took part in a post-screening discussion with one of the stars and one of the director's collaborators on *Straw Dogs* at the Barbican, November 2011.

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6) *Professional theatre practitioners, amateur theatre makers, other specialists*

This is evident in consultancies and residencies in professional contexts (e.g. Behrndt's work as a dramaturg, Taiwo, Seago and Bonenfant's residencies; Janet Lee and Nigel Luck's company Strange Arrangements' residencies in Winchester, London and at the Festival Mondial des Théâtres de Marionnettes in Charleville, France). There is also evidence of impact in the deployment of books and articles used by those in the industry to further their interest and develop their practice, notably in the areas of pantomime and music theatre (Taylor) and dramaturgy (Behrndt).

b. Approach to impact

The Unit had utilised Capability Funding (from 2003/4 – 2008/9) initially to build research capacity, and as the numbers of researchers and outputs increased, a key focus became 'extending the possibilities for dissemination' (Capability Funding Strategy 2006-09). Post RAE 2008 there was an explicit recognition of the 'need to identify and strengthen impact, collaboration and quality within our research' (Unit 35 research strategy for 2010-11 and 2011-12). This was supported by a University wide strategic objective for research which required that there should be awareness of 'the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy' (AHRC definition).

Since 2010, the Unit has continued to find ways to enable impact. Its Research Funding Strategy has aimed 'to support projects where measurable impact can be demonstrated to be particularly high, as a result of excellent research, and to fund activities that enhance staff ability to measure and create impact'. This fed into changes in operational objectives that were reflected in additional criteria for internal funding applications. The Unit established an Impact Fund in order to develop Practice-as-Research projects and support socially interventionist practice as well as developing, gathering and documenting other types of impact.

Each May, researchers fill in a report detailing their RKE activities for the previous 12 months. A section on impact was added in 2011. Having had two years in which to understand and begin to gather impact data, researchers were able to make a good response about the ways in which their research from earlier periods had demonstrable impact. In addition, in 2011 a research assistant was employed from Unit funds to gather together all the impact data into a manageable format.

As the University and the Unit began to ask researchers to report on impact the group realised that certain types of work were already creating significant impacts, but that they had not been documented or, indeed, celebrated. Efforts were made to formalise documentation of impact through dissemination beyond academia, especially but not exclusively in applied theatre and PAR and in relation to empowerment, transformation, public policy and cultural change. This is evident in, for example, the use of post-performance interviews (Sharp's work on *Our Country's Good*, 2013). It should be noted that this has to be balanced against issues of confidentiality in some applied work.

When collaborating across disciplines and with industry, informal comments about the impact of the Unit's members' work on those collaborators are now routinely noted (e.g. Zaroulia involvement in Eurovision, Behrndt's collaborations via her role as dramaturg). PAR projects include feedback surveys with participants and with audiences. Impact is also evidenced by invitations and awards (e.g. keynotes outside academia). The fact that such citations and invitations have been made suggests a level of impact on industry and media in these areas.

Another aspect of the strategic approach was investment in staff development: the Unit chair attended the AURIL Conference in Bristol 2009, the ARMA conference in Manchester in 2010, and the SCUDD conference in 2011, all of which fed into discussions at the Unit's working group, Senate RKE Committee and University-wide REF Working Group. A number of seminars on impact have been held within the Unit since Nov 2009, including one led by Prof. Robin Nelson and one by Prof. Chris Baugh. Colleagues attending a number of national events on impact have fed back to members of the Unit via workshop events.

The two case studies that have been submitted demonstrate that the approach to impact developed during the period has led to a greater understanding of the diverse ways research might feed into external communities of practice, and to a careful and deliberate exploration of how it is possible to document the processes through which the research has impacted on external communities.

Thus there is a longstanding pattern of impact creation that falls into three categories: a)

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empowerment through participation; b) engagement and interaction with professional practice; and c) dissemination to the public through talks, interviews, lectures and through the mainstream media. The approach of the Unit has developed awareness of these impacts and improved strategies for documentation and evidence gathering.

c. Strategy and plans

There will be substantial changes in the department for the next REF cycle. The two key members of staff in applied theatre are expected to reach retirement. However, given the importance of this work in the department it will remain a priority, and its impact will in any case endure. Newer areas of work will continue to be supported and impact will become increasingly embedded in the processes of publication, public engagement, media dissemination, and performance. This is in line with the University's RKE Strategic Plan 2011-15 and the objective to 'increase the external visibility of research and knowledge exchange projects undertaken by University staff' and the University's Strategic Plan which states that: 'We will maximise the impact of our research by seeking to address the key issues for civil society, business and policy makers regionally and nationally and by ensuring that our research is appropriately disseminated. Since research communities are now global we will strive to ensure that our research is increasingly international in its reach and of international quality' (University of Winchester Strategic Plan 2010-15).

The Unit strategy for 2013 continues to reflect a strategic intention to support impact as follows:

- to foster the documentation of impact as part of the process of research dissemination (a requirement for funding applications and annual reporting);
- to promote the work of the Unit in public lectures and the media (e.g. encouraging the public lectures and collaborations with Theatre Royal Winchester, developing the web presence and ensuring staff are adequately prepared for TV and radio interviews);
- to focus time and resources on the gathering of data and the documentation of impact;
- to develop collaborative projects and networks between researchers and non-academics;
- to continue to develop links with local venues and companies such as The Point, Eastleigh, Nuffield, Southampton, and Theatre Royals in Basingstoke and Winchester.

d. Relationship to case studies (recognising that individual case studies may not relate directly to the approach).

Two case studies have been submitted: Prentki's work in applied theatre and Behrndt's work in dramaturgy. Prentki's work clearly engages with Theatre for Development around the world and has had a major impact on aspects of policy, particularly with regard to education. He has been engaged in research and practice with NGOs in developing countries around the world for a number of years, and so the impact of his research has been generated in quite diverse areas and has had time to feed into public policy and the development of educational methods. The approach of the unit was to find the evidence of such impacts by employing a research assistant to assist him in gathering testimonials, citations and policy documents that evidence the impact he has created. Given the documented use of his methods in the training of staff in NGOs the impact of his work will continue to be felt for many years to come.

Synne Behrndt is a newer researcher who was first submitted to the RAE in 2008. She works as a practising dramaturg in professional companies and writes about the processes of dramaturgy as she perceives it through her practice. Her work as practitioner, writer and speaker on the subject of dramaturgy has been integral to performances that have played to international audiences, and which has received widespread critical acclaim in the media. The impact of her research has also been highly influential on practitioners with whom she has worked and who have invited her to give keynote addresses and seminars. Since this is a newer research practice the impact has been harder to document but with research assistance the evidence has been gathered retrospectively. However, the unit's approach of asking researchers to put strategies in place to gather impact has borne fruit and researchers like Behrndt now regularly file testimony from peers and keep records of feedback from attendees at events where they're invited to speak as well as noting citations and media commentary as it occurs.

These two case studies demonstrate that the strategic approach taken by the unit is generating information about the impact of research in relation to established and newer researchers, across the areas of professional practice as research and applied theatre practices, and that researchers in the unit are now putting in place strategies for gathering impact data.