Institution: Queen's University Belfast

Unit of Assessment: 32 Philosophy

Title of case study: Philosophy, Citizenship and Schools

1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

Sustained research on citizenship issues by Professor David Archard and Dr Jeremy Watkins has:

- Provided the intellectual content for a Philosophy for Citizenship course which has been undertaken by hundreds of children in schools across Northern Ireland since its inception in January, 2012;

- Improved children's intellectual and interpersonal skills by promoting better quality reasoning, listening and oral communication;

and,

- Delivered a sustainable model of citizenship education that is particularly tailored to the needs of post-conflict societies and that has been embedded in a number of teacher training courses in Northern Ireland.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

The challenge of promoting responsible citizenship in post-conflict societies is complicated by the need to find an effective way of dealing with the legacies of the past whilst at the same time promoting forward-looking goals, such as reconciliation, democratic participation, and respect for rights. The research undertaken by Professor Archard and Dr Watkins sheds light on both aspects of this challenge, bringing together insights on themes such as responsibility, reparations and forgiveness with normative claims concerning civic status, autonomy and democracy.

Watkins' research (Watkins, 2009, 2011; Crawford and Watkins, 2010), which has been crucial in developing the Philosophy for Citizenship course, has concentrated on two questions which are particularly relevant to responsible citizenship in post-conflict societies, namely (1) how should such societies address the legacies of mass violence and human rights violations, and (2) what principles, if any, should be used to apportion blame.

In his response to the first of these questions, Watkins has sought to develop a pluralistic approach that acknowledges a place for norms of retribution and reparation whilst at the same time stressing the value of forgiveness both as a self-standing virtue and as a means of promoting civic reconciliation. Among the insights which have emerged from his work has been a clearer account of the forms of conditionality to which forgiveness is subject: against the prevailing orthodoxy, he has argued that forgiveness can be justified in the absence of perpetrator acknowledgement so long as the perpetrator is amenable to future relationships which are based on respect and non-violence.

His approach to the second question is motivated by his opposition to an overly abstract way of theorising about collective responsibility. Many of those who write on this subject assume that there is a binary choice between blaming groups for past violence or blaming individuals. Against this opposition, Watkins argues that there isn't a single set of metaphysical facts about responsibility that determines the level at which blame should be assigned but, rather, a number of practical paradigms that permit a differentiated approach towards responsibility. In Crawford and Watkins (2010), for example, he argues that groups should sometimes be blamed for past violence under a 'civil law' paradigm of responsibility but not under a 'criminal law' paradigm.

Archard's contribution to the Philosophy for Citizenship project has been through his research on autonomy, democracy, civic membership and the family. In his recent publications on these subjects (Archard, 2013a and 2013b), he has been concerned with the 'best interests' principle, especially as it bears on public policy issues concerning the treatment of children. He has sought to clarify the nature of this principle and to consider its relation to other regulative ideals, such as the public good, the rights of parents and the autonomy of children. In his work on 'dirty hands', Archard has also explored the extent to which all citizens within a democracy may be complicit in the evil done by their elected leaders, thus illuminating the issue of political responsibility.

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

Archard, D. (2013a), 'Children, Adults, Best Interests and Rights,' *Medical Law International,* 13 (1): 55-74.
Contribution to international peer-reviewed journal.

Archard, D. (2013b), 'Dirty Hands and the Complicity of the Democratic Public,' *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 16 (4): 777-790.
Contribution to international peer-reviewed journal.

Crawford, J. and Watkins, J. (2010), 'International Responsibility', in Samantha Besson and John Tasioulas (eds.), *The Philosophy of International Law* (Oxford University Press)*:* 283-298.
Co-authored chapter in peer-reviewed volume.

Watkins, J. (2009), 'The Conditional Case for Unconditional Forgiveness', in Stephen Bloch-Schulman and David White (eds.), *Forgiveness: Probing the Boundaries* (Inter-disciplinary Press): 31-8.
Chapter in invited volume with international contributors.

Watkins, J. (2011), 'Matching Well-Being to Merit', *Ethical Perspectives,* 18 (1):5-27.
Contribution to international peer-reviewed journal.

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

The need for high-quality citizenship education in Northern Ireland is made all-the-more acute by the recent history of violence, sectarianism and alienation from the political process. As part of the broader challenge of the peace process, it is clearly important to ensure that young people have the skills and knowledge needed to play a constructive part in civil society. The work of Archard and Watkins is therefore of particular benefit because it provides a model of citizenship education that is specially suited to the needs of post-conflict societies. Through its application in schools across Northern Ireland, it has helped hundreds of children to develop their skills in listening, reasoning and constructive dialogue and to acquire a better understanding of issues surrounding democracy, rights and dealing with the past.

The roots of this impact go back to Watkins' research on responsibility and punishment. In 2010 and 2011, Watkins gave a series of talks on this research to Northern Irish schools. Following on from the success of these talks together with his growing interest in the philosophy for children ('p4c') movement, he was inspired to develop a suite of learning resources that harnessed together his own research on citizenship issues with the collaborative, enquiry-based pedagogy that is characteristic of p4c.

The resulting 'Philosophy for Citizenship' course has since been enriched by the addition of extra learning resources based on Archard's research. In its current form, it has been delivered in person by members of the Queen's Philosophy Unit to approximately 360 children across 12 classes in 5 schools. To extend its reach further, it has also been the subject of three specially-devised teacher training courses which have been attended by 51 representatives from both

primary and secondary schools across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

As a result of these activities, Archard and Watkins' research has delivered various important benefits. First and foremost, it has helped those children who've attended the course to develop their intellectual and interpersonal skills and to come to a better understanding of citizenship issues in post-conflict societies. Paul Carswell, Principal of St Bride's Primary School, Belfast, explains:

> 'We have run the Philosophy for Citizenship course for the past two years in six of our P7 classes (approximately 180 children). The course has been of tremendous value to the children. It has been extremely valuable in developing thinking, listening and interpersonal skills. One activity which generated a lot of discussion was when children were given a statement 'Who would you forgive?' and had to justify their responses and reach agreement as a group. These kind of moral dilemma activities add real value to the curriculum.'

In a similar vein, Elizabeth Smith, Headmistress of Sullivan Upper School Prep Department, Holywood, comments:

> 'We have hosted the Philosophy for Citizenship course for the past two years. Archard and Watkins' work has given the children an important insight into philosophical issues surrounding citizenship. Aside from developing their understanding of questions concerning fairness, responsibility and dealing with the past, it has also had an impact on their ability to work together, negotiate and reason.'

Secondly, the research has had an impact on the classroom practice of those teachers who've attended one of the training courses. Of the 15 teachers surveyed following the most recent course in June, 2013, everyone agreed that it would make a positive difference to their subsequent teaching. Ciara Lynch, a primary school teacher from St. Seachnall's National School, Co. Meath, remarks: 'The training course was excellent. The teaching resource pack was very helpful. I am trying to use all of these materials in my teaching'. Sarah Wright, a teacher at Victoria Prep School, Belfast, writes: 'The Philosophy for Citizenship course has not only improved my class's listening and communication skills, but it has also inspired me to use some of the course materials and ideas elsewhere in my teaching – for example, as part of drama lessons.'

Thirdly, it has had an impact on broader curriculum design. Although obtaining top-down support for a new subject is an extremely slow process, the work has already attracted the attention of the Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). Alan McMurray, Education Manager at the CCEA comments: 'It is worth considering how the Philosophy for Citizenship initiative can be further developed as part of the NI citizenship curriculum'. At the grassroots level, too, a number of teachers have been motivated to press for philosophy within their schools. Vera McClenaghan, a teacher at Hazelwood Integrated Primary School, Newtownabbey, writes that, 'as a result of the training course, I am trying to build philosophy into my timetable on a weekly basis', and Paul Taggart, a politics teacher at Sacred Heart Grammar School, Newry, comments that 'due to Archard and Watkins' work, I am pressing my senior colleagues to include philosophy as part of our "Learning for Life and Work" programme'.

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

1. The QUB Philosophy, Citizenship and Schools website, setting out details of the initiatives above, including a sample of Philosophy for Citizenship course materials, photographs, comments from participants, and relevant links: http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/PhilosophyCitizenshipandSchools/

2. Feedback forms from teachers who hosted a Philosophy for Citizenship course.

3. Feedback forms from children who participated in a Philosophy for Citizenship course.

4. Feedback from teachers who attended a Philosophy for Citizenship teacher training course.

5. St Bride's Primary School, Belfast.

6. Sullivan Upper School Prep Department, Holywood.

7. The Philosophy Man Ltd, Essex.

8. Sacred Heart Grammar School, Newry.

9. Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment, Northern Ireland.