

DELIVERING EXCELLENCE IN
TEACHING ENGLISH IN
SCHOOLS CONFERENCE 2022

**A Model for Re-Engaging
Students with English: Creativity,
Criticality and Active Learning**

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THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR
THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH



DECLINE & FALL?

➤ Decline in A Level English(es)

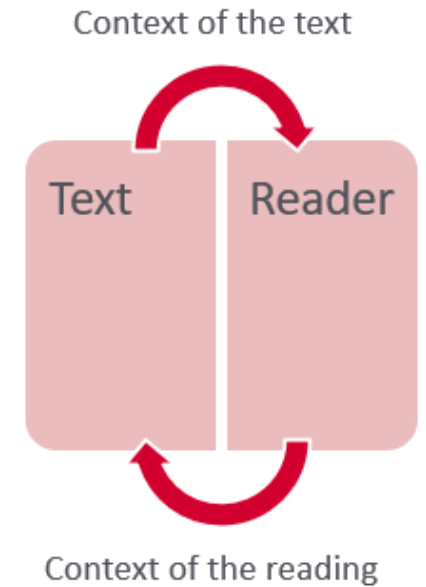
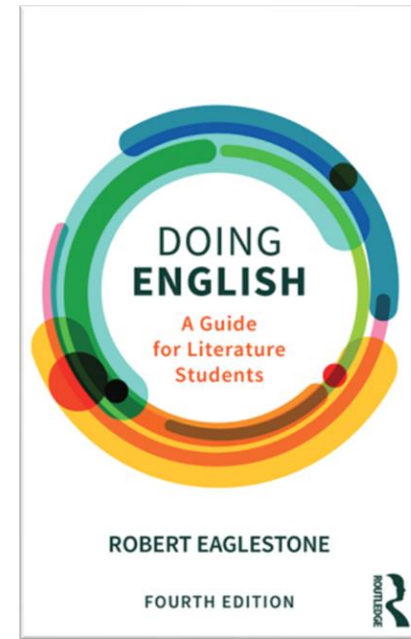
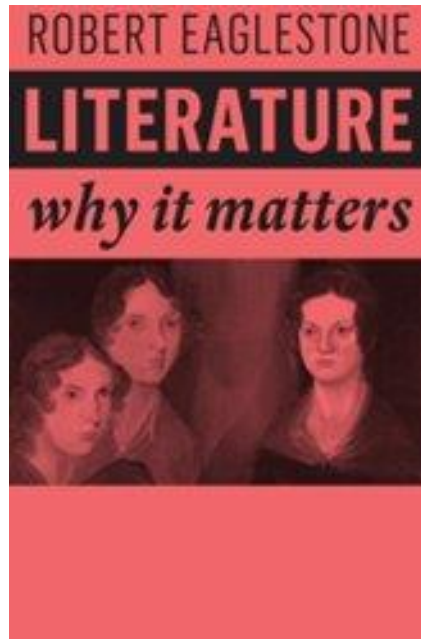
- Emphasis (& value) in STEM subjects;
- Removal of AS options;
- 'Facilitating' subjects list;
- Student disengagement at KS3&4;
- Narrow GCSE spec;
- Language GCSE unlike A Level;
- No reference to multi-modal texts
- 'Bleeding down' of GCSE into KS3

	2012	2016	2020
English Language	24,416	21,933	14,715
English Literature	49,070	48,973	38,310
English Language & Literature	16,476	12,470	7,250
All A Level entries	Unavailable	785,890	731,855



Reading ‘comes into being in the live circuit set up between the reader and the “text”’

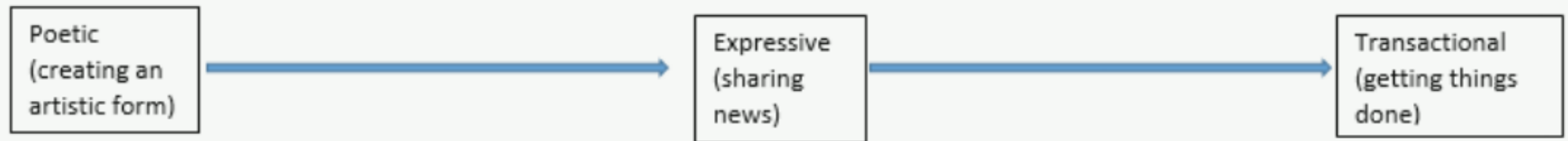
(Rosenblatt, 1978, p14)



ENGLISH IS A CONVERSATION

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'CREATIVE'?

- Connotes 'newness', 'imaginative', 'originality' (Stafford, 2010, p30)
- 'Vexed word... writing can be more or less creative: in the degree to which it is transformative for the writer' (Rosen, 2002, p197)
- Pragmatic perspective:
 - *'The single most beneficial thing we can do to foster creativity is to see it not as some odd, aesthetic indulgence but as **a part of everyday life and every lesson**. To do this we must establish a classroom that values experiment and collaboration.'* (Wright, 2012, p132)
- Types of texts and types of writing
- Communication
- Learning is creative (McCallum, 2012)



Britton's Framework of Writing Functions - adapted from (Beard, 2000, p. 94)

Degrees of functionality: where would a sign post go?
Keats' 'Ode to a Nightingale'?

THE TEXT'S THE THING...

- Where's the text in this class (or SoW)?
- Who is the reader and what kinds of reading will they be doing in this lesson (series of lessons)?
- How might they respond to the text/context?
- What are the contexts of the text? How might this affect how the reader makes meaning?



Rachel Roberts considers what we do when we *read* texts and when we *teach* the reading of texts – and offers some advice to those working with beginning English teachers.

(Roberts, 2019)

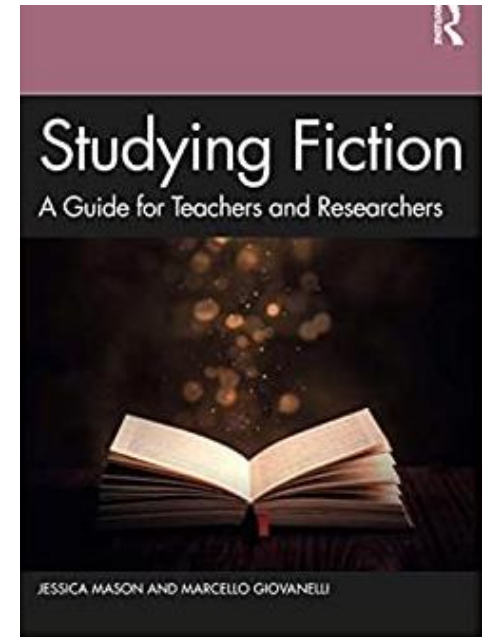
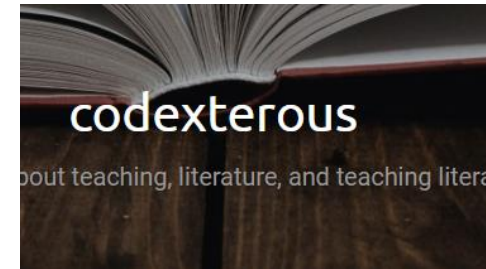
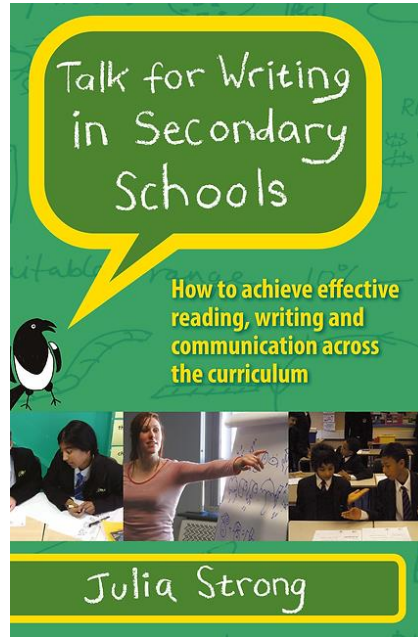
ENGLISH PEDAGOGY & THE TEXT

‘In teaching a text, teachers act upon assumptions about the nature of text, the nature of literature, what it means to read a text, how one marshals evidence to support a particular reading of a text, and the very nature of evidence itself.’ (Grossman & Shulman, 1994, p. 5)

➤ Thinking and talking (Strong, 2012)

➤ 'Authentic' reading (Mason & Giovanelli, 2021)

➤ Generative written responses (Atherton, 2022)



STRATEGIES

THE CURRICULUM IN ENGLISH

- 'Knowledge rich'
- Concepts
- Themes
- Epistemic ascent (Winch, 2013)
- Substantive & disciplinary knowledge (Counsell, 2018)
- Spiral curriculum (Bruner, 1960)

CLPE'S READING & WRITING SCALES



IMPLICATIONS

Look closely at your curriculum:

- Content
- Design and structure
- Emphasise the importance of the discipline (its purpose, its facility beyond exams, including potential careers)
- Joy!

FINAL THOUGHT



'Powerful knowledge', 'cultural literacy' and the study of literature in schools

Robert Eaglestone



WILEY

The sciences study nature; the humanities, and the study of literature especially, are concerned with the time-bound, changing existence in which we ourselves are participants. The study of literature is a form of communication and making of meaning and value. **Reading literature involves experience, judgement, pleasure and emotion.** We learn to write by turning not to equations but to other people's attempts, models and forms of experience; **we learn what we think not by computing but by discussing, with others and with ourselves.** This does not mean there are no basic ideas or core concepts in the study of literature. There are: they include the concept of genres and their impact on meaning; features like narrative voice, plot, arc, structure, closure; a sense of how form and style work, and more. There's a craft to reading a poem that can be taught, a proficiency to thinking through a novel in relation to your own experience that you can learn. But crucially, unlike the sciences, all these terms are not equations or simple facts: each term I've listed is part of a continual conversation through which the discipline evolves. The terms mark questions in a conversation, not answers to an algorithm. **It's by encountering and, more importantly, joining this conversation, not by memorising a list of inert knowledge, that students will learn to read and succeed in literary studies and, even better, to love literature.'** (Eaglestone, 2021, p36)

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LINKS

Andy Atherton (Codexterous) blog: <https://codexterous.home.blog/>

Christine Counsell on the curriculum (2018): <https://impact.chartered.college/article/taking-curriculum-seriously/>

Christopher Winch's epistemic ascent and curriculum design (podcast): <https://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/news/audio/view/epistemic-ascent-and-curriculum-design-christopher-winch-seminar-podcast/>

CLPE: <https://clpe.org.uk/>

Eaglestone's talk on 'powerful knowledge': <https://www.philosophy-of-education.org/impact/>

EMC: <https://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/>

James Durran's blog: <https://jamesdurran.blog/>

NATE www.nate.org.uk (<https://www.nate.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/11-The-NATE-Annual-Survey.pdf>; <https://www.nate.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/29-NATE-News-Summer-2021-2-1.pdf>; <https://www.nate.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/NATE-GCSE-English-Language-survey-report-1.pdf>; <https://www.nate.org.uk/curriculum-assessment-in-english-3-19/>)

Talk 4 Writing: <http://www.talk4writing.co.uk/>

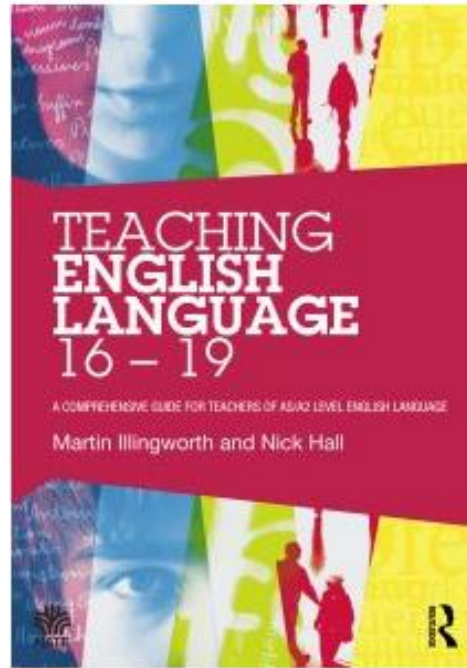
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Diversifying the Canon

A series of practical presentations from NATE's Reviewing Literature Working Group (for KS1-5 English teachers), demonstrating how diverse texts can be studied alongside canonical texts.

Following the success and feedback from NATE's Diversity CPD last term, we are delighted to announce our next CPD offering on this theme.

English teachers often do not have the power or resources to add 'diverse' texts into their school curriculums. NATE's Reviewing Literature Working Group will aim to show that a diverse education can be taught using canonical texts, with this range of literature having equally important place in our classrooms. The session will involve sharing ideas of teaching canonical texts (following a Twitter and Instagram poll) alongside diverse texts from primary to secondary level. The interactive session will consist of each presenter suggesting ways to compare the Canon to diverse texts including picture books and graphic novels, and teachers can see this effect through a sharing of range of approaches. There will be the opportunity for Q&A following each presentation.



Furzeen Ahmed is Associate Lecturer in English Language at the University of Derby.



Aalishah Rauf is an English teacher at Windsor High School and Sixth Form.



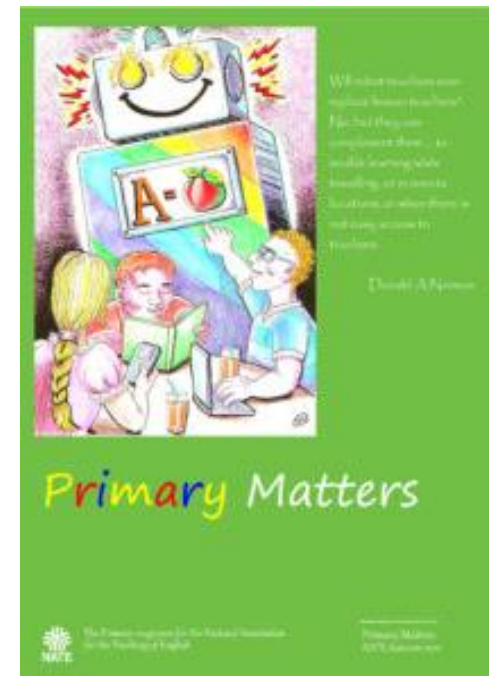
Jessica Taron is second in English at City of London Academy and leads The Right Writing campaign.



Lesley Nelson-Addy is a PGCE English Curriculum Tutor and DPfI candidate at Oxford University Department of Education.



Thishani Wijesinghe is head of English at Royal Grammar School, Guildford.



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