

Connections

Darryl Whetter and Ardashir Vakil

The aims of this project were to: create, for students and staff at both institutions of intellectual, social, cultural and emotional connections through the writing, reading and sharing of project-generated fiction; create a forum for a wider, socio-cultural, international discussion about the ways creative writing is taught and experienced in different places; develop a fertile environment for participation of students and staff in creative writing Studies, literature and publishing in academia and beyond.

Introduction

For this project we wanted to create and enable a space for the exchange of working practices and pedagogy between students and teachers at Goldsmiths and LASALLE in relation to creative writing teaching and develop methodologies that deepen student and staff knowledge and understanding of collaborative working and learning relationships.

We applied for the PIF to support the development of our partnership and consolidate our shared practices with the broad aim to develop knowledge and understanding of how to model, pedagogically, aesthetically, and experientially fiction as a powerful mode of human connection?

The main challenges were in terms of organisation and ensuring that we as academic staff and the students could squeeze as much activity and learning and exchange as possible into the time (7 days) at each other's institution.

Process and Participants

Darryl and I were the main participants who acted as agents of pedagogy and practice between the students in our two institutions. The rationale was to exchange and learn from each other's pedagogy and practice of teaching and writing in the field of Creative Writing and to disseminate that as widely as possible amongst the students so they could be beneficiaries of the wide pool of experience that was brought by the teachers and the students involved in the project.

We taught sessions to each other's students, both individually and in groups, gave joint readings of our work at both institutions, had meetings and discussions with members of staff at both institution and most importantly, arranged for students from both institutions to exchange work with each other in suitable pairs so they could read each other's work and exchange comments.

Outputs and Impact

The PIF supported the development of learning experiences ie. workshops for MA Creative Writing students at both Goldsmiths and LASALLE. From these workshops we developed new perspectives and shared expertise on the similarities and differences in our teaching methodologies. Through individual tutorials we learned needs and demands of students in London and Singapore and our students enabled collaborative working relationships. From these learning experiences students learned from and with two experienced teachers of creative writing as well as exchange ideas and feedback with peers.

Public readings were also performed at both institutions with students, staff and alumni presenting. The Goldsmiths Research Theme of 'Migrations, Mobilities, Displacements' was explicitly addressed by both me and Darryl through exploring Salman Rushdie's concept of the 'stereoscopic view' of the migrant. Vakil offered the biculturalism of India and the UK, while I did the same with Canada and Singapore.

These connections, this collaborative partnership demonstrates that Creative Writing is a robust, global discipline which supports the development of literature and the exchange of ideas and research with national, international, and transnational influences.

Authors

Dr. Darryl Whetter is the Programme Leader for the MA Creative Writing, School of Creative Industries LASALLE. Whetter writes fiction and poetry, with two novels- *The Push and the Pull* and *Keeping Things Whole and Origins* was his first book of poems.

Ardashir Vakil is the Programme Coordinator of the BA in English with Creative Writing and Workshop Leader, MA in Creative and Life Writing at Goldsmiths. Vakil is a novelist, poet and short story writer who has published two award-winning novels – *Beach Boy* (Penguin, 1998) *One Day* (Penguin, 2003) with the most recent short story 'Laptop' featured in the Fall issue (2017) of *The Iowa Review*.