

Institution: Leeds Trinity University		
Unit of Assessment: 27: English Language and Literature		
Title of case study: Creative Writing: Enabling aspiring writers to find their voices and get published		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Dr Amina Alyal	Senior Lecturer	1997-present
Martyn Bedford	Senior Lecturer	2008-present
Professor Paul Hardwick (publishing poetry as Oz Hardwick)	Principal Lecturer in English	2000-present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 1 August 2013 to 31 December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? Yes		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Researchers in creative writing at Leeds Trinity University have used their national and international experience to help aspiring writers find their voices and express themselves, both for personal development and for publication. As a result, beneficiaries have entered into careers in writing, editing, or tutoring, produced prizewinning work and become best-selling writers. The researchers have done this by drawing together young writers, aspiring authors, and experienced practitioners in public engagement events on campus and in the community, and by taking their expertise to schools, festivals, community centres and writing retreats locally, nationally, and internationally.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Bedford's novels for teenage and young adult readers have had national and international acclaim. <i>Flip</i> (2011), his first novel in the genre, was shortlisted for the national Costa Book Awards and won four regional prizes in the UK. His second and third, <i>Never Ending</i> (2014) and <i>Twenty Questions for Gloria</i> (2016), were both nominated for the CILIP Carnegie Medal. <i>Twenty Questions for Gloria</i> was also selected for <i>The Guardian's</i> Best New Children's Books Guide for 2016, won the 13+ category in the Coventry Inspiration Book Awards. Its popularity with readers is evidenced by the fact that it was a top-three YA download on lovereading4kids.</p> <p>Bedford has published many short stories and his first solo collection; <i>Letters Home</i> was published in 2017. The title story, first published in 2006, was made into a short film that premiered at the 2009 Version Film Festival, at the Cornerhouse, in Manchester. His short stories include specially commissioned pieces that are part of his outreach to the community: for example, two 'Room Zero' (2015) and 'A Capsule of Time' (2013), were written for Malvern College, Worcestershire, and Wellington College, Berkshire, to celebrate World Book Day and were published on the schools' intranets.</p> <p>Hardwick is recognised nationally and internationally as 'a major proponent of the neo-surreal prose poem in Britain' (Paul Hetherington and Cassandra Atherton, <i>Prose Poetry: An Introduction</i> (Princeton University Press, 2020), p. 125). His collection <i>Learning to Have Lost</i> won the 2019 Rubery International Book Award for Poetry. <i>The Lithium Codex</i> was shortlisted for the same award, and his individual poems have won national and international awards and prizes.</p>		

Hardwick's prose poetry, most notably in *The Lithium Codex* employs the still-contested form to explore issues such as loss and mental illness in a manner which is both unflinching and at the same time 'life-affirming' (HQ). The combination of candour and poetic rigour which informs his work has impacted on diverse communities within and outside of the academy.

Hardwick has published five full poetry collections and four chapbooks, along with several collaborative works in diverse media, including print, film, music, and performance. He has been invited to and attended national and international events and symposia including the Art and Soul Conference at the University of Winchester and the Prose Poetry Research Group at the International Poetry Studies Institute (IPSI), University of Canberra. Hardwick has edited several anthologies, including (with Miles Salter) *The Valley Press Anthology of Yorkshire Poetry* (Valley Press, 2017), which was a 2017 National Poetry Day Recommendation, and (with Anne Caldwell) *The Valley Press Anthology of Prose Poetry* (Valley Press, 2019), both of which featured new writers alongside poets of international standing.

Alyal's collaborative book with Hardwick, *Close as Second Skins* (Indigo Dreams, 2015) was shortlisted for the AHRC-funded 2015 Saboteur Award for Best Collaborative Work. She has published two solo volumes of poetry, *The Ordinarity of Parrots* (Stairwell, 2015) and *Season of Myths* (Wordspace/Indigo Dreams, 2016), as well as collaborative work in print, performance, and film, and articles and book chapters on myth, poetics, and creative practice. Her interest in world mythology and poetry has not only informed her own collections and numerous individual poems in journals and anthologies, but also provided impetus for workshops. This, in turn, has led to her editorship of several anthologies which showcase both emerging and established poets.

3. References to the research

Martyn Bedford, *Twenty Questions for Gloria* (Walker Books 2016) Winner of Coventry Inspiration Book Awards 2017. Nominated for Carnegie Medal 2017 shortlisted Ysgol Bae Baglan Book Awards 2017, longlisted for ABA South Coast Book Awards 2017, longlisted for Redbridge Teen Book Award 2017.

Martyn Bedford, *Never Ending* (Walker Books 2014) Nominated for Carnegie Medal 2014, shortlisted for Essex Book Awards 2014, Hull Book Awards 2014.

Oz Hardwick, *Learning to Have Lost* (Canberra: IPSI, 2018). Winner of the poetry category in the 2019 Rubery International Book Award list.

Oz Hardwick, *The Lithium Codex* (Hedgehog Poetry Press 2019). Winner of the Hedgehog Shorts competition, shortlisted for the 2020 Rubery International Book Award.

Amina Alyal, *Season of Myths*, Indigo Dreams Publishing 2016. ISBN 978-1910834275. An explicitly multicultural collection informed by rigorous and wide-ranging academic research. From Indigo Dreams, which has a sound reputation among small presses.

Amina Alyal, *The Ordinarity of Parrots*, Stairwell Books 2015. ISBN 978-1939269294.

4. Details of the impact

Researchers in Creative Writing at LTU have collaboratively had an impact on aspiring writers by creating a lively and supportive writing culture that began locally but now has national and

international reach, plus a vibrant online presence. The flagship public engagement event at LTU has been the annual Writers' Festival. Seed funded by the Royal Literary Fund in 2005, the now self-supporting event draws around 200 writers at all levels of experience, both from the local community and around the UK, as well as from the university, for a day of workshops with professional writers in various genres. Claire Wigzell, whose journey towards being a published poet began at the Writer's Festival writes that **'I found the positive and friendly atmosphere, the deep respect for people and the striving for high quality writing meant that I achieved a great deal'** (Wigzell1). Work that Wigzell has produced through mentorship from the researchers includes commissions from Leeds City Council for civil engagement performances at Kirkstall Abbey and Leeds Art Gallery.

The researchers have also had an impact on aspiring writers through the Wordspace off-campus open mic night which has run monthly since being founded in tandem with the Writers' Festival 2015. Wordspace has created a community which welcomes, promotes, and supports new writers alongside guest performers of national, sometimes international, standing. Actively promoting equality and inclusivity, Wordspace has acquired a reputation as a safe space for aspiring writers and comperes. Gill Lambert, now a published poet and workshop leader writes that **'I built up my confidence in the safe environment that Wordspace created.'** (Lambert1.pdf) Joe Williams found the **'welcoming and inclusive space'** the chance to hear and meet writers **'from many different backgrounds was 'invaluable to me in developing my own writing'** (Williams1.pdf). The Wordspace ethos has successfully been transferred online, with regular attendance of around 20-30, drawn from the UK (York, Leeds, Liverpool, Sheffield, Hertford and Devon), USA, Canada, Palestine, and Sri Lanka. Wordspace has nurtured a number of award-winning writers, including Mark Connors, Maria Frankland, Hannah Stone, and J.A. Browne, author of the children's books series *The Earth Chronicles*, as well as Williams, Lambert and Wigzell.

In partnership with Indigo Dreams Publishing, the researchers founded the Wordspace imprint in 2015 to showcase new writing from this vibrant community in anthologies and single-author volumes. The nine volumes published to date include LMA Bauman-Milner's debut collection of short stories, *Dark Doors* (2015), which was shortlisted for a Saboteur Award.

These initiatives have also had the impact of supporting writers to become professional writing tutors. It has been a policy at the Writers' Festivals to grow workshop leaders by appointing new leaders like Frankland, Lambert and Browne alongside established practitioners. Browne writes that **'I learnt a great deal about teaching creative writing, the content and logistics, and addressing larger audiences'** (Browne1.pdf). As a ripple effect of this activity, Lambert and Connors co-founded Yaffle Press (Keithley) in 2019, and Frankland has set up her own company as a writer and tutor. She writes: **'My company is earning me a full time living, something I have always dreamed of. I thank Trinity in each and every book I publish.'** (Frankland1.pdf)

Hardwick has had international impact by leading workshops drawing on his research, with a particular emphasis on the distinctions and connections between poetry and prose, in Australia (Poetry on the Move), Germany (Writers Ink), Italy (Poetry on the Lake), as well as nationally (Art and Soul, Winchester) and regionally (Hive Young Writers Sheffield). Many new writers have published work which was stimulated by – or developed in – these workshops. Australian poet Lucy Alexander author of *Strokes of Light* (Recent Works Press, 2020) wrote: **'I came home with ideas fluttering around my head like Ravens.'** (Alexander1.pdf) Respected Australian writers Eugen Bacon and Dominique Hecq acknowledge his influence. Listing Hardwick alongside Baudelaire, Rimbaud, and Margaret Atwood, Hecq says: **'Most recently I've discovered the work of Oz Hardwick after taking a master class with him at a poetry festival. He taught me the simple art of defamiliarization.'** Hardwick's association with the Prose Poetry Project at the International Poetry Studies Institute (IPSI), University of Canberra has resulted in creative publications in collaboration with Recent Works Press, Australia. Hardwick's support of writers beyond the curriculum has twice been nominated for a Festival of Learning Tutor Award which 'recognises inspirational tutors or trainers who have supported learners, in a range of contexts, to go on to lead successful and rewarding lives.' He has been granted honorary membership of

Writers Ink, with the citation that **'Oz has never ceased to inspire and encourage others with his writing', he is 'an outstanding instructor.'** (WritersInk1)

Alyal has particular impact on women writers, for example as invited speaker and workshop leader for a day at the Ilkley Literature Festival 2018, 'Acting Out: Women's Voices and the Spoken Word'. Since lockdown, she has been working with writing tutor Judi Sissons of The Writing Space, leading workshops and editing a collection of participants' work: *Words from a Distance* (currently under consideration with Stairwell Books). Sissons described Alyal's impact as **'encouraging the women to have confidence in their writing and share it with a wider audience ... providing mutual support for women's wellbeing and creativity.'** (sissons1.pdf)

Bedford has had an impact on young people by engaging them with creative writing (2,500-3,000 secondary school students over author visits to 40+ secondary schools across England): [feedback on a talk to Year 7 students at Crossley Heath School, Halifax](#), stated that **"I have heard from several students who are now thinking about being authors!"** Bedford has tutored adults at Residential Writing Courses including Moniak Mhor (Scotland), the Arvon Foundation (Lumb Bank), and The Hurst (Shropshire) and Art of Writing (Italy). Since 2019, he has acted as a mentor with The Writers' Studio, a scheme that offers a range of one-to-one support packages to aspiring writers, which particularly encourages writers from communities that are underrepresented in British publishing. Among the writers who have achieved success after mentoring from Bedford is novelist Linda Green: **'It was after rewriting based on Martyn's advice that I was taken on by an agent and got my 1st book deal. If you're serious about your writing, I highly recommend him.'** Green has now published 10 novels, which have sold more than one million copies and been translated into 12 languages.

In their collaboration on the Writers' Festival and Wordspace, Alyal, Bedford and Hardwick ensure that the expertise developed in individual outreach is brought to bear on the local, national, and international creative writing community fostered by LTU.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

References

Bacon, Eugen and Hecq, Dominique – (<https://paulsemel.com/exclusive-interview-speculate-authors-eugen-bacon-dominique-hecq/>)

Curtis Brown, literary agency, 'Martin Bedford', <https://www.curtisbrown.co.uk/client/martyn-bedford/work/teaching>

Sweeney, Emma Claire, The Writers' Studio, 'Bestselling @LindaGreenisms praises mentor Martyn Bedford', <https://twitter.com/emmacsweeney/status/1232972193895735296>

Testimonials

Alexander, Lucy (Alexander1.pdf) – testimonial by published Australian writer on workshops led by Oz Hardwick

Browne, Jane (Browne1.pdf) Testimonial by author of *The Earth Chronicles*, best-selling children's writer and professional copywriter nurtured by Wordspace, professional workshop leader nurtured by the Writers' Festival

Frankland, Maria (Frankland1.pdf) Testimonial by published writer nurtured by Wordspace, workshop leader at Writers' Festival, who became a professional tutor

Sissons, Judi (Sissons1.pdf) Professional tutor, founder of 'The Writing Space'

Impact case study (REF3)

Wigzell, Claire and Lambert, Gill (WigzellLambert.pdf) Testimonials by published writers nurtured by Wordspace, subsequently workshop leaders at Writers' Festival

Williams, Joe (Williams1.pdf) Testimonial by published writer nurtured by Wordspace

Writers' Ink (WritersInk1.pdf) Citation for Oz Hardwick's Honorary Membership