

Institution: University of Brighton
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Unit of Assessment: C25 Education
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a. Overview

University of Brighton (UoB) Research in education is led by the Education Research Centre (ERC), which is located within the School of Education. The school is a leading and large-scale provider of professional teacher education with the ERC's aim being to create high-quality research knowledge that translates into professional practice. To advance this agenda, and strengthen the research critical mass, the environment has been structured around two themes and a core methodology:

- *Learners' Rights and Voice*: Led by Professor STEPHENS, this theme adopts a rights-based approach to improving children's, young people's and adults' educational experiences and achievements in national and international contexts.
- *Critical Perspectives in Teacher Knowledge, Identity and Practice*: Led by Professor LOVELESS, this theme focuses on critical perspectives in teacher knowledge, identity and practice.
- *Narrative and Biographical Methodologies*: Led by Professor GOODSON, this approach is central to both of the above themes and is a distinctive use of theories and methodologies.

The ERC co-ordinates the research environment within the School of Education and is a key instrument in advancing the university's research infrastructure. This has been enriched through university investment of £8.8m in research sabbaticals, doctoral studentships, a new Brighton Doctoral College (BDC), early career researcher (ECR) support schemes and innovation grants. The combination of dedicated professorial leadership, together with comprehensive research support infrastructures, has injected systematic rigour to the research environment. These ongoing improvements, together with enhanced international collaborations and partnerships, have strengthened both our current and future research environment. This may be illustrated by the acceleration of doctoral completions from 9 (RAE2008) to 20 and the publication of significant books [GOODSON, 4], [HAYLER, 1], [LOVELESS, 4], [STEPHENS, 3], [TURVEY, 4], [WISKER, 3].

b. Research strategy

Strategic vision: Education research at UoB aims to generate new knowledge that fosters critical understandings of learning and teaching in diverse cultures and complex worlds. Our focus is upon social justice, democracy and voice in pedagogical and social contexts. We are committed to applied research in international and national arenas that develops the pedagogical practices of educators from early years to higher education, and improves the achievement and participation of learners in their education.

Research priorities: Our performance in RAE2008 (in which 35% of the research was judged to be 4*/3*) was an important step in the development of our research. As a consequence of this, and incorporating feedback from the RAE2008 sub-panel, we undertook a strategic review that identified five priorities to take forward our vision for impactful research from 2009–14. These were:

- advancing a distinctive research agenda that aligned with our intellectual strengths
- developing a critical mass of high-quality postgraduate research (PGR) students
- adopting a strategic approach to research appointments
- enhancing the career development of researchers within the context of professional practice and research
- strengthening the impact of our research within professional practice and a range of educational contexts

Advancing the research environment since 2008: Overall, the priority of our research lies in the strength of its translation to practitioners and to diverse education communities (as described in REF3b [1, 2] that focus on rights-based approaches to learners' experiences, and debates about teacher knowledge). Specifically, the advancement of our priorities, as set after 2008, may be illustrated through the following highlights:

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A distinctive agenda: Research was refocused into two themes linked by common narrative and biographical methodologies so as to deepen areas of existing research strength. Key monographs (linked to each theme and their underpinning methodology) have served to advance the intellectual agendas.

- **Learners' Rights and Voice:** This theme is led by STEPHENS and includes GOODSON, JOHNSON and ROBINSON. STEPHENS' book *Qualitative research in international settings* [3] employs context and culture as pertinent themes to reconfigure international education; described by Beighton as 'both illuminating and inspiring'. Giroux, a founding theorist of critical pedagogy, said of GOODSON's *Developing narrative theory* [4] that: 'it should be read by everyone concerned with the connection between theory, politics and everyday life'. Doctoral topics associated with this theme include: teacher narratives in Cyprus; English teaching in Bangladesh; disability and education in Ukraine, and; narratives in sub-Saharan settings.
- **Critical Perspectives in Teacher Knowledge, Identity and Practice:** This theme is led by LOVELESS and includes GOODSON, HAYLER, Hiller, TURVEY and WISKER. LOVELESS' book *Learning identities in a digital age: rethinking, creativity, education and technology* [4] has been reviewed by Morrison as essential reading for those rethinking teaching and online education in any capacity. Currently, Downs (University of Huddersfield) is producing an autobiographic reader, *Reading and teaching Ivor Goodson* (Lang, 2014), discussing GOODSON's four fields of curriculum history, professional knowledge, teachers' lives and narrative research. Doctoral topics associated with this theme include: plasticity in digital music education; life histories of medical educators, and; e-learning in higher education (HE) in the Middle East.

PGR critical mass: The cohort of high-quality doctoral students (40 ERC enrolments 2012–13) has been developed through our Professional Doctorate (EdD) Programme, which succeeded in doubling doctoral completions in applied contexts such as schools, teacher education and health professions. This work is also underpinned by WISKER's research in doctoral learning as set out in her monograph *The good supervisor: supervising postgraduate and undergraduate research for doctoral theses and dissertations* [3]. In 2013, ROBINSON further organised and hosted the conference 'Engaging with Methodology: Diversity, Questions and Challenges' which was supported by the International Association for Professional and Practice Focused Doctorates.

Strategic research appointments: The group has been strengthened by the appointment of Principal and Senior Research Fellows to contribute their expertise in methodological approaches and contexts (ROBINSON and JOHNSON, respectively). Professor HOBSON (from Sheffield Hallam University) has been appointed to lead the ERC through its next stage of development, starting January 2014.

Researcher development: Our mentorship model is epitomised by TURVEY and HAYLER. They are teacher educators who both registered for doctorates at Brighton and then completed during the census period. Based on their doctorates, their subsequent research and monographs serve to contribute distinct methodological inputs to the theme of *Critical Perspectives in Teacher Knowledge, Identity and Practice*. Three awards of Research Sabbatical leave (GOODSON, STEPHENS, WISKER) resulted in the production of significant monographs.

Strengthening impact: The bridge between research, professional practice and their impact may be illustrated in STEPHENS' Quality Education Project (QEP) with Save the Children, and JOHNSON's work on sexual and reproductive health rights, each conducted with partners in a total of eight countries. ROBINSON's publications in *Student Voice* contributed to the *Cambridge Primary Review* and the research on UNICEF'S 'Rights Respecting Schools'. GOODSON and LOVELESS' research on professional knowledge stimulated debate in a variety of contexts from adult learning to primary pedagogy (REF3b [2]).

More generally, the practitioner base in the School of Education has benefited from these advances in the research environment, as they contribute to pedagogic practice and staff development in research-based teaching and learning. During the census period, researchers also focused on the impacts of research in community education projects such as learning networks, reflective teaching, young people's learning, attainment and aspirations, and parental use of Children's Centres through developing parents as researchers (REF3b [1]). The ERC also enriches the school through strong international networks whereby visiting scholars have collaborated in a variety of symposia and publications during the census period (eg Etienne

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Wenger's master-class and lectures on 'Communities of Practice as Social Learning', (2013).

Development of the infrastructure: Post-2008 we have established a more systematic approach to the delivery of the research strategy to achieve a higher order of excellence. The intellectual agendas required to advance this research strategy are supported through the two new research themes. Each theme provides peer support, mentoring, and expert leadership to raise the quality of research outputs and support innovative research that has impact. Research Fellows (ROBINSON and JOHNSON) have been appointed to work with researchers in the development of funded proposals and projects. Publication is co-ordinated through writing teams, critical review, and TURVEY's editorship of *Research in Education (R.Ed)* the ERC's online journal.

The ERC (led by LOVELESS) has a strategy group that both oversees research themes and manages the research strategy, sets targets and monitors progress. Staff are supported through ERC Seed Corn Funding, and the Research Grants and Conference schemes. The ERC reports to the university's Research Strategy Committee using the university's Current Research Information System (CRIS) and process of Annual Research Monitoring (ARM). These have brought greater consistency and rigour to the continuing process of evaluating key performance indicators to inform the ERC's identification of future priorities.

Additionally, the ERC is responsible for the local delivery of the Research Concordat Action Plan in support of researcher career development, and the university's *Code of Good Practice in Research* and the *Guidance on Good Practice in Research Ethics and Governance*. The ERC is a critical conduit for the local implementation of the university's research infrastructure which, since 2008 has seen an overall additional investment of £8.8m in initiatives such as the Research Sabbatical Scheme, doctoral studentships, Research Challenge and Networking grants. Targeted support for ECRs includes a 'Rising-Stars' scheme with individual awards of £10k, an ECR Ambassador to develop a support network across the university and the annual *Future's Bright* conference for ECRs now in its fourth year.

Future strategic goals: Our research environment is founded on the conviction that: (i) the communities that benefit from research are as important as the people who produce research, and; (ii) the systematic translation of pedagogic research is as important as its intellectual veracity. In this context, and taking account of our successes since 2008, the ERC has identified five strategic goals for 2014-20 that will serve to enhance the research critical mass:

- the strategic appointment of researchers at all career stages to accelerate the advancement of each research theme and its linkage to the practitioner base
- further advance research mentoring and support for staff at all career levels to increase the number of influential and world-leading outputs
- strengthen the research environment by increasing research income through collaborative grants from international agencies, UK research councils, foundations and charities
- continue to develop the next generation of researchers by enhancing opportunities and support for ECRs and PGRs
- maximise the impact of our research through embedding new processes for impact planning and by enhancing research collaborations with a range of non-academic partners and users.

In order to deliver these strategic goals, researchers in the two themes will continue to lead intellectual agendas that connect teachers' professional development to cultures of childhood, youth and learning, and to the rethinking of landscapes of learning and pedagogy in a digital age. Further innovations in theory and methodology will advance the areas of narrative, narrative ecologies, auto-ethnography and critique of Western epistemologies. Our strategy for managing impact and practitioner benefits, as linked to these intellectual agendas, will affect four areas of educational practice: rights promoting organisations (eg Child Hope); professional communities and networks (eg Society for Research in Higher Education); research partnerships (eg teaching school alliances and academies), and; community organisations (eg Hastings Voluntary Action). This will be accompanied by new formal education research partnerships within early years settings, youth groups and clusters of schools.

Our delivery of these goals will be achieved by continuing to make strategic appointments that further strengthen these academic goals and build upon the existing expertise of staff. We will

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also develop an engagement strategy for funders that is co-ordinated through the university's Economic and Social Engagement (EASE) team and the Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP). It will include support for consultancy projects for practitioners to become active researchers (eg 'Distance Travelled' research with Brighton and Hove Youth Service). We aim to develop the next generation of researchers by: recruiting practitioners into the School of Education who either have a Doctorate or are registered; sustaining the mentoring process that underpins an incremental transition of practitioner to ECR and; supporting developing staff cohorts in the successful EdD programme. These will be further supported through the delivery of priorities in UoB's Research Concordat Action Plan (see section c).

c. People, including: I. Staffing strategy and staff development

Staffing aims: Since RAE2008 we have prioritised the intellectual capital of our research community as a primary asset, and have set out to ensure its sustained support and development. We value the contributions of all colleagues by:

- retaining and rewarding staff who are central to our research themes
- recruiting talented and outstanding researchers to bring fresh ideas and insights
- mentoring and supporting emerging researchers and practitioners in our research themes
- planning for succession and sustainability

Delivering the staffing strategy: Our performance against these aims may be illustrated through the following examples:

The research theme *Critical Perspectives on Teacher Knowledge, Identity and Practice* includes TURVEY and HAYLER, who completed their doctorates in the period, published sole authored books and were awarded School of Education research grants to support a research project with school partners on narrative ecologies, and an international symposium in auto-ethnography in education in 2014.

The *Rights-based Approach to Learning* theme benefited from the recruitment of ROBINSON and JOHNSON as Research Fellows to contribute their expertise in methodological approaches and contexts in developed and developing countries. They have been successful in securing funding from international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and in publishing research reports and outputs. As a result of these appointments, a balance has been maintained since 2008 between losses of senior research active staff leaving through retirement and the mentoring and appointment of new staff who are emerging or ECRs.

Succession planning includes the creation of and promotion to new roles, in addition to planning research trajectories for active and emerging researchers. In order to future proof leadership, we have appointed one additional professor (Hobson) to lead the ERC and establish new education research partnerships from January 2014. There have been three promotions in the census period to Principal Lecturer or Research Fellow for distinctive roles in developing research mentorship, publication, funding and doctoral programmes. We are also building a cohort of 16 staff who are emerging researchers from 2014–2020.

Career development and concordat implementation: The ethos and values of our commitment to researcher development has been advanced by the university's Research Concordat Action Plan, which was recognised through a European Commission HR Excellence in Research Award in 2012. The Concordat Steering Group includes key members of personnel, equality and diversity staff, as well as leading and contract researchers. It is monitored by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) for Research, overseen by the RSC and reports twice yearly to the University Management Group.

Since 2011, a major strategic university investment of £7.2m has focused on initiatives for researcher development. Every researcher in this submission has benefited from these schemes, including: Proposal.net, a training scheme for writing research grant application (LOVELESS, TURVEY and HAYLER); three periods of sabbatical leave worth £105k (GOODSON and STEPHENS 2012, WISKER 2013); Research Challenge award worth £10k to support the 'Narrative, Context and Learning' symposium in 2011 that brought together 13 international scholars in the field; local community based research (£5k, JOHNSON), and; £1k from an international conference fund to support dissemination and networking (ROBINSON). These university initiatives are complemented by ERC-specific investments since 2008, including: a school conference fund for

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all active researchers (value £42k); a competitive £38k fund for pump-priming research activities that build research activity outputs, and; in 2012/14, a competitive Education Research Grant Scheme (£39k).

Diversity and equality: The university's Equalities and Diversity policy aims to promote fairness and consistency in the recruitment and progression of research staff. Embodied in the ERC is a distinctive commitment to equality and diversity in influential outputs that explore human rights and as exemplified in our research theme *Learners' Rights and Voice*. The combination of research interests and organisational practices around equality and diversity in the School of Education enhances the development and training for all staff on these issues through online and face-to-face provisions. Indicative of the ERC's commitment to equality is our strategic decision that after 2010 we would only recruit researchers as full-time, permanent staff who are able to engage at substantial levels with an integrated portfolio of research, staff development, teaching and outreach in partnership. Appointments are also made following the university's Recruitment and Selection Procedures and Practices, with reference to the university's published Equality and Diversity Policy. Colleagues who have sensory impairments are provided with special equipment to support their professional duties. The University empowers senior and mid-career staff through a dedicated Academic Leadership programme delivered through The Ranmore Consulting Group, which covers finance, change management and leadership.

c. II. Research students

The Brighton Doctoral College (BDC): The university has taken significant steps to enhance the experience of our research students as our contribution to developing the next generation of researchers. All the PGRs are now based within the BDC, which was established in 2011 under the leadership of a new Dean who is responsible for postgraduate research. A recent QAA report (March, 2013) noted '*since its (BDC) establishment the trajectory of almost all success indicators has been upward.*' The core work of the BDC is to:

- oversee the application-to-graduation process for all PhD students
- provide a training needs analysis to establish each student's skills profile that is then mapped against the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF)
- arrange compulsory formal training for all new students via the university RDF

In addition, attendance at the BDC's annual PGR conference is a requirement for ERC students. All supervisors undergo dedicated training, including equalities and diversity training, prior to joining the approved register and this must be refreshed every five years. All staff submitted in the Education Unit of Assessment (UoA) are doctoral supervisors and contribute to teaching on the EdD programme.

Supervision is complemented by a series of checkpoints following the established BDC procedures, ensuring that satisfactory progress is taking place and the supervisory team is fulfilling its responsibilities. Checkpoints include initial research plan approval, a series of annual progression reviews and a thesis completion plan. A Director of Postgraduate Studies at professorial level implements the BDC procedures in the ERC and works alongside a principal research fellow who is the programme leader for the EdD programmes at Brighton and in partner institutions in Mauritius.

The ERC PGR environment: Since 2008, the School of Education has developed a strong doctoral programme. We have succeeded in doubling doctoral awards from 9 (RAE 2008) to 20 for the census period. We have a strong record of attracting research students in the field, with 40 enrolments (30 of which are EdD) in 2012/13. Our EdD programme provides strong links to educational practice, with 14 conferrals during the census period (table 1). In 2012, a competitive process for university PGR studentships recognised the increase in quality of the PGR environment in education and invested £128k in two full-time doctoral studentships and two international research scholarships.

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Table 1: Doctoral awards in education 2008–12

C25	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
EdDs	5	1.5	3	1	3.5	14
PhDs	0.5	1	0.5	2	2	6
Total	5.5	2.5	3.5	3	5.5	20

Research students contribute to national research conferences (eg BERA and the National Professional Doctorate Conference on Methodology), and the UoB's annual Learning and Teaching Conference and its Postgraduate Conference. The school and university provide a programme of guest lectures, master-classes, seminars, study days, and workshops as part of the RDF. There is a competitive university fund for research student conference support of up to £1,200 per student over the duration of their studies.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Research funding: ERC external research income in the census period was £679k. Our strategy for income generation has been to maintain a balance between focused, small-scale partnership grants and larger-scale research bids in collaboration with other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and large INGOs (eg Save the Children). The university infrastructure includes an expanded central Research Office that administers a Grant Support Panel (comprising RCUK grant panel members) to provide support and feedback on applications. The university EASE office has a business development manager (BDM) who works with us to expand our funding from foundations, trusts and charities (REF3a).

Income portfolio: Our funding reflects our thematic areas and includes collaborative bids with academic and community partners.

In our *Learners' Rights and Voice* theme we collaborated with leading INGOs, foundations and charities such as Save the Children, UNICEF, Bernard van Leer Foundation, Panos, Beatbullying, *Cambridge Primary Review*, and Building Communities through Dialogue. UK government sources include: Higher Education Academy (HEA), Sheffield Lifelong Learning Network and Brighton and Hove City Council. ROBINSON has recently been funded by the Office of the Children's Commissioner to research the impact on children's rights of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Autumn Statement (2013) and 2014 UK Budget.

Our research in the *Critical Perspectives on Teacher Knowledge, Identity and Practice* theme is supported through income from the AHRC as part of a £440k project led by University of Sussex and the British Academy. Funding from UK government bodies includes the British Council, HEA and the Teacher Development Agency. WISKER was awarded a £20k HEA International Scholarship Award in 2012. GOODSON is part of the €2.5m EU ALFA III-funded RIAIPE3 project involving 14 universities in Latin America and six in Europe, exploring issues of refraction, reform and equality.

Infrastructure and facilities: Over the past five years, the university has updated its research infrastructure in support of education research, with the ERC and School of Education now located in the £20m Checkland Building on the Falmer site since 2009. Its research resources and facilities have attracted 22 international visiting scholars from universities in China, Japan, Denmark, Brazil, Sweden, Ghana, Ireland, Taiwan, the Netherlands, Portugal, Australia and India. The ERC space is located at the heart of the school's teaching and learning spaces. The research environment has specialist computer rooms, art and design studios, internal learning and social spaces, and an open learning centre.

e. Collaboration and contribution to the discipline or research base

Our long-standing and new collaborations during the census period enrich the education discipline and contribute to the vibrancy of the ERC research environment. Significant contributions to the discipline have emerged from each of our two research themes and our shared interest in advances in narrative and biographical methodologies.

Discipline contribution and leadership: A number of researchers have influential scholarly roles within the education research base. Researchers at UoB during the census period

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contributed to the discipline through 46 keynotes; eight journal editorships; sixteen editorial board memberships; four book series, two visiting professorships, two visiting fellowships, three international Research Council review colleges, and two Teaching Excellence Awards. The most influential activities that highlight leadership in the discipline include:

Journal editorships: *International Journal of Educational Development* (STEPHENS), *Journal of Education Policy* (GOODSON), *Innovation in Education and Teaching International* (WISKER), LOVELESS has guest-edited *Computers and Education* (54:3, 2009).

Network leadership: Regional network implementing the *Cambridge Primary Review* (ROBINSON); International network of researchers in childhood studies for Bernard Van Leer Foundation (JOHNSON).

Expert contributions: The European Commission's Innovative and Prospective Technologies working group expert seminars (LOVELESS 2009, TURVEY 2012).

Conference keynotes: GOODSON – the inaugural Cyprus Congress of International Research in 2012; LOVELESS – keynotes at Learning Identities in a Digital Age Postgraduate Symposium in Brno, Czech Republic 2013 and; TURVEY – keynote at ICT Conference on Creative Teaching & Learning in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil 2008. LOVELESS was the Academic Conference Chair and TURVEY on the Programme Committee for the international conference CAL09 in Brighton. HAYLER will give keynote at Inaugural British Auto-ethnography Conference 2014.

Visiting professorships: Rhodes University, South Africa (STEPHENS) and Tallinn University, Estonia (GOODSON).

Research Council Review Colleges: STEPHENS: ESRC UK, Norwegian Research Council and Hong Kong Research Grants Council.

Collaboration: Research in each theme is organised strategically to facilitate collaborative work with both academic and non-academic partners. Outputs provide evidence of the success of this approach. Our collaborations enhance the activities of education practitioners and communities in many different contexts.

Learners' Rights and Voice: This research theme characterises ERC's commitment to collaborative international work, particularly building research capacity with NGO communities engaged in social justice and children's rights. For example, STEPHENS [4] has led the four-country QEP project with research teams in the African sub-continent that resulted in the building of indigenous researcher capacity. JOHNSON was the lead researcher on a multi-site four-country research project that applied a socio-ecological model for youth programming with participating INGOs such as International Planned Parenthood Federation (JOHNSON). ROBINSON collaborated with the University of Sussex in promoting the Rights-Respecting School network.

Critical Perspectives on Teacher Knowledge, Identity and Practice: Research underpins the School of Education's mission to develop through collaboration the conceptual depth and pedagogic reach of teachers at different stages of their professional lives. For example, GOODSON's world-leading international reputation for research into teachers' lives led to a collaboration to develop the newly formed Cyprus Educational Research Association in 2012. Research collaborations with the University of Kurdistan-Hawler in Iraq have contributed to understandings of equity for women in international HE settings (WISKER).