THE IMPACT AWARDS 09 – PUBLIC POLICY AND SERVICE IMPACT AWARD

Joint Winner - The University of Liverpool, IMPACT (the International Health Impact Assessment Consortium and IMPACT+)

Background

IMPACT, the International Health Impact Assessment Consortium (www.healthimpactassessment.org.uk), is a self-financing unit within the University of Liverpool's Division of Public Health.

IMPACT's mission is to improve health and reduce health inequalities by advancing Health Impact Assessment (HIA) nationally and internationally. HIA is combination of procedures, methods and tools which allow wide-ranging health programmes to be assessed and measured which then inform planning and decision-making.

IMPACT pursues its mission through R&D, education, training and consultancy.

Knowledge transfer

As a centre of HIA research excellence, IMPACT has sought to transfer this knowledge and build capacity for HIA in the public sector.

In 2004-05 IMPACT was approached by dozens of public and private sector organisations needing a HIA consultancy service, as few commercial operations had the expertise required. Since IMPACT's research had influenced the policy initiatives generating this demand, it sought to capitalise on its expertise by setting up a commercial consultancy and training service, IMPACT+, to operate alongside IMPACT in the Division of Public Health.

In view of the predicted increase in demand for HIA consultancy arising from new national and international legislative and policy drivers, this initiative was championed and assisted by the University's Research & Business Services. The business plan for IMPACT+ attracted £127,000 in pump-priming funding from the University's Higher Education Innovation Fund. IMPACT+ was launched in April 2006.
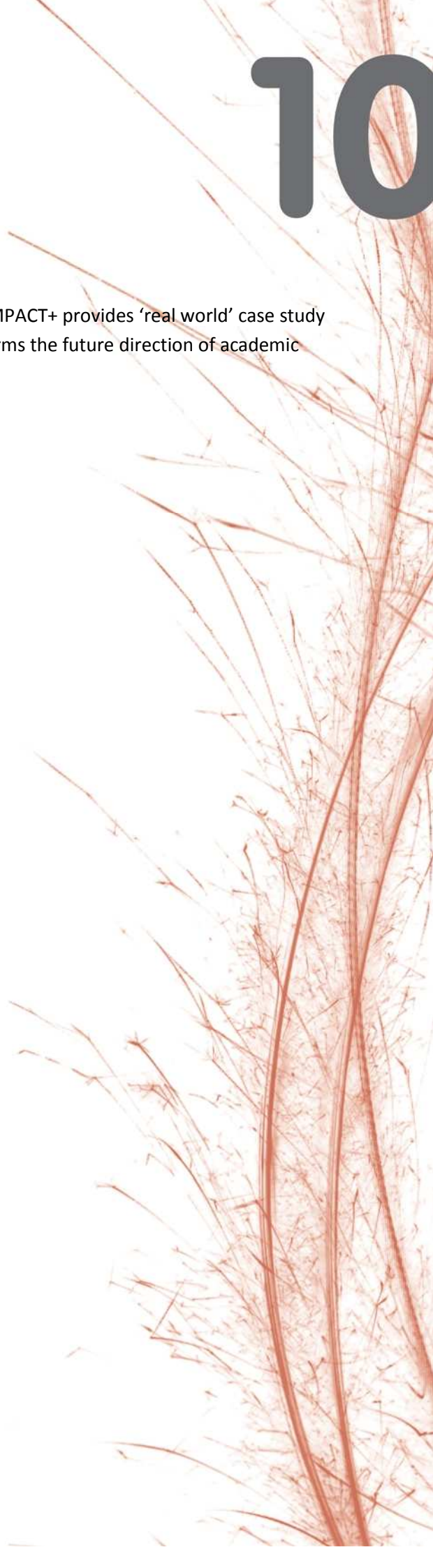
Impact

At the time of The Impact Awards 09, IMPACT+ was still the only dedicated service provider in England whose staff could systematically draw on the findings of advanced HIA research carried out by academic colleagues working beside them – ensuring that private and public sector clients benefitted from the latest knowledge, methodologies and tools. The HIA Gateway register shows that IMPACT/IMPACT+ have delivered nearly half of the HIAs undertaken in England.

THE IMPACT AWARDS

The engagement has many benefits since consultancy undertaken by IMPACT+ provides 'real world' case study material for students, attracts contract research commissions, and informs the future direction of academic research.

THE IMPACT AWARDS 09 – PUBLIC POLICY AND SERVICE IMPACT AWARD

Joint Winner – Sancton Wood School/Anglia Ruskin University, The Learning Needs Profiler©

Background

Diagnosing dyslexia in a child requires an assessment by an educational psychologist. This assessment, passed to the school, is comprehensive but lengthy. These reports are often only used to alert the school to the fact that a child has a dyslexia diagnosis which results in standard treatment. However, the growing consensus is that each dyslexic child will have their own unique combination of processing problems, which means that one size does not fit all in terms of appropriate treatment. Teachers are faced with two problems in tailoring interventions to individual children. Firstly, a diagnosis of dyslexia is so broad that it does not clearly identify the specific problems encountered by any individual child. Secondly, having identified the specific problems to be treated, it is very difficult for teachers to obtain clear evidence concerning the effectiveness of the many available intervention treatments.

The Learning Needs Profiler (LNP)© developed in close collaboration between the University and the School provides a tool for converting the complex information contained in an educational psychologist's report into an easy-to-interpret 'Learning Needs Profile' and links identified issues to systematically reviewed interventions.

The key innovation is the large amount of complex, expert knowledge embedded in the product in a way that makes it readily accessible to non-experts, allowing them to create a customised programme of intervention for each child. The Intellectual Property is shared equally between Sancton Wood School and Anglia Ruskin University.

Knowledge transfer

The Learning Needs Profiler (LNP)© is the culmination of a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) between Anglia Ruskin University and Sancton Wood School. The collaboration was driven by the recognition that much scientific research in the area of dyslexia was not being effectively applied in the education of dyslexic children.

The partnership has been coordinated by the KTP research associate in the school working in close collaboration with the school's Managing Director and the Head of Psychology at Anglia Ruskin University.

Impact

The LNP© has the potential to revolutionise the treatment of dyslexia in the UK where previous treatments had tended to reduce this complex syndrome down to one of several core deficits (e.g. phonological processing, visual stress, etc.). However, this ignores the huge diversity within the population of dyslexic readers and rather than ignoring the complexity of dyslexia, the LNP© enables teachers to embrace this complexity and respond to it effectively, leading to much more effective interventions, since these will be tailored to each individual child's actual needs.

An estimated 5-10% of the population in the UK are dyslexic, and this disability can act as a real barrier for these people in achieving their full potential, and making their full contribution to society. This project has the potential to enhance the lives of a very large number of people, leading to great improvements in their quality of life, career prospects, opportunities for growth, and, by freeing their potential, to provide huge benefits for society generally. The project has also helped to maintain the financial security of the school.