

Institution: Teesside University
Unit of Assessment: 29, English Language and Literature
Title of case study: Developing the Teaching of Creative Writing
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>This impact relates to the development of Creative Writing within school and University curricula and has three elements. Firstly, this research has played a leading role in the development of new conceptual frameworks and innovative methodologies for the teaching of Creative Writing within English Literature University curricula within the UK and beyond. Secondly, this research has made a key contribution to the development and implementation of innovative models of professional development for teachers of English Literature and Creative Writing in Further and Higher Education. Finally, this research has changed the profile of Creative Writing as an academic discipline by informing the development of new national UK frameworks for the teaching of Creative Writing in schools and University, including the development of new A Level specifications.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>This impact is informed by a body of academic research developed by Professor Ben Knights and Dr Chris Thurgar-Dawson and disseminated through single and co-authored publications in the form of monographs, chapters in edited collections and articles in peer-reviewed journals. Knights was Professor of English and Cultural Studies at Teesside University from 1995-2011. Knights was awarded a National Teaching Fellowship in 2001 to undertake the <i>Active Reading</i> project. From August 2003 to July 2011 Knights was seconded as the Director of the Higher Education Academy English Subject Centre. He has been a Professor Emeritus at Teesside University since July 2011. Thurgar-Dawson was appointed a National Teaching Fellow Research Assistant at Teesside University from 2001-2003 and is currently Senior Lecturer in English (2003 to date) and MA Creative Writing Programme Leader.</p> <p>The research underpinning the impact represented in this case study is longstanding; it has been undertaken in a range of contexts (both national and international and in schools and universities) and employs innovative research methodologies. Knights has played a leading role in the work of the Development of University English Teaching Project (founded in 1980 to promote the professional development of teachers in Higher Education), the National Association for the Teaching of English (which works to promote standards of excellence in the teaching of English and to support professional development through access to current research and publications) and the National Association of Writers in Education (the Subject Association for Creative Writing, which produced the first Benchmark Statement for Creative Writing in 2008). This research has employed innovative practice-based methodologies, including action research, and has demonstrated the value and benefits of experiential learning in both pedagogic and professional development contexts. This research investigates a number of related concerns including the relationship between creativity and professional development (Knights, <i>The Listening Reader</i>, 1995), the role of experiential learning in Higher Education (Knights, "Group Processes", 1995) and the relationship between critical and creative reading practices in the teaching of English Literature (Knights, "Creative Reading", 1995). These concerns are synthesised and developed in an original book project which investigates the role of creativity in the development of English Literature as an academic discipline with a focus on the role of creative writing (Knights and Thurgar-Dawson, <i>Active Reading</i>, 2006). This research examines the historical, critical and policy contexts which have shaped the evolution of English Literature in Higher Education. More specifically, it examines the development of University English since the 1990s in the context of the expansion of Higher Education, the increasing diversity of student cohorts and innovations in learning and teaching practice. This research investigates the relationship between 'critical' and 'creative' writing and examines the benefits of synthesising creative and critical practice; it provides innovative pedagogic methodologies, including the practice of 'transformative writing', designed to foster</p>

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models of learning characterised by active production rather than passive consumption. This research was further disseminated in international contexts through the co-editing (with King) of *Anglo-American Pedagogy: Special Issue of Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition and Culture*. 7:3 (Fall 2007) 321-576) and through chapters published in an edited collection published by the University of Warsaw (Knights, "Teaching and Writing as Complementary Processes," 2008).

3. References to the research**Books**

1. Knights, Ben. *The Listening Reader: Fiction and Poetry for Counsellors and Psychotherapists*. London: Jessica Kingsley, 1995. [Available on request].
2. Knights, Ben and Chris Thurgar-Dawson. *Active Reading: Transformative Writing in Literary Studies*. London: Continuum, 2006. [Available on request].

Chapters in edited collections

3. Knights, Ben. "Creative Reading." *The Teaching of Literature in Adult Education*. Ed. Peter Preston. Nottingham: Nottingham University Department of Adult Education 1995. [Available on request].
4. Knights, Ben. "Teaching and Writing as Complementary Processes." *DUET Encounters*. Ed. Małgorzata Gregorzewska and Aniela Korzeniowska. Warsaw: Institute of English Studies, University of Warsaw, 2008. [Available on request].

Articles in Peer-Reviewed Journals

5. Knights, Ben. "Group Processes in Higher Education: the Uses of Theory." *Studies in Higher Education* 20:2 (1995) 135-46. [Available on request].
6. Knights, Ben. "The Text and the Group." *Developing University English Teaching*. Ed. Colin Evans. Edwin Mellen Press, 1995. [Available on request].

Active Reading: Transformative Writing in Literary Studies is stocked in 567 public, national and University libraries in 50 countries in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe and North and South America [WorldCat.org].

4. Details of the impact

This research has benefitted individuals and professional communities and effected changes in policy-making in the Further and Higher education sectors in relation to the teaching of English Literature and Creative Writing. It has had a formative impact on the significant expansion of Creative Writing. The number of UK HEIs offering undergraduate programmes in Creative Writing through UCAS has more than doubled between 2003 (29 HEIs) and 2013 (70 HEIs) [5:1]. HESA returns indicate a dramatic increase in the numbers of students enrolled on Creative Writing courses at undergraduate level (from 59 in 1994-5 to 3,010 in 2011-12) and at postgraduate level (from 73 in 1994-5 to 1,078 in 2011-12) [5:2]. The impact of this research has taken a number of forms: it has promoted the development of creative methodologies for the teaching of English Literature within the context of cross sector professional communities; it has supported and enhanced the professional development of academic practitioners in the field of English literature, both at Further and Higher Education levels, in the UK and abroad; it has contributed to the integration of Creative Writing into national A Level curricula. Knights's appointment as Director of the Higher Education Academy English Subject Centre (2003-2011) facilitated a national and international programme of research and dissemination in relation to the development of Creative Writing as a discipline.

This research has contributed to the development of creative methodologies for the teaching of English Literature; papers, workshops and conference panels delivered in professional development contexts have served to promote innovative practice across the education sector. Knights has presented the following papers and workshops: "Intelligence and interrogation: the identity of the English student" (*Subject Centre International Conference*, 2003); "Writing as learning" (*Institute for Learning and Teaching Northern Regional Forum*, 2003); "Writing as professional development" (*Institute for Learning and Teaching Annual Conference*, 2002); "Reading, writing and retention" (*Institute for Learning and Teaching Northern Regional Forum*,

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2001); "Talking texts: learning as dialogue" (*Institute for Learning and Teaching Annual Conference*, 2000). A series of workshops on "Creative - Critical Crossovers" at *Renewals: Refiguring University English in the 21st Century* (Royal Holloway, July 2007) were convened by Knights and provided a forum for professional practitioners from a range of Universities (including Bangor, Bath Spa, Hertfordshire, Oxford, Royal Holloway, Sheffield, Southampton, University College London) to further develop innovative pedagogic practices in relation to creativity in the English curriculum. The publication of research-informed features in journals for professional associations for teachers in both Further and Higher Education has informed ongoing professional development: Knights, "The Implied Aesthetic of English Teaching" (*WordPlay: the English Subject Centre Newsletter*, April 2010); Knights, "Reading, Writing, and 'Doing English': Creative-Critical Approaches to Literature" (*English Drama Media*, the journal of the *National Association for the Teaching of English*, 12 October 2008); Thurgar-Dawson, "Transformative Writing: Re-creating the literary text" (*Emag: The Magazine for Advanced Level English*, 41 (September 2008) 25-8); Knights, "English on the Boundaries" (*English Subject Centre Newsletter* February 2001).

Professional development workshops have been delivered by Knights and Thurgar-Dawson at national and international venues and have provided new models for pedagogic practice: Knights (with Gibson), "Writing and the Teacher," *Higher Education Academy Conference*, 2008; Knights and Thurgar-Dawson, *National Association for the Teaching of English Annual Conference*, 2006; Knights and Thurgar-Dawson, University of Warsaw, 2005; Knights, *Institute for Learning and Teaching Conference*, 2004. This research has informed the design of open access online resources in support of professional development for teachers: Knights served as a Project Co-ordinator for the "Adding Subject Specificity to Accredited Programmes" (ASSAP) project which developed "The Pool," an open access online resource for newly appointed English and Creative Writing lecturers in Higher Education, funded by Higher Education Academy and by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) Open Educational Resources project [5:3-5]. Knights also contributed to the ESRC Teaching and Learning Research Project online database: "Discipline-based pedagogic research: English in Higher Education" [5.6]. Knights has acted as a mentor for Higher Education Academy sponsored teaching and learning projects promoting good practice in relation to the critical-creative crossover, resulting in the production of professional development resources directly informed by the research presented in this case study [5:7-10].

Professor Knights was invited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency to contribute to a national sector consultation on the review of A Level specifications following the launch of 'Curriculum 2000'. From 2008 onwards the AQA and EdExcel awarding bodies have incorporated critical-creative elements into their English literature A Level.

The following reviews and/ research beneficiary testimonies provide evidence of the impact of this research:

- Adrian Barlow, "The Language of the Tribe", *English Association Newsletter* 185 (2007): "[*Active Reading*] is an important book, valuable in the first instance not only to student teachers and NQTs but also to those teaching in HE who need convincing of the value of using transformative writing as a literary tool..."
- Greg Garrard, *Staff and Educational Development Association Newsletter*: "*Active Reading* is a welcome contribution to the transformation of English . . . Ben Knights is a key figure in an emerging pedagogical research culture in English... engrossing and insightful."
- Former Chair, Assessment and Qualifications Alliance: "Ben Knights was, in the period leading up to A Level reform in 2010, a key thinker in the field of expanding ways of studying literature post 16, and a key facilitator in getting together groups of academics, teachers and examiners to look at creative ways of thinking and writing about literature. His work in this area was strongly endorsed by QCA and is now firmly enshrined in all the A level syllabuses for which I am responsible."
- Co-Director, The English and Media Centre: "Ben Knights's work looking at the relationship between 'critical' and 'creative' writing and on transformative writing has made an important contribution to work on the teaching of literature at advanced level in schools and colleges. It has helped to provide a theoretical underpinning and set of practices to inform secondary

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classroom approaches. . . Ben was also involved in discussions around the development of a Creative Writing A Level, starting in 2006, when there was a symposium to discuss initial thinking. This early thinking has now finally culminated in the accreditation of an AQA Creative Writing A Level, due to start being taught in September 2013. His paper for NAWA in March 2006 was an important contribution to this process. Finally Ben was also involved with a group of university teachers and A Level teachers who met regularly during the process of A Level curriculum reform around 2003/4, called 'The English Reform Group'. This group shared ideas and tested out thinking about ideas developing in schools and universities about practice in the teaching of English across the different phases."

- Research Officer, National Association for the Teaching of English: "Ben Knights' recent work has firmly established his reputation as an innovative and highly influential theorist and practitioner of pedagogies that create synergies between the disparate worlds of school and university English. It may be seen as the culmination of a trajectory that began when, as a member of the DUET (Development of University English Teaching) steering group, he developed the concept of Literary Practice into what is now called transformative writing. His Active Reading project (with Dr Chris Thurgar-Dawson) led to the publication of *Active Reading: Transformative Writing in Literary Studies*, a text whose theoretical frameworks and pedagogic range and depth has the power to impact critical study and creative writing in English departments worldwide."
- Director, National Association of Writers in Education: "As Director of NAWA, now the Subject Association for Creative Writing, I should like to testify to the important contribution made to the development of the subject by Professor Ben Knights. Ben was instrumental in enabling NAWA to work productively with the English Subject Association for many years, ensuring that the relationship between English and Creative Writing studies was a fruitful one. He played a particularly crucial role in preparing the ground for the Creative Writing A Level that has finally this year been accredited. He was instrumental in researching material relevant to the proposed qualification and ensuring that discussions involved a broad range of specialist input. The new A Level, in conjunction with the Creative Writing Subject Benchmark that emerged through similar partnership work over the same period, is already having impact on the provision of CPD for teachers developing Creative Writing in the classroom and the ongoing support for professional writers teaching at all levels."

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. Marketscan Report: 1314-TEES-0007. [Available on request].
2. HESA Student Record (1994/5 – 2011/12): 34883. [Available on request].
3. "Writing and the Teacher": <http://humbox.ac.uk/2733/>
4. "Transformative Writing": <http://humbox.ac.uk/2935/>
5. "Designing a Critical-Creative Module": <http://humbox.ac.uk/3004/>
6. *Teaching and Learning Research Programme*: <http://www.tlrp.org/capacity/rm/wt/knights/>
7. Bell, Kathleen, "Creative Writing in Relation to Formal Essay-Writing Skills and Understanding of Literature," HEA *English Subject Centre* Project: <http://www.english.heacademy.ac.uk/explore/projects/archive/literacy/cwskills/index.php>
8. Lee, Stuart, "New Tools for Creative Interpretation" HEA *English Subject Centre* Project: <http://www.english.heacademy.ac.uk/explore/projects/archive/technology/tech16a.php>
9. Harper, Graeme, "Critical Responsive Understanding" HEA *English Subject Centre* Project: <http://www.english.heacademy.ac.uk/explore/publications/newsletters/newsissue15/harper.htm>
10. Ruberry, Matthew, "Plot-Casting: Using Student-Generated Audiobooks for Learning and Teaching," HEA *English Subject Centre* Project: <http://www.english.heacademy.ac.uk/explore/publications/casestudies/technology/plotcasting.php>

[Archived web pages available on request.]