

Institution: Royal Holloway, University of London		
Unit of Assessment: 27 English Language and Literature		
Title of case study: Enhancing English Literature Teaching in Schools: Informing subject-knowledge and disciplinary resilience in light of the 2014 Curriculum Reform in England and Wales		
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:
Professor Robert Eaglestone	Professor of Contemporary Literature and Thought	1997-date
Professor Anne Varty	Professor of Victorian Literature	1989-date
Professor Kiernan Ryan	Emeritus Professor (English)	1997-2016
Dr Katie McGettigan	Senior Lecturer in American Literature	2015-date
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>The 2014 Department for Education curriculum reforms of English Literature precipitated declining student enrolments and sector confidence, and generated teachers' need for new subject knowledge. Research at Royal Holloway has re-invigorated the disciplinary value of English literature; strengthened the professional practices of two Examination Boards, and English teachers, thereby benefitting students. Researchers at Royal Holloway have provided Continued Professional Development and resources for teachers, consulted on syllabus reform for the Awarding Bodies OCR and Edexcel, and collaborated with Subject Associations, educational publishers, the English and Media Centre, British Library and Prince's Teaching Institute. Royal Holloway's research has shaped educational experience for A Level teachers and their students across the UK and internationally.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The reformed English syllabi, including GCSE English, are heavily invested in heritage texts and operate within an educational economy that prioritises STEM subjects. The value of English Literature has consequently been downgraded, leading to a precipitous 25% decline in enrolments in English Literature A Level since 2016. Research undertaken at Royal Holloway has demonstrated the educational benefits of English Literature by redefining its cultural, historical and social value.</p> <p>Robert Eaglestone's book, <i>Literature. Why it matters</i> (R1), demonstrates how literary structures are found across the widest range of cultural expression, from poetry to news and computer games. This research demonstrates the importance of literature in our current era, both in forming cultural value and in intellectual development. Here, and in his book, <i>Doing English: A Guide for Literature Students</i> (R2), Eaglestone presents English Literature as a conversation rooted in community, as inculcating 'ways of thinking' rather than an assembly of 'facts'. He demonstrates the relevance of English Literature to a changing economy, enabling the discipline to compete flexibly in a shifting educational environment.</p> <p>Varty examines poetry in the context of the politics of its production and reception: the suffrage campaign and 1970s feminism are brought to bear on women's poetry of WW1 in 'Women's Poetry in First World War Anthologies' (R3), and the backdrop of Brexit illuminates poetry and performances by the female national poets of the UK in 'National Poets on Tour' (R4). By</p>		

demonstrating the political context in which poetry is written and read, Varty's research amplifies the disciplinary value of English Literature.

Research by Ryan and McGettigan applies historical context to literary study. Ryan's book, *Shakespeare's Universality* (R5), brings Shakespeare's work powerfully into the present, championing techniques of close reading to free it from politically conservative interpretations enshrined in traditional scholarship. Ryan further revitalises Shakespeare for 21st century readers by drawing out the plays' politics of social inclusion and progress. McGettigan's book, *Herman Melville* (R6), examines transatlantic relations between American authors and their British publishers in the nineteenth century to show how material print culture enhances the authority of the text within a divided American polis.

Together, these studies analyse the contexts in which texts are produced, and demonstrate how texts are illuminated by historically and philosophically enriched understanding. In light of Eaglestone's research, they also advance understanding of the discipline of English Literature at large.

3. References to the research

R1 Robert Eaglestone. (2019) *Literature. Why it matters*. London, Polity Press. QI: Double peer reviewed. Available from HEI on Request.

R2 Robert Eaglestone. (2017) *Doing English: A Guide for Literature Students* fourth revised edition. London, Routledge. QI: *The first edition was published in 1999, 2nd edition 2002, 3rd edition 2009, 4th edition 2017, audiobook, 2020; this series of editions represents the international reach of a sustained engagement with questions of disciplinary pedagogy. Supported by 2014 HEFCE National Teaching Fellowship Award (£10,000). 23,121 copies sold worldwide since 2002.* Available from HEI on Request.

R3 Anne Varty. (2016) 'Women's Poetry in First World War Anthologies and Two Collections of 1916', *Women's Writing. Special Edition Women's Writing and WW1*, ed. Emma Liggins and Liz Nolan. 24.1, pp. 37-52 (double peer reviewed, international press)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09699082.2016.1233772>.

R4 Anne Varty. (2019) 'National Poets on Tour in June 2016: "Shore to Shore" and Brexit', *Review of English Studies*, 70.293, pp.135-157 (double peer reviewed, international press)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/res/hgy108>

R5 Kiernan Ryan. (2015) *Shakespeare's Universality: Here's Fine Revolution*. London, Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare (double peer reviewed, international press). Available from HEI on Request.

R6 Katie McGettigan. (2017) *Herman Melville: Modernity and the Material Text*. Durham, University of New Hampshire Press (double peer reviewed, international press). Available from HEI on Request.

4. Details of the impact

'[text removed for publication]'. [text removed for publication], *Teaching English* (October 2019). (E3)

Professor Eaglestone is a major voice in defending and inspiring the teaching of English in schools. Leading educationalist Gary Snapper commented that his research led to 'a resurgence of discussion about the transition between A Level and HE English', and his work has been widely disseminated, including through the HEA's Innovative Pedagogies series in 2015 (reaching collectively over 38,000 readers (E3)). *Literature: Why It Matters* (R1) has **shaped new ways of thinking about English as a discipline that have inspired teachers** and informed a growing movement of reconceptualising English Literature. Snapper reports:

'[text removed for publication].' (E3, E4)

Eaglestone mobilised response to the threatened future of English by instigating and co-chairing the national conference 'English: Shared Futures' (E:SF) in 2017. Described as '[text removed

for publication]', this facilitated a **national revitalisation of English** by the major Subject Associations: the English Association, University English, the National Association of Writers in Education, the Institute of English Studies, the Higher Education Academy, joined by The National Association of Teachers of English [NATE] in 2019 for the second E:SF conference in 2020. As a result of Eaglestone's research leadership, E:SF generated [text removed for publication] events since 2017, attended by over [text removed for publication] delegates. E:SF has become a festival of English, with its own website ([text removed for publication] unique visits since 2017), app, twitter, virtual publication, fringe, satellite and linked events. E:SF promotes disciplinary resilience by assuring thriving debate to enable professionals and organisations across the sector to adapt to changing educational circumstances, needs and values. Snapper commented that 'For NATE, [Eaglestone] is a crucial link between the worlds of school and university English', a claim borne out by delegate feedback from E:SF ONLINE 2020: 'I consider the bigger picture more and have already incorporated some of the ideas and resources into my online teaching to KS3,4 and KS5'. Barbara Bleiman, Education Consultant, English and Media Centre, testifies to the value of Eaglestone's vision: 'I can think of no-one else in university English who has been so influential in raising ideas, generating new initiatives and creating a unified sense of what the subject as a whole could and should be'. (E4, E5)

Influencing the design and delivery of curriculum and syllabi

Eaglestone's contribution to shaping the rationale for English literature in schools is supported by more practical approaches. Eaglestone and Varty have influenced the A Level English Literature syllabus by serving as Advisory Board Members for the OCR and Edexcel Awarding Bodies when they **reformed specifications for A/AS Level English Literature and A Level English Literature and Language** to comply with the 2014 DfE Statutory Guidance, *English programmes of study: key stage 4*, and *GCE AS and A level subject content for English literature*. They helped these Awarding Bodies to develop their strategic approach to the discipline, select prescribed texts, and frame the Assessment Objectives. The revised syllabi were first taught in 2015. Together, Eaglestone and Varty have helped to shape the educational experience of more than 20% of English Literature A level students nationwide. (E6)

Eaglestone has **enhanced teachers' understanding of syllabus change** by addressing events organised by Subject Associations, and at CPD programmes for the OCR. He has enlivened teachers' ability to teach the requirement that students, 'explore literary texts informed by different interpretations' by, for example, workshop delivery at OCR A Level conferences (collective reach of CPD: [text removed for publication] teachers E4, E6). He also intervened directly in student learning, for example as author of the chapter 'What is English Literature?' in the English and Media Centre publication *The Literature Reader* (June 2019). Education historian, Simon Gibbons, summarises: 'Eaglestone consistently demonstrated his commitment to effective English teaching in secondary schools' (*English and its Teachers*, 2017).(E3)

Influencing delivery of syllabi in schools by developing subject knowledge

Through sustained engagement with the pedagogic priorities of GCSE and A level teachers of English Literature, we have ensured that our research is made available and accessible to teachers via the department's TeacherHub>English. This resource was founded by Eaglestone and colleagues in 2016 and addresses needs generated by the reformed national curriculum, outlined in the 2014 DfE Statutory Guidance. TeacherHub therefore provides: 1) new understanding of the discipline and 2) new subject knowledge. It reaches 127 subscribing schools and 176 named teacher participants. Freely available online, 48 videos and podcasts address 36 A level texts and topics (including eight for Shakespeare), have in excess of 79,000 unique views, international reach (Brazil, India, United Arab Emirates), and 1,140 YouTube subscribers. Annual CPD events have been led by McGettigan, Ryan and Varty (collective attendance 71 teachers), at which 98% of delegates reported that they would use the resources provided in the classroom, and 85% were more likely to teach the texts discussed as a result of attending (E1). Delegates since 2016, surveyed in May 2020, attest to long term benefit: 'lots of these ideas have now become embedded in my own delivery and...have added a richness which has benefitted my A level students.' (E1)

Bespoke visits for A level students to attend Shakespeare classes, and an emergency online Lockdown collaboration with London's Harris Federation (30 Academies across London) in June 2020, have engaged over 100 teacher delegates, and over 500 A Level student visitors, with the outcomes of this research. Dr Rachel Roberts at the Institute of Education, University of Reading, reports, 'I have used the resources myself in my teaching of PGCE students', demonstrating that a generation of trainee teachers are teaching from this research. The reach of TeacherHub is further demonstrated by the fact that it is the top listed 'University Website' on the English and Media Centre 'Digital Resources' page: 'For students considering...A Level English...the videos provide a taste of what it's like to hear lectures from experts in their field'. Resources are also promoted to teachers by the Prince's Teaching Institute, diversifying their reach and endorsing their significance. (E1, E2)

Teachers of A Level English have benefitted from Varty's research on World War 1 Poetry by women. The anthology *Scars Upon My Heart* was set as a new core text for the reformed AQA A Level which required students to understand the poetry's historical context. Varty's research **enhances teachers' knowledge** of how the poetry reflected the suffrage campaign, and their teaching is informed by a range of resources, articles and performances she produced. Her articles on this material, published in the English and Media Centre's *Emagazine*, and Hodder's *English Review* together reached c. [text removed for publication] schools nationwide and over [text removed for publication] print subscribers. English teacher Susan Ferguson at the Piggott School, Wargrave, reports that these have extended her subject knowledge, and boosted the aspirations of her students: 'the article about Jessie Pope and the *Scars* work has been instrumental in making our teaching more interrogative. It helps our subject knowledge IMMENSELY'. (E2, E3)

To enhance students' learning and participation, Varty developed an original playscript, 'Emily's Dream' that demonstrated the confluence of suffrage campaigns and women's war poetry. This resource for teaching *Scars Upon My Heart*, workshopped in December 2018 by 20 Year 8 students at The Cheney School, Oxford, (performed to audience of c 300 students in the playground), was published as a resource for teachers in *Teaching English* (October 2019) as an example of 'creative reading', reaching over [text removed for publication] NATE members (print and online access) comprising teachers, Education Departments, and PGCE students. Access to creative pedagogy was further widened by her invitation from the co-curricular organisation Poetry by Heart (PBH) to write their 2019 Armistice Day blogpost about how 'Emily's Dream' brings *Scars* to life (reached 64,000 unique users, 4,651 teachers worldwide via PBH social media). Of this, the [text removed for publication] PBH stated, '[text removed for publication]' (E3, E9)

Her research has also enhanced subject knowledge via the Prince's Teaching Institute at an online CPD course Varty taught on 'Suffrage Literature' to [text removed for publication] teachers on 1 July 2020, reaching an estimated [text removed for publication] stating that 'the course will have an impact on my pupils' and 69% reporting an **increase in teaching confidence**. Qualitative responses include: 'this was invaluable to me as a teacher for GCSE and A Level'; 'This was a brilliant session, and has given me loads of ideas as we are currently re-writing our curriculum' (E10). Her TeacherHub>English CPD and videos on *Scars*, viewed 883 times between July 2018 and October 2020, generated such feedback as: 'I will teach context differently (more holistic)' (E1). By making *Scars* more accessible, as well as by her pedagogic publications on Carol Ann Duffy based on '[text removed for publication]' (E9), Varty's resources have increased availability of women poets within the syllabus. Varty's research has led to **greater equality of gender representation** for a syllabus dominated by male authors and protagonists.

Ryan's *Shakespeare's Universality* has revitalised teaching of Shakespeare in GCSE English by re-interpreting canonical texts fit for 21st-century students. He was commissioned to write five articles on Shakespearian Tragedy for the British Library's Discovering Literature series. They are endorsed by AQA on their webpage 'Teaching Resources' for GCSE English Literature, and Andrea Varney at the British Library reports that Ryan's articles are 'amongst the most popular

articles on our site' (E7). Between April 2018 and May 2020, they were viewed by 224,282 unique users. Ryan's TeacherHub>English CPD on Shakespeare's tragedies was described by teachers as 'incredibly motivating' and '**inspiring and thought provoking**'. His TeacherHub>English videos on Shakespeare have been viewed over 1,862 times between April 2019 and October 2020. (E1).

Declining knowledge of American literature in schools arising from 2014 DfE policy to remove American Literature from the GCSE curriculum yet to retain it at A Level, has been addressed by McGettigan. A measure of stakeholders' affirmation of the need for this can be seen in her 2017 award of GBP1600 from the US Embassy to lead CPD for teachers via TeacherHub>English. (E8) This redressed teachers' lack of contextual knowledge about set texts for AQA and OCR A Level syllabi. It led to a collaboration with the Prince's Teaching Institute, where McGettigan ran online CPD on 'Arthur Miller and American Outsiders' in November 2019, and to her online A level independent reading course on *Moby Dick*, for resource provider Massolit, viewed [text removed for publication] times between October 2017 and April 2020 (available to [text removed for publication] subscribing institutions worldwide) (E8). Her TeacherHub>English resources on American set texts have been collectively viewed over 4,787 times. Delegates at McGettigan's CPD courses, which together reached 45 teachers, reported **a high increase in confidence** and stated that they would use their new knowledge in the classroom, eg. 'boosted my enthusiasm for next year's teaching so many ideas and excellent resources'. (E1) Her article for students on '*The Great Gatsby* and the American Dream' enriched students' subject knowledge, published by Hodder's *English Review* in September 2020, circulated to [text removed for publication] schools nationwide (E9).

Barbara Bleiman, Poetry by Heart, and Garry Snapper all attest that Royal Holloway English researchers **demonstrate what the English Literature curriculum 'could and should be'** (E4, E9). They have also given teachers necessary resources to produce new content for their GCSE and A-level students.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

E1 TeacherHub Report (62 pages): statistical analysis of participants' feedback with collated significant mentions.

E2 Testimonials corroborating the impact of TeacherHub provided by Susan Ferguson at the Piggott School, Wargrave and Dr Rachel Roberts, Institute of Education, University of Reading.

E3 Professor Eaglestone's and Professor Varty's pedagogy publications (18 items). Notable reviews and mentions of Professor Eaglestone's *Doing English* and *Literature: Why it Matters* outside HE (6 items).

E4 Testimonials by Dr Gary Snapper, Editor of NATE's *Teaching English*, MLT and PGCE Tutor, Oxford University Department of Education, and Barbara Bleiman, Editor of *Emagazine*, Education Consultant, English and Media Centre.

E5 *English: Shared Futures* 2017 & 2020 impact report provided by The English Association.

E6 Testimonial provided by Keeley Nolan, Lead Subject Advisor, about Professor Eaglestone's work with OCR, and documentation of Professor Varty's work with Edexcel.

E7 Statement and data provided by Dr Andrea Varney, Digital Learning, The British Library.

E8 American Embassy award letter; statement and statistical data provided by MASSOLIT regarding Dr McGettigan's course on *Moby Dick*.

E9 Testimonial provided by [text removed for publication] (Hodder Education) and testimonial with data from [text removed for publication], Director of Poetry by Heart, regarding Professor Varty's work.

E10 Testimonials from [text removed for publication] and [text removed for publication]. Reports from The Prince's Teaching Institute regarding courses by Dr McGettigan and Professor Anne Varty.