

<p>Institution: University of Cambridge</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: Education (25)</p>
<p>a. Context</p> <p>The Faculty of Education has a large number of researchers working on a wide range of issues. Its main non-academic user groups, beneficiaries and audiences are broadly of two types (exemplified below by some organisations that have commissioned research over the review period):</p> <p>(1) organisations concerned with educational policymaking, development and regulation, their officers and advisers: these have included (a) national governmental (e.g. UK/England Department for Education, UK Department for International Development, US Department of Education, Republic of Kazakhstan Centre for Education Policy); (b) national quasi-governmental (e.g., in the UK, the [now] National College for Teaching and Leadership, the [erstwhile] Qualifications and Curriculum Authority); (c) other national (e.g., in the UK, the National Children's Bureau, Gatsby Charitable Foundation); and (d) international (e.g. LEGO Foundation, Christian Blind Mission).</p> <p>(2) organisations directly involved in making educational provision and those who work in them: these have included (a) schools (e.g. School 21, the Wroxham Teaching Schools group), (b) local authorities (e.g. Cambridgeshire County Council, Lincolnshire County Council); (c) commercial and not-for-profit organisations (e.g. Tribal Education, Cambridge International Examinations); and (d) other bodies with an educational mission (e.g. the British Library, the National Gallery).</p> <p>The Faculty's research seeks to achieve impact beyond the immediate audience of those particular organisations commissioning research from it, but these examples are indicative of the types of intermediary and user organisation towards which the Faculty's research is targeted, with the sponsors, members and clients of such organisations being the main beneficiaries.</p> <p>The main types of research impact that the Faculty seeks to achieve are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform and stimulate public, professional and political debate on educational matters. • To inform and shape the formulation, development and implementation of enhancements to educational policy and practice. • To inform and contribute to the design of inventive educational approaches and resources and to innovative provision for professional training and development. • To inform and promote the intelligent application of new ideas and research findings to the conduct of professional practice in education.
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>There is a high degree of specialisation and segmentation in educational provision and the associated professional groups. Under these circumstances, the Faculty's impact strategy encourages researchers to pursue engagement of users through a carefully targeted and tailored approach. Such an approach builds on understanding of the particular segment of educational policy and provision in question; it employs careful analysis of pathways to impact within that segment to establish appropriate forms of liaison with key intermediaries, so as to formulate an effective impact strategy and follow it through. The viability of such an approach is underpinned by the rich networks of professional contacts which researchers across the Faculty have access to by virtue of their extensive professional and research experience, and often their reputations within their specialist fields. In pursuing such an approach, researchers also seek advice from colleagues across the Faculty, and call on the practical support provided by the Faculty's Research Office. Crucial to implementing this strategy is the discretionary time (at least 60 days per year) that the Faculty allocates to each research-active member of its core academic staff for purposes of conducting and disseminating research, and further discretionary time (20 days per year) allocated to cultivating professional (including user) relations.</p> <p><u>Faculty research projects are often commissioned by direct users:</u> For example, <i>Evans and Fisher</i> were competitively selected by the Department for Children, Schools and Families to undertake a study (2006/09) of <i>Language Learning at KS3: the impact of the Key Stage 3 Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) Framework and changes to the curriculum on provision and practice</i>. When the report was published in 2010, Schools Minister Johnson referred to its findings in interviews reported by the Guardian and the BBC. Further impact was through the researchers' contributions to a range of key meetings where national MFL policy decisions were formulated. These included <i>Evans's</i> invited membership of the National Strategies Steering group which oversaw revision of the Framework for KS3 MFL, incorporating several recommendations from the study's findings;</p>

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Fisher's keynote presentation of findings at an Ofsted conference in 2008; presentations of research findings in 2008/09 at Westminster to audiences comprising civil servants, Ofsted inspectors, LA advisors, MFL teacher educators, and MFL teachers; and invited attendance at a meeting in 2011 with Schools Minister Gibb on the future of MFL teaching in schools, where the official documentation drew heavily on evidence from the Cambridge study. Project findings have also been disseminated to teachers through the Faculty's wide-ranging links with schools, and fed into its teacher education programmes. By virtue of the high national profile of this research, and its direct influence on policy, it has also had a wider influence and more indirect impact. The report features, for example, in the reading lists of ITE programmes in MFL around the country.

Other research projects are supported by intermediary organisations seeking research that can both inform their own work and help a wide range of other users to improve educational policy, practice and outcomes: For example, the *epiSTEMe* project (*Ruthven, Howe, Mercer and Taber*) was competitively commissioned as part of the *Targeted Initiative on Science and Mathematics Education (TISME)* by a consortium led by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) but also comprising key intermediary organisations including MyScience, the Association for Science Education (ASE), Institute of Physics (IoP), Gatsby Charitable Foundation, and National Centre for Excellence in Teaching Mathematics (NCETM). Responding to a user-defined brief, *epiSTEMe* (2008/13) undertook collaborative research with school leaders and teachers to design, trial and refine an intervention in early-secondary mathematics and physical science teaching. The project then conducted a larger-scale field trial which established that the intervention was effective. As well as establishing a cadre of around 100 trained teacher users in 30 schools, the project held dissemination meetings and made intervention materials and research findings available via its website. The researchers are now working with a user advisory group – including members of the key intermediary organisations above – to identify further pathways to impact. They have been consulted by the Department for Education about aspects of the new National Curriculum; and its pending implementation provides an opportunity to engage prospective users of the intervention and secure attention for the research findings. Equally, *epiSTEMe* has contributed to a range of broader *TISME* activities and events targeting potential policymaker and professional users.

Over time, certain bodies of research, as well as the researchers associated with them, build up a substantial reputation which attracts potential users, and which can be stimulated further by promotional activity: One example is *Mercer's* research on *Thinking Together*. The Faculty website has a dedicated section which explains this dialogue-based approach to the development of children's thinking and learning, providing downloadable material and links to further useful resources including books written specifically for teachers. Since 2008, *Mercer* has led CPD sessions for 11 local authorities in England and 2 in Belgium. UK agencies and bodies that have sought research-based advice over this period include the DfE, QCDA, the National Strategies, NATE, the Association of English Advisors, the National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum, and Educational Psychology in Scotland. In the first few months of 2013 alone, advice has been sought by the Singapore Ministry of Education; with government support, the Open University of China is planning a course for primary teachers based on the research; and School 21 has launched an EEF-funded project influenced and guided by *Mercer's* expertise.

Sometimes, development of a research area and impact from it involves building relationships with groups that would not normally consider themselves users of educational research: In 2008, for example, *Burke* secured the involvement of (and commitment of time and resources by) leading architectural firms (SCABAL and Feilden, Clegg & Bradley) in a small Faculty-funded project on *Principles of Primary School Design*. In 2010, she was commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) to assemble an interdisciplinary team of architects, early childhood experts and educational experts for a project on *Storey Height and Quality in Primary Education Environments* which directly influenced CCC policy on planning new primary schools. From 2011, *Burke* led an AHRC-funded network on *The Decorated School*, involving practising architects and with formal links to English Heritage and the Royal Commission for the Ancient Monuments of Scotland, also connecting with school based community campaigns and reaching a world-wide audience via its blog. In 2013, the AHRC jointly funded a Collaborative Doctoral Training Award in partnership with SCABAL architects (co-funding the initiative) comprising knowledge-transfer scholarships for 3 students researching aspects of *The value of design in building high quality schools supporting excellence in teaching and learning*. This illustrates an approach to establishing relations with a network of niche user groups and securing impact for the associated research.

c. Strategy and plans

The Faculty will continue its successful strategy for generating research impact through the combination of: (1) allowing its researchers dedicated time to explore such opportunities; (2) ensuring the freedom to shape such initiatives to best fit individual research programmes; (3) encouraging continuous engagement with intermediaries and users throughout the research process; and (4) providing dedicated support from the Faculty's experienced Research Office.

In the interest of remaining innovative in these endeavours, the Faculty will continue to identify opportunities to explore new approaches to generating user engagement and research impact. This will include looking closely at promising practices developed in other organisations that could be adapted to the Faculty's particular situation. For example, after successful experiments in establishing framework agreements with organisations such as Cambridge International Examinations and the Bell Foundation, the Research Office will now extend this approach to a wider range of external partners, facilitating continuing research collaboration with them.

In addition, the Faculty will continue to support a range of networks which foster sustained engagement with professional users. In particular, several Faculty-organised networks have a direct focus on the diffusion of ideas and practices developed through research amongst schools and their teachers, primary and secondary, nationally and regionally. Well established networks of this type currently include those associated with the Cambridge Primary Review [CPR], Leadership for Learning [LfL], Cambridge, School Teachers and Research [CamSTAR], and the School-University Partnership for Educational Research [SUPER]. The Faculty also maintains a strong and close regional partnership with around 250 schools (some of which are Teaching Schools at the hub of more local professional networks) to provide research-informed initial teacher education and continuing professional development programmes.

Three current University and Faculty initiatives will create important further channels for achieving impact in coming years. Faculty researchers and projects will be encouraged to:

- Participate in the University pilot of an ESRC-funded Impact Acceleration Scheme to support activities such as user-led research, secondment to user organisations, and collaborative work with policy makers and professional leaders on policy challenges.
- Contribute to the Faculty's expanding international programmes of research-based educational development and associated teacher education, led by a Professor of International Education (who will take up this newly created position in 2014).
- Contribute to the programmes of research-based development in primary education to be provided by a new University Training School (expected to be established in 2015) under the leadership of a Clinical Professor (expected to be appointed in 2014 to this new post).

d. Relationship to case studies

While the submitted case studies have been chosen from a range of areas of research and have pursued appropriately tailored pathways to impact, they all reflect the successful operation of the overarching impact strategy described in the opening paragraph of the previous section.

CINDLE is an example of a project directly commissioned by an intermediary user organisation (Cambridgeshire County Council on behalf of its schools), providing a direct pathway to impact within the commissioning organisation itself; this, in turn, providing evidence and testimony of professional credibility and effectiveness on which wider indirect impact has been based.

RECOUP is an example of a project commissioned by a key intermediary organisation (the Department for International Development), giving access to their existing networks of user contacts and providing leverage, and often mechanisms, for wider dissemination and impact.

Student Voice is an example of more serendipitous wider international impact, arising principally from an aspect of the Faculty's research becoming recognised as world-leading, both in its conception and by virtue of the practical tools developed. Crucial here was the Faculty's capacity to respond to such interest and provide appropriate support for uptake by prospective users.

Finally, the Cambridge Primary Review set out to generate a high-profile national debate in its first phase, embedding a public relations professional in the project team. Equally, in its later phase, through building an extensive and well supported national network, it was deliberately designed to produce professional impact. This case shows how effective such strategies can be in gaining recognition for an ambitious comprehensive research synthesis, in securing engagement of the profession, and in leveraging influence on discussions of policy and practice.