

Section A		
The fields in this section are mandatory.		
Institution: Leeds Arts University		
Unit of Assessment: Unit of Assessment: 32 Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory		
Title of case study: Raising awareness of art writing through Tactile Writing Workshops		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2011 to 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Karen Tobias-Green	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Course Leader BA(Hons) Creative Writing	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: Sept 1997 to present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014 to 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
Section B		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>The research, a critical disability studies perspective informed by notions about how the power of objects, senses and discourse are able to stimulate and provoke thought, language and writing, has raised awareness of writing strategies that can inform the visual arts and creative writing in general. The beneficiaries of this research are, directly, dyslexic creatives and those working in dyslexia support, and indirectly, children, young people and adults. Particular communities include those around East London, Leeds and Ilkley.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
The nature of the research insights or findings which relate to the impact claimed in the case study.		
<p>Notions about the power of objects, senses and discourses to stimulate and provoke thought, language and writing are informed and enhanced through a critical disability studies lens, deconstructing definitions of 'good' writers, 'academic' writing and 'creative' writing. Writers/creatives with dyslexia often experience representations of themselves that significantly affect their self-image as writers (Tobias-Green, 2014). Writing is a rich, valid, inclusive form of creative communication. Notions of normalcy and hierarchies of writing are disrupted by questioning and re-positioning words and ideas: writer, maker, learner, creator, producer, individual, collective: all challenged through visual culture and arts education (Tobias-Green, 2017)</p> <p>Rather than make binary visual and verbal literacy, tactile engagement with materials, objects and sensory experiences can develop writing across the arts and beyond. Dividing writing into categories suggests a rightness of being that rejects complexity and discourse. This research/writing practice rejects simple binaries and is applied to exploring dyslexia and writing. It does not consider people to be homogenous, revealing that underlying discourses rely on normative narratives, which are critically pulled apart by the tactile, inclusive, sensory, experiential and playful elements of their approach to writing.</p>		

The synthesis of critical visual studies and disability studies employed in developing the research is important in shaping and unpicking narratives around writing in an art institution and beyond. This thinking questions the identity of writing in the art school and, in the spaces provided by the tactile writing workshop, allows participants to carve out new identities (Tobias-Green 2014). The research contributes to the de-territorialising of dyslexia, writing and disability.

An outline of what the underpinning research produced by the submitted unit was

Interactive workshops aim to deepen writing skills by exploring how objects, words and language interact in making visual/textual connections. They assail the barriers between image and text to explore the tactile, aesthetic qualities of writing. The research method provides opportunities to interact with writing, materials and text in purposeful, non-threatening environments. Participants produce and share collages of text and visuals and are facilitated to interact playfully and imaginatively with extracts of philosophical, sociological writing.

Participants include further and higher education students anxious about re/entering the university power structure, tutors of students with dyslexia who felt unable to engage in any kind of meaningful, enjoyable writing experience, and participants outside the University, who had not written for years or who did not see themselves as writers. Workshops aim to heal the 'fracturing of intent between visual and textual language' (Tobias-Green, 2014, p.194). The recognition that the impetus to write freely is provoked by a loosening up of the tactile, sensory body and its engagement with object, materials, language and senses is widely documented (Tobias-Green, 2014, 2017).

Any relevant key contextual information about this area of research.

The workshops' underpinning methodologies grew from Tobias-Green's extensive experience as English tutor and dyslexia specialist teacher, the teaching of narrative and visual language within the University, and their own creative writing practice, forming the basis for their research. This multiple positionality provides an understanding of some conflicts and anomalies writers in the art school and beyond (with dyslexic diagnoses and without) experience in their multiple identities - student, dyslexic, artist, writer, tutor.

3. References to the research

- 1) Tobias-Green, K., Osgood, Jayne, Taylor, Carol, Andersen, Camilla Eline, Benozzo, Angelo, Carey, Neil, Elmenhorst, Constance, Fairchild, Nikki, Koro, Mirka, Moxnes, Anna, Otterstad, Ann Merete and Rantala, Teija (2019) Conferencing otherwise: a feminist new materialist writing experiment. *Cultural Studies <=> Critical Methodologies*. ISSN 1532-7086 <https://lau.repository.guildhe.ac.uk/17577/>
- 2) Tobias-Green, K. (2017) Challenging the cult of normalcy: art education and transdisciplinary practices. *Visual Inquiry: Learning & Teaching Art*. ISSN 20455887 <https://lau.repository.guildhe.ac.uk/15221/>
- 3) Tobias-Green, K. (2016a) Presented at the Nordic Education and Research Association Conference *Communities of practice, value issues and recognising the existence and worth of alternative pedagogies*. Helsinki March 10 2016.
- 4) Tobias-Green, K. (2016b) Presented at 12th International Congress on Qualitative Inquiry *Stories from an Art Institution: the writing lives of students with dyslexia*. The University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, Chicago, May 19th 2016.
- 5) Tobias-Green, Karen (2015) Portrait of a queen : the photography of Paul Bennett-Todd. *JAWS - Journal of Art Writing for Students*, 1 (1). pp. 85-89. ISSN 2055-2823 <https://lau.repository.guildhe.ac.uk/17322/>

6) Tobias-Green, Karen (2014) The role of the agreement: Art students, dyslexia, reading and writing. *Journal of Art, Design and Communication in Higher education*, 13 (2). pp. 189-199. ISSN 1474273X <https://lau.repository.guildhe.ac.uk/10212/>
Evidence of the quality of the research must also be provided in this section. Guidance on this is provided in the 'Panel criteria'.

- All outputs went through a rigorous peer-review process
- The research was acknowledged outside the institution when Tobias-Green was asked to present on/run interactive workshop for Writing as Part of a Visual Practice to students and staff at the postgraduate Centre for Arts and Learning Goldsmiths University February 2016.
- The research is cited outside the institution to further others' work. 'The Role of the Agreement: Art Students, Dyslexia, Reading and Writing' has been cited by [Pickard, Beth](#) ; Norris, Val. / **The Process of Accessing the Disability and Dyslexia Service at USW : Outcomes of a Collaborative Pilot Study**. Paper presented at USW Learning and Teaching Conference 2018, Treforest, United Kingdom.
and
- Pickard, B (2019) The Process, Challenges and Opportunities of Developing a Curriculum in a Creative and Therapeutic Arts Undergraduate Degree Programme. *International Journal of Art & Design Education*. DOI: [10.1111/jade.12226](https://doi.org/10.1111/jade.12226)
- Tobias-Green was highly commended in the Winchester Poetry Prize 2019 for their poem *The Little Park*.
- Tobias-Green writes regular column on arts and culture website [The State of the Arts](#) entitled *Write. North*. They writes regularly for online arts journal Corridor8.

4. Details of the impact

Beneficiaries/publics

Beneficiaries of the research are those working in the wider writing community with artist/writers who may have dyslexia/traits of dyslexia whether diagnosed or not, workshop facilitators, tutors working with writers with dyslexia in universities and beyond, members of the public attending literature festivals, specialist dyslexia festivals and community arts venues. Students at Leeds Arts University have benefited from the research, whether diagnosed with dyslexia or undiagnosed, including the students who study on postgraduate and undergraduate programmes and all students who study on the BA (hons) in Creative Writing (written and taught by Tobias-Green and arising from this research).

Dissemination of research

- Yorkshire Dyslexia Tutors' Forum seminar and workshop (2016) for tutors run by Tobias-Green and Byrne - an arts writer and dyslexia specialist teacher. Work was presented to a group of 8 freelance dyslexia specialist tutors through a presentation and a demonstration of the tactile writing workshop so that attendees could then deploy these strategies themselves.
- Tobias-Green ran a workshop for artist/writers with dyslexia as part of the International Festival of Dyslexic Culture, London, 2015.
- Tobias-Green ran a tactile writing workshop as part of the Ilkley Literature Festival in 2018.
- Tobias-Green ran a workshop for artist writers wishing to develop their creative writing skills at Hyde Park Book Club, Headingley, Leeds in 2019.

Yorkshire Dyslexia Tutors' Forum seminar and workshop (2016)

Attendees reported: *'The presentation, delivered by Karen and colleague Joanna Byrne, demonstrated the sense of responsibility and ownership dyslexic participants in workshops can feel around their writing despite their doubts and anxieties, the value and purpose of writing, and an understanding of how through the process of engaging with these areas participants are able to gain control and develop strategies for accessing a wide range of knowledge and information to support their writing. The insight given by Karen into the tactile writing workshop provided valuable strategies for making writing accessible, creative and productive. As an aside, as a participant, it was also a fun and engaging session and encouraged the group to be playful as well as think creatively.'* [1]

International Festival of Dyslexic culture, London, 2015.

Work was presented to 12 members of the general public with dyslexia, who were interested in writing and creativity, through a presentation and a demonstration of the workshop so attendees could deploy these strategies themselves.

Attendees reported: Changes in their perception of their behaviours around writing and their approach to self-image and writing:

'I attended Karen's workshop as part of 'The Festival of Dyslexia' in London. Within the workshop, we were given 'permission' to write without worrying about our spelling, this could be looked at a later date. This approach is refreshing and one I have tried myself, but to hear this from a professional, working in the field of Dyslexia helped me validate my own feelings. From an analytical point of view asking, "what cheese or art work would you be?" was interesting, it made me think of art in collections we will never see, stolen art, perhaps, what art would be can only be answered in terms of what has gone before, what I have knowledge of. Being invited to feel material and ask questions of the haptic nature of the fabric was really interesting, and perhaps limited by the vocabulary of the writer, but to question the nature of fabric, the senses of touch noise and smell, helped to see those elements come together under one roof, of 'fabric' I could see that relationship coming together. I enjoy workshops of this nature, it is a time I can forget my dyslexic spelling, relax, and write without judgement.' [2]

Ilkley literature festival

17 Members of the general public interested in writing and creativity.

Attendees reported: *'Karen provided exceptionally thoughtful, sensitive, generous and positive support for writing my MA dissertation. She listened well and gave excellent feedback and advice. She is widely read in appropriate and useful academic perspectives and guided me effectively through these complex fields of enquiry. For all these reasons I was drawn to the workshop she gave at the most recent Ilkley Literature Festival, which was stimulating and fun and produced a poem about being a carer, which I published on my website at lesleyeleanorwood.com/2018/10/07/the-friends/' [3,4,5].*

Tactile Writing at Hyde Park Book Club (2019)

Tobias-Green presented their tactile writing workshop to a varied group of artist/writers with an interest in disability and inclusivity.

Attendees reported: *'I saw the Tactile Writing Workshop at Hyde Park Book Club and was tempted to explore what it had to offer. It was unusual in that the table was covered with craft objects: pens, papers, postcards, glue, wool etc. How could I write with those? What would we be doing? There is a tendency to feel a bit self conscious when you are not sure what will happen. However it was really fun. The facilitator really encouraged everyone to use the materials and to enable me to speak and write what they evoked and created*

associations with. It was surprising and I thoroughly enjoyed it as I am sure the others who attended did too. There are more ways to create narratives or poetry and meaning than just putting pen to paper.' [6]

'The workshop/presentation was a helpful, insightful session drawing attention to the strategies used by the facilitator to make writing accessible, creative and productive. Care was taken to involve all participants and to move from the acts of tactile engagement with materials to communicating, through spoken language, to conveying meaning in the written word. Participants felt relaxed and enabled enough to read their work out loud and to join in conversation about the nature of creativity, writing and (where appropriate) disability'.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[1] Email feedback on Yorkshire Dyslexia Tutors' Forum seminar and workshop, February 2016

[2] Email feedback on workshop for artist/writers with dyslexia, International Festival of Dyslexic Culture, London, 2015

[3] Email correspondence with Ilkley Literature Festival, 2018.

[4] Email feedback on tactile writing workshop, Ilkley Literature Festival, 2018.

[5] Email feedback on tactile writing workshop, Ilkley Literature Festival, 2018.

[6] Email feedback on tactile writing workshop, Hyde Park Book Club, 2019.