

Continuing Bonds: Creative Dissemination

Guidance Notes

Acknowledgements

Thank you to our funders, the AHRC, for supporting the original *Continuing Bonds* and *Continuing Bonds: Creative Dissemination* projects from which these materials are developed.

Thank you to our colleagues who worked on the original Continuing Bonds project (Christina Faull, Lindsey Büster, Laura Green and Justine Raynsford) as well as those on previous projects (including the AHRC Crossing Over project and Grave Goods projects, and the Whitworth Park Community Archaeology and History project). We note particularly Lindsey Büster who was instrumental in developing many of the archaeological case study materials used in both the original project and the Creative Dissemination follow-on, as well as the art exercise included in the Creative Dissemination teaching materials.

Special thanks to Andy Holland our Creative Dissemination research admin, and to our volunteers Stefan Yolov and Aiden Dulay.

Thank you also to the venues who hosted the workshops these teaching materials were originally developed for – Kro Bar (Manchester), The Sheffield College, and the University of Bradford.

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Introduction

The Creative Dissemination project

Practices around death, dying, bereavement and grief have varied over time and geographical space. With the advancement of medicine in the Western world, dying has become a longer process and has been 'professionalised' with death itself considered less of a natural part of life and more a failure of medicine. Expectations around bereavement and grief are heavily influenced by stage-based models which anticipate that individuals will progress through a series of stages towards 'acceptance'. Yet, experiences other than acceptance are natural and normal. In fact, continuing our bonds with the deceased and being significantly affected by loved ones' deaths for many years after bereavement seems an expected part of the human existence.

Outsourcing death and dying to professionals has created a society where many do not know what death looks like or what to expect at end of life. Similarly, the grieving are squeezed into metaphorical boxes which do not fit them and their experiences are 'benchmarked' against restrictive societal expectations. The Creative Dissemination project aligns with other initiatives such as Dying Matters Awareness Week and the Death Café movement to re-connect society with the intricacies of death, dying, bereavement and grief, and to normalise individuals' experiences. The project draws on previous work – namely, the *Continuing Bonds* project, the *Crossing Over* project and *Grave Goods* projects, and the *Whitworth Park Community Archaeology and History Project* - which has found both archaeology and creative writing to be successful and safe methods for opening discussion about difficult topics such as these.

During the Creative Dissemination project, a series of three creative writing workshops were held in three cities culminating in an anthology, celebration events, and these teaching materials. This manual provides guidelines for individuals wishing to run similar workshops of their own. We hope you enjoy the experience!

Rationale for facilitating workshops

Feedback from the Creative Dissemination workshops revealed:

- 83-90% of individuals said different aspects of the workshops normalised their own experiences of death, dying, bereavement and grief
- 97% said that creative writing was a useful way to explore death, dying, bereavement and grief
- 80% said that what the past has to teach about death, dying, bereavement and grief was valuable to them
- 97% had made connections with other writers

- 72% had spoken more about death, dying, bereavement and grief with people in their lives
- 94% said they would recommend the workshops to a friend

From these workshops an anthology was created which showcased 40 poems, short stories, flash fiction and creative memoir exploring death, dying, bereavement and grief. The anthology is available to download for free at <https://continuingbonds.live/>.

The workshops are designed as a set of three. It is possible for an individual to attend either of the first two workshops as stand-alone events; however, ideally, the final workshop requires prior attendance.

Workshop 1: Inspiration

This workshop should take 1.5-2 hours to complete. The exercises are optional and will impact the length of the workshop. Workshop numbers will also impact on timings.

Notes to accompany the slides can be found in appendices 1.

The aim

The aim of the 'Inspiration' workshop is to introduce individuals to archaeological and contemporary materials which showcase different aspects of death, dying, bereavement and grief. This first workshop is an opportunity for writers (including amateurs – no writing experience is needed) to meet each other and start developing working relationships, to be inspired by the materials they are introduced to and to engage in writing exercises which may feed into their final creative piece.

The ultimate aim of the project is to widen the boundaries of talking about death, dying, bereavement and grief. Often, in the Western world, such subjects are felt 'taboo' which can lead to individuals feeling their grief- or the ways in which they remember deceased loved ones- are not 'normal'. It can also lead to problems around death such as individuals' not clearly informing loved ones' what their wishes are for their body or funeral after death. At a societal level, not talking about death as a normal part of life can lead to death being 'professionalised' with individuals being unsure about what actually happens at end of life and what their rights and options are.

Workshop 2: Deepening connection

This workshop should take 1.5-2 hours to complete. The exercises are optional and will impact the length of the workshop.

Notes to accompany the slides can be found in appendices 2.

The aim

The aim of the 'Deepening Connection' workshop is for attendees to engage further with the archaeological material and to move their writing or creative piece forwards.

It is also an opportunity to strengthen connections between writers in the group.

Workshop 3: Editing and Finalising

This workshop should take 1.5-2 hours to complete. The exercises are optional and will impact the length of the workshop. Attendees to W3 need to have attended *either* W1 or W2 (or both).

The aim

The aim of Editing and Finalising is for individuals to spend time getting further feedback on their work and to learn from their peers about the creative process.

Notes to accompany the slides can be found in appendices 3.

Handouts

Sources of Support

Please see appendices 4 for the Sources of Support handed out in the Continuing Bonds: Creative Dissemination workshops. This is provided as an example. The sources (of support) will need to be edited for the geographical area you are running the workshops in.

Providing individuals with sources of support is ethically important as talking about and being exposed to the death, dying, bereavement, and grief topics can bring up difficult emotions.

Giving Helpful Feedback

Please see appendices 5 for the advice about Giving Helpful Feedback we provided for participants in the Continuing Bonds: Creative Dissemination workshops. It is important to promote a supportive atmosphere between writers to enhance individuals' confidence, boost productivity and made the experience overall more enjoyable.

Certificates (optional)

In the original Continuing Bonds: Creative Dissemination workshops we provided certificates for individuals to prove their attendance. Please see appendices 6 for examples of these.

Potential Exercises

Each workshop contains different exercises which are optional and should be included at the facilitator's discretion. A short description of each are included below.

Workshop 1: Inspiration

Meaningful Objects: 5 minutes

This exercise asks whether individuals have had any objects which represented- or belonged to- the deceased which are meaningful or they have not been able to throw away. It is important that individuals have the option *not* to share and to keep their reflection personal.

Free writing – What object would you have as your legacy: 10 minutes

This exercise involves free-writing for five minutes, starting with the phrase, 'The object I would have as my legacy is...' (5 minutes are left for sharing). The idea is for participants to write whatever comes into their minds without censoring themselves. Writers are advised not to go back and read what they have written during the five minutes and not to worry about correcting spelling or grammar at this point. Afterwards, individuals may wish to share what they have written.

Free writing – Objects and loss: 10 minutes

This exercise involves free writing for 5 minutes (5 minutes are left for sharing). Individuals pick an object and start their free writing using the sentence 'As I think about the [insert object], I...' / 'As [insert character's name] thought about the [insert object], s/he ...'. Writers can write with themselves as the narrator (e.g. I remember my mother's necklace...) or by using a character (e.g. Harry pulled a grey box from under the bed and blew the dust from the lid...). Afterwards, individuals may wish to share what they have written.

Art exercise: 10 minutes

Inspired by the Cave Art of Cueva de los Manos (Argentina; 11,000-7,000 BC), individuals are invited to draw round their hands on a sheet and write within the shape something they are taking with them from the workshop or something they wish to leave behind.

It can be useful to create a 'break' between considering what can be a difficult topic and attendees leaving the workshop. This art exercise can be used before individuals leave to this end.

Workshop 2: Deepening Connection

What's your story? 5 minutes

At the end of workshop 1, individuals were asked (if they wanted to) to bring an object with them to the second workshop which was connected to their own legacy or that of a loved one. This is a time for attendees to share objects or any other observations with the group. This can be kept to five minutes if individuals share in smaller groups.

Death can be difficult – sharing. 5 minutes.

Due to medical advances we are living longer and experience longer-term care than before. Sudden and unexpected death can feel unjust and untimely. It may be useful for individuals to spend time discussing this in groups.

Sharing your writing: 10 minutes

This exercise comes at a time in the workshops where individuals should already be split into smaller groups. It is an opportunity for individuals to share some of what they have written or are thinking of writing, talk to their group about the object they have brought, or to 'freestyle' – perhaps sharing what the workshop has got them thinking about.

Writing theory: 5 mins each

Task 1

Think of an object, and remember or imagine the emotion that might be associated with it. Describe its material, patina, shape, weight and appearance. What is it about this object which best embodies the person or our relationship with them?

Task 2

Think of a funeral, a memorial, or a rite that has happened - in the ancient past or in your own life. Did this help, comfort, and give shape to your grief, or not? What kind of 'send-off' or memories of the dead were made through these ceremonies?

Task 3

Think of the place where the dead are laid or scattered: ancient or modern. Why here, and why is it meaningful? Are they alone or in company? Describe its atmosphere. What weather do you associate with it? What memories does it evoke?

Workshop 3: Editing and Finalising

Feedback and editing: 25 minutes

If individuals brought spare copies of their work with them – now is the time to distribute them.

In groups of three, individuals have ten minutes each to read their piece and get feedback from the group members. Please signpost individuals to *Giving Helpful Feedback* and ask them to critique kindly and positively. Individuals can give feedback about what strikes them most about the piece, what they liked in particular and what they would have liked to have seen more of. If individuals have made notes, please give them to the person whose piece they are about.

Your Creative Process: 25 minutes

a) 15 mins. This exercise is an opportunity for individuals to learn about how others' become inspired and develop their pieces. In groups of three, each individual should explain to their group how they created their piece, describing what their creative process was. The group

have five minutes to ask questions of the individual about their creative process and to learn about this.

b) 10 mins. Ask one or two people from each group to feed back to the wider group about i) what they learned about writing/the creative process and ii) whether anything struck them from their discussion.

We would value ongoing evaluation on the workshops and resource – If feasible, please get in touch with k.croucher@bradford.ac.uk and continuingbonds@bradford.ac.uk to share anonymous feedback.

Appendices

Appendices 1: Notes pages for W1 'Inspiration' slides

Notes for W1 'Inspiration' slides

Slide 2:

This workshop should take 1.5 - 2 hours to complete.

The exercises are optional and the exercises used will impact the length of the workshop.

Workshop numbers will also impact on timings.

Slide 3:

This is the timetable for Workshop 1, Inspiration. The timetable above gives suggested timings but you may wish to change these depending on the time you have available.

You will find accompanying documents in the Guidance Notes.

Slide 4:

The aim of the 'Inspiration' workshop is to introduce individuals to archaeological and contemporary materials which showcase different aspects of death, dying, bereavement and grief. This first workshop is an opportunity for writers (including amateurs – no writing experience is needed) to meet each other and start developing working relationships, to be inspired by the materials they are introduced to and to engage in writing exercises which may feed into a final creative piece.

Often, in the Western world, such subjects are felt 'taboo' which can lead to individuals feeling their grief- or the ways in which they remember deceased loved ones- are not 'normal'. It can also lead to problems around death such as individuals not clearly informing loved ones' what their wishes are for their body or funeral after death. At a societal level, not talking about death as a normal part of life can lead to death being 'professionalised' with individuals being unsure about what actually happens at end of life and what their rights and options are.

Details of the original 'Continuing Bonds' project and an anthology created through the 'Creative Dissemination' project can be accessed at <https://continuingbonds.live/>.

Slide 5:

Although the materials might spark personal thoughts or memories, the workshop (as is true for all three workshops) is not intended to be 'therapy'. We would encourage participants to look after themselves in terms of allowing themselves to 'hold back' emotionally if this feels needed and to use the 'Sources of Support' available in the Guidance Booklet.

To create a safe space for attendees, facilitators can create 'rules' for the workshop. It is important the space is non-judgemental and supportive, that personal stories/experiences shared in the workshop are kept confidential, and that feedback on creative work is given positively. It can be helpful to frame feedback in terms of what individuals liked about someone's work and what they would like to see more of. There is a handout on 'Giving Helpful Feedback' in the Guidance Booklet.

Slide 6:

In this workshop, individuals will be introduced to materials which we hope will inspire creative work. These materials are both archaeological and contemporary, the quotes which showcase the latter being taken from workshops run by the Continuing Bonds: Creative Dissemination project.

Slide 7:

Many individuals and organisations say we do not talk enough about death, dying, bereavement and grief.

This quote comes from a health and care professional who took part in a research workshop.

Slide 8:

It is important for individuals to feel able to talk about death if they need or wish to. This quote explains how not talking about death can lead to difficulties, which can be for the dying and for the bereaved.

Embedded within this account is the sense that there is a 'right' thing to do – for a person to 'sort' their affairs out if they know they are dying and have time enough to do so. Interestingly, this account contrasts with another person's account, who passionately described not forcing a person into talking about their own death if they are not ready. It seems there are two 'right' things to do which do not sit neatly together. This is an example of the politics of death, which is explored later in the teaching slides for workshop 2 (Deepening Connection).

Slide 9:

In the modern Western world we often think about grief as progressing through a series of stages towards a place of acceptance, as suggested by Kubler-Ross in her 1969 book *On Death and Dying*. However, we know that individuals do not always experience grief in these ways and instead, the Continuing Bonds model as proposed by Klass, Silverman and Nickman (1996), might be more accurate.

Certainly, archaeologists have seen individuals to maintain their bonds with the dead and keep the dead close across time and across cultures.

Slide 10:

As we rarely talk about death in 'normal' conversation in Western society, we are often unaware of what other people 'do' with their loved ones. As a result, we are unsure about what is normal. If we have not encountered keeping the dead close physically this might evoke feelings of disgust or revulsion, however, keeping the dead close is normal and has been for many years.

The quotes here exemplify people in modern day keeping the dead close in the form of ashes.

Slide 11:

Keeping ashes close is something we do in modern-day life and is something we have done for years.

This example (the Plastered Skulls from the Neolithic Middle East) demonstrates an example where the dead were kept tangibly close. Some people were buried beneath the floor of the house after death. The skulls of some of these individuals were then excavated by the inhabitants and a face of plaster was re-created over the dry bone. They were then kept within the household or courtyards. The skulls show evidence of breakage and repair suggesting that they were handled and cared for.

Slide 12:

Throughout time and (geographical space), we see that individuals have remembered their dead for years and across generations. Thus, archaeology teaches us we are never quite done with the dead. This shows us how there is no 'time-limit' on loss or grief. This concept – that there is no time limit on loss or grief – is different to many of the messages we get in modern day society which affords us three days bereavement leave and often expects us to move towards a place of acceptance or 'closure'.

Objects are often powerful evokers of memory and help us retain relationships with the dead. Many people retain objects which belonged to the dead or heirlooms. There are also objects placed/buried with the dead which archaeologists find during excavations such as ... enter the hairpin info.

The dead place debts upon us with the 'stuff' of their lives which they leave behind. This stuff can sometime be problematic or 'out of the ordinary', as this quote shows us. For many these objects can also be a comfort.

Slide 13:

There may be multiple reasons why the objects we are left with are difficult.

One reason why objects which belonged to- or are associated with- the dead are 'difficult', is because they are perishable and therefore require a quick decision to be made. Rather than a person taking their time with an object, they are forced to take a decision (e.g. throwing an object away) which doesn't feel right in terms of where they are with their grief.

This quote depicts the dilemma that flowers which belonged to the dead pose to the living. Perhaps they are difficult to throw away because they do not feel they 'belong' to the living (and therefore it is not their right to make the choice), or because they symbolise an act of 'moving on' which does not feel right.

How we feel about- and treat- objects can change over time. For example, a person may initially need to wear an item of clothing which belonged to the deceased for comfort, which later becomes too painful to wear. Or, vice versa: an item of clothing which feels too painful to wear initially becomes a way of the individual continuing their bond with the deceased and incorporating them into their daily life later on.

Slide 14:

Some of the objects we are left with are intensely connected with the person, as is showcased in this quote.

[Optional] Exercise. 5 minutes:

Have attendees had any objects which represented the deceased and which are meaningful to them?

(It is important individuals have the option *not* to share and to keep their reflection personal).

Slide 15:

The following 5 slides showcase objects which can inspire creative writing and poetic pieces. Feel free to jot down some initial thoughts and reactions to the objects.

Slide 22:

The objects showcased and the quote above embody some of the legacy which individuals leave behind. Sometimes this is purposeful – we chose to bequeath objects such as jewellery to particular loved ones or ask that their ashes are kept ‘in the light’. Sometimes we have less control over this and it is the objects others choose for us (e.g. the jewellery we are buried in) or which society chooses for us (e.g. the pots buried next to us) which become our legacy many years on.

[Optional] Exercise. 10 minutes:

This exercise involves free-writing for five minutes, starting with the phrase, ‘The object I would have as my legacy is...’.

Free writing is a method which can provide a starting place for a piece, help a writer develop their ideas or move an individual past writer’s block. The idea is to write whatever comes into a person’s mind without censoring oneself. Writers are advised not to go back and read what they have written during the five minutes and not to worry about correcting spelling or grammar at this point.

Afterwards, individuals may wish to share what they have written.

Slide 23:

Throughout the slides so far, we have mentioned or showcased many objects, from a jar of Horlicks, to misshapen shoes to plastered skulls. The following exercise can help individuals to use these objects (or an object of their own choosing) as inspiration. Writers can write with themselves as the narrator (e.g. I remember my mother’s necklace...) or by using a character (e.g. Harry pulled a grey box from under the bed and blew the dust from the lid...).

[Optional] Exercise. 10 minutes:

Free-writing for 5 minutes, using the sentence ‘As I think about the [insert object], I...’ / ‘As [insert character’s name] thought about the [insert object], s/he ...’.

Afterwards, individuals may wish to share what they have written.

Slide 24:

Between this workshop and the next, attendees are advised to let the materials 'work' on them and send time gathering their thoughts. There will be more time set aside for writing in the second- and especially the third- workshops.

If individuals would like to bring an object from home (or a photo of this) to the next workshop as inspiration they are welcome to. Attendees might like to bring objects which remind them of their deceased loved ones or an object which they would like to have as their legacy.

Talking about death and dying can bring up thoughts and emotions which are difficult or unexpected. Remind attendees to look after themselves and to use sources of support if needed. There is an example of a Sources of Support document in the Guidance Booklet. Sources of support will need to be developed specifically for the geographical area workshops are being facilitated in.

Slide 25:

The next workshop is called Deepening Connection. In this workshop, individuals will have the opportunity to engage again with the objects and archaeological case studies. They will be introduced to more archaeological and contemporary inspiration material and will be given some basic creative writing/poetry guidance.

Individuals will have time to start developing their piece/develop their piece further.

We would encourage participants (if they like) to 'buddy up' with another writer/poet from this workshop (workshop 1) so that they can swap their pieces and get feedback on these.

Slide 26:

[Optional] Exercise. 10 minutes:

To create a 'break' between considering what can be a difficult topic and attendees leaving the workshop, it can be useful to insert an art exercise for individuals to engage in before they leave.

This art exercise is inspired by Argentinian cave art produced 9-13 thousand years ago, where individuals stencilled their hands onto cave walls (see next slide). These handprints are both personal and anonymous.

The exercise invites individuals to draw round their hands on a sheet and write within the shape something they are taking with them from the workshop or something they wish to leave behind.

Slide 27:

Argentinian cave art produced 9-13 thousand years ago by individuals stencilling their hands onto cave walls. The prints left are both personal and anonymous.

Slide 28:

Workshop ends.

Appendices 2: Notes pages for W2 'Deepening Connection' slides

Slide 30:

This workshop should take 1.5 - 2 hours to complete.

Slide 31:

This workshop provides a re-cap on W1, encourages sharing of creative work and inspiration materials, and spends time looking at the politics of death. Individuals will have the opportunity to spend time re-engaging with the materials from last time, working independently on their piece, or learning about writing or poetry theory.

The timetable above gives suggested timings but you may wish to change these depending on the time you have available. In particular, we would encourage extending the amount of independent writing time given to individuals.

Slide 32:

The workshops are designed as a set of three however it is possible for an individual to attend just workshop one or two (not workshop three) without attending the rest providing they are sent the slides from the other workshops.

Those new to the project at this second workshop will need to pick up a Sources of Support sheet and a Giving Helpful Feedback sheet.

Slide 33:

This second workshop – Deepening Connection – will include more writing time, more discussion time about the objects and with each other, some sharing of attendees work and introduction to some writing/poetry theory.

Attendees will be invited again to ‘buddy up’ for feedback and to take part again in the art exercise.

Slide 34:

Although the materials might spark personal thoughts or memories, the workshop (as is true for all three workshops) is not intended to be ‘therapy’. We would encourage participants to look after themselves in terms of allowing themselves to ‘hold back’ emotionally if this feels needed and to use the ‘sources of support’ given.

To create a safe space for attendees, facilitators can create ‘rules’ for the workshop. It is important the space is non-judgemental and supportive, that personal stories/experiences shared in the workshop are kept confidential, and that feedback on creative work is given positively. It can be helpful to frame feedback in terms of what individuals liked about someone’s work and what they would like to see more of. There is a handout on ‘Giving Helpful Feedback’ in the Guidance Notes.

Slide 35:

The ultimate aim of the workshops are to widen the boundaries on talking about death, dying, bereavement and grief. This is to target the sense that talking about death is often

felt 'taboo' in Western society which can lead to problems like individuals not writing wills or telling their loved ones what they would like for the funeral, to individuals not knowing what is 'normal' to experience when bereaved, and to individuals who are bereaved not feeling/being supported by those around them.

Slide 36:

In workshop 1, individuals were introduced to the idea that throughout time and across the globe, individuals have kept the dead close. Rather than 'moving on', humans tend to keep the memories and legacies of loved ones alive, and often do this through objects. Workshop 1 touched on how death can be a tricky and political time, something which will be explored further in this present workshop.

Attendees were shown contemporary accounts of death, dying, bereavement and grief, as well as archaeological materials and objects. Individuals spent time free-writing also.

Slide 37:

At the end of W1, individuals were asked (if they wanted to) to bring an object with them to this second workshop which was connected to their own legacy or that of a loved one.

Exercise. 5 minutes: What's your story

This is a time for attendees to share objects or any other observations with the group. This can be kept to five minutes if individuals share in smaller groups.

Slide 38:

Death can be a political time in which tensions run high and there seem to be no 'rules', or rules which clash with each other. At the heart of these issues is often a sense of respect (or disrespect) and the desire to do the 'right' thing by a person or in a particular situation.

This is exemplified in the quotes above.

Top left: This quote depicts how it was important to this individual that her friend's grave was visited and cared for yet this wasn't possible because she was buried close to her family in Ireland and far away from where her friends lived.

Bottom left: This quote depicts how it was important to the individual that she was buried in clothes which depicted her personality and how this (in her opinion) didn't happen.

Top right: This quote depicts how it was important to the individual that her dying friend's wishes were carried out at her funeral and how this (perceivably) didn't happen because her sister's 'wouldn't listen' to what she wanted.

Bottom right: This quote depicts how families can differ about who has possession of a loved ones' ashes and the acceptability of ashes being split between family members.

(We would suggest picking one or two of the quotes on this slide rather than reading all four).

Slide 39:

Due to medical advances we are living longer and experience longer-term care before death. This is what we often expect (and hope) for ourselves – a long life. Sudden and unexpected death can feel unjust and untimely.

Top right: This quote exemplifies how children may feel uncomfortable talking about their parents' deaths. This has left the parent fearing their wishes (for their body and funeral) will not be heard, and by association carried out.

Bottom left: This quote exemplifies how individuals are sometimes not ready for death, even those who have lived what we perceive to be a long life.

Exercise [optional]: 5 mins

Open discussion with the group or see if people want to share their experiences

Slide 40:

Now is a good time to take a break as after this, individuals will be split into groups to either do some writing, learn some writing theory, or work on their piece.

Slide 41:

Exercise:

In the next part of the workshop, individuals can choose to spend some time reflecting on the materials they were introduced to in workshop 1, spend time working independently on their piece, or spend time learning about writing or poetry theory. We would advise splitting the room into different areas, each given over to one of these options.

We would advise giving at least 10 minutes for this exercise.

Note to writers: It is fine to write about life and not death, as death is often an inspiration for engaging with life.

Slide 42:

John Berger once wrote that poetry holds out the promise 'that what has been experienced cannot disappear as if it had never been' (in *Once in a Poem* - from '*And our faces, my heart, brief as photos*' published by Bloomsbury Publishing 2005).

He encourages us to use our poetry to give voice to an experience that is uniquely ours. We each have very different attitudes towards losing someone, and dealing with the emotions and things they leave behind. We may feel paralysing physical grief, deep sadness, rupturing loss, anger, resentment, betrayal, regret or indifference. We may feel blessed or burdened. The following exercises are designed to help you either imagine what someone in the past might have felt when they placed something with the ancient dead (if you want to be inspired by the archaeology) or move you to thinking about your own experiences.

Task 1. Think of an object, and remember or imagine the emotion that might be associated with it. Describe its material, patina, shape, weight and appearance. What is it about this object which best embodies the person or our relationship with them?

Task 2. Think of a funeral, a memorial, or a rite that has happened - in the ancient past or in your own life. Did this help, comfort, and give shape to your grief, or not? What kind of 'send-off' or memories of the dead were made through these ceremonies?

Task 3. Think of the place where the dead are laid or scattered: ancient or modern. Why here, and why is it meaningful? Are they alone or in company? Describe its atmosphere. What weather do you associate with it? What memories does it evoke?

Slide 43:

1. Voice - is there a speaker or narrator in your poem? Is it you, or in the third person, or is it more descriptive?

2. Form - think about what shape and structure you want your poem to have: it might be short couplets, verses, a longer poem or even 'prose poem'. Poetry gives you licence to experiment with this so be adventurous!

3. Poetry encourages you to experiment with strong imagery, symbolism and metaphor. You can help your reader make connections and meanings they might not otherwise expect, using these devices.

4. Language - avoid weak, familiar words and stereotypes: use a thesaurus to find alternative words to surprise or delight your reader.

5. The poem as a journey: how will you begin and where do you want to end up? Sometimes thinking of the last line helps you work out how to get there.

Slide 44:

When writing prose such as short stories and flash fiction, there are some common aspects to consider or look out for; point of view, showing not telling, where to start, and use of setting.

Point of view

Point of view refers to the perspective from which the story is told. A first or third person perspective is common: i.e. 'I went... I jumped... I felt...' or 'Jane went... Jane jumped... She felt...'. Second person perspective can be used but is rare. This is 'You went... You jumped... You felt...'.

The point of view you choose impacts what you can write (the content) and what your character can know. In first person perspective, i.e. 'I went...', generally, you can only tell your reader what your main character knows.

In second person, i.e. 'You went...', you make your audience a character and have similar limitations to if you were writing in first person.

Third person, i.e. 'Jane went...', is more complicated because there are three types of third-person perspective: omniscient, limited, and objective. The youtube link connects to a video which describes each of these points of view in more detail.

Slide 45:

Show not tell

It is common advice for writers to *show not tell*. Showing rather than telling brings our writing to life. When we show rather than tell the reader is left to deduce what is happening (which readers prefer) rather than stating it outright.

An example of telling would be, 'Sara was cold'. We are telling the reader that Sara is cold rather than letting the reader see this for themselves. To show that Sara is cold, instead we could write, 'Pulling her scarf up over her mouth, Sara shivered.' This is written in third-person point of view.

Another example of telling would be, 'I was so angry'. Again, we are telling the reader the narrator is angry rather than letting the reader see this. Instead, to show the reader the narrator is angry, we could write, 'My hands bunched into fists and a heat rose up my neck to my cheeks. 'Are you alright?', Harry said. 'You look like you're about to blow'. This is written from the first person perspective and uses another literary device – dialogue - to show the narrator's anger by what the character Harry says.

Slide 46:

Start with the character

When starting to write a piece of prose, individuals will find themselves inspired in different ways. Some writers start with a story they want to tell. More commonly, a certain line or voice or image will come to a person and they will start thinking around this and develop an idea of a character. Developing a character first helps you write a story which feels genuine – you know what your character would or wouldn't do and your story will be influenced by how they overcome the obstacles in their way.

Exercise [2 mins]:

To start developing a character pick two random letters of the alphabet. These are your character's initials. Create a name for your character.

Use your setting

Setting is helpful for setting the mood of the scene. When we use the weather to mirror the mood – e.g. an argument happening in a heatwave – we call this *pathetic fallacy*. See how the mood of a wedding can be changed depending on how we write the weather:

"On the morning of Jill and Peter's wedding, the sun rose bright over lush green fields."

Vs

"On the morning of Jill and Peter's wedding, dark clouds covered the sky and thunder rumbled on the horizon."

Use your setting to create tension in your writing and to mirror the mood – have a couple whose marriage is rocky together in a malfunctioning lift, have a child meeting the person who will quickly become their best friend on a sunny day at a funfair.

Slide 47:

Exercise [10 minutes]: The next part of the workshop involves sharing in a group. Individuals should already be split into groups from the previous exercise. The groups can either share some of what they have written in the workshop(s) or are thinking of writing, tell the group about the object they have brought, or 'freestyle' – sharing what the workshop has brought up for them.

Slide 48:

As discussed in workshop 1, to get feedback on their pieces, attendees are encouraged to find a 'feedback buddy' from the group. Pairs or small groups work best. Decide how you are going to contact each other and swap contact details.

Please make sure your feedback is kind and constructive – see *Giving Helpful Feedback* in your packs.

Please aim to have a good draft of your piece by the next workshop, which is called 'Editing and Finalising'.

Slide 49:

Between this workshop and the next attendees are advised to work on their pieces, to get feedback from others and to create a substantial draft for the final workshop.

Individuals will be sharing their pieces and getting feedback in the next workshop, *Editing and Finalising*. Please ask them to bring three copies of their work with them in anticipation of this.

Talking about death and dying can bring up thoughts and emotions which are difficult or unexpected. Remind attendees to look after themselves and to use sources of support if needed. The Sources of Support document developed for the Creative Dissemination workshops is available in the guidance material, see 'Guidance Booklet'. Sources of support will need to be developed specifically for the geographical area workshops are being facilitated in. This should have been developed for your W1, Inspiration.

Slide 51:

Workshop ends.

Appendices 3: Notes pages for W3 'Editing and Finalising' slides

Slide 53:

The aim of Editing and Finalising is for individuals to spend time getting further feedback on their work and to learn from their peers about the creative process. We close again with the art exercise.

Slide 54:

Although the materials might spark personal thoughts or memories, the workshop (as is true for all three workshops) is not intended to be 'therapy'. We would encourage participants to look after themselves in terms of allowing themselves to 'hold back' emotionally if this feels needed and to use the 'Sources of Support' available.

Sources of support will need to be developed specifically for the geographical area workshops are being facilitated in. This should have been developed for your W1, Inspiration.

To create a safe space for attendees, facilitators can create 'rules' for the workshop. It is important the space is non-judgemental and supportive, that personal stories/experiences shared in the workshop are kept confidential, and that feedback on creative work is given positively. It can be helpful to frame feedback in terms of what individuals liked about someone's work and what they would like to see more of. There is a handout on 'Giving Helpful Feedback' in the Guidance Notes.

Slide 55:

Exercise [25 minutes]:

Split individuals into groups of three.

If individuals brought spare copies of their work with them – now is the time to distribute them.

They will have ten minutes each to read their piece and get feedback from the group members. Please ask individuals to give critique kindly and positively. There is guidance on this (entitled *Giving Helpful Feedback*) in the Guidance Notes.

Individuals can give feedback about what strikes them most about the piece, what they liked in particular and what they would have like to have seen more of.

If individuals have made notes, please give them to the person whose piece they are about.

Slide 57:

Exercise [25 minutes – 15 initially, 10 to share]:

This exercise is an opportunity for individuals to learn about how others' become inspired and develop their pieces. It is an opportunity to learn about the creative process from one-another.

In groups of three, each individual should explain to their group how they created their piece, describing what their creative process was.

The group have five minutes to ask questions of the individual about their creative process and to learn about this.

Slide 58:

Exercise [10 minutes]:

Ask one or two people from each group to feed back to the wider group about i) what they learned about writing/the creative process and ii) whether anything struck them from their discussion.

Slide 59:

Here is a good opportunity for individuals to add their handprint to the art exercise offered in W1. This can be a nice way to round off this final workshop. See the next slide for the exercise instructions and information about the inspiration behind the exercise.

Slide 60:

Art exercise:

This exercise invites individuals to draw round their hands on a sheet and write within the shape i) something they are taking with them from the workshop, or ii) something they wish to leave behind.

(This sheet of handprints was then displayed at the Creative Dissemination celebration events, see 'Guidance Booklet' for details.)

This exercise was inspired by Argentinian cave art produced 9-13 thousand years ago by individuals stencilling their hands onto cave walls. The prints left are both personal and anonymous.

Slide 62:

Workshop ends.

Slide 64:

These teaching slides were developed through the Continuing Bonds: Creative Dissemination project. During this project a Facebook group, and Twitter and Instagram

accounts, were created. This allowed individuals to stay up to date with the project and to connect with each other.

Our accounts are included above, feel free to create and add your own.

Slide 67:

Here are some references for more information should individuals be interested.

Appendices 4: Sources of Support



Continuing Bonds

Sources of Support

Cruse Bereavement Care. <https://www.cruse.org.uk/>. A national helpline that offers support, advice, and information when someone dies. Free helpline number: 0808 808 1677. Monday and Friday 9:30-5pm. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday 9:30-8pm (excluding bank holidays)

Lullaby Trust. <https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/>. National helpline that provides a confidential support service for families who experience the sudden loss of a baby or toddler. Helpline: 0808 802 6868 (Monday – Friday: 10am-5pm, Weekends and public holidays: 6pm-10pm). support@lullabytrust.org.uk

Sands Stillbirth & Neonatal Death Charity. <https://www.sands.org.uk/>. Offers support to anyone affected by the death of a baby. Helpline: 0808 164 3332. helpline@sands.org.uk

Child Bereavement UK. <https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/>. Provides support for the death of a child of any age. Helpline: 029 2081 0800 (Monday 10am-5pm, Tuesday-Thursday 9am-5pm, Friday 9am – 4:30pm). mail@cff.org.uk

Blue Cross for Pets. <https://www.bluecross.org.uk/>. Offers support to anyone grieving for the loss of a pet. Helpline: 0800 096 6606 (Monday-Sunday 8:30am-8:30pm). pbssmail@bluecross.org.uk

Appendices 5: Giving helpful feedback



Continuing Bonds: Creative Dissemination

Giving helpful feedback

Taken from Ginny Wiehardt's blog: <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/tips-for-an-effective-creative-writing-critique-1277065>

1. Read the work carefully

Read pieces two or three times. The first time, read through to get the flavour. The second time, focus more on the details. Give yourself time with the writing to let it 'work on you'.

2. Choose your words

Go with 'I' statements (e.g. I would describe what he looks like earlier) rather than 'you' statements (e.g. you're not giving enough information about his appearance). Focus on your own response (e.g. I felt that this phrase wasn't clear). And/or, focus on the writing itself (e.g. This sentiment would be more effective if shown as well as told¹).

3. Start with the positive

Negative feedback is much easier to respond to if we've had some positive feedback too. And, we can learn just as much from positive feedback as negative. All pieces of writing have something going for them. Try and draw this out.

4. Consider why it's not working

Listen to your response as a reader. If something puts you off or throws you out of what you are reading, pay attention. Try and figure out what is behind your reaction. What isn't working for you? Is it the character? The way they talk? Has the setting not been described clearly enough for you? Does there need to be more conflict²?

A simple formula:

- What did you like?
- What would you have liked to see more of?
- What did the author/poet do well?

¹ 'Show not tell' is common advice given in writing. To tell would be 'he felt angry'. Show would be, 'Hugo's cheeks spotted red and he bunched his hands into fists'.

² 'Conflict' is what grips our readers and creates a story for them. We can't let our characters have things easy otherwise there would be nothing to root for.

Appendices 6: Certificates of attendance



The Continuing Bonds: Creative Dissemination Project

Inspiration Workshop

Date:

Certificate of Attendance

1.5 hours

Participant:

[Insert facilitator's name and sign
above the line]



The Continuing Bonds: Creative Dissemination Project

Deepening Connection Workshop

Date:

Certificate of Attendance

1.5 hours

Participant:

[Insert facilitator's name and sign
above the line]



The Continuing Bonds: Creative Dissemination Project

Editing and Finalising Workshop

Date:

Certificate of Attendance

1.5 hours

Participant:

[Insert facilitator's name and sign
above the line]