



Building Interdisciplinary Bridges Across Cultures

Dr Georgie Horrell & Dr Aisha Spencer

Abstract

Our paper will reflect on a collaborative, intercultural and international project which amongst other poetical initiatives considers ways of harnessing the power of Spoken Word poetry in the classroom. This aspect of the work of the project engages with both traditional and contemporary poetic practices in different parts of the world. In a recently completed initiative, called Page Fright, the UK Poetry Society highlights the particular influence of Spoken Word (and poets like Benjamin Zephaniah, Hollie McNish and Joelle Taylor) and considers the potential of this work for unlocking attitudes to page poetry for young people. Whilst the work of our wider project is concerned with all types of poetry, in this paper we will focus particularly on comparative and collaborative research exploring the potential for spoken word and dub poetry in the classroom.

Bio

Dr. Aisha Spencer is a lecturer in Language and Literature Education at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, in Kingston, Jamaica. She has been teaching language and literature for twenty (20) years and is passionate about using alternative forms of literary pedagogy to help students better connect with all genres of literature, especially poetry. Her areas of research interest are in Gender and Nationalism, Postcolonial Literatures, and Literature Education. She is co-editor of a recently published anthology of Caribbean poetry, entitled 'Give the Ball to the Poet' : A New Anthology of Caribbean Poetry. She has also written book chapters and journal articles on Poetry and the Teaching of Poetry. Some of the titles include: 'The Language of Caribbean Poetry' and 'Caribbean Music and Caribbean Poetry', and 'Experiencing Poetry: Transforming students' attitudes and responses to poetry through a hands-on approach to the teaching of poetry'.

Georgie Horrell lectures in literatures in English at the University of Cambridge. She has particular interests in children's literature and postcolonial literatures. Georgie was a core member of the Caribbean Poetry Project team in Cambridge, which collaborated with a team at the University of West Indies, and is co-editor of Give the Ball to the Poet, a new anthology of Caribbean poetry for young people. She is Director (UK) of ZAPP the South African Poetry Project (<http://zapp.educ.cam.ac.uk/>), an exciting initiative which works to inspire young people and their teachers through poetry. Georgie is also the Director of the newly formed International Poetry Project.