

Institution: University of Derby

Unit of Assessment: 25 'Education'

a. Context

The two education research centres within the School of Education at the University of Derby have a uniquely conscious and intentional approach to impact as their aims are to seek to transform contemporary attitudes to education and to career guidance at popular, professional, political and policy making levels. 'Impact' is, therefore, a defining feature of our research culture and not an afterthought. The two centres are the Centre for Educational Research (CER) which has existed in various incarnations since 1997 and the International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS) which was established in 1998.

The Phase of Accidental Impact (1997-2009)

As in most universities, prior to 2010 impact was dependent on research contracts and awards or the particular interests of research active individuals. Where that research had impact it was for the most part accidental rather than strategic. Two examples of individual researchers who had impact are:

1. (CER) Fiona Shelton who has published papers, book chapters and a successful co-authored book, *Effective Behaviour Management in the Primary School*. Maidenhead: Open University Press (2009) based on her research, and that of colleagues, into boys and challenging behaviour (see Shelton, F. (2008) *Too Cool For School*, in Holtz, O. (Ed) *Pedagogic Approaches to Teaching and Learning with Boys – A European Perspective*. Munich: Waxmann.) From 2008-2009 she worked as a Primary Advisor with the Curriculum Design and Implementation Team at the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, making a major contribution to the 2009 *Primary Curriculum Review*.
2. (iCeGS) Professor Tony Watts OBE who has carried out a number of comparative studies of guidance systems around the world, as well as acting as consultant to several transnational action projects. He has also been a consultant to various international organisations including the Council of Europe, the European Commission, OECD, UNESCO and the World Bank. From October 2001 to October 2002 he was a member of the OECD staff, working on a 14-country Career Guidance Policy Review; this has subsequently been extended through other bodies to cover 55 countries. His recent work has included a project for the European Training Foundation on career guidance in the Middle East, a review of Careers Services in New Zealand, and a review of Careers Services in Wales for the Welsh Assembly Government.

The Phase of Conscious Impact (2010 – Present)

With the appointment of new heads to CER and iCeGS in autumn 2009 more strategic approaches to impact were adopted within both Centres.

The Centre for Educational Research (CER) built on research work by engaging in a variety of national debates consciously aiming to transform educational thought, policy-making and practice in education in order to challenge the therapeutic turn in in all sectors of education and to defend a subject-based curriculum.

The International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS) had a research focus on the development, on-going reform and ultimate closure of the Connexions service. The Centre published numerous policy analyses and other research studies investigating the direction of government careers policy relating to Connexions and wider youth careers services. Since 2010 the Centre's research has addressed a range of themes associated with the changes that have been made within a volatile sector. The aim was to build a sustained and critical engagement with the policies that are being pursued by the present government.

Impact template (REF3a)

b. Approach to impact

The new approach to impact in both Centres was not merely to present research findings but to engage in debate and discussion with political and policy making organisations, think tanks, professional bodies and trade unions and to reach a public audience through direct use of the national and international press, radio and television and social media.

Two recent and major indicators of successful engagement were:

In 2012, Professor Dennis Hayes, the Head of CER, was chosen by the Mayor of London to serve on the panel of the **Mayor's Education Inquiry** to find ways to improve the standards of education of London's children and young people. He was one of eight members of the Inquiry team which explored the critical challenges facing London's primary and secondary schools. Hayes was the only academic and the only person outside of the London region to be appointed to the Inquiry. Extensive research including a major consultation, data analysis, a survey of secondary school teachers, evidence hearings and symposia took place between February and October 2012. The outcome was a delivery plan through a **London Schools Challenge Fund** of over £24m.

In 2012 Dr Tristram Hooley, the Head of iCeGS, was appointed a specialist adviser to the **Education Committee Inquiry into Career Guidance for Young People**. Their report *Careers Guidance For Young People: The Impact Of The New Duty On Schools* (2013) found that the Government's policy on career guidance has been regrettable, and led to a decline in the quantity and quality of career guidance for young people. Evidence gathered by iCeGS from research sources showed that devolving responsibility to schools without providing strong support will inexorably lead to a decline in the provision of career guidance. Implementation of the Committee's proposals would strengthen the delivery of career education and guidance by tightening the government's guidance to schools and providing enhanced support from the National Careers Service.

Given below is an indicative list of conscious interventions by researchers from the two centres:

- International engagement with careers developments in Sri Lanka (contributing to the Education for Knowledge Society Project funded by the Asia Development Bank in 2011); Europe (providing expertise to the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network) and Canada (meetings with key provincial policy makers in New Brunswick, Ontario and Alberta);
- Discussions with the Minister of State for Schools, policy advisors and GLA officials;
- Meetings with BIS officials and civil servants and representatives of government departments and agencies (HEFCE, Skills Funding Agency, UKCES etc.);
- Discussions, seminars, conferences and publications involving major trade unions (SCETT 2009 -2013);
- Discussions, seminars and publications with think tanks and charities open to a wide network of teachers, educationalists and parents (i.e. *Institute of Ideas Education Forum; Real Action*);
- A series of press articles and media appearances (*The Guardian; The Independent; Spiked*; National and Local Radio; International TV) ;
- Use of social media and blogs.

c. Strategy and plans

The strategy of sustained critical engagement through debate and discussion at national and international level will be continued through a new School of Education Research Strategy (June 2013) which will see an increased focus on more specific areas of impact. For example:

- (1) The CER will focus on and understanding and critique of recent changes in higher education.

Impact template (REF3a)

One aspect of this will be to examine whether the 'therapeutic university' is a reality and how this is reflected in the following: university management strategies around the world; the notion of the student as consumer; 'innovative' approaches to learning and teaching and, in particular, to the changing role of the academic and attitudes to academic freedom.

(2) A central future focus for iCeGS will be to extend the sustained critical engagement about career guidance to work with school teachers and those engaged in workplace and lifelong learning. This will involve a more focussed approach to research bidding and contracting in order to maximise impact.

d. Relationship to case studies***Relationship to case studies***

The case studies are examples of how the two centres consciously engage in a variety of contexts and at different levels to achieve their aims to bring about changes to educational thought and practice, and to careers provision.

The CER case study develops one aspect of the critique of the therapeutic turn in education: the creation of a 'diminished self' through a 'dual attack' on the subject - first, an attack on the human subject as a knowing subject by emphasising emotions over the intellect; and, second, by attacking the traditional subject-based curriculum through which knowledge is transmitted.

The iCeGS case study shows the impact of a sustained critical engagement with policy makers and professionals to support the development of national and international careers and guidance services that are based on research evidence rather than being politically and ideologically driven.