



Sydney Story FACTORY

Igniting the spark of creativity to help young people find their voice.

**Workshop Program Evaluation Summary
February 2017**

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“Thanks so much for allowing my children to take part in your programs. Kai started Sydney Story Factory in its very first term, and he never looked back. He has become much more comfortable with writing since taking the workshops, and I’m so appreciative of Sydney Story Factory for giving him the opportunities to grow and gain confidence with his writing.”

Kyong Choe, parent.

The Sydney Story Factory runs creative writing workshops for young people aged 7 to 17 that focus on improving writing skills and boosting confidence.

All workshops are designed and led by our expert team of writers and teachers. Under their guidance, volunteer tutors work with young people one-on-one or in small groups, giving them the personal attention to their writing even the best teachers struggle to provide. Workshops can include elements of drawing, filming, audio recording, cartooning, dressing in costume or theatre, whatever works best to spark students’ imaginations and help them explore their ideas. All workshops are free.

The programs evaluated in this report were all run once a week (either one or two hours) for a term, at the Sydney Story Factory in Redfern. Topics varied from creating digital animations to writing fantasy stories, writing about their community, and stories set in Fear City, where every inhabitant has an unusual fear.

THE NUMBERS

2014

Student Enrolments

2,197

Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islanders

19%

English as an additional
language or dialect

52%

Student
Workshop Hours

6,258

Volunteer
Workshop Hours

3,557

2015

Student Enrolments

2,380

Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islanders

26%

English as an additional
language or dialect

34%

Student
Workshop Hours

10,426

Volunteer
Workshop Hours

5,048

2016

Student Enrolments

3,278

Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islanders

29%

English as an additional
language or dialect

31%

Student
Workshop Hours

13,244

Volunteer
Workshop Hours

5,064

THE STORY

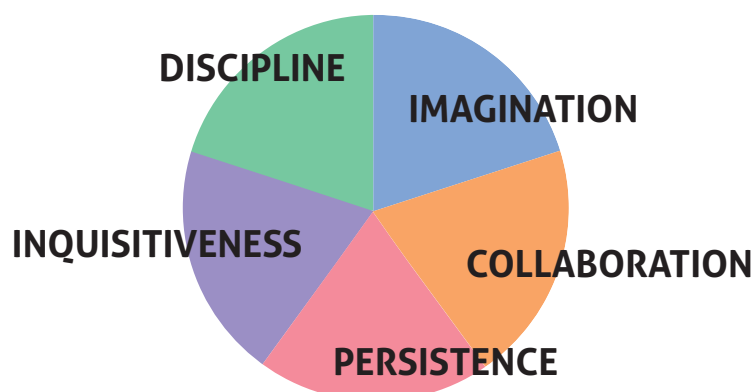


Since inception, the Sydney Story Factory (SSF) has been committed to conducting a rigorous, long-term evaluation of the benefits of our programs for young people.

A three-year evaluation conducted between 2014-2016 by Associate Professor Jackie Manuel and Dr David Smith from the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney under the direction of Professor Robyn Ewing AM, investigated the impact of long-term participation in SSF creative writing workshops in the following areas:

- writing skills
- self-confidence
- engagement in learning
- enthusiasm for creative writing.

The study broke new ground in the evaluation of complex social and emotional outcomes from arts programs, in particular because of the focus on the central importance of fostering children's creativity. The study developed a model of creativity based on the following five central dimensions:



By tracking changes in these five dimensions, the evaluation's longitudinal approach enabled a strong and systematic investigation of the factors that foster children's ongoing creativity and imagination.

The full evaluation report is available on request.

"At the Sydney Story Factory, we believe that all young people, no matter their background, should be given the opportunity to develop the communication skills and confidence that are crucial for future success."

**Cath Keenan,
Co-founder and
Executive Director**



THE METHODOLOGY

During the first year of the evaluation, considerable time was spent refining the qualitative and quantitative tools required to meaningfully capture changes to these elusive, often intangible attributes in the areas of impact.

The evaluation settled on a case-study methodology creating rich pictures of individual students by comparing data from multiple sources. In addition, data was collected from a wider range of students through pre- and post-program surveys only. The instruments developed to collect the data for the rich case studies were as follows:

- pre- and post-program questionnaires for students, administered by the evaluation co-ordinator;
- an observation schedule developed by Dr David Smith, allowing observers (trained by the evaluation team) to note changes in students' behaviour associated with each of the five dimensions of creativity (persistence, collaboration, discipline, imagination, inquisitiveness);
- a bespoke Writing Analysis Framework* developed by Associate Professor Manuel that is unique in the field of research and practice in teaching writing, writing pedagogy and writing assessment, and the first of its kind in Australia and internationally; Analysis of student writing by Associate Professor Manuel, and volunteers she trained, using the Framework provided a holistic, meaningful way to evaluate changes in writing, moving beyond analysis of grammar and vocabulary to take in nuances in meaning, imaginative use of language and originality;
- interviews with students, parents and volunteers conducted by phone/email, or face-to-face, by the evaluation co-ordinator and members of the evaluation team;
- post-program questionnaires with parents and teachers, where possible, administered by the evaluation co-ordinator and other members of the evaluation team.

By comparing data from these various sources, the evaluation developed rich case studies of 10 students, each of whom participated in two or more term-long SSF workshop programs. Survey data pre- and post-program was collected from 88 students. The evaluation took three years to complete, finishing in September 2016.

*The Framework developed by Associate Professor Manuel will be published and copyrighted by the evaluation team, with the aim of widely disseminating this valuable tool for assessing students' creative writing.

“To flourish in a complex, ever-changing world, young people must be creative thinkers with highly developed problem-solving skills.”

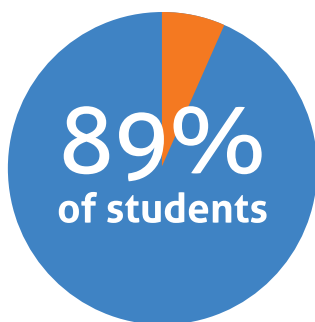
THE INSIGHTS

SURVEY DATA

Changes to students' responses in the pre- and post-program questionnaires throughout the period of the evaluation strongly suggest that students became more aware of their writing, and importantly developed more accurate self-perceptions of their abilities to allow them to identify priorities for improvement. The three core achievements for the students were:

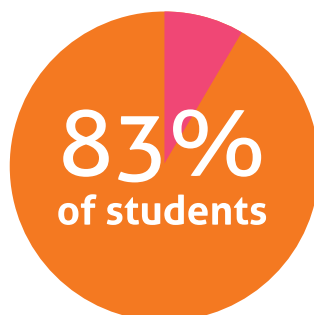
• Positivity

The students overwhelmingly liked the programs, felt supported and believed SSF helped them in their school work.

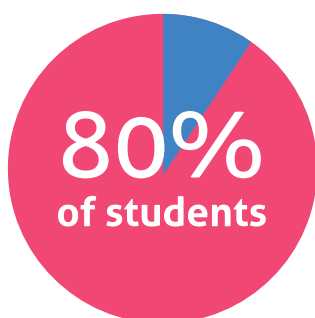


'Sydney Story Factory provides the opportunity to write creatively.'

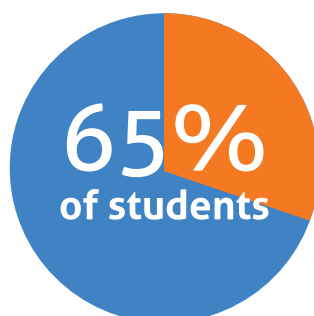
'I know I can ask for help and support.'



'I like coming to Sydney Story Factory.'



'Sydney Story Factory participation helps my schoolwork.'



"These response changes signified powerful learning and understanding that was then reflected in both observational records and in the analysis of writing."



• Empowerment

The experience of attending the initial workshops was a powerful learning experience for most students, particularly if there was a structured reflection session after the workshop about their knowledge of creative writing and their own practice.

Survey responses for the 88 students tended to move from certain to uncertain (or 'not true of me'). This suggests that the workshops had helped students learn about the complexity of writing and their own practice and indicates a growth in self-knowledge and awareness. This can be seen as a first step towards improving the quality of the students' writing.

• Growth

Students who undertook several workshop programs grew in their learning and understanding about the elements of 'good' creative writing, their own writing practice, areas for improvement, and components of effective writing practice.

COLLABORATION
CONSIDERATION
OF AUDIENCE
DISCIPLINED LESSONS ABOUT
CHOICE OF CHARACTERS'
VOCABULARY FEELINGS
CAPACITY TO WRITE DIALOGUE
EDITING SEEKING
TOWARDS FEEDBACK
IMPROVEMENT HIGHER STANDARDS

"These response changes signified powerful learning and understanding that was then reflected in both observational records and in the analysis of writing."

THE ACHIEVEMENTS



CASE STUDY DATA

The 10 case study students demonstrated that they were mostly engaged, focused and active participants in SSF creative writing workshops over two or more full terms, and this resulted in positive changes in:

- self-confidence and confidence in engaging with both adults and peers;
- enjoyment of creative writing;
- increased knowledge and understanding of creative writing processes and their own writing practices;
- the development of writing skills that for many are beyond the expected outcomes for their age/stage.

Parents were “extremely positive” about the impact of SSF programs on their children and their schoolwork. While not always able to pinpoint specific improvements in literacy skills or school achievement as a direct result of attendance, they all observed increased confidence in their children, leading to improvement in organisational skills, social interaction and oral communication. Importantly, several parents revealed that the non-judgmental and accepting approach taken by the storytellers and volunteers has been incredibly important in building their children’s sense of identity.

The students’ writing – the product of the workshops – provided the strongest evidence of their ideas and the development of and growth in their writing skills and capacities. For those students who attended more than one workshop program, the analysis of their writing from two or more workshops provided strong evidence of writing development in the cognitive, affective, socio-cultural, inter-relational and stylistic domains.

“Observations of the 10 case study students indicated that they generally enjoyed being in the workshops, were relaxed and communicated easily and confidently with both adults and peers, were focused and continually engaged in the workshop activity.”

When a student attended at least two workshop programs, their writing demonstrated increased capacity to:

- explore writing topics guided by the storyteller;
- apply learned strategies for planning and prewriting;
- draw on a greater repertoire of vocabulary;
- experiment with ideas and test these with tutors and peers;
- write with a sense of audience and purpose;
- balance personal and emotional investment with skills in informal research and discussion with others;
- edit and add detail to their writing with continued guidance;
- seek assistance and initiate conversations about ideas and writing;
- experience enthusiasm for writing and creating a 'product';
- reflect on the process of writing and develop confidence in their writing ability;
- invest in the quality of the 'product' that will be presented to 'real' audiences;
- take pride in their finished piece.

When mapped to the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA, formerly Board of Studies and Educational Standards) learning stages and outcomes, these students demonstrated writing abilities beyond or well beyond that expected of their year group and stage. Further, for case study students, the impact of SSF workshops enhanced their confidence as writers, their enjoyment and pleasure in writing, their repertoire of vocabulary, technical skills, planning strategies and discipline in writing sustained pieces, and their internalisation of the writing process.

This growth and these positive results were maximised through carefully structured and scaffolded full-term workshops that explicitly included the 'seven core conditions' of writing (developed by the evaluation team and outlined overleaf). In particular, growth in personal knowledge about their own writing practice and the elements that require improvement were also maximised when participants are provided with time and opportunities to engage in reflection, and when this is scaffolded by a tutor and/or facilitator.

However, while analysis of student writing indicated growth and development in individual case study student's writing skills, it also indicated that much of the writing is highly derivative, often copying plots, events and characters directly from students' own, often limited experience. While this is to some extent to be expected, particularly in younger writers, continuing this derivative practice limits the potential, capacity and development of imagination, one of the key dimensions of creativity. There is a strong link between the creative dimensions of inquisitiveness and imagination.

Regarding the 'Five Dimensions of Creativity', the strongest evidence, particularly from observation records, was for collaboration followed by discipline. The two dimensions for which there was much less, and less consistent evidence in the case studies were inquisitiveness and imagination. In both latter cases, evidence tended to be, for the majority of observations, at the lower end of each of these dimensions.

“When mapped to the NSW Education Standards Authority learning stages and outcomes, these students demonstrated writing abilities beyond or well beyond that expected of their year group and stage.”

THE SEVEN CORE CONDITIONS

Over the course of the evaluation, the evaluation team identified from research seven core conditions that are essential in fostering student creative writing and that, from evidence, were elements of Sydney Story Factory workshops.

These are:

- **Time**

Full-term weekly workshops foster the development of creativity and confidence in a familiar environment.

- **Choice**

Providing extensive choice of topics and opportunities for writing that depended on individuals generating their own ideas and receiving support and affirmation for their own work.

- **Process**

Structured workshops equipping students with an understanding of the process of writing and helping them develop their own 'toolbox' of strategies for all aspects of writing.

- **Purpose**

SSF writing projects provide authentic audiences that extend beyond the teacher due to the concerted effort to make explicit the purpose and audience for all writing by using scenarios, roleplay, props and stimuli to encourage imagination.

- **Craft**

Term-long workshops enable sustained engagement with writing, with students given time to learn conventions, structures, stylistic features, and the mechanics of good writing in the context of their own writing.

- **Feedback**

Term-long workshops exemplify the understanding that writing has a complex relationship to 'talk', providing opportunities for genuine dialogue with, and feedback from, tutors and peers. The celebration of the final product encouraged students to invest in their writing and internalise the writing process over time.

- **Community**

Students gained recognition that writing is a social act requiring the establishment of a community of learners and occurs during a web of relationships between the writer and the reader/audience. SSF workshops provide a safe and familiar environment facilitating students to take risks with their writing, think creatively by making connections between known and 'new' ideas sparked by the story-teller, and test out their ideas with trusted others.

"The seven-week continuous writing workshop programs at SSF exemplified the successful integration of these conditions in powerful and unique ways: ways that are rarely replicated or apparent in formal classroom settings in mainstream schools."

THE RECOMMENDATIONS



In many cases, students did significantly improve their writing skills, yet some did not optimise this achievement suggesting a more deliberately structured, and particularly reflective approach in SSF workshops might result in greater learning and improvement. As such, a more deliberate and explicit structure may achieve this more effectively.

1. Workshops should be continuous term-long and be carefully scaffolded and structured to deliberately focus on explicitly building the 'Five Dimensions of Creativity', particularly those of imagination and inquisitiveness (inquiry and research beyond individual experience).
2. There should be an emphasis in all workshops of deliberately finding ways to expand participants' life experience and knowledge and more workshops like the 'Home' workshops. Developing workshops with this emphasis should result in expanded capacities for imagination in writing, particularly for students with a more limited life and cultural experience.
3. All workshops should include scaffolded deliberate opportunities for participants to reflect on their writing practices and to explicitly identify areas for improvement and strategies to achieve this. Such deliberate evaluation of practice and planning for improvement is essential if student growth, particularly for older students who attend more than one workshop, is to be maximised.

"Is our purpose simply to provide opportunities for students to write creatively or is it to deliberately develop the creative skills and processes and improve these?"

LEXI

“The shield must be broken, I realise, as I plummet down through the sky and my last thought before the world blacks out is I am so going to sue Spaceships Incorporated™.”

“The extent of this development far exceeds what would be expected of a student in a mainstream classroom context.”

THE STUDENTS

Lexi began at SSF in Term 1, 2014 when she was 11-years-old. She continued in Terms 2 and 3, 2014; Term 1, 2015; and Term 1, 2016, completing the 'Mind Matters' workshop. In 2015, she commenced Year 7 and reports that English is the language spoken at home.

Responses in all five post-workshop questionnaires recorded that Lexi enjoyed being part of SSF, where she was provided with both opportunities and support to write creatively. She also consistently reported that participation had helped with her school work.

Lexi has consistently indicated over three years that she thinks she is a creative person who enjoys creative writing and feels proud when she writes. Analyses of her writing also provided strong evidence of her creative capacities. Her 'Mind Matters' story – developed over the course of a term-long workshop in early 2016 – is a lengthy, coherent and finely crafted piece of writing that exceeds expectations for a writer of her age.

Self-confidence is clearly evident in Lexi's writing scripts. She adapts and effectively utilises a wide range of planning and pre-writing strategies derived from the story-teller's scaffolds, and from her own repertoire of personal writing rituals. From her pre-writing, drafting and polished pieces of writing, it is manifestly the case that Lexi has internalised the writing process to a significant degree and demonstrates a high level of self-confidence in generating, shaping and representing her ideas in writing.

Lexi's cognitive and affective capacities, along with her stylistic development over the period from 2014 to 2016, provide robust evidence for her growth and maturation as a writer and her sustained investment in the process and product of creative writing. Her 'Mind Matters' story, for example, runs to more than 3000 words – a remarkable achievement for a young writer.

Within Associate Professor Manuel's Writing Analysis Framework, Lexi's writing has developed from 'Proficient' (in 2014) to 'Connecting', with significant indicators in the 'Independent' stage. The extent of this development far exceeds what would be expected of a student in a mainstream classroom context. Her writing meets and exceeds many of the NSW BOSTES English Syllabus outcomes expected of a student in Stages 5-6 (Years 9-12). For Lexi, the impact of SSF workshops has been profoundly significant and instrumental in her demonstrated accomplishment and capacity as a writer.



YARRIE

"Sydney Story Factory helped me find my voice. They helped me explore the power and importance of writing. They are from my village: they speak my language."

THE STUDENTS

Yarrie and her family are originally from Sierra Leone but fled the civil war and spent time in a refugee camp before arriving in Australia in 2004. Once here, Yarrie spent 18 months in an intensive language centre and then a further 18 months at primary school before going to Tempe High School. Over time, despite being happy in Australia, many of Yarrie's difficult memories from war in Sierra Leone and hardships in Guinea began to re-surface. Yarrie started to experience nightmares that she was running for her life back in a war zone.

By year 11, Yarrie was finding it difficult to go anywhere on her own and was having trouble sleeping but in 2011, a youth worker told Yarrie about a writing competition and she started to write about her dreams. She won the competition, saying: "...there is something about writing and describing what I had experienced because I was too afraid to tell anyone. But I could write about what was happening inside my head. Writing became like my best friend and I would keep a pen everywhere so I could write whenever the flashbacks attacked me... So, I was happier but I didn't share my writing. At home, I would fix up the words and spelling but then just leave it. Sometimes I would even destroy it when I re-read it later..."

When Yarrie encountered SSF she "...was one of the first ones there after school and on a Sunday. And I met Helen and we instantly connected. I went whenever I could through 2012 and 2013, two solid years. I slept, ate and wrote. And I only stopped because I was rehearsing for a show."

Later on, Campsie Police asked Yarrie to mentor some girls and she shared the method she had used to overcome her pain and struggles. She shared her work and contacted SSF to work with them. Now a student at the Australian Catholic University where she is undertaking international studies and a United Nations Ambassador for young people, Yarrie hopes she can continue to tell her story in Australia, to give a voice to refugees still in camps. She wants to help teachers understand how to support refugees overcome their trauma to learn.

* This case study was developed retrospectively, and data was derived through several interviews. The case study was validated with the subject.



CLAIRE

“Bob is two-and-a-half years old (in human years he is 17-and-a-half years old). He is a German Shepherd. He is a pet and a YouTuber (he posts himself tap-dancing and pretends to be his owner David) and is also a secret detective. When he is not being any of these, he likes digging up holes in David’s garden.”

THE STUDENTS

Claire began at SSF in 2013 when she was eight, and continued in 2014, completing the 'Quarantine' workshop. She speaks Indonesian, Mandarin, German and English at home. Asked to describe herself, Claire says that she “tries to speak as fast as possible and sometimes mixes her words up with interesting - and sometimes confusing! - results.”

Claire’s writing from the Term 3, 2013 workshop provides evidence of her increased capacity to generate ideas and develop these over time, greater attention to detail, and a greater level of sustained engagement and investment in the writing process and product. In fact, the pre-writing and planning evident in Claire’s workshop drafts highlight a significant development in the quantity of writing achieved during each workshop session, compared to relatively scant evidence from the Term 2 workshop drafts.

Equally worth highlighting is the development in Claire’s capacity to sequence and structure the ideas generated from the planning scaffolds. This may in part be attributed to her ability to adapt and utilise the range of scaffolds provided by the storyteller, and to apply learning from the previous workshop.

In terms of ideas and substance, Claire’s work provide evidence of some originality, although the characters, action and plot tend towards the familiar and predictable, with writing still ‘close to the self’. There is evidence of increased capacity to write in more structured and considered ways, with more complex sentence structures, paragraphing and syntax.

Claire’s parents’ responses indicate strong agreement that she talked about what she had done at SSF with them, was more co-operative and creative at home and more motivated to learn at home. They also strongly agreed that she could express ideas more clearly and was more confident in doing this and better at understanding how people feel. Claire consistently reported that her attendance at SSF had not helped at school, but her parents suggested strongly that Claire had become a self-regulated and independent learner, who studied harder at school and was more positive about, and more motivated to learn at, school.

In 2014, Claire changed her response and reported that her participation at SSF had helped with her schoolwork. This change was reinforced in her interview where she talked specifically about increasing her confidence and skills in writing poetry – one of the major writing tasks in Term 2, 2014. However, while Claire’s responses to several post-workshop items suggested that she believed her writing skills had improved, particularly in double-checking work and editing, her parents’ opinion was somewhat less positive. They wrote: “...[Claire’s] writing skill is still weak. She still need to help in organise to make into paragraph (sic)”.

THE STUDENTS



HAYLEY

“My mum is special because one time I really wanted to go to the Easter Show and she took me.

That shows how kind and nice she is.”

Hayley, a 10-year-old girl, attended four workshops in Terms 1 and 2 in 2014 and Terms 1 & 2, 2015. An important feature of the evidence collected is her movement from more positive and/or negative questionnaire responses to ‘unsure’ responses, common to many SSF participants as their experience of workshops increases knowledge and understanding of the complexity of writing and their own writing practices.

Since her second workshop, Hayley has indicated that she is willing to share and discuss her ideas, although she has responded that she does not find this easy. Observations have recorded increasing levels of self-confidence in both initiating and sustaining interactions and in sharing her ideas and seeking feedback.

Writing from Term 1, 2015, was judged to reflect the indicators of the Developing stage (6-8 years). While it showed consistent engagement with pre-writing and planning supported by scaffolds, prompts and discussion, the writing used simple language and sentence structure and concrete and literal description. There was no evidence of exploring/expanding ideas and little elaboration of plot, setting or character. Writing showed minimal evidence of empathy, concern for audience and editing.

Writing from Term 2 demonstrated significant growth in writing skills. Her writing was judged to achieve all relevant indicators of the ‘Developing’ stage and the large majority (apart from awareness of audience) in the ‘Transitional’ stage (7-9 years). Her writing provided evidence of increased imagination and creative historical appropriation in the creation of characters, and strategies that provided increased coherence of plot. Some sentences were more complex in structure and varied in nature, and vocabulary was broader and more sophisticated than in Term 1. Plot resolution was, however, unconvincing with still little evidence of character empathy. Her writing would have benefitted from more attention to final editing – there was no evidence of redrafting to refine vocabulary, character or setting or to increase coherence.

In conclusion, evidence gathered about Hayley’s participation at SSF indicates increased confidence in sustained communications, particularly with adults, in sharing and discussing ideas and working in groups. Evidence also points to some significant development in her writing skills although indicators achieved are still less than those generally expected of her age, particularly those concerning awareness of audience, expanded vocabulary in more varied and complex sentences and the capacity to explore characters, especially in relation to empathy. Apart from collaboration, there is minimal evidence regarding the ‘Five Dimensions of Creativity’, especially that of discipline in regard to editing towards improvement of the quality of writing.



SAM

"This course has been helpful because it is a fabulous experience and I get an insight on the awesome world of books!"

THE STUDENTS

Sam was 10 years old when he began at the Sydney Story Factory. His family speaks English and Vietnamese at home. Sam loves detail, diagrams, and marshmallows. Between 2013 and 2015, Sam was an enthusiastic participant in a number of SSF after-school workshops ranging from 'Fantasy' to 'Fear City', when students created and wrote about characters with unusual fears.

Over the course of three term-long workshops, Sam's distinctive voice became even more pronounced, with a consistent and convincing narrative voice driving the story. And the final product of the 2014 workshop 'Fear City', Sam's story titled 'The Returned' shows a clear capacity to invest in and persist with his writing over a significant period. It is well-edited and polished, which can only occur with careful attention to, and regard for, the writing process, conventions and audience – a characteristic of the accomplished writer.

When comparing the analysis of his writing from Term 3, 2013 with that of his writing from Term 2, 2014; we can report that Sam has moved from 'Expanding' / 'Bridging' / 'Fluent' on the writing continuum to 'Connecting', thus achieving a significant movement across five stages of the writing continuum. This growth represents a remarkable development over one year at SSF.

There is also unequivocal evidence in the follow-up interview of Sam's imagination and creativity. He speaks of "creating my own world in my story" and of writing "being like God... a God that can change the world... could flood the whole of a page". He speaks of the power that a writer has to create worlds, an "elemental power... making a huge fire beam, a fire tornado fly up and transform into a dragon". Further, he talks about enjoying generating ideas, thinking about "what happens next" and "making things up as you go" – all expressions of imagination and creativity.

Sam's own words in the interview demonstrated a high degree of creative imagination, as does his writing, and there is evidence from Sam that attendance at SSF has increased this capacity. Sam also identified other characteristics that he thought had increased because of his participation at SSF:

- his workshop participation 'built my confidence in writing';
- he now found it 'easy to find ideas';
- he had moved in his writing from 'simple stories' of 'description only' to 'more complicated stories';
- his characters were 'built more' and he wrote about their 'feelings';
- 'writing is more fun than I thought'.

Interestingly, Sam spoke about several differences between writing at SSF and writing at school. He clearly identified “never finishing” as a problem for him, particularly at school, and especially in set time limits. He pondered whether this was because he was “too slow”, “wrote too much”, or “thinks too much”. One of the things that he liked about SSF was the absence of strict time limits. However, he also suggested that his participation at SSF had had a positive impact on his school work and increased his confidence in writing at school.

Sam’s writing over the 2015 workshop demonstrates he is achieving at or exceeding the standards at the ‘Connecting’ stage (typical of students 12-14 years old) and evidence of meeting several criteria in the ‘Independent’ stage. A comparative analysis of Sam’s writing since 2013 confirms that he has moved from ‘Expanding’/ ‘Bridging’ / ‘Fluent’ on the writing continuum to ‘Connecting’, with some indicators in the ‘Independent’ stage. This represents a significant movement across six stages of the writing continuum in two years of attending SSF workshops.

**“This represents
a significant
movement across
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THE EVALUATION TEAM



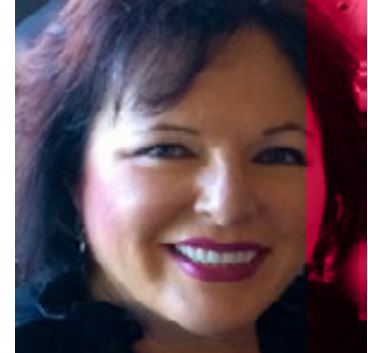
**Professor
Robyn Ewing, AM**

Robyn is Professor of Teacher Education and the Arts in the Sydney School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney. She teaches in the areas of curriculum, English and drama, language and early literacy development and works with both undergraduate and postgraduate pre-service and in-service teachers. Robyn is passionate about the role creative arts experiences and processes can and should play in transforming the curriculum at all levels of education. Robyn's teaching, research and writing has included a focus on the use of drama with imaginative literature to enhance students' learning. Other research interests include the experiences of early career teachers, primary curriculum, professional learning, mentoring, innovative teacher education and arts informed research methodologies.



Dr David Smith

David is a private educational consultant and a former associate professor in the then Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney. After teaching in primary and secondary schools for 10 years in rural NSW and metropolitan Sydney he spent most of the next 30 years in teacher education, first at Macquarie University and then at the University of Sydney. As a former associate professor in the Faculty of Education, David is the author, co-author and editor of 14 books and more than 100 published articles. David has been a consultant and evaluator for programs in the UK, Canada, Scandinavia, and New Zealand as well as for state and national governments in Australia.



**Associate Professor
Jackie Manuel**

Jackie is Associate Professor in the Sydney School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney. Her teaching, research and publishing is in the field of secondary English education and literature. Her particular research interests include writing development, fostering creativity in English education, teenagers and reading, the history and development of secondary English curriculum, and the experiences of early career teachers of English. She coordinates secondary English curriculum in the Faculty and is involved in a range of ways with the English teaching profession.