

<p>Institution: University of Exeter</p> <p>Unit of Assessment: Education</p> <p>a. Context</p> <p>There has been a long-standing commitment at Exeter to educational research which makes a difference to professional and policy-makers' understanding of teaching and learning, transforming educational outcomes for young people and promoting education which is democratic, participatory and inclusive. In particular our research has had impact through influencing i) public policy ii) professional practice and iii) professional guidelines and training.</p> <p>We have engaged actively with a wide range of non-academic stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, policy-makers in both government and quasi-governmental organisations and our impact extends across regional, national and international boundaries.</p> <p>i) Influencing public policy: we work closely with policy-makers to influence the curriculum and national strategies for education. Our current work advising policy makers has deep roots. Desforges was the Director of the Teaching and Learning Research Programme of the Economic and Social Research Council, the largest coordinated programme of social research ever mounted in the UK (1998-2002) and was a founder member of the National Education Research Forum (1999-2006) set up by then secretary of state, Blunkett, to advise the government. This tradition of engagement in policy continues strongly in the present. Wood contributed to '<i>Learning, Playing and Interacting</i>' (DCSF, 2009) with lead members of the Early Years National Strategies team, and to the training materials that were used to roll out the document. Holden sat on the QCA Working Party for Assessment in Citizenship until 2012. Burden's work on understanding dyslexia has had national policy impact through the Rose Report and work with the British Dyslexia Association. Hennessy was appointed as consultant to the TDA to develop Generalist Music teacher training modules and is now a member of the Expert Panel for Music set up by the DfE to support the introduction of the 2014 national Curriculum. Craft advised the QCDA and helped develop a framework for creativity in the curriculum. Her collaborative research on possibility thinking was drawn upon in the Tickell review of early years foundation stage. She currently advises the BBC's Sesame Street programmes on teaching for creativity. Levinson provided evidence on the education of traveller children to the National Strategies in 2009 and 2012. Myhill was research consultant to the National Strategies English team, leading to, for example, the DVD <i>Teaching Speaking and Listening</i>, distributed to all secondary schools; she has led the writing of the grammar strand of the revised National Curriculum for English and given advice to the Minister for Schools on Primary and Secondary English. Haynes worked with NFER on the main evaluation of the national diplomas. Fisher has contributed to a working party on phonics led by the Minister for Schools. Norwich chairs the SEN Policy Options group (funded by NASEN and Pears Foundation) providing for national policy seminars and advice to government. Norwich has represented England on the European Special Needs Development Agency and Levinson and Postlethwaite have worked with Education International researching trade union policies with regard to equity.</p> <p>ii) Influencing professional practice: regionally, we are at the centre of a 'partnership network' of over 200 schools, with a long-term relationship with Exeter University. This network supports research collaborations. Much of our research involves working with these schools to develop and evaluate improved practice. In this, we are building on a deep tradition established in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s by influential educational researchers such as Wragg (classroom management, assessment and questioning) and Bennett (teaching styles, play and group work in classrooms). This tradition has continued. Skinner's project, funded by Astra Zeneca Science Teaching Trust, worked with local schools to investigate primary-secondary transition in science; Murphy's Esmée Fairbairn funded project, with Fisher and Wegerif, investigated improving early Maths education through a focus on talk. Larkin's Esmée Fairbairn funded 'Re-Flect' project with Freathy and Walshe developed teaching for meta-cognition in RE and Freathy's research for the Bible Society, developed RE materials with a local artist, trialled with local teachers and children at Exeter Cathedral in an event covered by the BBC. Nationally, our research has shaped professional practice, for example, the lesson study approach used in Norwich's three year study to improve teaching for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, established a research community of 40 UK schools collaborating to improve SEN teaching. Similarly, Myhill and Jones' ESRC Follow-on Funding and EEF funding enabled them to bring together more than 60 schools, both primary and secondary, implementing new ways of teaching writing which lead to improved outcomes for students in national assessments. Internationally, we have advised governmental</p>

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bodies and engaged in projects to improve practice with international partners. The 1m€ EU FP7-funded project Science Education for Diversity, led by **Wegerif** with **Mansour**, **Postlethwaite**, **Skinner** and **Hetherington**, developed science education practice in collaboration with researchers and schools in Malaysia, India, Turkey, Lebanon, Netherlands, and England (24 schools and over 6000 children were involved in the study over three years). **Martin's** 40 month ESRC project on global exchange is working with schools teachers in India and the Gambia as well as the UK to develop professional practice in the teaching of geographical and intercultural education. The Centre for Teaching Thinking and Dialogue led by **Wegerif** is working with a small to medium educational enterprise, Thinking Schools International (TSI) to apply research from **Burden**, **Craft** and **Wegerif** to improve practice in schools in the UK (a network of 300 schools) and in Malaysia (where 1,000 schools have been trained by TSI as 'thinking schools' with 9,000 more being trained).

iii) Influencing professional guidelines and training

Education research at Exeter has also been influential in shaping professional guidelines and in developing CPD for teachers based on robust research. **Norwich's** research on teaching SEN pupils has led to a 'personalised learning task' being rolled out to all trainee teachers in the UK and his recent research on using 'Lesson Study' in SEN education has been adopted by the DFE and disseminated nationally through initial teacher training of all teachers on the one year PGCE programme. Testimonials and evaluations reported in the separate case study, indicate that this has contributed directly to improving the quality of teaching for pupils with SEN. **Burden's** advice on the treatment of dyslexia to the Singapore government and his work with the British Dyslexia Association has improved the quality of teacher training. Conferences in Music Education, led by **Hennessy**, and in RE, led by **Walshe**, bring together practitioners and researchers for professional development opportunities and practical workshops based on writing research have been run at NATE, UKLA and National Literacy Trust events by **Myhill**, **Jones** and **Watson**. The Framework for Intercultural Learning, developed by **Martin**, is a CPD tool, based on her ESRC research, available to schools online. **Mattick** undertook a General Medical Council funded study of medical students' mental health, and an Academy of Medical Royal Colleges funded study of a change from formative to summative assessments made of junior doctors. Both of these recently submitted reports will inform changes to professional guidelines and training.

b. Approach to impact

In 2008-9, we held several staff meetings to forge our research strategy, one facilitated by external expert on communities of practice, Etienne Wenger. The shared vision that emerged is of educational research that makes a positive difference through illuminating and informing practical choices at every level, from the decisions of government ministers to those of teachers, parents and community leaders. Making a difference can only be achieved *through a grounded understanding of impact and active engagement with stakeholders*. To support *understanding of impact*, staff development sessions have included a seminar, led by the University's Research and Knowledge Transfer (RKT) team; a session on Public Engagement, led by the College's Impact Officer; and a dedicated session for ECRs on Understanding Impact, led by the Associate Dean for Research. A staff intranet provides links to resources to support understanding of impact, such as examples of successful Impact Pathways for ESRC applications, and Case Studies. To support *active engagement with stakeholders*, we have focused on the critical mass of our five Research Centres (Special Educational Needs; Writing Research; Teaching Thinking and Dialogue; Higher Education; and Science, Maths and Technology Education) and our two emerging research groups (CREATE: education for creativity; and Re-Place: global and sustainable education). Each has built links with its own key stakeholder groups, including local headteachers, LA advisors, subject associations, charitable or quasi-governmental groups, and commercial enterprises. For example, the Centre for Teaching Thinking and Dialogue is working with *Thinking Schools International*; the RE-Place group is working with *Think Global* and the *Geographical Association*; the creativity group is working with the *Youth Sports Trust*; and the Centre for Research in Writing is working with the *National Association for the Teaching of English* and with *Pearson Education*. The Centre for SEN and Disability has been involved in coordinating the national SEN Policy Research Forum, (established for 20 years and founded by a ESRC seminar funding) which is a national network of academics, central and local government policy makers and administrators and professionals that holds regular policy seminars and publishes policy papers.

We have a genuine strategic commitment to public engagement and impact, and to the

Impact template (REF3a)

principles of the 'Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research'. The appointment of a dedicated Impact Officer to provide advice and guidance on public engagement and impact activities is one indicator of this. The Impact Officer is available to assist with the impact requirements of research project proposals and to help academics determine appropriate impact strategies for their research. We are actively engaged in a University wide annual competition for 'impact awards' and have been short-listed for two awards this year. We are also involved in two university-wide RCUK Catalyst project: the first, *Catalyst for Public Engagement*, for which **Myhill** is a Co-I, and the second, the RCUK School-University Partnership Initiative which is led by GSE. Both projects are founded on the principle that engagement involves '*interaction and listening with the goal of generating mutual benefit*' (NCCPE). As a consequence, **Chappell**, drawing on Catalyst funding, co-led a workshop on public engagement in education with two practice-based action researchers, stimulated by a recent AHRC-funded project, and **Givens, Postlethwaite, Holden, Hetherington** and **Ralph** are working with ECRs across the university, developing their skills in communicating research in partnership schools. **Allan** has received University funding to develop an impact strategy with stakeholders at the proposal stage of an interdisciplinary bid on gender. Researchers' involvement in public engagement and impact activities is valued and recognised as a significant aspect of an academic's career trajectory: impact is one of the categories reviewed on the University's annual Performance and Development Review for all staff.

c. Strategy and plans

GSE will build on its current strong impact portfolio pursuing four strategic goals: *a) to engage all academics in impact activities; b) to develop better mechanisms for initiating and tracking impact; c) to strengthen strategic stakeholder relationships; and d) to establish better planning for impact at the point of grant application.* To achieve these goals, we intend to share the experience of evidencing impact for the REF Case Studies as the basis for all staff understanding how they can take their research to user communities, drawing on the Impact Officer's expertise and the resources from the Catalyst Public Engagement project. The outcome will be that each academic will create their own/group impact narrative and their own record of evidence. For the latter, we will trial best practice evident in other UoAs in the College, such as Impact diaries or Impact logs. The School's ITE Partnership Office already includes specific impact questions in its regular surveys of partnership schools, and we need to strengthen this as a mechanism both to stimulate and capture impact. The College Research Strategy has identified a need to make better use of social media for public engagement and impact, and we will participate actively in this initiative. Existing stakeholder relationships with research centres have tended to be serendipitous, rather than strategic, and we will now be more deliberate in identifying key stakeholders, and building co-participatory relationships with them, so that the voice of users feeds through the whole research cycle, from initial stages of the grant development to dissemination and knowledge transfer. A Link Fund and the skills of RKT in brokering user relationships are available to support this process. Our peer review of grant bids procedure has worked effectively in raising grant success rates, but now we need to ensure the procedure also focuses on planning for impact at the research design phase and to work together, sharing best practice, to generate more creative and effective ways to connect and share research outcomes with users. In addition, we are developing a series of specific impact seminars for our ECR staff, designed to help new researchers with limited funding and publications to understand how they can engage in impact activities and plan for impact.

d. Relationship to case studies

All four case studies (**Norwich, Myhill, Burden** and **Martin**) are direct outcomes of our approach to impact. Each arises from one of our research centres or emerging groups, signalling the benefits of collaborative teams working together; each case study indicates strong understanding of impact, derived from school and university level sessions outlining impact; and each case study is an example of research which includes established links with users. The authors have expanded their own understanding of impact through the process of developing the case studies, and in the next REF period they will be impact leaders, sharing their own insights and experiences with other colleagues. Additionally, the case studies offer different examples of best practice which can be promoted more widely going forward. **Martin's** case study provides an exemplar of stakeholder involvement from the inception of a research project through to its dissemination; **Norwich's** case study is a model of co-production of research with teachers as stakeholders; and the **Burden** and **Myhill** case studies illustrate how relationships with commercial educational enterprises can extend the reach of our research, including across international boundaries.