

Institution: Manchester Metropolitan University		
Unit of Assessment: D27 English Language and Literature		
Title of case study: 'Talking across differences': Enabling new writing from the multilingual classroom to the global lockdown		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2000-2020		
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:
Dame Carol Ann Duffy	Professor of Poetry, Creative Director of the Manchester Writing School, UK Poet Laureate 2009- 2019	1996 to Present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2013-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact <p>The second half of Carol Ann Duffy's laureateship (2014-19) was characterised by the development of new writers, with an emphasis on poetry as a democratic art form. Significant impacts have been achieved through her leadership of major projects such as Mother Tongue Other Tongue (MTOT), the Manchester Poetry and Fiction prizes and Write Where We Are Now (WWWAN). MTOT is a multilingual poetry competition for school pupils that received a Queen's Anniversary Prize in 2019: as testimonials from the schools indicate, MTOT has increased the self-confidence of bilingual and multilingual pupils, enhanced inclusivity and cultural exchange in the classroom, and fostered co-creation between children and their families. Feedback on the Manchester Poetry and Fiction prizes demonstrates that the competitions have inspired young, emerging writers from diverse backgrounds to work with major publishers such as Penguin, and apply for grants and fellowships to further their writing careers. WWWAN initiated and then archived a global poetic response to the advent of COVID-19 in early 2020: with a media reach of 352,861,861 across ten countries, WWWAN led the way in creating and voicing a sense of international community at a time of national crisis.</p>		
2. Underpinning research <p>Between 2000 and 2014 Carol Ann Duffy published four poetry collections: <i>Feminine Gospels</i> (2002) [1], <i>Rapture</i> (2005) [2], <i>The Bees</i> (2011) [3] and <i>Ritual Lighting</i> (2014) [4]. Early short love lyrics such as 'White Writing' from <i>Feminine Gospels</i> are expanded into the extended sequence of love poems in <i>Rapture</i> that won the T.S. Eliot Prize in 2005. The rooting of, or longing for, the transcendent in ordinariness in poems such as 'Bridgewater Hall' or 'Epiphany' from <i>Rapture</i> sow the seeds for further explorations of quotidian British life in later Laureate poems like 'The Counties' and 'Oxfam' (published in <i>The Bees</i>), which are characterised by a rare ability to speak for, and to, a broad audience beyond those familiar with poetry, connecting with their own experiences of childhood, parenthood, love and loss. All this is explored and expressed—from the earliest books through the laureate years—in poems of great clarity, inviting new readers into not just her own books, but the English lyric tradition to which she constantly alludes.</p> <p>The theories of change for the projects described in this case study are anchored in this creative practice, which treat the personal and cultural aspects of language, identity and experience as the raw material for a poetic technique that can be learned, and is available to everyone. Poetry in these projects, as in Duffy's own work, is crafted from immediate and near-to-hand materials and voices, brought together in acts of sharing and community, through the media and on the printed page. Duffy's poem 'Poetry', for example, in <i>The Bees</i></p>		

sets out an *ars poetica* with its insistence that the ordinary—a pint of Guinness, the crescent moon, insects—can be rendered as, respectively, a nun, a boomerang and as ‘music scored on the air’. This belief that the materials of poems can be ordinary and accessible, and that any of us can become a maker, was the defining vision of Duffy’s later laureateship, and its legacy is enduringly inscribed in the Manchester Writing School’s mission to enable new writing.

The projects described here also draw on a career’s experience of creative leadership through curation, which has generated 11 edited poetry anthologies; six of these have been published since 2000. Duffy’s work over the past decade has addressed themes of national and global fragmentation and crisis, including climate change (*The Bees*), Brexit (*My Country* [5]) and the COVID-19 pandemic. Her public curatorial projects address these crises directly, bringing together new writers with diverse voices to counter disengagement, fragmentation and isolation.

3. References to the research

1. Carol Ann **Duffy**, *Feminine Gospels* (London: Picador 2002), ISBN: 978-0330486438.
2. Carol Ann **Duffy**, *Rapture* (London: Picador 2005), ISBN: 978-0330412803.
3. Carol Ann **Duffy**, *The Bees* (London: Picador 2011), ISBN: 978-0330442442.
4. Carol Ann **Duffy**, *Ritual Lighting: Laureate Poems* (London: Picador 2014), ISBN: 978-1447274506.
5. Carol Ann **Duffy** and Rufus Norris, *My Country: A Work in Progress* (London: Faber & Faber 2017), ISBN: 978-0571339747

Indicators of Research Quality:

Carol Ann Duffy’s awards and honours include the PEN Pinter Prize (2012), the Costa Poetry Award (for *The Bees*, 2011), the T.S. Eliot Prize (for *Rapture*, 2005), a major NESTA Award (2001), the Whitbread Poetry Award (1993), the Forward Poetry Prize (1993) and the Laureateship itself (2009-19). She was made a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1999, and was elected as an Honorary Fellow of the British Academy in 2015. She was appointed OBE in 1995, CBE in 2002 and DBE in the 2015 New Year’s Honours for services to poetry.

4. Details of the impact

Duffy established the Manchester Children’s Book Festival in 2010: since then, annual festival activities that give children and families access to leading children’s authors have been embedded within a year-round programme engaging directly with teachers, schools and communities. This festival has initiated a series of key projects, the most significant of which is Mother Tongue Other Tongue, a multilingual poetry competition. MTOT is a practice-led project rooted in close collaboration between writers and English teachers with a desire to keep creativity alive in the classroom. It has given rise to a wealth of new writing from the young participants, much of which is preserved and curated in the project anthologies. It has also inspired new research on the impact of creative multilingualism in education [A]. In 2019, during its eighth year, MTOT won a Queen’s Anniversary Prize for Higher Education, an honour which recognises research that ‘innovates and delivers real benefit to the wider world and public’ [B]. The panel chose to reward a project which takes ‘a practical approach to social cohesion’, and uses creativity to foster an ‘appreciation of cultural diversity’ [C].

Duffy launched MTOT in 2012 as a pilot project, and in 2013 it was rolled out nationally as a Laureate Education Project. Independent regional versions of the competition have continued, with Manchester Writing School (MWS) running MTOT for over 40 schools

located principally in the Northwest. With 2300 entries from the Northwest in 2020, we estimate that across the eight annual iterations of the competition, including the years in which it had national reach, over 40,000 pupils between the ages of 9 and 17 in 77 participating schools have responded to its prompt to write poetry either in a language that they are learning at school, or in a language that they speak at home. MTOT supplements and challenges the national curriculum's marginalisation of creative writing, and its positioning of standard English and English literary heritage as a privileged norm, by nurturing bi- and multilingualism. The project also celebrates the underlying cultural resources as valuable creative assets. This process has increased the confidence of bi- and multilingual pupils, and facilitated the exchange of cultural knowledge in the classroom. Schools are supported to engage with MTOT via CPD for teachers, creative resources and multilingual poetry workshops designed and delivered by Duffy and other Manchester Writing School poets. Winning pupils perform at an annual event hosted by Duffy and celebrity guests, who have included Malala Yousafzai, a Nobel Peace Prize Winner, and the poet Imtiaz Dharker. MTOT entries are then collated in an anthology published on the project website and distributed to participating schools. Since 2014 the anthology has been accretive, adding each year's winning entries to those from previous years. The 2020 iteration features 41 mother tongue poems and reflective commentaries, representing 22 community languages [D].

A 2019 evaluation of the MTOT project, involving 35 teachers and 336 pupils, informed our successful submission for the Queen's Anniversary Prize. The report demonstrated that MTOT was achieving its outcomes in increasing the self-confidence of bilingual and multilingual pupils, enhancing inclusivity and cultural exchange in the classroom, and fostering dialogue and co-creation between children and their families [E]. 84% of the pupils said the competition 'has made me feel more connected to my cultural background', and 78% declared that writing poetry 'made them feel more free to express their personal experience and identity than other forms of writing'. A primary school teacher wrote in her post-engagement diary that 'Children's confidence and cultural pride definitely increased and improved, especially after our fantastic visit from your poets', and the mother of a primary school pupil reflected that it helped her daughter to 'build a stronger link to [her mother tongue] and gave her an appreciation of her ability to speak another language.' MTOT was pivotal to Manchester's successful 2017 bid to become a UNESCO City of Literature, and it has informed three iterations to date of the City's celebration of International Mother Language Day. The latter forms one of Manchester City of Literature's six keystone projects, with poets leading thousands of schoolchildren each year in multilingual poetry writing and performance [F].

Alongside MTOT, Duffy and the Manchester Writing School have also enabled new writing through two international writing competitions that award the UK's largest prizes for unpublished work in poetry and fiction. Duffy created the prizes specifically to nurture the careers of a diverse range of new and emerging writers, and she was the main judge on the tenth anniversary of the competitions in 2018. Lucy Ingrams, the Manchester Poetry Prize winner in 2015, described the competition as 'one of the most powerful intersections in the UK between new writing and the wider world'. Since 2013, the competitions have received 21,170 entries, with 17 winners and 95 shortlisted writers. In 2018 and 2019 alone, the competition attracted 5,184 entries from 81 countries. Offering one of the most lucrative prizes in creative writing in the UK, the MWS has invested £140,000 during the current REF period in developing a new generation of authors. Shortlisted and winning writers have consistently emphasised the credibility it gave them with agents, publishers, readers and audiences, and the boost the competition gave to their confidence in writing. Mona Arshi, who won the Manchester Poetry Prize in 2014, used the prize money to complete her debut collection *Small Hands*, which won the prestigious Forward Poetry Prize in 2015. Drawing on her Filipino heritage, Romalyn Ante submitted a manuscript which won the Manchester Poetry Prize in 2017. This submission developed into her acclaimed debut collection *Antiemetic for Homesickness*, which was published by Penguin in 2020. Ante commented that the prize boosted her confidence to 'write in [her] second language', apply

for grants and approach publishers. *Antiemetic for Homesickness* was subsequently named as *The Observer* 'Poetry book of the month' in July 2020. Ante commented that 'The prize has put me out there – in the "world of poetry". Winning helped me realize that I deserved to be heard and that I could contribute, as a writer, to the culture of UK poetry'. US writer Sakinah Hofler, a Manchester Poetry Prize Finalist in 2016 and a Manchester Fiction Prize Winner in 2017, commented that her shortlisting in 2016 inspired her to continue writing just when her teaching contract in the US had been cancelled. In 2019, Hofler returned as a judge for the Manchester Fiction Prize at the annual awards ceremony at Chethams Library. The initial shortlisting 'gave me the confidence', she commented, 'to keep submitting and keep believing in my work'. Winning the Fiction prize then enabled her to overcome what she termed her 'imposter syndrome' as a writer. The 10K prize money also allowed her to take time off work to complete a draft of her first novel, and to start applying for writers' fellowships. A former chemical and quality engineer, she is now an Albert C. Yates Fellow at the University of Cincinnati [G].

Following this commitment through MTOT and the Manchester Poetry Prize to nurture a diverse range of new writing, Duffy initiated the WWWAN project during the first 2020 national lockdown as a response to the Coronavirus pandemic. Conceived by Duffy as 'a radical reinvention of the anthology form', WWWAN has solicited and curated new work from a wide range of emergent voices and established poets from 16 different countries, including Bangladesh, India and Nigeria: all the writers shared their contributions digitally in real time. Duffy invited the poets to write directly about the pandemic or about the situation they found themselves in during lockdown: their responses were published on the Manchester Writing School website, which featured 607 poems from 207 poets by 30/6/20. Global media coverage of WWWAN between 20/4/2020 and 7/8/2020 had a total reach of 352,861,861 across ten countries, and the website had received 174,000 hits by the end of August [H]. Readers of the poetry were encouraged to tweet their responses, including poetry of their own, and these responses had a reach of 2,164,570 across 19 countries [I]. The poems describe widespread feelings of isolation and separation under lockdown, but they also record the experiences of writers working on the frontline such as Ante, who is an NHS nurse.

Inspired by Duffy's WWWAN initiative, the Manchester Writing School launched an archive to collect poetry written by the public about their experiences of the pandemic and lockdown in mid-August. By December 2020 this archive had received 264 submissions from 13 countries, including Bulgaria, Singapore and Trinidad: submissions came from entire community groups, as well as from individuals. It is envisaged that, alongside the WWWAN collection, this archive will be curated and made available to the public via the newly established Manchester Poetry Library as a repository of creative responses to the Coronavirus pandemic. The long-term aim is to facilitate a wider public understanding of poetry alongside the complex dynamics of health and wellbeing under lockdown conditions, and to educate and inspire future generations of readers [J]. WWWAN and its archive have been received as intended by Duffy, as a living record that created and voiced a sense of community at a time of universal crisis, and as a future device for commemorating and reflecting on how we experienced the pandemic.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- A. Edwards, J., N. Mohammed, C. Nunn & P. Gray. 2020. "Mother Tongue Other Tongue: Nine Years of Creative Multilingualism in Practice." *English in Education*, DOI: 10.1080/04250494.2020.1850176 article corroborating the reach and significance of MTOT.
- B. Manchester Metropolitan Queen's Anniversary Prize 2019 Submission corroborating the reach and significance of MTOT.
- C. [The power of poetry in embracing cultural diversity – Queen's Anniversary Prizes](#)

- D. Hussain, Y, ed. (2020) *Mother Tongue Other Tongue: An Anthology of Poems from the North West Poetry Competition*. Routes into Languages North West, Manchester Metropolitan University; <https://www.queensanniversaryprizes.org.uk/winners/creative-education-to-promote-understanding-and-appreciation-of-cultural-diversity-through-childrens-creative-writing-in-mother-tongue-and-english/>
- E. MTOT Evaluation Data and Report corroborating impacts on pupils, teachers and parents; MTOT website: <https://www.mmu.ac.uk/mothertongueothertongue/>
- F. Manchester UNESCO Creative Cities Network application (2017) corroborating the important role that MTOT played in securing UNESCO City of Literature status.
- G. Manchester Writing School submission data; Manchester Writing Competition media links including testimonials and quotes corroborating the impact of the Manchester Poetry and Fiction Prizes on new and emerging writers:
 - <https://aah-magazine.co.uk/2016/manchester-writing-competition-2016-an-interview-with-last-years-winners/>
 - <https://youtube/AQ6xuGhWkqw>
 - <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/jul/07/antiemetic-for-homesickness-by-romalyn-ante-review-ales-of-yearning>
 - <https://aah-magazine.co.uk/2018/the-manchester-writing-competition-celebrates-tenth-anniversary>
 - <https://youtu.be/vYevGy2fSpc>

Martin MacInnes (Manchester Fiction Prize winner 2014) testimonial
- H. WWWAN website: <https://www.mmu.ac.uk/write/> ; WWWAN Audience Data.
- I. WWWAN Twitter Data corroborating social media reach of WWWAN.
- J. WWWAN Public Submissions Data to 3/9/2020.