

CREATING TEXTS SHARING STORIES

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Other Voices

Creative Writing on Diversity



First frame:

- ‘the fruit of the lived experience of these students as individuals’
- ‘respect and stimulus for the creative capacity of the learner’
- Freire 1996

OTHER VOICES CREATIVE WRITING PROJECT

- UAL T&L exchange funded creative writing workshops
- A unique collection of short stories and poems from a diverse student community exploring creative writing as form of self-expression.

Stories of the student experience

- **Self-expression** – what they are experiencing, how they can express it and how they can share it, recognise the relevance of their personal narratives
- **Learning from narrative** – sense-making, how they learn from each other, how they can encourage empathy, problem solving, making connections
- = resilience, self-belief, gaining voice, sharing/advocacy.
- We as teachers learn from them about their lives in their words

- Your story counts

Students at edges?

- Gender
- LGBT
- BAME
- Mixed race
- UK/International
- Single parent families
- First to university
- Mental illness

What are they facing?

- Racism
- Struggling to find mental well being
- Alone in a city
- Away from home
- Finding place
- Transition – child to adult
- Absence
- Escape

Students' expressed feelings

- Exclusion
- Fear
- Hope
- Belonging
- Being outsiders
- Volatility
- Being Global citizens
- Transition

Creative writing = spaces for

- Honesty
- Exploration
- Expressing fear
- Examining what makes you strong
- Describing unsaid things
- Take time to say things

Students talking to each other - What are their contexts?

- Boxing
- Hip hop
- Being on the tube
- Migrant away from family
- Backpacking
- Surfing

How to share individual stories?

- Publishing as site of support and amplification
- Social process of learning

To be heard through Publication

- Tangible outcome in **print**, beautiful object, respectful of content, material value of their ideas
- While also **digital** for wider dissemination – on a professional publishing platform – to reach diverse audiences, a spreadable media, content finds listeners, engagement

Publishing as site of empathy and transition

- agency of writers
- legitimacy through publishing
- learning from each other through act of editing
- getting closer to the stories
- writers gain confidence they can be heard

Publishing process

- Stories are written – the individual takes agency
- Stories are connected – authors and publishers – supportive environment, others start to learn the story, help express it, turn it into a text
- Stories are shared – distributed through published work – become real and amplified

- We all learn

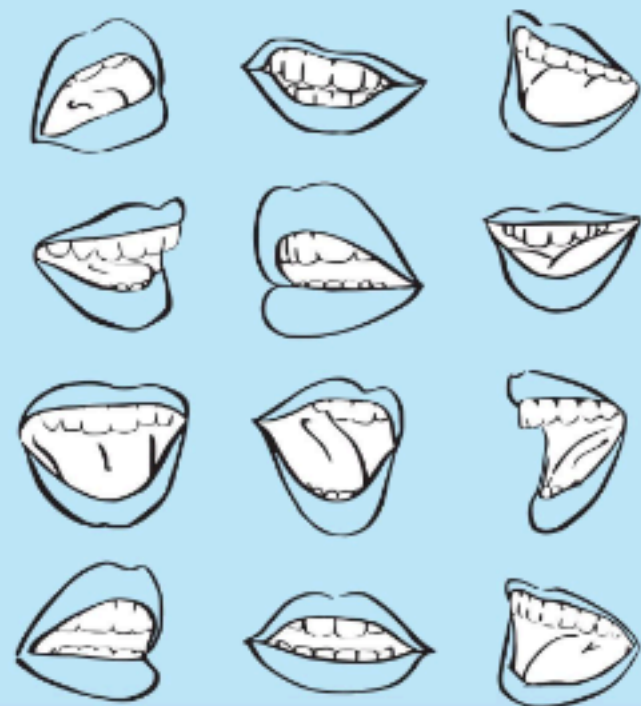
Final frame:

- ‘Publishing isn’t a passive medium’
 - ‘The role of publishing is an act of mediation’
-
- Bhaskar (M.) 2013



Other Voices

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Gabrielle Clarke

↓
People like mirrors; they are complete. You see
what's behind you, which is before you, all that is
known is known again.
Same forward as it is backward.
A palindrome.
A circle.
But it can also be false. It can lie and the mind
dreams.



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Charlene Delim

Not anymore

I think the best thing about feeling like I'm in a good place,
is that it's now.

I mean there were times when the "now" then was really
dark and I couldn't breathe and next thing I know I'm in psychiatry.
I hated the psychiatrists. They would try to understand everything
and the nothing that was going on, that I couldn't really explain
to anyone because of shame that I couldn't control something that
should be controllable. Counselling never worked, I would come
out feeling like I was getting mocked at by society who lied and
said everything would be better after a few sessions. Pure bullshit.
No-one would understand how I really felt and what was going
through my mind because everyone's source of pain is different, and
so is their reactions to that, and that's all dependant on who they are
as a person, and just because a few people have a similar diagnosis
doesn't mean the same treatment will work. Up till now I spent
years trying to fight off my demons, which was apparently that
being too considerate and too emotionally sensitive is what lead me
to draw in people's pain and help them heal. I guess that's what's
different now, I hated seeing how much pain my parents were in
when I almost couldn't take it anymore, I was prepared to die and
let them bury their daughter, mourning at their loss and mull over
on what it is that they did and didn't do. I vowed to never let my
parents feel like they were shit, because they weren't and it was me
who had a problem.

I'm a lot more confident than before, perhaps more
calculative too. Careful not to demonstrate the power I know I
have to stand up for myself and those around me, watching out for
those who truly believe they're the 'take no bullshit' kind and use it
against you. Fuck off.

Nowadays only a small amount of people are worthy of
my deep consideration, but genuinely I am a nice person and I guess
we can be friends, so long as you understand what mutual respect is
and don't sound like a condescending piece of shit. I can't take that,
not anymore.

I'd say travelling around the world helped me understand
things, where I go I'm none but one of billions of people, or that
because I am just this one, where else can I go? What can I see? Who
will I meet? What will happen on these lands I've never been to but
growing to love? No-one knew me atop of those cliffs admiring the
sunrise, I could be whoever I wanted to be.

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