

<p>Institution: UWE, Bristol</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: UoA25 Education</p>
<p>a. Context</p> <p>This Unit's work includes colleagues engaged in educational research across the University, research which primarily benefits learners and practitioners in a range of environments, e.g. students and teachers in early years, school, college, and university settings, and professional and vocational learning contexts. Some of our work is at the forefront of researching technology-enhanced pedagogic practice, the impact of which is felt by learners, business and wider society. We also achieve impact through influencing educational and related social policy. To enhance our impact we often adopt a collaborative approach to research, having long epitomised the increasing institutional focus throughout the period on applied, practice-led and theoretically-informed research. Although RAE 2008 and its predecessors did not formally assess impact outside academia, much of our work, including that showcased in the outputs submitted there, prioritised impact on policy makers and other stakeholders.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>At a national level, the Unit's research has impacted on a diverse range and significant number of highly influential policy documents as outlined below, including the Cambridge Review of primary education, Parliamentary reports on academy schools, in Baroness Sharp's Inquiry into the role of colleges in their communities, by submissions to a governmental panel on access to universities and on HEFCE's strategic funding priorities.</p> <p>Whilst it does not all feature as submitted outputs for this exercise, our work targets impact through specific knowledge transfer and exchange activities, and collaboration with stakeholders and communities locally, nationally and internationally. Via discussions with its users, we know our research changes behaviours, enhances life chances and informs policy debates. Examples include impact on cultural enrichment and diversity in particular local settings, (e.g. Tarr's work on community cohesion, and Harrison on multi-cultural HE classrooms), and nationally too (e.g. Andrews and Babayigit's research on language acquisition, and Attwood and Last's ESRC funded work on secondary pupils' educational dispositions). It also impacts in an international context (e.g. Harnett, Knight and Edmonds' EU funded project on the teaching of Engineering across Europe, and Kushner, Ahmed and Last's UNICEF commissioned work across parts of the developing world). UWE's education research can target specific practitioner groups (e.g. Pollard's work on inter-professional working in the healthcare sector, or Bovill's on work-based learners in HE; Harnett's and Smart's projects on history and citizenship educators across Europe; and Witt on maths' anxiety in primary classrooms), or particular sectors of the wider education system (e.g. Harnett's work on the Cambridge Review of the Primary Curriculum; Eke and Butcher on Early Years practice; Ryan and Last on schooling in Islamic communities, Everett on young learners in the post-compulsory sector, or Bradley and Waller on HE student experience). It impacts upon the wider economic prosperity of individuals, communities and organisations, e.g. Cook and Santos Rodriguez's European Framework 7 funded <i>Learning Layers</i> project, and high level international policy e.g. Andrews' AHRC funded (£1.5m) new collaborative project on multilingualism.</p> <p>The Unit's approach views public engagement as a means to share our research and broaden its impact. We achieve this through building sustainable relationships and high impact networks with partners and stakeholders. This impact can initially be a local one, e.g. Carter's reading project with partnership schools which improved many local young children's reading abilities. In such instances we seek to extend this impact's reach through regional and national networks, improving the practice of others thereby enhancing outcomes for their learners too. We are also collaborating nationally (e.g. Harrison's work with Sheffield's universities) and internationally through for instance the <i>Learning Layers</i> project with 17 partners from 7 countries. The benefits of this strategic approach are several-fold, including the development of trust and mutual respect to enhance research impact on wider communities – the unique systems of governance within schools working in partnership with UWE locally is a further example of this. Arising largely from the Higher Education Funding Council for England's commissioned <i>Bristol South and Four Cities</i> research projects in our impact case study, the work of Raphael Reed, Harrison, Croudace, Baxter and Last led to changes in how many schools are run through our extended partnerships with them, leading to significant impact upon school experiences and educational opportunities for young people, including improved examination outcomes and enhanced parental and community engagement. The Cabot Learning Federation (CLF), a nationally recognised federated academy of</p>

Impact template (REF3a)

6 secondary and 5 primary schools, works closely with UWE at a strategic institutional partnership level, and is structured and managed in part as a consequence of this research. Raphael Reed led this work and subsequently received a highly prestigious 12-month Leverhulme research fellow scholarship to undertake a follow-up study. The recognition of CLF Chief Executive Sir David Carter as a UWE Visiting Professor, and the embedding of our relationship through the Pro-Vice-Chancellor-led University Schools and College Partnership Service demonstrate the institutional importance attached to ensuring the impact of this work more widely. Our research on school governance has fed into numerous practitioner events and several significant policy documents including Michael Gove's 2012 and 2013 parliamentary review of academies, and the 2013 Universities UK report on widening participation in HE. The application of our research recommendations both in school governance structures across the region and in such important policy documents is as a consequence of our approach to impact, which seeks to directly engage policy makers to influence policy locally and nationally, and our preparedness within the UoA to target whichever fora facilitates the highest impact for our research. The Raphael Reed work for instance was presented to Local Authority (LA) leaders and head teachers across the region as part of a roll-out strategy, as well as the schools within the area where research was undertaken, as broadening its reach was considered strategically important.

Impact, whether through learning and teaching, community, public and employer engagement, is the Unit's top priority, driving our research approach at every level, and is articulated through our strategic aim 'to enhance our reputation for excellent research that has a positive impact on the economy and society'. This strategy is reflected in high profile projects locally (e.g. the Learning and Skills Council funded project evaluating Work Related Learning (WRL) in schools (James, Bathmaker and Waller)) which led to the development of WRL teaching aids widely adopted in the region; nationally (e.g. the recent ASDAN sponsored research into the impact of skills-led qualifications (Harrison, James and Last)); and internationally (e.g. Children's Literature Across Europe (Harnett, Carter and Butler)).

Using the ASDAN work as an example of how the Unit collaborates with the funding body in a joint approach to enhance impact, user engagement was achieved through the following means: A national 'road show' of dissemination events for head teachers and local authorities (200+ attendees); Workshop session for invited teachers, charities, LAs etc at the national EDGE Foundation conference (25 attendees); Invited seminar with teachers, charities, LAs etc at the Education and Employers Taskforce in London – 20 attendees (150+ online 'views'); Archiving in the DfE-sponsored Centre for Analysis of Youth Transitions repository of 'what works' in improving outcomes; and Citations in the new Institute for Public Policy Research report on vocational education. It was also central to ASDAN's submission to House of Commons *Education and a Curriculum for Life Select Committee*, to which Harrison was invited to give verbal evidence.

Similarly Thompson's input to the University Committee on the Education of Teachers (UCET) (Post-16) formed a key part of its response to the Government's 2012 *Lingfield Review* of teaching qualifications in the post-compulsory education sector. In addition to departmental support for undertaking the project in collaboration with City of Bristol College and UWE colleagues, Thompson receives financial and workload support to facilitate her engagement with UCET.

The recent re-launch of the Bristol Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning and Education (BRILLE), through which much of the Unit's research is channelled, presented an opportunity to overhaul its website, facilitating enhanced engagement with practitioners and potential collaborators, and we are currently further developing ways to monitor this and various forms of impact. As well as showcasing the Centre's work and membership, the site links visitors to the University repository, offering an access/dissemination point into our other research activities. In UoA25 we have responded to changes in social media enabling improved dissemination potential e.g. websites, RSS feeds, Twitter accounts etc., and are establishing mechanisms for measuring the impact of these and more 'traditional' forms of research dissemination.

c. Strategy and plans

BRILLE's strategic plans are focused towards ensuring high impact, and its recent division into three discrete areas facilitates the targeted involvement of external partners, further harnessing and focusing our work. Each thematic area is led by a senior researcher, and advised by a high profile external 'critical friend' with vast experience in the given field – including advice on how to enhance our research's impact.

The Unit's approach to ensuring impact is further exemplified by another recent project, Waller

Impact template (REF3a)

and Bradley's Leverhulme Trust funded *Paired Peers* study of the impact of social class on undergraduate student experiences at Bristol's two universities. The study enjoyed significant media coverage nationally and locally, and strategically exploited this public profile to gain access to influential groups and individuals including MPs, civil servants, policy makers including OFFA and HEFCE, and graduate employers' groups. In addition to traditional academic activities, Waller and Bradley presented their findings to UWE's *Social Science in the City* public engagement forum. Waller gave a keynote presentation on the research to a regional conference of A Level teachers, and the project team have addressed several other 'user' events, focusing upon education practitioners and industry. These include meetings with university admissions and widening participation staff regionally, and the influential *Brightside Trust Bridge Group*, who bring together educators, policy makers and graduate employers to promote social mobility through HE. The research team plans to impact on a significantly wider audience of potential undergraduates and their families with a 'lay' book on how the findings can inform decisions around university choices, and strategies to enhance students' prospects of securing employment upon graduation.

Over its duration the project held a successful 'local' (i.e. Bristol-based) dissemination event in its first year, aimed at teachers and careers advisors in school and colleges. The 2nd year 'regional' dissemination event primarily targeted HE staff including admissions tutors and widening participation practitioners. The 3rd year 'national' dissemination event (in London) launched the final report before an invited audience of over 70 influential people, including MPs, media, academics and HE policy makers including senior staff from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Higher Education Academy, Universities UK, Russell Group, Alliance Group, Million+ Group, Universities and Colleges Union, and National Union of Students.

The good practice exemplified within this project now informs impact-enhancing aspects of other work across the Unit as part of our future strategy. Examples include prioritising research leave for key individuals to both undertake activities aimed at enhancing the research's impact and build the Unit's wider 'impact culture'. We support colleagues at University and UoA level in bid writing to ensure they include clearly articulated pathways to impact, and are exploring how strategically we both enhance and evidence impact across our research.

UWE's commitment to ensuring research impact is reflected by our partnership with the University of Bristol in the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE), established in 2008 as part of the £9.2m Beacons for Public Engagement initiative from several funding councils. The NCCPE supports universities through promoting best practice in public engagement, providing a single point of contact for the whole sector. Although the Unit has had limited engagement with it to date, we are currently considering how best to make use of the resource NCCPE offers for enhancing our work's impact.

d. Relationship to case studies

The two case studies submitted demonstrate different aspects of our approach to impact:

Teaching and Learning Cultures in Further Education (TLC)

In common with other projects within the Unit, through its dissemination and engagement activities, this research strategically targeted both policy makers for, and providers of, further education (FE), influencing debates around key issues such as 'quality' and 'learning cultures' in those settings. Significant impact occurred upon government and funding body policy and a well received book was produced for practitioners. The research altered the content of several teacher training and staff CPD programmes across the sector. The strategic targeting of organisations such as the Association of Colleges (representing College Principals also impacted upon policy at an institutional level within FE. Later work including the *Paired Peers* project cited in section c sought to adopt similar approaches to ensuring impact as outlined above.

Youth participation in Post-compulsory Education in South Bristol/Four cities study

Impact here was sought and achieved through two strands: nationally by engaging with HEFCE and other government agency policies; and locally through strategically seeking to change school governance across Bristol and the wider region. Nationally impact was targeted initially to school managers locally, then rolled out to impact the national policy debate on the matter, as evidenced by its inclusion in parliamentary reports and other policy documentation. The success of these initiatives locally enabled the team to extend their impact and influence national educational debates, e.g. through engagement with individuals including MPs and organisations such as Universities UK, and through influencing HEFCE's approach to and priorities for research funding and in universities working with schools on a local level.