

**Impact template (REF3a)**

<p><b>Institution:</b> York St John University</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 29 (English Language and Literature)</p>
<p><b>a. Context</b></p> <p>The diverse research represented in this UoA is part of a long tradition at York St John University of serving the educational and creative needs of individuals and groups outside our subject area. The English language plays a key role in individual and societal development on a global level, and our research has a significant impact on a broad spectrum of uses of the language in education and society more generally.</p> <p>An important user group is the educational sector, where English serves as a medium for, an object of, and sometimes an obstacle to, learning and teaching. We use our research to respond to the needs of students from primary to higher education, both native and non-native speakers, and to inform teaching practice and educational policy for and through language. Users of our research are, then, students and teachers who use English for educational, creative, professional and communicative purposes, as well as educational policy-makers, private providers and charities, and other language professionals. The application of our research is concerned especially with the needs of less advantaged and marginalised students, from a variety of backgrounds, both in the UK and abroad.</p> <p>A second non-academic user group where our research and creative outputs have major impact is the general reading and writing public. They benefit through participating in creative writing workshops, attending performances and readings, and reading our literary works.</p> <p>Not only do our outputs make important contributions to theoretical and critical understanding of the English language, they also produce or underpin impacts of the kind exemplified below.</p>
<p><b>b. Approach to impact</b></p> <p><i>Partners</i></p> <p>Researchers in the Unit have forged meaningful relationships and durable interactions with key partners outside academia. They engage with research users through participation in, and/or collaboration with, various non-academic organisations, including professional groups, charitable trusts, and government agencies. Examples include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr Anne-Marie <b>Evans</b>' work as Lead Researcher in Literature for the Villiers Park Educational Trust, where she has incorporated her research on American literature into the Online Extension Activities Learning Project, as part of the Trust's efforts to enable school pupils from less advantaged backgrounds to aspire to, and gain access to, English courses at university. She designs and manages two to three research-informed residential courses at Villiers Park each year, with an average attendance of 25 pupils from across the UK.</li> <li>• Dr Helen <b>Sauntson</b>'s continuing research (begun at the University of Birmingham) on sexuality discourses in Birmingham and York secondary schools. Dr Sauntson has liaised with Stonewall, the NUT and Birmingham Youth Services and her research has helped to inform their anti-homophobic bullying initiatives.</li> <li>• Dr Abi <b>Curtis</b>' collaboration with artists and curators at the Natural History Museum, where her poetry challenges the boundaries of learning and teaching, both of creative writing and other subjects, such as engineering (see <i>Creative Writing</i> case study).</li> <li>• The work of Clare <b>Cunningham</b> (formerly Wardman) on Additional Language (EAL) provision and home language support with members of the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (see case study <i>Applying 'plurilithic' concepts</i>).</li> <li>• The sharing of research by Professor Gweno <b>Williams</b>, Dr Rachel <b>Wicaksono</b>, and Dr Sarah <b>Lawson-Welsh</b> (submitting outputs in UoA 36) on the teaching of English language and literature at the HE level through various HEA subject centres, contributing to the development and dissemination of new approaches to English teaching, and teaching through English, in postcolonial, globalising, and new technology contexts. For example, Wicaksono received a £6500 grant from HEA for the development of her online <i>ELF Tutorial</i> (see case study <i>Applying 'plurilithic' concepts</i>).</li> </ul>

## Impact template (REF3a)

- Regular invited papers by Wicaksono, Cunningham, and Hall on the pedagogical applications of their research to EFL teachers at international professional conferences and British Council events (see case study *Applying 'plurilithic' concepts*).
- Writing and broadcasting on global Englishes by Wicaksono for the BBC World Service 'Learning English' website (her videos have been viewed over 12,380 times).
- Continuing engagement by Laura **Joyce** on the Global Queer Cinema project, begun at the University of Sussex. The project includes collaborations with MIX Festival NYC, the BFI London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival and Kashish Queer Film Festival, Mumbai, in addition to work with queer community groups and activists.

*Public readings*

Our creative writers engage with the wider community through their links to festivals and community events. The creative prose writer Naomi **Booth** has been an invited contributor at Quick Fictions, the Brighton Digital Festival, and Hanover Action for Sustainable Living events. The poets Dr J.T. **Welsch** and Curtis have strong links with various festivals including Bridlington, York, London Fringe, First Fictions and Stanza, through performing readings and giving workshops. Welsch, for example, serves on the committee running the Poets & Players reading series, bringing together poets and musicians for regular, Arts Council-funded events in the Whitworth Gallery in Manchester. Joyce has engaged with the wider community through readings and events including Quick Fictions in Brighton, and the Bloomsbury Literary Festival based at Waterstones in Gower Street, Bloomsbury. Williams regularly chairs literary events and interviews writers for the Ilkley Literature Festival, the Bronte Society Haworth and the York Literature Festival.

*Online presence*

The UoA's creative writers have a strong online readership through e-publication, e.g. on the Salt Modern Voices site, which Welsch helped to set up. Booth, Curtis and Joyce have all contributed short fiction to the innovative iPhone and iPad app *Quick Fictions*. The app is among the *Sunday Times* top 500 apps, and the top ten for books. Evans has developed online activities for school pupils on the basis of her research (the website hits on the Villiers Park YouTube channel for these activities records – as of August 2013 – 1462 hits in the last twelve months). Hall and Wicaksono have developed a website ([www.mapping.com](http://www.mapping.com)) to provide language professionals, students and academic applied linguistics professionals with a common forum for community support and development (with over 4,500 unique visitors from September 2012 to the end of July 2013), as well as online resources for teachers and students to raise their awareness of diversity in global Englishes (see case study *Applying 'plurilithic' concepts*).

*Institutional support*

In order to maximise the impact of their research and creative work, engagement with all these external groups by UoA members has been supported and enabled by institutional funding for attendance at performances, readings, workshops, professional conferences, and other events held outside of the university. Funds are distributed on the basis of business plans which have clear impact strategies, and procedures for allocation of internal funding for specific projects include a requirement for the specification of an effective impact strategy. A concrete example of institutional support for the enabling of impact is the University's agreement to create and maintain Hall and Wicaksono's online course for English teachers.

**c. Strategy and plans**

One of the University's key strategic objectives for 2012-2015 is to "[e]ngage with and influence users of research, locally, nationally, and internationally." Consistent with this objective, the English Literature and Creative Writing team and their English Language partners in LIdIA will continue to forge strong links with practising writers, prominent public festivals, professional organisations, and other agencies. Staff will continue to be supported by being given: (a) additional time allocation in the work planning model for research and the achievement of impact; and (b) continued financial support for activities which involve travel.

We are developing a strategy to incorporate potential impact as a central factor in future research by UoA members and partners. This strategy embraces:

## Impact template (REF3a)

- the organisation of workshops and talks focusing on impact (the first of these, a presentation entitled *Storytelling: A focus for impact in the teaching/research interface* by Prof. Sali Tagliamonte [University of Toronto] was organised by LIdIA in 2013);
- research users' attendance at, and involvement in, events organised by the UoA;
- the consolidation of existing relationships, and the establishment and nurturing of new relationships, with partners outside academia, in order to engage more fully with users;
- expansion of our existing networks of non-academic partners in: (a) allied language professions; (b) professional and governmental organisations; (c) schools; and (d) other countries around the world;
- vigorous efforts to bring our work to a greater number of non-academic users through: publishing houses with a broader reach; professional agents for the promotion and dissemination of creative outputs; and greater online presence through professionally-developed websites.

These strategies build on foundations already established during this census period and that of RAE 2008, as the following paragraphs illustrate.

A strong relationship with secondary schools had by 2008 been developed by the English Language team, guided by then Head of Subject Professor Angela Goddard. Contact with schools continues, for example through Cunningham's work on EAL provision. In the Creative Writing team, Welsch and Curtis have vigorous support from their publisher, Salt, who have a strong web-presence, organise readings and events, and produce both hard copy and e-versions of their publications. The growing international reach of our impact will build on current relationships, including those of Evans and Hall with in North America (the USA and Mexico) and Hall, Cunningham, and Wicaksono's collaboration with the British Council.

We are also keen to expand the impact of our work among language professionals who work with English, especially translators, interpreters and speech language therapists. Dr Andrew **Merrison** is currently working with practising interpreters in a project which will benefit BSL/English interpreters. An ECR specialising in children with reading disabilities, Dr Leesa **Clarke**, has been appointed on a 0.5 contract as part of this initiative. Hall and Wicaksono's *mapping.com* website is aimed at language practitioners from a range of areas, including translators and interpreters and speech language therapists, as well as students. UoA members plan to develop these relationships through involvement with professional organisations and expanded online presence, using *mapping.com* and the new outward-facing LIdIA website.

#### d. Relationship to case studies

The case studies reflect the two major areas of impact deriving from the outputs represented in this UoA: (a) learning and teaching of and through English; and (b) creative writing in English.

The *Applying 'plurilithic' concepts* case study exemplifies the work of colleagues in the UoA who use their research on language learning and use to inform and support educational professionals in their teaching and student support practices and policies. In accord with the approach sketched in section 2, Hall, Cunningham, and Wicaksono have established strong relationships with professional organisations, in order to raise awareness about teaching philosophies and practices on the basis of empirical and metatheoretical research. They have also sought to reach a wider audience through speaking to practitioners in international forums, and applying their research in online resources with a global reach.

The *Impact of Creative Writing* case study is representative of UoA members' engagement with the wider community of readers and audiences for poetry and other forms of creative writing through workshops and festivals where Curtis has performed and taught, and relationships with other institutions, which have resulted in both a creative output through a poetry collection, and educational impact in the scientific community. The print and on-line reviews of her poetry demonstrate a strong, positive impact on a poetry readership. Curtis' two theoretical papers have had a direct impact on her own creative, poetic outputs, but have also impacted upon approaches to creative writing teaching.