Institution: University of Cambridge
Unit of Assessment: UoA25
Title of case study: Cambridge research on 'Student Voice' taken up into policy by the Ministry of Education in Ontario, Canada.

1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

From 2000 to 2003 Professor Jean Rudduck led a largely Cambridge-based research team that investigated the potential of 'student voice' to engage learners. The 'Consulting Pupils about Teaching and Learning' research Network, funded by the ESRC's Teaching and Learning Research Programme, trialled and evaluated strategies with teachers in a wide range of schools. Take-up in the UK and abroad was extensive. This case study focuses on the impact in Ontario, Canada; where the Ministry of Education explicitly used the findings of Rudduck's research to mount an ambitious *Student Voice* initiative (2008-); the success of this has led to date to the Ministry providing some 6,000 grants to 800 schools to help build stronger approaches to 'student voice' into the infra-structure of its school system.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

Research team and funding: Professor Jean Rudduck led the ESRC-funded 'Consulting Pupils about Teaching and Learning' network of research projects (ESRC ref. L139251006). From 1994 she was Director of Research and subsequently Professorial Fellow at Homerton College becoming Professor of Education in the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge when the College formally 'converged' with the Faculty in 2001; she formally retired in 2004. Leading team members were: Professor Madeleine Arnot (in post throughout and Professor of the Sociology of Education since 2003), Professor Donald McIntyre (at Cambridge 1996 – 2007), and Professor John MacBeath (at Cambridge 2000 - 2012). Other members of the research group included Helen Demetriou, Julia Flutter, Kate Myers, Dave Pedder and Bethan Morgan (all Cambridge), Michael Fielding, Sara Bragg (both Sussex University) and Diane Reay (King's College London, joined Cambridge in 2005). Professor Rudduck and team received £425k from ESRC 2000-2003; smaller-scale follow-ups from the ESRC and others extended its life to 2005.

A Cambridge-based network of six related research projects. Although interest in student voice had grown as a powerful way to engage students in their learning, previous evidence had suggested that this was difficult to bring about, especially in a context dominated by a performance agenda. The aims of this new research, pursued collectively through six projects, for which Rudduck provided overall direction, were therefore to: (i) identify strategies to help teachers consult pupils about teaching and learning; (ii) gather evidence of the power of pupils' comments to improve teaching and learning; (iii) explore the impact of consultation on pupils, teachers and schools; and (iv) develop ways of building consultation into schools' organisational structures. The six research projects (see 3.1), all carried out 2000-2003, embraced: (1) How teachers responded to pupils' ideas on improving teaching and learning in different subjects (McIntyre and Pedder – Cambridge); (2) Ways of consulting pupils about teaching and learning (MacBeath, Myers and Demetriou – Cambridge); (3) Pupil perspectives and participation: starting and sustaining the process (Fielding and Bragg - Sussex); (4) The potential of pupils to act as (co)researchers into the process of delivering teaching and learning (Fielding and Bragg - Sussex); (5) How the conditions of learning in school and classroom affected the identity and participation of different groups of pupils (Arnot, Reay and Wang - Cambridge); (6) Breaking new ground: innovative initiatives involving pupil consultation and participation (Flutter - Cambridge). The team used a range of strategies for gathering student perspectives, including semi-structured interviews, focus groups and questionnaires (see 3.5). These data were then analysed and fed back to schools so that school leaders and teachers could act on them.

Rudduck also conducted a meta-study for the research (see ref. 3.2) and, by way of dissemination, gave lectures to some 10,000 teachers.

Summary of key findings: The research established that being able to talk about their learning helped *students to*: develop a stronger sense of membership, feel more positive about school and

more involved– *the organisational dimension;* created a stronger sense of respect and self-worth so that they felt more positive about themselves - *the personal dimension;* initiated a stronger sense of self-as-learner so that they were better able to manage their own learning – *the pedagogic dimension;* and produced a stronger sense of agency so that they contributed to improvements in teaching and learning and wider school matters – *the political dimension.*
Benefits were also apparent for *teachers.* These included: deeper insights into young people's capabilities; the capacity to see the familiar from a different angle; practical agendas for improvement; and a renewed sense of excitement in teaching. (See 3.4)
Several research issues relating to the further development of "student voice" were identified. These included problems in hearing the 'quiet voice' i.e. those students who were hesitant or reluctant to speak up in schools which tended to value the more vociferous; the need to avoid the creation of a 'pupil voice' elite made up only of students who were the most articulate; the importance of sustaining authenticity in the face of pupils' scepticism; the importance of sharing data and/or offering feedback to pupils about how their views were being acted upon; and the need for trust and openness as pre-conditions for dialogue and action.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)
End of Award Report
3.1 Rudduck, Jean. Consulting Students About Teaching and Learning: Process, Impacts and Outcomes: *ESRC Full Research Report*, L139251006. Swindon: ESRC [http://www.esrc.ac.uk/my-esrc/grants/L139251006/outputs/read/20b343e5-42ba-4221-ab1f-7c3578c052cd ; also accessible from http://www.esrc.ac.uk/my-esrc/grants/L139251006/read]. Evaluated as 'Outstanding' by independent peer reviewers.

Key Publications
3.2 Rudduck, J. and McIntyre, D. (2007) *Improving Learning Through Consulting Pupils*, London: Routledge (The major meta-study emerging from the network's activities. Based on a mixture of empirical research and theoretical insights, it argues the case for the transformative potential of student voice initiatives. An Appendix lists 40 publications emerging from the research). ISBN-13: 978-0-415-41616-0.
3.3 Flutter, J. and Rudduck, J. (2003) *Consulting Pupils: What's in it for schools?* London: RoutledgeFalmer. (A book designed to make issues of educational policy more accessible to practitioners). ISBN-13: 978-0415-26304-7
3.4 McIntyre, D., Pedder, D. and Rudduck, J. (2005) Pupil voice: comfortable and uncomfortable learnings for teachers, *Research Papers in Education*, 20, 2, 149-168. ISSN: 0267-1522.
3.5 MacBeath, J., Demetriou, H., Rudduck, J. and Myers, K. (2003) *Consulting Pupils: A toolkit for teachers*, Cambridge: Pearson Publishing. (Prepared for teachers interested in pursuing student voice in their own classrooms and schools.) ISBN-13: 978-1-8574-9846-2
3.6 Fielding, M. and Bragg, S. (2003) *Students as Researchers: Making a Difference*, Cambridge: Pearson Publishing. ISBN-13: 978-1-8574-9847-9.

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

A major educational policy development based on Cambridge Faculty of Education research: We focus here on how policymakers in one Canadian province used these research findings to build an infrastructure for 'student voice' in their school system. This became a very substantial development emanating directly from the Cambridge research.

The Ontario Student Voice policy initiative, based on the Cambridge research**,** was started by its Ministry of Education in 2008 with three components:
1. Student Forums – implemented through regional forums held across the province to gather student input on a variety of topics.
2. *SpeakUp* Projects – $1.2 million was allocated for student-led projects;
3. Minister's Student Advisory Council (MSAC) – composed of 60 students (Grades 7–12) from across the province who continue to meet regularly with the Minister of Education to share their ideas, particularly on ways of strengthening student engagement.
Jean Courtney, Education Officer, Ontario Ministry and Team Lead for their Student Voice Initiative

provided an update in April 2013 (see 5.1). In this she describes the activity that has derived from the application of Cambridge's research findings:

> "Over 6000 grants have been awarded to 800 schools in 72 school boards for *SpeakUp* projects. To date, 41 Regional Student Forums have been held in Ontario to bring students together to make recommendations regarding student councils, student engagement, leadership, and the Civics curriculum. Student feedback confirmed a desire to host forums. In response, the Ministry has created kits which are distributed freely upon request. A total of 2000 kits have been ordered by students and teachers. Their recommendations have been shared with the Ministry and have resulted in changes to *SpeakUp* project categories. The conversation continues".

Strong testimony to the Impact of the Network's Research: Courtney contacted Cambridge in 2006:

> "I write to acknowledge the inspirational work of Jean Rudduck. I can attest to the fact that the foundation of Ontario's Student Voice initiative rests at the University of Cambridge. My connection with Cambridge University began in 2006 when I sent an exploratory email to Professor Jean Rudduck and Julia Flutter, co-authors of the ground-breaking book, *Consulting Pupils—What's in it for schools?* I discovered the publication while conducting a literature review on student engagement as Ontario focused on reducing the number of early school leavers."

The Ontario Ministry of Education then came to a financial arrangement with the publisher to adapt the *Consulting Pupils 'Toolkit* (see 3.5). More recently it has taken up the *Students as Researchers* materials (see 3.6). Courtney acknowledged both:

> "The *Consulting Pupils Toolkit for Teachers* (3.5) and the *Students as Researchers* (3.6) resources inspired Ontario's student-led collaborative inquiry effort. In 2012, the first *Students as Researchers* Forum was piloted…. Findings from the pilot project have led to transformative changes including modifications in transition supports for aboriginal students in one school board quickly leading to changes in other districts struggling with the same challenges. Since the pilot, eleven Students as Researcher forums have trained student research teams across the province. Research findings and recommended next steps have been shared with their principals, school board teams and the ministry. Interest grows".

Ontario's implementation of ideas about student voice has also sparked very similar policy developments in Alberta, beginning in 2008 (see 5.3).

The broader context and policy implementation: In 2008, TLRP Director Andrew Pollard summarised and explained interest amongst policy-makers in the UK (see 5.4):

> "The UK impact of work on pupil consultation has been very considerable in the past few years, thanks largely to the work of this Network. In one form or another it has been promoted by government departments and agencies in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England. […] In part it caught a wave of teacher enthusiasm to innovate and to explore alternative ways of developing educational quality. Indeed, the network consistently worked with very high levels of teacher engagement in the research process at all stages, and is a paradigm case of the benefits of this approach."

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)
5.1 Letter dated 24 April 2013 [Supporting document 1] from Education Officer, Ontario Ministry of Education, Canada [Nominated referee 1].

5.2 The website describing and supporting Ontario's *SpeakUp* initiative can be found at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/students/speakup/. It also provides a comprehensive index to the wide range of projects that have been conducted by students and teachers in Ontario's schools.

5.3 The website about the Alberta *Speak Out* project (The Alberta Student Engagement Initiative) can be found at www.speakout.alberta.ca. For date of commencement, see http://www.speakout.alberta.ca/Results.aspx

5.4 Pollard, A. (2008), Extended Review of 'Improving Learning Through Consulting Pupils', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 29, 3, 349-351. British Journal of Sociology of Education, Vol. 29, No. 3, May 2008, 349–351, DOI: 10.1080/01425690801966477