

Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution: Oxford Brookes University
Unit of Assessment: 25 – Education
Title of case study: Leadership of learning impact in further and higher education
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Researchers from Oxford Brookes University have significantly contributed towards driving improvements to teaching and learning through an evidence-based approach. They have influenced practice and policies, whilst challenging public perceptions about the impact of education. Through their partnership with the University of Westminster, the Westminster Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training has improved teaching and learning in the Learning and Skills Sector, engaged with the design and delivery of enterprise education programmes for Further Education leaders and championed the status of vocational education. They have actively contributed to public debates and their research continues to be disseminated and used in training throughout the UK.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The Westminster Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (WCETT), was a partnership between Oxford Brookes University and the University of Westminster which applied insights from research expertise to lead, influence and inform both practice and policy within the learning and skills sector, both nationally and internationally. Established as a Centre with more than £1million of funding from the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), WCETT academics worked in partnership with practitioners from the Learning and Skills sector.</p> <p>WCETT's networking capabilities resulted in the award of additional and significant funding from the independent charity NESTA/SEEDA (Browne and Beresford: 2008)¹. This project resulted in the research-informed design and delivery of an enterprise education programme for Vice-Principals working in Further Education (FE) Colleges. The programme was delivered to senior college staff working in the South East of England and informed further research, arguing that enterprise education in the post-compulsory education sector is currently dependent on narrow and short term funding streams, ghettoised within university business schools, and reliant to a large degree on the goodwill and support from a small number of enterprise champions. In pursuit of a more broadly embedded approach the paper provided a case study of an independent membership-based national enterprise network, the Enterprise Educators UK, which evolved from the government sponsored UK Science Enterprise Centres, and which it is argued provided a useful model for sustainability and growth within both Higher and Further Education contexts (Beresford & Elliot, 2010)². As part of this project Browne and Beresford undertook further research into the effectiveness of the first Enterprise Academy at Amersham College as funded by the Peter Jones Foundation, making recommendations which have informed the development of similar ventures nation-wide.</p> <p>In 'The dangerous rise of therapeutic education' (Ecclestone & Hayes, 2008)³ the authors used examples across the education system, from primary schools to university, as well as the workplace to show how therapeutic education is turning children, young people and adults into anxious and self-preoccupied individuals rather than aspiring, optimistic and resilient learners who want to know everything about the world.</p> <p>A further research project, supported through The Westminster Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training, focused on the role of mentoring for new and experienced teachers (Eliahoo, 2009)⁴. In this research, mentors were asked to reflect on their experiences, interpretations of and training for their role specifically associated with identifying and supporting improvements in subject pedagogy. Conclusions from this work, suggest that government and regulatory body activity conflate subject knowledge with subject pedagogy and thereby add to the lack of coherent policy towards mentoring teacher trainees in the Lifelong Learning Sector. Recommendations were that mentor training should be re-focused; and that mentoring should be as well funded and supported in the Lifelong Learning Sector as it is in the school sector.</p> <p>Research funded by the Steven Lawrence Charitable Trust, and bid for under the umbrella of WCETT, supported Haight to investigate vocational ability and vocational pedagogy. The research,</p>

based on engagement with young engineers in inner-city London, found strong preferences among learners and teachers in secondary, further education (FE) and higher education (HE) for applied and work-relevant learning approaches in engineering education. Opportunities for these were unbalanced through the phases, with work experience, enrichment events and access to professional engineers more readily available to the younger 14-19 Diploma students than to further or higher education students. The research demonstrated that access to meaningful work experience for FE and HE learners was curtailed by educational institutions' lack of resources focused specifically on fostering employer engagement.^{5,6}

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. 'To develop and deliver the pilot phase of a package of professional development and support in enterprise education for senior staff in FE colleges in the South East', £201961 grant awarded by the National Endowment for Science, Technology, and the Arts. 2008-2009. This bid was prepared as part of the work of the Westminster CETT which was created following an application to create a Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training.
2. Beresford, R. and Elliot, G. (2010) The role of networks in supporting grassroots good practice in enterprise education. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 15(3), 275-288. ISSN 1359-6748. DOI:10.1080/13596748.2010.503998. This article appears in a special edition of the Journal entitled 'Knowledge, Innovation and Enterprise in Post-compulsory Education' with Beresford and Elliott as the Editors.
3. Ecclestone, K. and Hayes, D. (2008). *The Dangerous Rise of Therapeutic Education*. Routledge. ISBN 9780203870563

The chapters address a variety of thought-provoking themes, including how therapeutic ideas from popular culture dominate social thought and social policies and offer a diminished view of human potential, how schools undermine parental confidence and authority by fostering dependence and compulsory participation in therapeutic activities based on disclosing emotions to others, how higher education has adopted therapeutic forms of teacher training because many academics have lost faith in the pursuit of knowledge, how such developments are propelled by a deluge of political initiatives in areas such as emotional literacy, emotional well-being and the 'soft outcomes' of learning.

4. Eliahoo, R (2009) Meeting the potential for mentoring in Initial Teacher Education: mentors' perspectives from the Lifelong Learning Sector. *Teaching in lifelong learning: a journal to inform and improve practice*, 1 (2). 64-75. ISSN 2040-0993. DOI: 10.5920/till.2009.1264

The Westminster Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training was led by Oxford Brookes University in partnership with the University of Westminster to research and share good practice, to promote equality and diversity and to develop teacher training in the Lifelong Learning Sector. This article has stimulated practitioner debate with 74 hits on the Academia ed as at 28.05.2013 and is quoted in the Institute for Learning Magazine 'Intuition' page 21 Edition 5: 2011.

5. Haight, A (2012) Hungry for hands-on': Talented, inner-city engineering students, applied learning and employer engagement in a vocational-learning trajectory. *Journal of Education and Work*, 25 (4), 381-402.

Submitted to REF2014, Oxford Brookes University, UoA25-Education, REF2, A Haight, Output identifier 8807. This article is based on research carried out for the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust following the allocation of £55,363 of funding. The final report for this work and submitted to the Stephen Lawrence Trust can be found at:

<http://radar.brookes.ac.uk/radar/items/aba771f2-ed37-0217-70b2-7f770b2ee11e/1/>

6. Haight, A. (2010). Nurturing engineering talent in the inner city.

Paper presented to the inaugural research conference of the Education and Employment Taskforce, University of Warwick, 15 October 2010. Available at:

http://www.educationandemployers.org/media/7850/haight_nurturing%20engineering%20talent.pdf

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

Through the insights gained from their research, WCETT, has pioneered improvements within the Learning and Skills Sector by improving pedagogic processes, producing teaching and learning materials and fostering a research informed evidence based approach to teaching by brokering opportunity for practitioner debate on best practice.

The FE enterprise education project¹ was externally evaluated and the initial report⁷ found that senior-level participants generally expressed very positive views about the likely medium and long term impact of the programme. However, among middle managers and lecturing staff there was a view that there are significant barriers to wider uptake; mainly related to college culture and colleagues' resistance to change. This underlined the importance of working intensively with senior leaders to assist them to understand the role that enterprise and creativity can play within the college environment. The report recommended that the policy of focusing on senior leaders should be maintained and more work should be done to influence senior leaders to participate in the programme and introduce enterprise strategies within their colleges. The Enterprise programme reached its conclusion in 2011; the training materials were not only adopted by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) and used in their leadership training, but also seen as part of the requirement for Enterprise Champion status as awarded to a number of FE colleges. Furthermore, as a result of this and subsequent research at Amersham College, Browne worked with the Peter Jones Foundation in the design of a BTEC programme on Enterprise Education, currently offered in 36 colleges in England and praised by OfSTED⁸ in a good practice report.

'*The Dangerous Rise of Therapeutic Education*', Ecclestone (co-authored with Hayes)¹, is considered to be a vital read for professionals working in the field of pastoral care; it presents a robust critique of the world of personalised learning and the legacy of initiatives established by the last government focused on emotional well-being. The book challenges conventional thinking, stimulating debate amongst practitioners, with one reviewer commenting; "This remains an important read and one which will continue to serve as an important counterpoint for us to consider in developing pastoral care"⁹; another reviewer stated; "This book suggests that we do not include: to become fulfilled, to have high self-esteem, or to be happy. This much I agree: these are complex and beyond the legitimate scope of education institutions, though I expect educational institutions not to inhibit a sense of fulfilment. I hope that the strident and negative tone of this book does not discourage such professional discussions, because it has raised some important issues."¹⁰.

Recently Ecclestone (now employed at the University of Sheffield), using research insights gained whilst at Oxford Brookes University, some of which are published in '*The Dangerous rise of Therapeutic Education*' has contributed to the debate through forums such as The Institute of Ideas Social Policy forum¹¹ advocating "challenging a social project that hopes to engineer the emotional well-being, character, health and social behaviours of citizens seen as vulnerable whilst avoiding civic engagement in the political and educational questions this raises". Hayes, as the co-author of the texts, is a visiting Professor at Oxford Brookes University.

Eliahoo, based on her research insights developed through Westminster Centre for Excellence in Teacher published in (2009)³, was invited to give evidence to the Skills Commission Inquiry into Teacher Training in Vocational Education¹². The Skills Commission report references Eliahoo's work, citing her directly in support of its 19th and 20th recommendations advocating that mentoring should be ring-fenced in the long-term for funding, and, rigorously inspected as part of the agreed framework for College inspections.

Haight presented findings from her research at the inaugural research conference of the Education and Employment Taskforce in October 2010,⁶ and at The Edge Foundation's first research conference in November 2012¹³. The Edge Foundation, as a charity that champions practical and vocational education and training, is actively contributing to the policy debate¹⁴ surrounding Government reform of 14-19 education, with particular regard to the training of engineers, through its advocacy and sponsorship of University Technical Colleges (UTCs) in association with the Baker-Dearing Trust. Oxford Brookes University is sponsoring one of the first UTCs to be established in Swindon.

This range of impacts, although in their relatively early stages, demonstrate WCETT's on-going commitment to engaging with external organisations, contributing to debate and informing policy through insights based on excellent research.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

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7. NESTA Publications: Beresford, K (2010). Interim Report: Evaluating the Enterprising Further Education Pilot. EEFEF/56 .

http://www.nesta.org.uk/publications/reports/assets/features/evaluating_the_enterprising

First interim report from the external evaluator and posing the following questions:

- What is the impact on enterprise education in the South East?
- What has been the impact on educational institutions and professionals?
- What has been the impact on the wider educational landscape?
- What is the impact on young people?

8. Promoting enterprise in vocational courses for 16–19-year-old students in colleges. A good practice report from OfSTED <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/promoting-enterprise-vocational-courses-for-16-19-year-old-students-colleges>

9. Barrow, G (2012) 'Book Reviews' Pastoral Care in Education: An International Journal of Personal, Social and Emotional Development.30(4) 359-361. ISSN 0264-3944. DOI:10.1080/02643944.2012.736780

10. Dr Stephen Bigger (2008). The Higher Education Academy, ESCalate Education Subject Centre. <http://escalate.ac.uk/4866>

11. 'Society Wars': The Battle for Social Policy' Ed. Clements, D & Earnshaw, M (2012). Social Policy Forum 2012. <http://www.instituteofideas.com/transcripts/societywars.pdf>

12. The Skills Commission Inquiry into Teacher Training in Vocational Education <http://www.policyconnect.org.uk/sc/news/skills-commission-inquiry-teacher-training-vocational-education>

13. EDGE RESEARCH CONFERENCE 2012; Champion of technical, practical and vocational learning

There are many paths to success.

http://www.edge.co.uk/media/106097/ef_research_conference_final.pdf

14. House of Commons Science and Technology Committee 'Educating tomorrow's engineers: the impact of Government reforms on 14–19 education' Seventh Report of Session 2012–13.

http://www.edge.co.uk/media/104019/science_and_technology_engineering_education_full_report_february_2013.pdf