The Teaching and Learning of Scriptwriting in Adult Education:

The Liverpool Experience

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy by

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<u>DECLARATION</u>

This research is original and has not been submitted previously in support of any other degree qualification or course.

Signed :   Date:

ABSTRACT

In this thesis I have sought answers to the questions: 'How is scriptwriting taught and learned?' and 'Why is scriptwriting taught and learned?' I have concentrated on the history and practice of the subject in one city: Liverpool.

After defining the subject matter and establishing why it is worthy of study, I have outlined my methodology and methods. The methodology is 'hybrid'. First, the thesis traces and analyses the history and development of writing classes in the city. Methods used are, therefore, 'historical', including the study of archival material and the conduct of interviews. The latter part of the thesis gives a detailed picture of current practice and analyses that practice. Its methodology is broadly 'ethnographic'; it is essentially a qualitative study. I have, however, used some of the tools of quantative research. Methods include the use of questionnaires, interviews and lesson observations.

The 'historical' section begins with the establishment in 1973 of the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop and discusses its origins, philosophies, methods and influence. Chapter 4 deals with the Playwrights' Workshop, which grew out of the workshop movement, and considers its importance in terms of increasing specialisation and professionalism. Chapter 5 continues this theme as it traces the expansion of scriptwriting courses through the 1980s and 1990s.

The thesis then considers, in turn, the tutors and students involved in scriptwriting courses in the city in 2002/3. The tutors' practice is analysed in terms of the duality of their role as expert and facilitator. Ways in which that role has changed since the early writers' workshops are explored. The tutors' own ideas about the teaching of scriptwriting are also considered, as is the relationship between their teaching and writing, to provide some answers to the question: Why teach writing? Chapters 9 and 10 are based largely on two surveys of the student population. The initial survey establishes a profile of the population and provides some insight into students' motivation. The second, 'evaluation', questionnaire provides material for an analysis of whether and how their expectations were met, how they feel about teaching styles and methods and whether the courses could be considered successful.

In the thesis I have shown how current practice is influenced by the subject's history and have established how, why and by whom it is studied in Liverpool. This history has been shaped by influential individuals, socio-economic conditions and politics. Scriptwriting tutors have developed a sense of their own professionalism and expertise. Crucially, the tutors (and their students) believe that their status as professional writers is essential to their success as teachers.

The study brings us to the heart of the debate about who and what adult education is for. My findings suggest that, although there are differences in emphasis and interpretation amongst both tutors and students, the subject is increasingly seen as a 'vocational' one. Nevertheless, I would argue that these courses stand in the great tradition of adult education, providing as they do a variety of opportunities for change and development to many individuals from many backgrounds.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

GLOSSARY

A list of abbreviations and acronyms used in this thesis

ACACE	Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education
ACGB	Arts Council of Great Britain
AVCE	Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education
BAFTA	British Academy of Film and Television Arts
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CDP	Community Development Project
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EPA	Educational Priority Area
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
HEFC	Higher Education Funding Council
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Authority
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
HMSO	Her Majesty's/ His Majesty's Stationery Office
HTV	Harlech Television
JMU	John Moores University (formerly Liverpool Polytechnic)
LEA	Local Education Authority
LIHE	Liverpool Institute of Higher Education (latterly Liverpool Hope University College)
MAA	Merseyside Arts Association

MAWW	Merseyside Association of Writers' Workshops
MBC	Metropolitan Borough Council
METEL	Merseyside Education and Training Enterprise Limited
MSC	Manpower Services Commission
NACRO	National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
NALS	National Adult Learning Survey
NAWE	National Association of Writers in Education
NIACE	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
NS: SEC	National Statistics: Socio- Economic Classification
NUD*IST	Non-numerical, Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*
OPCS	Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
SRHE	The Society for Research into Higher Education
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TSO	The Stationery Office
UCAS	University and College Admissions Service
WALL	Writing Activities in Liverpool Libraries
WEA	Workers' Educational Association
WOW	Writing on the Wall Festival
WWCP	Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers

<u>**Chapter 1**</u>

<u>**Introduction**</u>

1.1 Background to the research and personal perspective

My interest in the teaching of writing to adults arose from personal experience. I

started teaching writing at the University of Liverpool in January 1991, having been a

professional scriptwriter for seven years. I subsequently conducted workshops and

classes for various institutions and agencies, including Liverpool Education

Authority, Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council, First Take, and Liverpool Institute

of Higher Education.

When I started to teach the subject I, like many teachers of writing, was often

asked the question: 'Can writing be taught?' However, this question was heard less

often as the years went by, the question seemingly becoming largely irrelevant as the

teaching and learning of writing became more widespread. This is not to say, of

course, that doubts are not still occasionally raised about whether it *should* be taught.[1]

The evidence produced herein may well help the reader towards an answer to that

question, but it is a question that, by its very nature, the individual must answer for

him or herself. The tutors and students discussed in this thesis have clearly answered

it for themselves in the affirmative.

My main research questions are, therefore: 'How is writing taught and

learned?' and 'Why is writing taught and learned?' The teaching and learning of

writing is a vast and ever-expanding field. Therefore, in order to present sufficiently

detailed answers to my questions it was important to narrow the field of study, which

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[1] Catherine Hayes, for example, expresses concern about graduates who, having studied writing, are
employed as 'storyliners' by television companies and whose approach to writing is overly 'formulaic'
(Interview 2002). Rowan Pelling, while acknowledging the appeal of writing classes, writes
entertainingly of 'all those earnest soul-searching scribes munching digestive biscuits as they listen to
one another's lyrical outpourings' (Pelling 2004, 23).

was done in two ways. First, I opted to concentrate on 'scriptwriting' rather than 'creative writing' or writing in general. Not only was the teaching of scriptwriting my own area of expertise, but it also served to bring into focus several issues surrounding the teaching of writing to adults and, indeed, issues in adult and continuing education in general, such as the question of whether these are 'vocational' courses and what that term really means. Furthermore, scriptwriting classes are a more recent phenomenon than other creative writing classes and groups, begging the questions of why and how they were first offered. Second, I decided to concentrate on Liverpool. Again, this was partly because I had the advantage of personal experience; but I also wanted to test out ideas about whether the Liverpool experience was typical of the rest of the country or significantly different in any way. This narrowing of the field does not mean that writing other than scriptwriting and places other than Liverpool are excluded entirely. It is necessary to consider them from time to time for definition and comparison.

That a change in perceptions as significant as the one described above has occurred in little more than a decade suggests that an historical study of the development of creative writing classes might shed light on the 'how' and 'why' of current practice. Indeed, I feel that any study of current practice would be impoverished by a lack of understanding of its historical perspective. There are, therefore, two parts to my research, the first essentially historical and the second, in broad terms, ethnographic. The 'historical' research deals mainly with the development of scriptwriting classes in the city out of the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop, founded in 1973. As most of the research took place during the academic years 2000/1 to 2002/3, this history, which forms the basis of Chapters 3 to 5, covers the years up to and including 1999/2000. In order to discuss current practice

effectively it is important to present a rounded and detailed picture of the experience of tutors and students. It was decided that the most effective way of giving such a picture would be to concentrate on one year: 2002/3. This choice was made because, research having started in 2000, it allowed time for the bulk of the historical research to be completed first, and for a small pilot study to be undertaken in 2000/1. This study of the tutors and students involved in scriptwriting classes in the city during 2002/3 forms the basis of Chapters 5 to 9 of the thesis.

The purpose of the thesis, then, is to describe and interpret both the development of scriptwriting classes in Liverpool and current practice in the teaching and learning of that subject in the city; and, from the evidence thus presented and interrogated, to answer the two main research questions in terms of scriptwriting. In order to do this, it is also necessary to ask the following questions: How has the teaching of scriptwriting developed and how does that development influence current practice? Who teaches scriptwriting, and how and why do they teach it? Who takes scriptwriting courses and what do the backgrounds and motivations of those people tell us about how scriptwriting courses are viewed by students? Are scriptwriting courses vocational, academic or leisure courses; or should they not be classified in this way?

1.2 Definitions

I have chosen to use the term 'adult education' as it seems to be the most generally and easily understood term, as well as being the least subject to the vagaries of fashion in educational terminology. Tight (1996) gives a useful overview of terms used to describe the education and training of adults, amongst them 'continuing education', 'post-compulsory education' and 'lifelong learning'. It would appear that

these terms vary in meaning according to who is using them. Any one of them can include both formal and informal learning situations, higher and further education, vocational and liberal education, award-bearing and non-award-bearing courses. However, 'post-compulsory education' clearly includes all courses leading to post-sixteen qualifications, such as degrees, A-levels or Advanced Vocational Certificates of Education (AVCEs), the inclusion of which would broaden the field of study too much. The terms 'lifelong education' and 'continuing education' also seem designed to broaden definitions of adult education, particularly with regard to informal learning situations.

I return therefore to 'adult education'. Hoggart's objection to the use of the term (ACACE 1982b) - that it has become 'stigmatised' owing to its association with non-vocational courses - is irrelevant in this context. Scriptwriting courses can be seen as 'vocational' or 'non-vocational.' In my view, they are probably both at the same time; it is up to individual students to decide whether or not they see writing as a vocation. This question will be revisited later when considering the views and practices of tutors and students on scriptwriting courses in 2002/3 (Chapters 7 to 10).

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines adult education as 'any learning activity or programme deliberately designed by a providing agent [for] a person who is over the school leaving age and whose principal activity is no longer in education' (Tight 1996, 65). This definition specifically includes 'non-vocational, vocational, general, formal and non-formal studies as well as education with a collective social purpose'. A similar definition is proposed by Legge: 'The organised provision of educational opportunities for mature people that are not a continuation of secondary or higher education as the terms are commonly used' (1982,1). A course that is 'not a continuation of secondary or higher

education' implies, in the context of this study, a course without entry requirements in terms of previous qualifications gained in secondary, further or higher education. Details of how these criteria were applied in practice to courses on offer in 2002/3 are given in Chapter 6.

I have decided to follow current practice in using the term 'scriptwriting' as one word. In this context, according to the *OED*, a 'script' is defined as: 'In theatrical parlance, short for a manuscript' or 'the typescript of a cinema or television film; the text of a broadcast announcement, talk, play or other material.' A 'scriptwriter' is one who writes such a script, its first recorded use (as two separate words) being by C. J. Caine in 1915 (OED 1989, 741), while George Orwell used the hyphenated 'script-writing' with its present meaning in 1945 (Ibid.). Thus, when I refer to 'scriptwriting' I mean, in essence, any writing which is intended to be performed, whether in the theatre, or on radio, television or film.

By Liverpool I mean the city of Liverpool. Courses and classes offered in Liverpool by any institution, company or agency come within my definition of 'adult education in Liverpool'. Those offered by institutions, companies or agencies based in Liverpool but which take place outside the city boundaries are not included, although they may be referred to in the text.

1.3 Methodology

In conducting this study it has been my intention from the start to use every method and tool available to me as a researcher in order to discover how and why people teach and learn scriptwriting. Consequently, the study is not an example of the use of any one form of methodology. Rather it is deliberately 'mixed'. Indeed, I have

employed two of the three 'broad categories' of research methodology defined by

Verma and Mallick (1999): historical and descriptive.

Chapters 3 to 5 are historically based and in these chapters, therefore, I have

used the tools of historical research. Having identified both primary and secondary

sources, I have tested and questioned their value, both intrinsic and extrinsic, in order

to discover the origins of and influences on the teaching of scriptwriting in Liverpool:

> [Historical research] is an act of reconstruction undertaken in a spirit of critical
> enquiry designed to achieve a faithful representation of a previous
> age...researchers often have to contend with inadequate information so that
> their reconstructions tend to be sketches rather than portraits. (Cohen et al.
> 2002, 158)

The purpose of the historical research is primarily to explain and illuminate current

practice in the field: in order to understand the results of the research undertaken for

the second part of the thesis it is necessary to place it in an historical context.

The study of current practice, which forms the second part of the thesis, is

essentially a descriptive study and, as such, can be seen as a logical extension of the

historical research, which describes the history of the subject. In order to give as

complete a picture as possible of current practice, it employs elements of several types

of descriptive study: survey, case study, evaluation study and ethnographic study.

While important evidence was gathered by survey, the amount of data gathered, the

size of the population studied and the fact that the surveys constituted only a small

part of the research suggest that to label the study as a whole as a 'survey' would be

inappropriate. 'Case study' might be a more appropriate description if that term can be

applied to a group as well as to an individual (Verma and Mallick 1999, 81), as the

study looks in some depth at a group of people. However, the group here is somewhat

larger than would be usual in a case study, and the study is not concerned with the

type of psychological analysis usually associated with that term. The notion of the

evaluation study is relevant, as descriptions of practice, whether by the researcher as observer, the tutors or the students, cannot be divorced from ideas about how effective or successful the experience of teaching or learning has been. Such evaluation, however, is again only part of the study.

Therefore, if my methodology must be labelled, it is probably best described as 'ethnographic', as it 'seeks to capture, interpret and explain how a group, organization or community live, experience and make sense of their lives and their world' (Robson 2002, 89). It does not, however, involve the sort of total immersion which, according to Borg and Gall, is considered essential by anthropologists to such studies - although they point out that the term tends to be used more loosely by educationalists (1983, 492-493). The study also starts without firm hypotheses to be tested, the theories and hypotheses being 'grounded' in observations made from the study of data. Suspicious of the excessive categorisation and labelling which are features of much educational writing, I have tried to avoid shaping my research to fit a given definition of a given methodology. Instead, I have remained flexible, as well as thorough, in my approach to the subject. It is probably most appropriate, therefore, to describe this study as a 'hybrid' (Robson 2002, 90).

I have been conscious throughout the research of the importance to a study's credibility of 'triangulation', defined by Cohen et al. as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of an aspect of human behaviour (2000, 112). Therefore, I have used, wherever possible, several methods of data collection to explore any given aspect of the subject. Perhaps of equal importance is the existence of an audit trail, which 'provides the reader with evidence of trustworthiness in that she or he can start with the raw data and continue along the trail to determine for her or himself if, in fact, the trail leads to the outcomes claimed by the researcher' (Kane

et al. 2002, 199). I have, therefore, made explicit the processes by which data have been obtained and the uses to which the data have been put.

1.4 Literature review: primary and secondary sources

Primary sources are described by Cohen et al. as 'those items that are original to the problem under study', including oral testimony of the participants in the events being studied and documents 'capable of transmitting a first-hand account of an event' (2000, 161). Oral testimony was obtained via interviews with people identified as playing a significant part in the development of the teaching of writing in Liverpool. The use of such a method was essential because of the paucity of written material, the difficulty of finding such material and its failure to answer many of the questions I needed to ask. Its importance to a study such as this is summarised by Thompson:

> Oral historians ... may choose precisely whom to interview and what to ask about. The interview will provide too, a means of discovering written documents ... which would not have otherwise been traced. The confines of the scholar's world are no longer the well-thumbed volumes of the old catalogue. Oral historians can think now as if they themselves were publishers: imagine what evidence is needed, seek it out and capture it ... Reality is complex and many-sided; and it is a primary merit of oral history that to a much greater extent than most sources it allows the multiplicity of standpoints to be recreated. (2000, 6)

Interviews were necessary, therefore, not only to establish as far as possible what happened, and when and how it happened, but also to discover the 'standpoints' of those involved. Details of how interviewees were identified and the interviews conducted are given below in Chapter 2.1.

The written sources most useful in establishing when, where and by whom writing was taught in the past are prospectuses from the main providers, held in the archives of Liverpool City Libraries, the University of Liverpool and the John Moores University. Other, more ephemeral, sources include theatre programmes, course

documentation, newspaper articles, recruitment material and publications of writers'
groups. Government reports, reports of official bodies such as the Arts Council, and
census returns have also been used.

Publications by those involved in the early history of writing classes, such as
Evans (1980), Jackson and Ashcroft (1972) and Kelly (1987), can be illuminating.
Such publications can be seen as primary or secondary sources. While they include
first-hand accounts of events, they often rely on the accounts of others and are
sometimes written some time after the events described. They also put events in
Liverpool into the context of contemporary educational and political thought.
Although written descriptions of practice are sparse, there are useful accounts of
creative writing classes in several books and journals. Amongst these are: Burrows
(1973), in the journal *Teaching Adults,* which contains mainly articles about the
practice of adult education; McAlister (1992), in its successor, *Adults Learning*; Jones
(1981) in *Adult Education and the Arts*; and Birch (1989), which is one of very few
published sources to deal with practice in Liverpool. There are also incidental
accounts of workshop practice by Birch (1986), Evans (1980, 1990) and the
Centerprise Trust (1977). *Writing in Education*, the journal of the National
Association of Writers in Education (NAWE), provides examples of current practice
by writing teachers, as well as articles about the subject's history and its place in adult
education. Of particular interest is the contrast between the underlying assumptions
held about the teaching of writing by contributors to that journal and those held by
contributors to *Teaching Adults* and *Adults Learning*, both published by the NIACE.
Writers in these publications tend to see writing classes as essentially non-vocational,
with their value lying primarily in the personal development of students; whereas

contributors to the NAWE's journal, specifically aimed at writers who also teach, are more inclined to view writing as a profession or vocation.

Secondary sources taking an historical view of writing classes proved rare - although Kelly (1960, 1970) and Harrison (1961), writing more generally about adult education, are invaluable in helping to establish an historical context, as are the essays in Jarvis's *Twentieth Century Thinkers in Adult Education* (1987). Taken together, these essays give a useful overview of the ideas that have shaped the history of adult education. No writer in the field can afford to ignore the contribution of pioneering thinkers such as Mansbridge and Tawney, whose ideas underpin the 'great tradition' of liberal adult education in Britain, nor of Yeaxlee, who is now generally credited with developing the concept of 'lifelong education'. Their influence is central to the very existence of the institutions within which scriptwriting is taught, and of the legislation which has influenced the provision of courses. Early practitioners, and some current ones, interviewed for this study clearly share some of their idealism and their sense of the political and social importance of adult education. It is interesting that both Mansbridge (1920) and Yeaxlee (1920) are careful to place their ideas within the context of the history of adult education.

More recently, ideas about 'andragogy', first proposed by Lindeman (Brookfield 1987, Jarvis 1987) and popularised by Knowles (1970), have dominated writing about adult learning. These ideas are of interest when considering the practice of scriptwriting tutors and the experience of their students, but it is my belief that the differences between the way adults and children learn have been exaggerated in an attempt to define andragogy. I am inclined to agree with Sutherland (1997) and Rogers (2002) in not over-stressing the difference and have, therefore, referred to writers on pedagogy as well as andragogy. Much of the literature available on the

teaching of adults is concerned primarily with how it should be done, being intended for trainee or practising teachers. However, such publications sometimes effectively connect practice with theory, and place theories and changing practices within their historical context (for example, Brookfield 1986, Rogers 2002). There has been a considerable amount of research done into adult students' motivation and feelings about learning; although the only research I have found specifically into students' feelings about writing classes is a very small study by McAlister (1992). However, the work of Daines et al. (1993), Fitzgerald et al. (2002), May (1985), Norris (1985) and, especially, Woodley et al. (1987) is useful for putting my own research into a wider context of motivation and attitudes among adult learners in general.

I have also consulted literature about writing (for example, Field 1984 and 1994, McKee 1997, Newman et al. 2000), often used by tutors and recommended to their students. Although these books are about 'how to write' and ostensibly intended for private study, they are usually written by people who teach scriptwriting, and are of use in helping towards an understanding not only of what is taught in scriptwriting classes, but also how and why it is taught.

The following chapter describes in detail the research methods, other than the study of literature, used during the course of this study.

Chapter 2

Research Methods

The material which forms the basis of Chapters 3 to 5 (the 'historical' section of the thesis) was obtained in two ways: by the study of existing publications, including archival material; and by interviewing a number of people who were involved, in various capacities, in the development of the teaching and learning of scriptwriting in Liverpool. Written sources used in these chapters have been discussed in Chapter 1.4, as have written sources referred to in the remainder of the thesis. The main tools of my methodology for Chapters 6 to 10 were: the study of prospectuses and course materials; questionnaires completed by tutors and students; observation of classes; and interviews with tutors.

2.1 'Oral history' interviews

Potential interviewees were largely identified by 'word of mouth', via current teachers of writing and interviewees, with one source leading to another. Several people gave lengthy interviews, describing the part they and others played in the history of the teaching of writing, as well as discussing their views on issues surrounding the subject. These interviews were largely unstructured and informal, focussing on whichever stage in the process each interviewee had been involved in, but also allowing them to comment on subsequent developments and any wider issues that arose during the interviews.

Longer interviews were recorded on audiotape and subsequently transcribed (Birch, Evans 2001; Morrison, Sear, Shane 2002). Shorter interviews, which were conducted with the intention of shedding light on particular aspects of the history of

the subject or obtaining another viewpoint, were not recorded. Detailed notes were taken, however, the accuracy of which was checked with the interviewees at the time of the interview. All interviewees were apprised of the purposes of the research and all gave permission for their interviews to be used and their identities disclosed in the thesis. On only one occasion did an interviewee ask for a section of the interview not to be used; this request was respected.

Silverman identifies three main approaches to the use of interviews: 'positivism', which gives access to 'facts' about the world; 'emotionalism', which tries to 'generate an authentic insight into people's experiences'; and 'constructionism', which is more concerned with the way in which meaning is constructed by interviewer and interviewee (2001, 86-91). The style and purpose of my interviews suggest that they are in the tradition of emotionalism. However, these interviews have not been used uncritically, as part of their purpose is to establish facts and any 'facts' emerging from them have been checked, where possible, by reference to other interviews and to written sources. For example, several of the interviewees had particular trouble recalling dates (often placing events earlier than the fact); these were checked against documentary sources. Where two accounts of the same event differ, whether in substance or interpretation, both versions are given. A useful summary of desirable practice in the conduct of oral history interviews is given in Morrissey (1970), whose straightforward and sensible advice was followed in my own interviews. It seems particularly apposite that the methods of the oral historian should have played a major part in the conduct of this study, as the philosophy and practices of the early writers' workshops owed much to the ideas and practices of Raphael Samuel, one of the pioneers of oral history (1975, 1977; see Chapter 3).[1]

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[1] See Appendix A for details of all the interviews conducted for this study.

2.2 Study of prospectuses and course materials

Prospectuses and course materials published by the main providers of adult education

in the city were among the archival sources used to establish the history of writing

courses in the city (see Chapter 1.4). Current prospectuses, promotional literature and

course materials were used to establish parameters and to identify courses to be

included in the study of current practice. This process began in July 2000. Enquiries

were made of all the institutions and agencies based in Liverpool which provide

education to adults: these include the University of Liverpool, Liverpool John Moores

University (JMU), Liverpool Hope, Liverpool Community College, the City of

Liverpool's Education and Lifelong Learning Service, the Charles Wootton Centre

and the Workers' Educational Association (WEA). Occasionally, tutors or

administrators suggested other possible providers, such as Productionline, First Take

and the Everyman Theatre. Some of these proved not to offer writing classes of any

kind, but brochures and prospectuses were obtained from those that did. The next step

was a careful perusal of these publications, supplemented by occasional telephone

enquiries to the providers, to try to establish which courses fell within my definitions

and should become the subject of further research.

Prospectuses (both in hard copies and on-line) and course documentation were

also obtained from course providers outside Liverpool to enable me to make the

comparison with provision in other cities which forms part of Chapter 7.

2.3 Tutor questionnaire

During 2000/1 and 2001/2 I sought to identify the tutors who would be teaching

scriptwriting in Liverpool, in order to construct a profile of those involved in teaching

the subject. My main tool in this stage of the research was a questionnaire, which was

designed with several objects in mind: to establish which tutors would be teaching scriptwriting; to provide information about tutors' backgrounds; and to act as a starting point for more in-depth qualitative research via observation and interview.

To fulfil the first of these three aims, it was necessary to elicit responses from all those tutors whose courses *might* include scriptwriting. In the cases of tutors working for the University of Liverpool and the WEA, this was a relatively simple task, as their prospectuses included not only the names of tutors, but also a brief description of the contents of each course. Questionnaires were sent, therefore, to all those tutors whose courses were specifically concerned with scriptwriting, and to those whose entries did not specify whether or not they intended to include scriptwriting. They were sent directly to University of Liverpool tutors, their addresses having been provided by the Centre for Continuing Education, and to WEA tutors via the Merseyside District WEA office. In the case of the LEA, no such details were included in its annual prospectus, *Learning In Liverpool*. Consequently, having made initial contact with the city's Education and Lifelong Learning Service by telephone, I sent to that office a questionnaire and a covering letter explaining the purposes of the research, addressed to 'the course tutor', for each creative writing course.[2] I also sent questionnaires, with covering letters, to any other providers whose prospectuses suggested they might offer courses concerned with scriptwriting, and to any providers whose activity in the area had come to my notice via existing contacts.

The first twenty questionnaires were despatched in September and October 2000. Those tutors who did not respond immediately were contacted again by both letter and, where possible, telephone or, in the case of colleagues at the University of Liverpool, in person. This procedure was followed again in 2001/2 and 2002/3,

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[2] *Learning In Liverpool* (2000) listed 'general' creative writing courses at the following centres: Newsham, Prince Edwin, Smithdown, Community Outreach (Unicorn), Anfield, Calderstones and Gateacre.

whenever new courses which might have included scriptwriting were discovered. From completed questionnaires and the responses of those who had not completed the questionnaire, I was able to establish the identities of all tutors working on discrete scriptwriting courses during the three-year period. I also identified a number of courses which included an element of scriptwriting as part of more general creative writing courses. I cannot be sure that I identified all the tutors involved in such courses, as most such courses were offered by the local authority. However, I am satisfied that I received replies from all those offering scriptwriting as part of general courses under the aegis of the University of Liverpool or the WEA. I also received replies from two LEA tutors, 'Jane' and 'Margaret', who intended to include some scriptwriting in their courses in 2000/1.[3] Between them, these two tutors taught four of the eight creative writing classes offered by the local authority in that year.

The questionnaire is divided into two parts, the first comprising questions about the respondent and his/her background, and the second questions about the respondent's classes, teaching methods and attitudes to teaching. Part One contains mainly closed questions designed to elicit information that would usually be associated with a quantitative survey (gender, age, ethnicity, employment status). It was established that only eleven people, including myself, taught discrete scriptwriting courses for adults in Liverpool during the three years being studied; three of them did not teach in 2002/3. Any quantitative conclusions drawn from such data would be, at best, of very limited value in terms of sample reliability, even with a 100% response. Krejice and Morgan suggest that in a population of fewer than fifteen people a 'sample' of 100% is required for reliability (1970, 607-610). In fact, replies were obtained from ten tutors, a response rate of 90.9%. Nevertheless, I would argue

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[3] Tutor Questionnaires J and M. Tutors are identified by letters or, when referred to in the body of the text, by fictitious names starting with the appropriate letter. Hence tutor J becomes Jane, tutor M becomes Margaret etcetera.

that it is valid to use information obtained in response to these questions to discover

what, if anything, the people in this group have in common in terms of their

backgrounds. Thus, one might reach some tentative conclusions about the sort of

people who teach scriptwriting to adults in Liverpool and ways in which their

experience influences their teaching. These data might also influence and inform the

interpretation of qualitative evidence about tutors' philosophies and practices obtained

from the second part of the questionnaire, lesson observations and interviews.

The first three questions of Part Two ask for information about courses taught

by respondents. The answers to these questions were used to determine whether their

work fell within the parameters of the study. The remaining questions in this part are

concerned with the 'how's and 'why's of their teaching, the intention being to

consider the answers in conjunction with the results of observations and interviews

subsequently conducted with the tutors.

2.4 Observation of classes

To help me to build up a picture of the teaching of scriptwriting to adults in Liverpool

and thereby, in simple terms, to discover answers to the questions 'what', 'where',

'when', 'who', 'how' and 'why', I set out to observe two classes taught by each tutor

teaching an open-access, non-degree-bearing scriptwriting course in the city in the

academic year 2002/3. With one exception[4] the tutors (of whom there were six)

planned to teach twenty-session courses, divided into two terms of ten sessions each.

The aim was, where possible, to observe each tutor for the whole of one session

during each term.

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[4] Tutor F (See below for an account of the problems encountered with this tutor).

The findings from these observations were added to and compared with evidence from documentation, tutor questionnaires and interviews with tutors. Observation does not, therefore, constitute the whole study but is, in Robson's phrase, 'a supportive or supplementary method' (2002, 312). The primary purpose of the observations was to attempt to find out how the tutors in the study taught scriptwriting, and what they were actually teaching.[5] Evidence from these observations was compared to the written statements of the tutors on their completed questionnaires. The 'how' and 'why' of their teaching were explored further in interviews after the observations had taken place.

My aim was to be essentially a 'non-participant' in the process of observation. However, I was unable to become purely an observer, as a psychologist might be when studying behaviour from behind a glass screen, for example, because of the circumstances of the study. Tutors and students were being observed, as far as possible, doing what they normally did in the place and at the time they normally did it. Nor did I employ the kind of formal and very structured approach to observation, using coding techniques, described by researchers such as Croll (1986) and Wragg (1999). This is because I was not researching particular and detailed patterns of behaviour, my approach being closer to what Wragg refers to as the 'open minded approach', in that the intention was to watch what happened, try to understand it and develop some ideas about the tutors' practice from what I observed (Ibid., 20). A rigorously structured, quantitative approach would not have been appropriate to research which was essentially ethnographic and qualitative. I did, however, intend to sit unobtrusively in the room making notes, albeit notes of a less structured and more

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[5] 'Interview and questionnaire responses are notorious for discrepancies between what people say they have done, or will do, and what they actually did, or will do' (Robson 2002, 312).

narrative kind, something more akin to the 'jottings' of ethnographic fieldworkers discussed by Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995, 17-32).

I was certainly not a 'participant' in the sense, often used by ethnographic researchers, of becoming part of the group and taking part in their activities. This would have been inappropriate, as I was not studying one group for any length of time, but several different groups on one or two occasions only. Also, because of my preliminary research and my pre-existing position as a continuing education tutor in the University, the tutors involved in the study already knew me. Therefore, I explained to the students and tutors the reasons for my presence at their classes, following the advice of Emerson et al. to 'inform people in the setting of the research, especially those with whom he has established some sort of personal relationship' (Ibid., 21), and asked them not to involve me in the group as a participant. Some of the tutors introduced me to their students at the start of the class, giving a brief explanation of my research, while others asked me to introduce myself. In all cases, the students were told that their anonymity would be preserved when the research was written up, and that if any of them objected to my presence in the class, I would withdraw. Fortunately, there were no such objections.

There was, however, a degree of participation. For example, students and tutors occasionally talked to me at break (a time which many tutors consider to be a part of the class, providing an opportunity for students to interact informally) or immediately after the class, either about my research or about the classes. Also, there were three occasions in three different classes where tutors referred to me for confirmation and/or clarification of something which had arisen in discussion and with which they felt, knowing about my own experience of writing, I might be able to

help (B1, D1, E2).[6] I dealt with these queries by answering as briefly as I could, while trying not to appear rude. None of the tutors or students attempted to draw me into a discussion during the class. I was aware that the presence of a 'stranger' in itself might change the way in which the class is conducted (see Wragg 1999, 15), an effect I tried to minimise by reassuring tutors that their work was not being evaluated or inspected on behalf of the University or any other agency, and by remaining as unobtrusive as possible. One of the major problems with observations of lessons in schools, whether by researchers, inspectors or colleagues, is that they produce in teachers a (very understandable) desire to 'show off' and produce something perhaps untypical of their normal teaching. Similarly, students might display untypical behaviour. I would argue that this did not happen during my observations. In the case of the students, the fact that there was another adult in the group would have far less impact than the effect of having a second adult in a class of children; especially as they had been reassured that the observer was not assessing or judging them in any way. Tutors had also been fully apprised of the nature and purpose of the research and should have had no reason to doubt the probity of the researcher, with whom many had been acquainted for some time. This prior knowledge, which might in some situations have the potential to cast doubt on the objectivity of the research, in this case strengthened the 'authenticity' of the experience by virtue of creating a sense of trust between observer and observed. In addition, my own substantial experience of teaching writing would have alerted me to anything out of the ordinary or 'not quite right' going on in the classes. This was not the case in any of the classes observed.

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[6] Observations will henceforward be referenced by the letter already assigned to the tutor concerned (or, in the case of jointly taught classes, the two appropriate letters) and a number indicating, chronologically, which of his/her classes is being referred to. See Appendix D for a full schedule of classes observed.

While one can never be certain about the degree to which one's presence has changed a situation, I would contend that my presence in the classes had very little impact.

Although the observations were not structured to the extent that they might be in a quantitative study, it was felt that a certain degree of structure would be helpful both as an *aide- memoire* and to assist in making comparisons between classes. Bearing in mind the nature of the study, therefore, and the intended outcomes of the observations, I designed an 'observation sheet' on which to make notes during each observation (see Appendix C). The first part of this sheet covers the questions to which the answers are largely factual and easily ascertained (who, what, where, when), either by reference to documentation or by brief discussion with the tutor. 'Teaching methods used' is related to a question on the tutors' questionnaire and intended to form a basis for consideration of the various teaching activities employed by tutors. As the primary outcome of each observation was a narrative of the session, I included a space for a chronological account of activities. To this extent, then, the observations could be said to be structured; but they were also exploratory in purpose, and the section headed 'Notes on teaching and learning' provided a space to make notes about anything deemed to be of interest which did not form part of the chronological account.

In the event, I observed a total of twelve classes during 2002/3 (see Appendix D). All five of the specialised scriptwriting courses at the University of Liverpool were observed twice, once during the first term and again during the second term. I also observed one class taught by Jane, a local authority tutor who had declared her intention to devote much of her 'general' creative writing course to scriptwriting (Tutor Questionnaire J); and, at the tutor's invitation, a class forming part of the Screenwriting MA at Liverpool John Moores University, taught by one of the six

scriptwriting tutors in the study. Although neither of these courses strictly fell within my definition of scriptwriting classes in the adult education sector, I felt that they would be of interest for purposes of comparison. Unfortunately, I was unable to observe one of the scriptwriting tutors. This tutor (Frank) did agree to allow me to attend a session and, indeed, arranged a date. However, he cancelled the arrangement at the last minute due, he said, to a failure to obtain permission from his organiser at the WEA. By the time such permission was obtained, the course (being only eight weeks long) had finished. I made further attempts to arrange an observation with him for either a non-scriptwriting course or a scriptwriting course in the following academic year, but was unsuccessful. I also failed to obtain a completed tutor questionnaire or any completed student questionnaires from him. As he was the only person teaching an adult education scriptwriting course for a provider other than the University of Liverpool during the year, this omission is a loss to the study. This tutor did most of his teaching (albeit not in scriptwriting) at the University, and it would have been interesting to see whether certain variables between the University and WEA courses affected his practice: for example, the lack of accreditation at the WEA, the shortness of the course, the location in Liverpool Central Libraries and any perceptible differences between the backgrounds of his students and those of the University tutors.

2.5 Interviews with tutors

Chapter 8 is based on interviews with four scriptwriting tutors (Brian, Charles, Diane and Ernest), all of whose classes had been observed during 2002/3. The interviews were 'semi-structured'. In this way, they differed from the interviews conducted for the 'oral history' element of the study. In Robson's terms they were 'respondent

interviews', as opposed to 'informant interviews' (2002, 271-72), the agenda being set by the interviewer; whereas in the 'oral history' interviews, although the interviewer would sometimes direct the interviewees towards aspects of their experience, the interviewees largely set the agenda by making choices about what they offered to the interviewer. Like the historical interviews, the interviews with tutors might be termed 'emotionalist', as their purpose was to explore the thoughts and feeling of the tutors. However, again like the historical interviews, the interviewees' versions of their experiences are not accepted uncritically. Also, partly because of the existing relationship between researcher and interviewee, these interviews can be seen in terms of constructionism, as the interviews became a forum for constructing meaning (Silverman 2001, 95-96). The interviewer's role as an 'insider-outsider' helped to create 'a dynamic process of interactivity where there is a recognition that the interviewer takes a major role in shaping the interview' (Perks and Thomson 1998, 102).

The intention was to allow the tutors to talk in their own terms about their practices and philosophies, while at the same time trying to cover similar ground in each interview so that tutor's responses could be compared. I therefore prepared a list of seven main areas to be covered in each interview. These were: the tutor's background and training; the tutor's perception of his/her role as a writing tutor; what the tutor was teaching and how he/she went about teaching it; whether and how the individual thought scriptwriting could be taught; what the tutor felt the students gained from his/her classes; the relationship between the tutor's teaching and writing; and how the tutor saw the future of the teaching of scriptwriting. These basic areas were supplemented by questions that seemed appropriate for individuals, sometimes

picking up on remarks they had made on the tutor questionnaire or matters of particular interest arising from observations.

The tone of the interviews proved to be relaxed and conversational, due to the relationship that had been built up between the interviewer and interviewees during the period of the study and previously. All the above areas were covered in all the interviews, although not necessarily in the same order or at similar length, the emphasis on different aspects depending on the interests and experience of the tutor.

The interviews took place between June and September 2003. Those with Brian, Charles and Ernest took place at a venue of the interviewee's choice and lasted between one and two hours. Owing to pressure of work, Diane was unable to meet for an interview. Her interview, therefore, took place on the telephone and lasted just over 30 minutes. Because of the brevity of the interview and the poor quality of the recording she is not directly quoted as often or as at great length as the others. Andrew was approached on several occasions, but it proved impossible to arrange an interview. This was disappointing in view not only of the stated aim to interview all five tutors whose classes had been observed, but also of Andrew's long experience of teaching scriptwriting. However, the loss of this tutor's contribution may be compensated for to some extent by the fact that his 2002/3 course was taught jointly with Brian, who gave a long and illuminating interview, covering both the course he taught alone and the one taught with Andrew.

2.6 Student questionnaires

Chapter 9 aims to construct as complete a picture as possible of the adults who chose to study scriptwriting in the year 2002/3 in Liverpool. All but one of the courses which fell within my definition of adult education courses in scriptwriting were

provided by the University of Liverpool, the exception being the WEA course for which it proved impossible to obtain any data. Consequently, statistics and inferences drawn concern only students attending open-access, non-degree-bearing courses at the University of Liverpool, except when the results of the 2000/2001 pilot study are explicitly referred to for the purposes of comparison. These are the same courses which were observed in 2002/3 for Chapter 7 and whose tutors were interviewed for Chapter 8.

Initial data were collected by means of a questionnaire, distributed to students by the researcher at the beginning of an early meeting of each course and collected during that meeting. This was deemed a more effective method of obtaining data than that of the pilot study in 2000/1, when questionnaires were given to tutors to distribute. For that study questionnaires were sent in September 2000, accompanied by explanatory letters, to all those tutors who had replied to the tutor questionnaire and whose courses were concerned either wholly or partially with scriptwriting. The response was patchy, replies being received from four University of Liverpool specialised scriptwriting courses (including the one I was teaching) and four 'general' creative writing courses, comprising one University, one WEA and two local authority courses. The number of students replying on each course ranged from two (Helen's University of Liverpool course) to fourteen (Charles's course). In all, there were 33 replies from specialised courses and 28 from general courses. Due to the small number of replies and the unevenness of the response across classes, the results of this survey could not be relied on to provide a representative picture of the student population. The questionnaires were retained, however, and subsequently analysed to explore similarities and differences between them and the results of the main study.

Two major changes in method, therefore, were made between the pilot study

and the main study: the decision to focus exclusively on scriptwriting courses (see Chapter 1.1) and a change in the method of distribution. At the beginning of the 2002/3 session I attended each course and explained the purpose of the survey, before distributing questionnaires to students to be completed before the end of the class. This method resulted in a much better response, a total of 87 replies being received from a population of 107. All 22 of the students on Andrew and Brian's joint course returned completed questionnaires, as did all the 24 on Brian's course; fifteen out of eighteen came from Charles; fourteen out of 27 from Diane; and twelve from Ernest's seventeen students. Six students who responded were registered on two courses each, so that in terms of actual students there were 81 replies out of a maximum population of 101.[7] The lower response from Diane and Ernest's groups is explained by the fact that, having asked to attend as early a meeting as possible, I invited individual tutors to choose when that should be. Some of them expressed concern about overloading their students with additional paperwork when they already had University forms to complete, as well as feeling that they should build relationships within their groups before introducing a stranger to them. In the event, the questionnaire was distributed in the first week of term to Andrew, Brian and Charles's classes, in the third week to Diane's class and in the fourth week to Ernest's class. In the last two cases attendance was somewhat lower than in the others, which might indicate a high drop-out rate at the beginning of their courses.

Although this is essentially a qualitative enquiry, it was important, in order to provide a meaningful picture of the student body, to be able to apply some of the tools of quantitative research with confidence. Given such a small population, the ideal would obviously have been a 100% response rate. Krejice and Morgan (1970) suggest

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[7] The total population would be lower if any of the students who did not complete questionnaires were registered on more than one course. As I was unable to determine whether this was the case, I am taking the total number of registered students as 101.

that a random sample of 80 is appropriate for a population of 100. Cohen et al. (2000) recommend a sample size of 79/100 for a confidence level of 95%, and for a confidence level of 99% a sample size of 99. Therefore, with a return of 80.2%,[8] I would argue that it is reasonable to use the survey results to draw inferences about the whole population regarding both the make-up of the group and its attitudes, provided that it is not broken down into too many sub-groups.

The questionnaire, which is reproduced in Appendix B, is divided into two parts. Part A requests seven pieces of factual information: name, date of birth, gender, ethnic origin, employment status, current or last job and highest educational qualification. Apart from for 'name', 'date of birth' (which was changed from 'age' in the pilot study to avoid vagueness and inconsistency) and 'current or last job', the respondents were given a choice of tick boxes. This is a change from the pilot study in the case of 'gender' (which was also changed from 'sex' to avoid frivolous and unhelpful responses such as 'yes please') and 'ethnic origin'. The latter, when not accompanied by tick boxes, had also elicited a number of unhelpful responses, some seemingly deliberate, such as 'Scouser', but most simply unable to be categorised, such as 'British'. Students were, therefore, given a choice of ethnic origins based on those used by the University's Student Enrolment and Registration Form (2002), from which the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) acquires its data.

Section B contains more open questions, asking students to give details of previous experience of both adult education and of writing, as well as asking about their motivations for attending the courses. Question fifteen provides a series of statements describing possible reasons for attending the course, followed by tick boxes. Respondents were invited to tick as many as applied to them. This list was

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[8] All percentages used in Chapter 8 will be rounded to the nearest tenth, except for those taken from Woodley et al., which are given to the nearest whole number.

changed from the pilot study to match the list used by Daines et al. (1993) in their study of adult learners' motivations, which provided a greater range of options. The only change in the wording of their options is from 'to save money' to 'to make money', which was felt to be more appropriate to the subject. Question eighteen asks students whether they are willing to fill in an evaluation questionnaire about their experiences; and nineteen whether they would be willing to be interviewed. In the event, no students were interviewed. There were three reasons for this decision: the responses to the evaluation questionnaire produced enough material on which to base a chapter about students' views on their courses; a chapter based on students' interviews would have made the study overlong; and, given that only a small number of students could have been interviewed in the time available, it would have been extremely difficult to find a means of selecting interviewees which would ensure that their views were representative of the student population as a whole.

When all the completed forms had been collected, each student was assigned a number as well as the letter or letters indicating the identity of his or her tutor(s). Henceforth, individual students, whenever referred to in the text, will be identified by both numbers and letters: for example, 1d, 16bc. Data obtained from the survey were subsequently entered into a database, and the statistical analysis package SSPS for Windows used to facilitate the analysis and comparison of variables.

Statistical information was obtained from a number of official sources for comparison with the results of the survey. The 2001 Census was used to try to determine whether the students were typical or representative of the area. It was necessary first to decide which population to compare them to: possibilities included Liverpool, Merseyside and the North West of England. I was able to establish that, of the 56 students who gave their addresses or telephone numbers, 34 lived in the

Liverpool local authority, twelve in Sefton, six in Wirral, three in Knowsley, one in Warrington and one in Manchester. I decided, therefore, that the most meaningful comparison would be with Merseyside, comprising the local authorities of Liverpool, Sefton, Wirral, Knowsley and St. Helens. HESA provided statistics about students in higher education, both for England and for the University of Liverpool in particular (2004a, 2004c), and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) provided published data on enrolments on local authority-run courses in 2002 (2003). The DfES also publishes the *National Adult Learning Survey (NALS) 2002*, which approaches the subject from a different perspective, surveying a sample of adults about their experience of learning.

Chapter 10 is largely based on data collected via an 'evaluation questionnaire', which was sent to students who had completed the initial questionnaire in 2002/3, a very small pilot study of students from two 2001/2 courses having been carried out to test the design of the questionnaire.[9] Evaluation questionnaires were sent to 53 of the 61 students who had indicated their willingness to complete such a form (eight having failed to give an address or telephone number) with covering letters on 2 June 2003; 29 students replied. A further letter, accompanied by a second copy of the questionnaire, was issued on 1 August 2003, eliciting a further eight replies. Telephone calls were made to all those who had not yet replied, and whose telephone numbers could be obtained, on 15 and 16 September 2003. As a result of these calls, after which questionnaires were re-issued to three people, a further five completed questionnaires were received, making a total of 42. This gives a response rate of 79%, representing 52% of respondents to the initial questionnaire and 42% of the total population. Completed questionnaires are spread fairly evenly across the five

[9] Evaluation questionnaires were sent to 22 students in September 2002. Nine replies were received.

courses: six out of a possible fourteen from Diane's course; nine from a possible

fifteen of Charles's students; thirteen out of 22 from Andrew and Brian's joint course;

eight out of 24 from Brian's course; and six out of twelve from Ernest's course.[10]

Eighteen respondents are female and 24 male. With such small numbers, any attempt

to analyse responses according to gender, age, ethnic origin or, indeed, tutor would be

of negligible value statistically. Nevertheless, when looked at in conjunction with the

observations, tutors' questionnaires and interviews with tutors, variations in students'

responses to different tutors can be of interest (see Chapter 10.3).

Because of the numbers involved, then, data obtained from these

questionnaires would be of extremely limited value in the context of a quantitative

study. However, by using rating scales (specifically semantic differentials) in

conjunction with open questions, it was felt that the questionnaires might 'afford the

researcher the freedom to fuse measurement with opinion, quantity and quality'

(Cohen et al. 2000, 253). Such scales were used to elicit students' judgements about

how well their expectations had been met (ranging from 'very successful' to 'not at all

successful'), how useful they found teaching methods used by their tutors (from

'useful' to 'useless') and how they rate the quality of various aspects of their courses

(from 'excellent' to 'very poor'). The wording was kept as simple as possible, bearing

in mind the scope such scales give for possible differences in respondents'

interpretation of value-laden terms (Osgood et al. 1957). In all cases a four-point scale

was used. An even number was chosen to try to eliminate neutral answers,[11] the

number of choices being reduced from six to four partly as a result of a tendency

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[10] The figures add up to 87 rather than 81 because of the six students who were enrolled on more than one course and returned the initial student questionnaire. Only one of these (12abd) completed the evaluation questionnaire, but her evaluation questionnaire did not refer at any point to Diane's course, implying that she withdrew at an early stage. As all her answers refer to Andrew and Brian's course, she will be referred to as student 12ab.

[11] Nevertheless, one student, seemingly determined to be neutral, circled both 2 and 3 twice in answering question ten. See Table 10.

observed in the small-scale pilot study to avoid the lower extremes; and partly because it was felt that, given the size of the population, a larger number of choices would create unnecessary distinctions.[12]

Open-ended questions were just as important in this survey, as they gave respondents the opportunity to clarify, explain or elaborate on their answers to the questions which employed rating scales; as well as expressing personal feelings about their experience and commenting on aspects of that experience which might not have been covered elsewhere. The researcher's motivation for using such questions alongside rating scales is summed up by Cohen et al.:

> The open-ended question is a very attractive device for smaller scale research or for those sections of a questionnaire that invite an honest, personal comment from the respondents in addition to ticking numbers and boxes ... It is the open-ended responses that might contain the 'gems' of information that otherwise might not have been caught in the questionnaire. Further, it puts the responsibility for and ownership of the data much more firmly into the respondents' hands. (2000, 255)

As each reply was received it was marked with the date of receipt and the student number that had already been assigned to the student concerned. Each competed questionnaire was attached to the appropriate student's completed initial questionnaire for ease of reference. The data obtained in response to questions eight, nine and ten were then entered in a database, in order to facilitate straightforward calculations. It was not thought that statistical analysis packages would be useful in analysing these figures, particularly as the small numbers involved meant that any comparison of variables would be highly unlikely to yield anything of statistical significance. In order to facilitate the comparison and collation of answers to the open-ended questions, all the forms were photocopied and the photocopies then cut into strips so that all the answers to each question could be filed together. All these

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[12] The only other changes, apart from minor adjustments to wording, were the change to the list of 'expectations' which had already been made to the initial student questionnaire and the deletion of the final question, which invited the students to comment on the design of the questionnaire.

answers were then considered in the light of questions seven, eight and nine in turn. Answers considered relevant to each topic being considered were extracted and put together so that students' answers to the open-ended questions could be considered alongside answers given to the 'rating scale' answers. Again, it was felt that available analytical packages, such as NUD*IST, would be of limited use in analysing the data, partly because the amount of data did not seem to justify the amount of work involved in learning to use a system with which the researcher was unfamiliar; and partly because the approach taken to the data was primarily, in Crabtree and Miller's term, an 'editing approach', with an emphasis on flexibility and the researcher's interpretation of the data in conjunction with other aspects of the research (Robson 2002, 457-58).

Chapter 3

The Writers' Workshops

3.1 Background to the founding of the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop

In 1973 in the Vauxhall area of Liverpool, David Evans, a lecturer at the University of Liverpool, convened the group that became known as the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop. It is my intention to show how this 'workshop' led directly to the first classes held in Liverpool specifically concerned with scriptwriting and is, in a sense, the ancestor of almost all 'creative writing' classes and workshops held in the Liverpool area since the 1970s. In so doing, I shall explore the reasons for and the implications of the gradual transformation of the 'writers' workshops' of the early days to the current provision of varied and increasingly specialised 'classes'.

Evans recalls that:

[The participants] didn't think for a moment they were among the pioneers of a nationwide movement ... They were simply working-class men and women who wanted to write and had been charged to do so by the electric tenants' campaigns of the previous months. As a maverick teacher/writer I was lucky enough to be around and drawn in. (1990,5)

This may seem a somewhat simple or even romanticised version of events, but one must bear in mind the nature of the piece, the preface to a collection of work celebrating the achievements of local writers' workshops, and its intended audience. Similarly, Evans's claim in the same piece to have thereby started the writers' workshop movement in Britain when he writes that 'it was in Liverpool, after all, that the first writers' workshop was born' (Ibid.) might seem a little grandiose. It is a claim, however, whose validity has been acknowledged by other, similar groups from elsewhere in Britain (Worker Writers and Community Publishers (WWCP) 1978, Morley and Worpole 1982). These groups 'formed more or less independently here

and there', some of them, such as the Stepney-based Basement Writers, very soon after the founding of the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop (WWCP 1978, 3). They could not, therefore, be said to have been directly modelled on the Scotland Road group. Indeed, their origins were as varied as their original aims, ranging from the Commonwords Workshop in Manchester, which developed from an oral history project (Ibid.), to Centerprise [sic] in Hackney, which started as a bookshop and coffee bar and developed as a community publisher (Centerprise 1977).[1] However, it was not long before members of the Scotland Road workshop found themselves sharing their experiences with and giving advice to groups from across the country (Evans Interview 2001, Shane Interview 2002).[2] Because of this, it can fairly be said that the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop had, by the end of the 1970s, become a model for the plethora of similar groups which were blossoming throughout Britain.

It is not my intention to trace the origins and development of these groups or to discuss their practices in detail; my concern is the development of the teaching and learning of scriptwriting, specifically in the Liverpool area. However, their success during the 1970s and '80s needs to be borne in mind when considering the Liverpool experience. It is important to remember that the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop and other similar groups in Liverpool did not exist in isolation, but were part of a national movement which became formalised as the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers (WWCP1978). The groups which made up this movement may have grown out of needs and desires, whether social, political or cultural, particular to their own regions, but their aims and methods were fairly similar, as were sources of funding. What I believe is different about the Liverpool experience is the

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[1] In Scotland, in the late 1970s and early '80s 'Writers' and Readers' Workshops' were developing along similar lines under the aegis of the WEA and the University of Edinburgh (Kirkwood 1990, 250 et seq.).
[2] For details of interviews and transcription conventions see Appendix A.

way in which the history of teaching and learning writing in the city can be traced from that day in September 1973.

How then did David Evans, formerly a South African journalist, come to organise a writers' workshop in the deprived and very traditional working-class area of Scotland Road? Ultimately, the answer lies in government policy. From 1970 to 1975 the area was designated by the Home Office as a Community Development Project (CDP). On the advice of Liverpool City Council, Vauxhall, a ward just north of the city centre, was chosen in preference to the Home Office's original choice of Toxteth, which had recently been the subject of Educational Priority Area project (EPA), funded by the Department of Education and the Social Science Research Council (Topping and Smith 1977). According to Thomas Kelly, then Head of the Department of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies at the University of Liverpool, the aim was to 'use community development techniques to improve the quality of life in areas of severe deprivation' (1987, 18).

The project, run by a team attached to the Town Clerk's Department, was not purely an educational one, being concerned with improving local services and with sociological research.[3] The Vauxhall area, according to Barbara Shane, a local community activist and later a leading member of the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop, was already highly politicised and the project found willing participants in the community:

> [We started] a lot of community organisations/ you know/ local people/ to get street organisations going and/ of course/ we thought we were going to do some good work and we went a bit over the top/ we were campaigning and blocking the roads and ... being an absolute nuisance really ... we were in a sort of political ferment - doing all kinds of activities- you know/ campaigning/ Tate's/ the big factory/ was closing down - the way the world changed from 1970 to 1980 was horrendous. (Interview 2002)

[3] Barbara Shane says that the main object was to get local people to claim benefits. (Interview 2002)

Both the WEA and the University of Liverpool were involved from 1972, the University taking its lead from the Russell enquiry into adult education, which was to publish its report in 1973 (University of Liverpool Institute of Extension Studies 1971, DES 1973). WEA tutor David Goodman, according to Kelly, made contacts which 'seemed to open up the possibility of adult education activities' (1987, 19), but did not feel that the WEA was best fitted to develop the sort of programme needed. After a year, the WEA withdrew, leaving Goodman employed by the Project to work with local groups, involved with industrial problems and welfare rights rather than education. Thus the field was left to the University.

From the University's point of view, its involvement in the Vauxhall area was primarily for research. Keith Jackson, head of the social studies division of what was now called the Institute of Extension Studies, was responsible for a research programme in community adult education. During the academic year 1971/2 he formed a team to link with the CDP. [4] This team initially comprised himself, a lecturer, Martin Yarnit, and a researcher, Robert Ashcroft. Jackson and Ashcroft give their views of action research in adult education in a paper given to the Nuffield Teacher Enquiry, asserting that 'cultural forms and expression must be placed at the centre of adult education in a working class area. We must stand where people are' (1972, 16).

Such views were very much in tune with radical thinking amongst adult educators at the time. Indeed, elsewhere in the same paper, they refer to 'evidence of [their approach's] success in the different social context of Latin America' (Ibid. 13), perhaps suggesting an awareness of the work and ideas of Freire (Jarvis 1987). The

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[4] 'With the help of the funds made available ... from the Gulbenkian Trust, the John Moores Jr. Trust and the Home Office, the Division is now launched on an extensive programme of teaching and research in the field of community development' (University of Liverpool Institute of Extension Studies 1972, 10).

following year Yarnit recruited a new member to the team in the person of David

Evans, 'whose experience of literature and journalism will help counteract undue bias

towards a "social studies" approach' (University of Liverpool Institute of Extension

Studies 1973, 12). The team initiated a number of classes, culminating in spring 1973

in 'Time Off', a series of courses in a variety of subjects.

This short period is sometimes remembered as a sort of guerrilla raid by the

academics of the University on the people of Scotland Road, which 'was inundated

with academics ... a few stayed, asked the people what they wanted and campaigned

alongside those people to set up, amongst other projects, a writers' workshop: the first

of its kind in the country' (Birch 1990, 153).[5] This might seem a little unfair on the

research team, as the purpose of its presence was clear from the start, to the

University if not to the residents of Vauxhall, the Institute of Extension Studies'

annual report emphasizing that: 'This is a research project, designed to explore

possibilities and discover how the problem can best be tackled' (University of

Liverpool Institute of Extension Studies 1972, 10).

Members of the team certainly seem to have been successful in their contacts

with local people, tapping into a desire for further education which was closely tied to

an appetite for community action and which could be said to be essentially political in

its nature, something understood by Barbara Shane and Barbara Blanche when they

got involved, having decided that 'the thing [they] were interested in/ as a sort of

movement for change/ was education' (Interview 2002). This was fertile ground for

David Evans, who had been involved in radical politics in his native South Africa,

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[5] Barbara Shane's version of the departure of Jackson, Yarnit and Ashcroft displays a similar misunderstanding or lack of communication between the research team and local people: 'I think the University got a bit scared of all the things that were going on, because we were sort of let off the leash' (Interview 2002.)

studying for a degree as a prisoner there before leaving the country to study at Oxford. Evans's own account of how he came to be part of Jackson's team is illuminating:

> I'd met a guy at Oxford who was working-class, reading politics/ Bob Ashcroft/ and he hauled me up to Liverpool for some sort of communications conference while I was in Oxford ... when the job came up for a - a culture person really/ in continuing education funded by Gulbenkian - it was a three year experimental job to work in inner city areas/ working class areas/ particularly Scotland Road - when that came up he actually suggested I applied - then I did because we'd had a lot of talk at Oxford about working-class culture/ which he was very interested in/ and about politics generally - I mean/ I'd come out of prison on the Left/ I was part of the freedom movement in South Africa so obviously socialism came into our discussions ... and so this job came up to work as part of a team in Scotland Road - there was already a team working there/ funded I think by the Home Office and other sources and Gulbenkian/ you know Gulbenkian's a big charitable trust, with a background in oil ironically ... I had pretty much an open brief and at the time I arrived/ which was in May 1973/ my first bit of work/ not work/ my first activity as a member of the social studies division ...was to go on a May Day march - that was the sort of atmosphere we were working in and I had a pretty open brief to do something cultural - there was a free scheme called Time Out [*sic*][6] which was offering Urban Studies and other elements free to adults in Scotland Road, using the schools ... and community centres. (Interview 2001)

Clearly Evans's beliefs and attitudes were in tune not only with those of Jackson and Ashcroft but also, and more importantly in view of subsequent events, with the community he was entering, caught up as it was in what Barbara Shane describes as a political 'ferment'.

Evans's contribution to the 'Time Off' programme of courses was to start what he describes as 'a little reading class, talking about books/ very informal/ and the aim was simply to talk about books.' The choice of books was, in itself, overtly political: *Brighton Rock* by Graham Greene, *North and South* by Elizabeth Gaskell and a book by George Orwell. Barbara Shane says that the group ' chose three books and [they] analysed them/ that went down okay' (Interview 2002). Note a slight difference in

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[6] Actually 'Time Off'.

emphasis here between Evans's 'talk' and Shane's 'analysed'. It was this short series of classes that led to the Writers' Workshop:

> In the course of this I made known that I'd been in journalism and they knew my background /they knew I'd managed to publish a few poems and a short story or two/ and one of them/ a chap called Frank Keelan/ an electrician/ said 'look a lot of us want to write/ we're interested in talking about books/ but we're even more interested/ some of us/ in our own writing/ could you convene a group in which we somehow discuss writing/ our own writing particularly?' (Interview 2001)

That is David Evans's account. Barbara Shane's is slightly different:

> And then somebody suggested the next thing/ because we were all in a nice cohesive group/ it was a writers' workshop - now he always says that/ David Evans always says that this fellow from Scotland Road suggested that/ but I've got a strong feeling that it was David Evans ... I don't know why he didn't claim credit for that ... but/ anyway/ the writers' workshop started. (Interview 2002)

Whatever the truth about the 'fellow from Scotland Road',[7] the important thing was that, in September 1973, a group of people from the Vauxhall area started meeting as the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop. The methods and motivation of this group might seem to be very different from those of the scriptwriting classes held in Liverpool thirty years later, which I will discuss in Chapters 7 to 9. However, an analysis of how and why things were done in the writers' workshops of the 1970s and 1980s, particularly the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop, will shed light on the philosophies which underpin the teaching of scriptwriting in Liverpool and provide material for comparisons with later practice.

3.2 The Workshop: its philosophy and practices

The Scotland Road Writers' Workshop survived until 1986, by which time there were writers' workshops in Liverpool 8, Old Swan and Childwall in the city of Liverpool,

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[7] Evans's version of events is recorded both in his own article, 'Writers' Workshops and Working Class Culture', where Keelan is referred to as 'an out-of-work electrician, the then chairman of the Heriot Tenants' Association' (1980,144), and in Kelly (1987,22), who simply refers to him as 'an unemployed electrician' but, interestingly, adds that he 'did not attend but sent in work.'

as well as Prescot, Runcorn, Kirkby and Stockbridge within a few miles. The Playwrights' Workshop, which will be discussed at some length in the following chapter, was also firmly established by now (MAWW 1990). Most, if not all, of these groups were directly modelled on, or at least influenced by, the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop. The first of them to be established, Liverpool 8 Writers' Workshop, was the result of an invitation by local community activist Dorothy Kuya to David Evans to run a workshop, along with members of the Scotland Road Workshop, at Burton Manor on the Wirral (Evans Interview 2001). The Liverpool 8 area was very different from Vauxhall, especially in its ethnic make-up, and Evans was surprised and encouraged by the success of this and subsequent meetings between the two groups.[8] The Childwall workshop was started by Keith Birch, with support from adult education worker Tricia Jenkins, who was based at the University of Liverpool. Practice here owed a lot to Birch's experience of the 'Scottie '83' workshop, one of two rival versions of the Scotland Road workshop which emerged in the 1980s, to which he had been introduced by David Evans after attending a course run by the latter at the University (Birch Interview 2001, Birch 1989). Janice Sear, the first co-ordinator of the Old Swan workshop, had also attended one of the Scotland Road workshops (Sear Interview 2002). There were many links, both formal and informal, between writers' workshops not only locally but also throughout the country. Centerprise in Hackney was among the groups which contacted the Scotland Road Workshop for help in setting up a workshop (Evans Interview 2001, Centerprise 1977, 19). The foundation in 1976 of the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers (WWCP), in which local groups took a prominent role from the beginning, helped to strengthen these links. There were, of course, differences between the

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[8] *Learning in Liverpool 1982/3* states that 'Liverpool 8 Writers' Workshop encourages primarily (but not exclusively) black residents of Liverpool 8 to express their talent through writing.'

groups in terms of their regional, social and ethnic identities. There were also differences in their origins and the way they were run, but they shared similar philosophies and working methods. Essentially, a writers' workshop was a small group of people who met on a regular basis to read their work and talk about their own work and that of other group members (Evans Interview 2001, Birch Interview 2001, Shane Interview 2002, WWCP 1978).

Classes in 'creative writing' had existed before 1973 but they had been few in number and it is possible that Evans and the members of the Writers' Workshop were unaware of their existence. However, in 1973/4 the WEA did offer courses in Liverpool and Birkenhead in Creative Writing, taught by W. Scobie and June Johns respectively, which sought to cover 'all forms of writing from personal letters and speeches, to articles, short stories and books' (WEA Prospectus1973). In Crosby in the same year Stella Johnson taught a course called 'Writing for Pleasure', which was concerned with writing 'both as a form of self-expression and with a view to publication' (Ibid.). Scobie had already run creative writing courses in Liverpool for the WEA in the three years from 1969/70 to 1971/2 (WEA Prospectuses1969 - 1971). From 1972 to 1977 the Local Education Authority ran a course entitled, in stark contrast to Stella Johnson's course, 'Writing For Profit' (Liverpool Education Authority). That writing for profit and writing for pleasure were often considered mutually exclusive is confirmed by Julie Burrows in her account of her own creative writing classes in Nottingham in the early 1970s:

> Broadly, there are two kinds of writing course, though there is some overlap. One aims to coach would-be commercial writers in details of current market requirements. The other has more literary aspirations, attempting to encourage the student to produce written work that will be intrinsically worth reading. (Burrows, 1974, 6)

Burrows's description of her methods includes the use of 'the presentation of a small object to handle' (Ibid., 7), a stimulus also employed by Scobie (Middleton Interview 2003), and exercises in summarising a plot, writing a 'skeleton' and changing prose into dialogue. Such planned exercises appear to have been largely eschewed by the writers' workshops, although Burrows's emphasis on using set texts and reading lists to offer examples of good writing to students is echoed in the origins of the Scotland Road Workshop in Evans's 'reading class.'

I have not been able to trace any writing classes in the Liverpool area between 1961 and 1969, but there were courses in the years 1957/8, 1958/9 and 1959/60 called 'Creative Writing', the first two taught by R.C.Barnes and the last by W.A.Pilkington. According to the WEA prospectuses, these courses consisted of 'a study of the purposes, techniques and various styles used in the writing of novels, short stories, plays, poetry etc.' (1957-59). The WEA's annual reports show that Barnes's classes were attended by 28 students in each year, while Pilkington attracted only twelve. The following year (1960/61) A.W.R. Hodge registered eighteen students on his 'Creative Writing' course for the WEA (Annual Report 1961).

At this distance in time it is difficult to discover exactly how these WEA and LEA tutors went about teaching creative writing. I am, therefore, very grateful to Maeve Middleton, a student on Bill Scobie's courses, for her account of his classes. Whether typical of writing courses at the time or not, Scobie's practices are certainly of interest when compared with those of Evans. As far as the early WEA and LEA classes are concerned, one might assume a certain amount of formality in teaching style, given the comparatively large numbers of students registered (for Scobie's

courses at least),[9] the usual lay-out of the teaching rooms used for adult classes at the time (usually lecture theatres or school classrooms), and the tradition of lecturing from which teachers of adults often came. Maeve Middleton confirms that this was the case, although she felt at the time that Scobie's style was much more informal than that of most teachers. She also confirms that, in spite of the WEA's roots and principles, the classes might have put off potential working-class students of the kind who attended the writers' workshops, partly because of the tutor's background and approach and partly because of the students that they attracted, whom she describes as 'creative literate people' from middle-class backgrounds (Middleton Interview 2003).

On the other hand, among the WEA's many contributions to the development of adult education are the introduction of the tutorial system, an emphasis on teaching from the angle of the students' needs and the conception of a social purpose behind study (Harrison 1961, 268, Mansbridge 1920). These principles are not dissimilar to those underlying the writers' workshops and, although there may have been a feeling that WEA classes were a bit too formal and many of the students middle-class, it would not be fair to say the people of Vauxhall were alienated from the organisation; Barbara Shane, certainly, had attended WEA classes (though not in creative writing) before 1973 (Interview 2002). It would seem that, despite the profound influence teachers like Scobie might have had on their students, such classes did not make much of an impact in terms of the expansion and development of writing classes, as is shown by the paucity of provision throughout the 1960s and '70s.

Whether or not the founders of the writers' workshops had any experience or knowledge of other 'creative writing' classes, they were certainly consciously trying to move away from the idea that their groups were classes in the traditional sense used

[9] At the time of writing (2003/4) the University of Liverpool's Centre for Lifelong Learning routinely limits numbers on its writing courses to twenty, although personal experience shows that more may be accepted at the discretion of the tutor.

in schools and adult education. The word 'workshop' is important here. It seems fairly certain that the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop was the first such group, in Britain at any rate, to use the word 'workshop' in its title. The choice of title was David Evans's, who chose it 'because it's down to earth/ workerist you know/ and I didn't want to call it a circle or group' (Interview 2001). Evans was clearly trying to appeal to a specific working-class community, many of whose members were politically active in various ways, and to signal that the group was consciously and exclusively working-class in character. In doing this he was following Raphael Samuel, who in 1967 had founded the History Workshop at Ruskin College, Oxford, where Evans himself studied. The connotations of seriousness, hard work and craft (as opposed to art) might have appealed, although the term 'workshop' was already, in 1973, in fairly common use elsewhere in the arts.

Its earliest recorded use in such a context in Britain was, according to the *OED*, in 1938 by the poet Louis McNiece in an article in *Modern Poetry* about Soviet poet Mayakovsky (1987, 375). Joan Littlewood's 'Theatre Workshop' was established in 1945 with a manifesto declaring it to be 'an organisation of artists, technicians and actors who are experimenting in stage-craft', although, perhaps significantly, there is no mention of writers (Goorney 1981, 42-43). By 1973 the Liverpool Playhouse was running regular 'workshops' at the theatre in Williamson Square for teachers and students, and had been doing so at least since 1970 (Liverpool Repertory Theatre 1970-1975). Indeed, Evans's own Department, the Institute of Extension Studies at the University of Liverpool, offered 'music workshops' for piano

and recorder in the academic year 1972/3 (University of Liverpool Institute of Extension Studies 1973, 22).[10]

The terminology was, then, not original in terms of the arts or of teaching and learning. Indeed, it had been used in the United States of America of a university-based writing class at least as early as 1942, when Paul Engle started the Iowa Writers' Workshop (Graham 2001). Evans, however, does not seem to have been aware of such usage outside Britain, having evidently come across the term for the first time in the context of Raphael Samuel's 'oral history workshops' (Evans Interview 2001, Samuel 1975 and 1977). By choosing it he was making a declaration of intent. He was saying that the Scotland Road group was something new. There had been classes and groups for writers in Liverpool before 1973, but this group was set up with little awareness of them and without reference to them. It had its own philosophy and its own ways of working. .

In Scotland Road, as elsewhere, the keynote was informality. The group was small in number, starting off with nine (1987, 21), its attendance varying between 'three and fifteen ... an average of about ten or twelve' according to Barbara Shane (Interview 2002). There was no charge for attendance, formal registration or membership and the participants in the early days were, with the exception of David Evans, all local to Scotland Road and consciously working-class. The format was simple:

> People who had written something read it out/ and then there was a general discussion on whether the rest of the students thought they were right or wrong/ and the rest of the meeting was more about discussing things in general/ literature in general or whatever came up/ politics/ whatever. (Ibid.)

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[10] A 'drama and music workshop' for adult students in Gillingham is described by Hazel White in *Teaching Adults* in December 1973.

Discussion was open-ended and not limited to writing. Indeed, there was a sense in which the members' writing was not what the workshops were about. Evans recalls that 'we didn't want to teach writing as such/ it was a way of making people aware of where they stood in society' (Ibid.). Both Barbara Shane and David Evans remember wide-ranging and often heated discussions on a variety of subjects. Evans also mentions that meetings of the workshop would sometimes be adjourned so that members could attend other events or meetings of a more overtly political nature (Evans Interview 2001, Shane Interview 2002). How, then, was this learning experience different from attending a conventional WEA or LEA adult education class?

First, it was flexible in form and content: the subject matter was not limited to writing, although its ostensible purpose was to discuss its members' writing; although there was usually a core group of participants, many others would attend irregularly and the meetings themselves could be abandoned in favour of other activities in the community. Second, it was rooted in the community: the participants came, in the early days at least, from very small area, an area described as a 'tight little community' (Shane Interview 2002); members were encouraged to write from their own experiences; and it was consciously, perhaps even aggressively,[11] working-class or 'workerist', to use Evans's preferred term.[12] There is little doubt that these workshops were overtly political, whereas Bill Scobie in his WEA classes consciously excluded politics from the discussion (Middleton Interview 2003). Third, the workshop sought to be informal and democratic in its methods, trying to move away from the idea of 'teacher' and 'taught'.

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[11] Janice Sear recalls an atmosphere of antagonism towards people perceived to be 'middle class' among workshop members in the 1980s (Interview 2002)

[12] In later years members, including Keith Birch and Jimmy McGovern, did come from further afield, and the workshop was advertised, as were others in the city, in the City Council's *Learning In Liverpool* supplement.

David Evans was a university teacher, with some experience of teaching in a more conventional setting, but he was aware that the workshop needed to adopt new ways of working. The Vauxhall CDP, of which the workshop was a part, sought to develop a new model for adult education:

> Education may best be conceived of as a dialogue between the educationalist and interested members of the community in which the former is as willing to learn as the latter. The dialogue ought to begin on issues chosen by the members of the community and not by the educationalist. (Jackson and Ashcroft 1972, 12)

The development of the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop from Evans's 'reading class' in the 'Time Off' scheme, which had in turn developed from informal contacts between Jackson's research team and the residents of the Scotland Road/Vauxhall area, shows this idea becoming reality. The 'dialogue' between the University team, including Evans, and the local community not only led to the formation of the workshop, but also determined its content. If it was to work - and to be different in any significant way from other adult education experiences - it was incumbent on the 'educationalist', in this case Evans, to create a new role for himself and forge a new relationship with the members of the group:

> I didn't have a model but I knew there was Ruskin and people like Raphael Samuel[13] who was running history workshops/ I'd met him and he didn't have notions about imaginative writing - he'd done a lot of work with working-class people/ and so had others/ here in the WEA there'd been tape recordings … Tom Lovett for example was a guy I knew well/ but I didn't quite go with the method of working. (Interview 2001)

It is interesting that Evans's only available 'models' were concerned with oral history or reminiscence projects, as the material produced by members of the workshop, and indeed of other workshops throughout the country, was often based in personal

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[13] Raphael Samuel had started the History Workshop at Ruskin College, Oxford in 1967. Its aims are set out in *Village, Life and Labour* (1975), edited by Samuel. In *Miners, Quarrymen and Steelworkers* (1977) Samuel describes the workshop as 'a loose coalition of worker-historians and full-time teachers and researchers'.

reminiscence: 'being first time writers they wrote about their own experiences mostly' (Ibid.).

Publications from the writers' workshops confirm that this was the case in many if not all writers' workshops (Kirkby Writers' Workshop 1985, Liverpool 8 Writers' Workshop 1981a and 1981b, MAWW 1990, Scotland Road Writers' Workshop 1975, Scottie Road Writers '83 1985). Evans describes his role and working methods thus:

> I thought the only way to proceed was to act as convenor/ to put in some ideas and to see what was offered by the people of inner city Scotland Road and to encourage them to write out of **their** experiences / for their own kind of audience/ never mind publication … never mind impressing publishing houses or even the rest of Liverpool/ but write in a way which spoke to their condition and their peers - and that was pretty much agreed - so what would happen was people would come in with a piece/ not necessarily fictional/ it might be a recollection of something that had happened/ but we worked to shape stuff and people would read out their stuff/ very nervously to begin with - I would throw in some comments - I might take stuff away/ look at it and pass opinion but everyone in the group was expected to pass opinion/ or not if they didn't wish to/ but it was for the group to decide and discuss - so it was a strange kind of animal/ I think a very good one - as people read out stuff and then somebody might not necessarily make a literary criticism/ but might say/ 'oh, that reminds me of something of my own/ you know/ something that happened to me' - so there was all kinds of interaction going on and we of course said 'go back and write it or try to write it'- so people would go off and have a go - and some people wanted to write poetry - most people wanted to write short stories or some account and it was remarkable, the stuff that was coming in/ and so at first that was enough … you know/ just sharing ideas.
> (Interview 2001)

It can be seen from this that Evans, as the 'educationalist' in Jackson and Ashcroft's terms, had to take on a role that was in some way different or separate from the others in the group. Undoubtedly, the workshops aimed to be democratic and to emphasise the equality of the participants, seeing terms such as 'teacher' or tutor' as alien to these aims. Nevertheless, in any group somebody must take a leading role, if only to deal with the practical aspects of running a group such as finding premises, bringing people together or starting and finishing meetings. By using the word 'convenor'

Evans suggests an inclination to limit his role to this sort of concern. However, the fact that he would 'take stuff away/ look at it and pass opinion', something which the others did not do, indicates something more akin to a tutor's role.[14] He also occasionally introduced the group to 'a bit of Lawrence, a bit of Brecht, the poets ... and whoever [he] could think of' (Interview 2001). What we see here is not someone deliberately assuming a teaching role – on the contrary, he was consciously avoiding that – but rather Evans's experience of both education and writing combining with his position as an outsider and a paid worker to place him, however informally, in a teacher's role.

Later in Old Swan Janice Sear used the title 'co-ordinator'. The Old Swan workshop was based in Old Swan Technical College where Sear was working as a tutor on 'Second Chance To Learn' and 'New Opportunities for Women' courses when, in 1978, a local woman, Winifred Froom, 'called into the college and asked if [they] could start a writers' workshop' (Sear Interview 2002). Sear, although paid by the college to run the workshops, consciously avoided the teacher's role, although she, like Evans, would take work home to read but not to 'mark'. Keith Birch, too, resisted taking on the role of 'teacher', although his workshop at Childwall was also linked to a college of further education:

> You can quickly become accepted as a member of the group and not as a teacher in the conventional way/ hiding behind the desk ... you become a member of the group - just someone who happens to have ... information or knowledge to pass on to that group. (Interview 2001)

This determination to avoid being thought of as a 'teacher' could be ascribed to a desire to distance writers' workshops from more formal or traditional forms education, which were felt to be alienating to the working-class people for whom the workshops were intended. Many people who did take part in the workshops had had

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[14] This was also Bill Scobie's practice at the WEA (Middleton Interview 2003).

negative experiences of education, their schooling disrupted by the Second World War or cut short by poverty and the need to start work.[15] Although it might now seem self-evident that 'the workshop is a teaching and learning group' (Morley and Worpole 1982, 122), those who ran and attended workshops were often anxious to distance themselves from any idea of such groups being 'classes'. The promotional booklet, *Writing In Merseyside*, maintains that 'Writers' Workshops are not teaching classes; members write at home and take their work to group sessions for honest, constructive and supportive criticism. No comment is passed on grammar, spelling and punctuation' (Birch 1986).[16]

This reference, as late as 1986, to writing classes not being concerned with teaching spelling, grammar and punctuation helps to give us an idea of what people, particularly working-class people with limited formal education, might have expected from a writing 'class'. The notion that one could 'teach' creative writing was quite new in Britain when the first writers' workshops were established, although there was a long tradition of teaching the subject in America (see Chapter 5.3). A 'writing class' with a 'teacher' or 'tutor' in charge would remind people of their experiences at school where the teaching of writing was often limited to grammar, spelling, punctuation and 'a little bit of composition' (Shane Interview 2002).[17] It is hardly surprising, therefore, that participants in workshops had little notion of the 'teaching'

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[15] Barbara Shane, who started school in the 1930s, describes how she was evacuated at the age of eleven. She returned to Liverpool to find the school destroyed and the only education available being classes for an hour a day in pubs. She left school at fourteen having in her words, 'no education to speak of.' (Interview 2002) Her experience is not untypical of her generation.
[16] That improvement in such area might well be a by-product of such courses, is, however, indicated by a reply to the evaluation questionnaire sent to students on 2002/3 scriptwriting courses. Student 14d finishes her reply to the question 'Do you feel your writing has improved? If so, in what ways?' with 'not forgetting my spelling is improving.' See Chapter 9.
[17] It can be difficult for those who went to school in the 1960s and subsequently to appreciate how much the teaching of English has changed. Creative writing in all its forms is now firmly embedded in the national curriculum for both primary and secondary school pupils (see The National Curriculum for England 1999). Interestingly, this has provided opportunities for freelance work for writers who also teach writing to adults, perhaps as teachers seek out experts in fields in which they themselves are inexperienced or inept (Tutor Questionnaires A, B and C, Interview C, Chapter 8).

of writing beyond the teaching of basic literacy skills. Such technical skills, although not ignored, were not a major concern of the workshops:

> We never bothered with the technical side so much/ if it was really badly wrong we did/ but people wrote the way they wanted to write and we didn't put any pressure on them to write in a certain way/ what we wanted was their ideas/ their lives/ down on paper/ you can do the tidying up after/ can't you? (Ibid.)

If structure, characterisation, dialogue and the other aspects of writing which writing tutors routinely set out to cover now (see below Chapters 7 and 8) were considered in the workshops it was through the medium of discussion, the emphasis being on informality. There seems to have been little sense of anyone actively 'teaching' the group about such things.

Nevertheless, it is inevitable that a person in David Evans's position would, for reasons I have already described, take on the role of 'teacher' to some extent. Later, Edward Barrett and Barbara Shane 'ran' the workshop and took on similar roles:

> By that time I'd been to the University/ and I liked to impart knowledge/ but what the people listened to me for was not formal knowledge/ and I often felt like putting my oar in and changing the direction of things/ but I didn't do that too much/ we just allowed it to develop organically ... people in a sense taught themselves. (Ibid.)

This description of the relationship between Barbara Shane in her role as convenor, facilitator, teacher or whatever one might choose to call it, and the rest of the group vividly illustrates how the practices of the writers' workshops distinguished them, in the minds of those taking part, from the conventional adult education 'class'. Scobie, in contrast, in the tradition of the evening class tutor, was perceived as a dominant personality who set exercises in class and for homework and who, while occasionally having students' work read aloud, positively discouraged criticism or discussion of that work in the class (Middleton Interview 2003). It was clearly Evans's intention to

establish such a distinction and he was successful in doing so. However, there were (and still are) other groups, usually called writers' circles, writers' clubs or simply writers' groups, which are also clearly not classes in the conventional sense. Harrison refers to writers' and poets' circles, indicating that such groups were well established throughout Britain by the middle of the twentieth century (1961, 324). Indeed, the Liverpool Writers' Club, which described itself as 'a group of poets, novelists, playwrights, actors etc. dedicated to the improvement/furtherance of writing standards in the area', claims a history stretching as far back as 1922, long before there were any writing classes or workshops in the city (Ryan *c.* 1991, 41).

These groups might seem on first consideration to be very similar to writers' workshops. They do not have teachers, they have members rather than students and their meetings usually consist of members reading their work, which is then discussed by the group. The existence of such groups is acknowledged by David Evans as 'a phenomenon that existed pre-workshops ... which [he] knew very little about' (Interview 2001). He clearly did not model the workshop on writers' circles, but much of what actually went on in the meetings was common to both types of group. The distinction between them seems to be in three areas: the background of the members; the motivation of the members; and the perceived purpose of the experience.

In Evans's mind the circles were intended for 'the middle class of the Wirral or Liverpool ... not right for us ... remember it was a political time' (Ibid.). Whether there was a significant class difference between members of circles and members of workshops cannot be established, as it is impossible to obtain such details about the participants. However, according to Barbara Shane, many writers' workshops (not including Scotland Road) became more middle-class in make-up as time went by, and it is possible that the real difference was smaller than Evans and other workshop

members imagined. Perhaps a more significant difference is that workshops such as Scotland Road and Liverpool 8 were firmly rooted in their neighbourhoods. Again, this would change as time went by, but it was usual for a workshop to recruit its members from a small area, identifying closely with the history and concerns of its people, whereas the Liverpool Writers' Club was based in the city centre and advertised for members throughout the city via the local press.

Another distinction between workshops and circles made by Evans is that the writers' circles 'were usually very much into publication and making money' (Ibid.). Members tended to see themselves as already being practising, even professional writers. The majority of people who attended the Scotland Road workshop wrote, according to Barbara Shane, 'more for pleasure and enjoyment' (Interview 2002). Although they did produce a few collections of work, the first, *Voices of Scotland Road*, published with financial backing from the Merseyside Arts Association in 1974 (Evans 1980 and Interview 2001), these were small, cheap publications intended for local consumption. There seems at first to have been no notion of the possibility of commercial success. Workshop leaders like Barbara Shane 'always told them that you weren't going to get fame or fortune/ and in the end [they] were wrong because Jimmy McGovern got it ... it was so unusual in those days/ so they really wrote for themselves' (Shane Interview 2002). It is clear from Shane's words that, whether or not individuals attending the workshops harboured ambitions of commercial success, such ambitions were neither expected nor encouraged. The Liverpool Writers' Club, on the other hand, included writers who had already tasted success.[18] But perhaps the main difference between writers' workshops and writers' circles lies in the fact that a workshop, however informal and democratic it may have been, was always intended

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[18] Among the members were Carla Lane and Myra Taylor, the writers of the B.B.C. comedy *The Liver Birds* (BBC 1969-1978), as well as poets and writers of short stories for magazines.

to be an educational experience. The Scotland Road Writers' Workshop sprang from an experiment in adult education, run by the University of Liverpool and funded by government. Its prime mover, David Evans, was a university teacher. The workshops that followed throughout the country were little different. According to Worpole: 'in each group there has been some contribution from people with higher education: teacher, journalist, or college lecturer. Most groups have benefited from institutional funds or expertise' (1978, 21).

Barbara Shane and Barbara Blanche, who both attended the first meeting of the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop in September 1973, were looking for education for themselves and their community as 'an agent for change' (Shane Interview 2002). Most people who went to the workshops were beginners who wanted to learn about writing. Some of them may well have been hungry for success as writers, but they were often also hungry for education and social change, as is shown in the later development of the workshop and the subsequent careers of individual members.

It is possible to conclude that David Evans, and others who founded writers' workshops, deliberately positioned them between 'classes' and 'circles', as informal groups convened primarily for the purposes of learning, 'creative writing' being both the subject and the medium of that learning. The evidence suggests, however, that the workshops were founded and developed with little or no reference to any pre-existing groups or classes. They were the result of a desire to find new ways of teaching and learning that would be appropriate for adults in working-class, inner-city communities. Their methods were developed in accordance with the perceived needs and desires of the people of those communities, many of whom were suspicious or wary of formal education, and whose background and culture did not pre-dispose

them to think of themselves as 'writers'. Even so, one must not underestimate how big a step it was for many people to go to a writer's workshop for the first time:

> People came to the workshop after a bit of hesitation/ and they'd get a crumpled bit of paper out of their pocket/ and usually a bit of writing they'd done/ but if you were a working-class man in that milieu/ you don't get out poetry and read it to your mates. (Shane Interview 2002)

That the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop and other workshops continued to attract such people is one measure of their success. I would now like to consider other ways in which one might measure their success and the reasons for any such success.

3.3 The success and influence of the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop

Before attempting to judge whether the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop was successful, it is first necessary to establish the grounds on which its success or failure can be measured. I would suggest that there are several areas we can look at: the number of people involved in the workshop; how long it lasted; the subsequent careers of those who attended it; the perceived quality of the educational experience; and the influence of the workshop.

I have already mentioned that the numbers were small. Indeed, Thomas Kelly noted that, had the workshop been subject to the normal regulations governing adult classes, it would not have been allowed to survive (1987, 22). Its freedom from such rules, which it owed to its genesis out of the CDP and the research project of Jackson and Ashcroft, was essential in ensuring its survival. Nevertheless, numbers remained low and it could be said that the small proportion of local people using the workshop indicates a lack of success. However, adult education has never, in any of its many forms, been a mass movement, as is shown by Harrison (1961) and Kelly (1970) in their thorough and instructive historical overviews of the subject.

If we compare the Writers' Workshop to other adult education initiatives in inner-city Liverpool, both in terms of longevity and influence, it must be considered one of the most successful. The University of Liverpool has had a long history of involvement in schemes (often government-backed) to improve adult education among the working classes of inner-city Liverpool (Kelly 1960 and 1987). From the University Settlement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to Lovett's work in the EPA from 1968 to 1972 (Lovett 1972a, 1972b, 1975; Midwinter 1972) such initiatives tended to have some degree of success for a few years; but failed to take root in the targeted communities, ending because of disagreement between those involved, lack of funding or both. The CDP as a whole was no exception to this rule, with the Department of Extension Studies withdrawing in 1974 (Kelly 1987, 21-22). However, the team did leave a solid legacy in the form of the 'Second Chance To Learn' scheme, developed by Jackson and Yarnit in 1976-77 (Ibid., 26-27), and the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop. The former was for a few years run jointly by the University and the WEA, before being taken over by the LEA. It was still running under the same name at Liverpool Community College at the time of writing and has, from its early days, included a writers' workshop. The latter survived until about 1986, having split in 1983 among some acrimony, into two rival workshops (Shane Interview 2002). I have already mentioned the influence the workshop had on other groups throughout the country. Many of these survived well into the 1990s, and several still exist. The direct connections between the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop and later writing classes, and its influence on their philosophies, styles and methods will be discussed further below (Chapters 5.2 and 8.1).

The influence the workshop, and others like it, had on the lives of the individuals involved is no less striking. Jimmy McGovern claims that it 'transformed

[his] life' (1982). In his case the transformation was dramatic and very public, from being 'a working class family man who hopes one day to be a teacher' to one of the most successful television writers of his generation.[19] Few others from the workshops became professional writers, but many had their lives transformed in other ways. Barbara Shane estimates that about 30 workshop members went on to university. Shane herself and Edward Barrett were the first to achieve this and it is notable that they both, unlike Willy Russell's archetypal mature working-class student in *Educating Rita* (1984), continued to live and work in their community. Shane was a prime mover in obtaining funding for the workshop and expanding its remit to cover other forms of adult education, including literacy, with herself as a full-time paid worker.[20] Barrett worked until his retirement as a further education lecturer on the 'Second Chance To Learn' scheme, as well as teaching a writing course at the University. Barbara Shane has summed up the workshop's effect on its members thus:

> In one sense they were de-ghettoised ... we lived in a ghetto in Scotland Road/ now that's what we were trying to do/ to sort of get people to think/ to improve their lives ... there are choices ... I like to think we did help to expand people's consciousness a bit. (Interview 2002)

As for the quality of the educational experience provided by the Workshop, there are no ways of measuring it, as no qualifications were obtained directly as a result of it, except insofar as its value is implied by the success of its former members described above.

If the workshop was successful – and in terms of the criteria mentioned above it is fair to say that it was – why did it succeed? In part it was because of the theory behind the Department of Extension Studies' project. Jackson and Ashcroft sought

[19] McGovern's television credits include *Brookside* and *Cracker*. See Chapter 7 and Appendix E for an indication of his continuing influence on tutors and students.

[20] Perhaps this is an example of the kind of enlightened self-interest that has driven many people involved in the development of writing classes and adult education in general in the city. The workshop was renamed the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop and Adult Education Group in 1979 after successfully applying for funding from the European Community (Shane Interview 2002).

new forms of adult education to suit working-class communities and their informal, committed approach worked when put into practice by David Evans in the workshop. Evans himself must take a lot of the credit for his commitment, his enthusiasm and his ability to work effectively with the people of Scotland Road and Vauxhall; the story of the development of writing classes in Liverpool owes much to Evans. The enthusiasm and commitment of local people such as Barbara Shane, Barbara Blanche and Edward Barrett were also essential if the project was to take root in the community. There is no doubt that the local community was ready for new forms of adult education: it was already highly politicised and people were seeking not only ways to improve their lives, but also the means to express their ideas, concerns and ambitions. Other working-class communities, such as Liverpool 8 and Old Swan, provided fertile soil for writers' workshops for similar reasons (Evans Interview 2001, Shane and Sear Interviews 2002).

It is important to recognise the importance of politics in the story of the writers' workshops. The academics involved in the CDP, including David Evans, were openly left-wing and saw their experiment in political terms. Their attitude 'represented the conflict mode in adult education as opposed to the consensus mode' (Kelly 1987, 47). Members of the local community, as we have seen, welcomed this approach. However, their funding came from national government initially, via local government; and from 1979 to 1984 the workshop was funded by money from Europe, again administered by local government. The workshop was unable to continue for long after the money dried up in 1984. So, however anti-establishment or anti-government the participants in the workshops may have been, their existence and survival depended on the policies of successive governments and the availability of funding from those governments.

But why writing classes? Part of the answer may lie in an awareness on the part of people in such communities that if they were to achieve their social and political aims they needed to improve their written skills,[21] but their work was not confined to the forms required for such purposes. From the start workshop members wrote creatively about their own experiences and those of people like them. Barbara Shane, David Evans and others talk about the lack of confidence people had in sharing their poetry or stories with others; but what is striking thirty years later is that these people *did* write about their experiences and, albeit with a lot of encouragement and in a comfortable environment, they *did* read out their work or have it performed. Creative writing was not considered to be a ridiculous or inappropriate occupation for working-class men and women in Liverpool in 1973. Perhaps one reason for this might be the cultural environment in which they lived. Although the Vauxhall area may have been a traditional, even inward-looking 'ghetto', to use Barbara Shane's word, Liverpool could, at that time, be described as culturally active and self-confident. The 'Merseybeat' phenomenon of the early 1960s was a form of popular culture firmly rooted in Liverpool's working-class communities, albeit hugely influenced by the 'art school' culture of the time.[22] Merseybeat was not just about performers, but also about writers and composers. There was also in Liverpool a thriving folk music scene (see Chapter 4.1). In the late 1960s and early '70s folk music was closely connected to poetry in the city. There were regular poetry readings at venues such as the Bluecoat Arts Centre, the Why Not? public house and the Gazebo cafe. Local poets such as Roger McGough and Adrian Henri, who continued

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[21] Janice Sear mentions workshop members seeking advice on writing letters to the press and pamphlets (Interview 2002).
[22] For slightly differing but entertaining accounts of this era see Williams and Marshall (1975) and Leach (1999). Cilla Black, one of the leading lights of Merseybeat, lived at 230 Scotland Road.

to perform locally, had been published and were well known nationally.[23] That poetry

was not seen as the province of an 'elite' or 'arty' city-centre based group is shown by

the independent emergence in 1974, the year after the founding of the Scotland Road

Writers' Workshop, of the 'Windows' community poetry project in Halewood, on the

border of Liverpool in Knowsley MBC (Ward 2000). Finally, the influence of the

local theatres, especially the Everyman, should not be under-estimated. The next stage

in the development of the teaching of scriptwriting in Liverpool owed much to the

policies of this theatre and to the active involvement of theatre professionals in the

local community, as will be shown in the following chapter.

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[23] Their collection of poems with Brian Patten, *The Mersey Sound*, was published by Penguin Books in 1967. Poetry readings at this time were popular throughout Britain. Elaine Feinstein, writing in her biography of Ted Hughes about London's first International Poetry Festival in 1967, refers to 'the sudden and widespread love of poetry read aloud, which lasted for about a decade [and which] has not been much analysed' (2001, 159).

Chapter 4

The Playwrights' Workshop

4.1 Background to the founding of the Playwrights' Workshop

The foundation of the Liverpool Playwrights' Workshop, probably in 1979,[1] represented an important change in the teaching of writing in the city. Before this there were no classes, workshops or groups in Liverpool specialising in scriptwriting of any sort. Writers' workshops occasionally attracted people who were interested in writing drama, and would continue to do so after specialised classes became more common, but most participants tended to write poetry, short stories or reminiscence, a preference reflected in the content of surviving texts published by the workshops. Although David Evans, himself an aspiring playwright,[2] did try to encourage an interest in theatre, 'it was a long time before [he] could persuade anyone in Scotland Road to write plays' (Interview 2001).

He sought to do this by taking groups from the Workshop to performances at the Everyman Theatre, and at local venues by the Everyman's community touring company, Vanload, and other companies such as 7:84. After a time, Barbara Shane and Barbara Blanche did write some drama, as did a man called Jimmy Small (Evans Interview 2001, Shane Interview 2002). According to David Evans, it was from Small and Jimmy McGovern that the impetus for a workshop specialising in scriptwriting came. Evans's account of the genesis of the Playwrights' Workshop is revealing, not only about the workings of the Scotland Road group, but also about the cultural

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[1] It is quite difficult to establish a precise date. Interviewees have tended to suggest an earlier date, without being precise, but written evidence suggests this as the most likely date.
[2] Evans later had some success on stage and television, starting with *Beneath Olympus,* produced by Merseyside Unity Theatre in 1979 (Dawson 1985, 41).

environment that existed in Liverpool at the time and is, therefore, worth quoting at some length:

> We went to a do in Manchester where there were dramatisations of things and I think Jimmy McGovern and John Small said/ 'this is the way forward'/ and I said/ 'yeah'/ I wanted it because I'd argued that theatre could be done anywhere ... we'd done one or two little plays of our own with the help of a drama student down in Scotland Road – we actually had a little performance in the old Everyman Bistro ... written by John Small ... and Jimmy was then doing sort of dramatic dialogue and Small/ I think/ went along to Merseyside Arts and said/ 'look we need something'/ and they came to me and said/ 'we need a specialist theatre person'/ so I said 'fine' and Merseyside Arts actually/ with some help from us/ in the sense that we put the word around ... there was obviously a take up for this/ and Pedr James/ who was then the director ... at the Everyman ... did a scheme/ and people came from everywhere/ there were about a hundred and twenty people/ I think/ to begin with/ and very enthusiastic/ and he spoke about theatre and then asked people to do their own short pieces. (Interview 2001)

In this narrative we can see, as in Evans's account of the origins of the Scotland Road Workshop (see Chapter 3.1), his perception of his own role within the group, facilitating the development of the new course, while at the same time being careful not to impose his own wishes or act too obviously as a teacher or leader. Rather, he sees himself as responding to wishes of the group members and encouraging them to take the lead.

As ever, the sources of funding for the project can reveal a lot about its nature and purpose. Merseyside Arts Association (MAA), the local arts funding body, had already been involved with the writers' workshops, financially supporting occasional publications. Its role in setting up the Playwrights' Workshop, and helping to bring together the University and the Everyman Theatre, reflected the policy of the Arts Council of Great Britain, then the national body responsible for funding the arts, as the author of the Institute of Extension Studies Report for 1977/8 notes:

> We welcome recent initiatives taken by the Arts Council of Great Britain to encourage a closer relationship between adult education and the arts. These have been eagerly taken up by the Merseyside Arts Association in partnership with the adult education agencies in this area, including the

Institute of Extension Studies, and have already generated a special
programme of courses and schools. (1978, 7) [3]

The Arts Council's policies were also, to a great extent, responsible for the willingness of the Everyman Theatre to become involved in the project. A major component of its policy for funding regional theatres was its support of writers working in those theatres. The New Drama Scheme had been initiated in 1952 'providing limited guarantees against loss plus a minimum royalty to the playwrights' (White 1975, 122). In subsequent years the scheme was widened to support second productions of plays and residencies for individual writers. For theatres like the Everyman, which consistently applied for and was awarded such grants during the 1970s, this was an essential form of funding if it was to produce new writing (ACGB 1972 -1984).

The Everyman Theatre had, during its relatively brief history, developed a successful policy of presenting a mixed programme of classics, contemporary works and new plays (Tanner 1974). Under the direction of Alan Dossor, Artistic Director from 1970, new plays, often about local issues, had become a dominant part of this mixture (Coveney 1975). The theatre, like many other regional theatres at the time, also justified its public funding by attempting to reach out into the community, chiefly by means of the Youth Theatre and Vanload,[4] the small touring company which played in community venues and local pubs. It has been said that, under Dossor, the Everyman was 'transformed into a political theatre aiming to attract working-class audiences' (Cowler 1997, 10).

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[3] It is possible that the first Playwrights' Workshop was one of the courses referred to here, although other evidence suggests it did not start until 1979. The 'recent initiatives' referred to grew partly from the awareness on behalf of the Arts Council and its secretary general of a lack of co-operation and liaison between the worlds of the arts and adult education (Shaw, 1978).
[4] Vanload was formed in October 1973, supported by grants from the Arts Council and the Merseyside Arts Association (Tanner 1974).

In the year 1975/6 the Arts Council granted awards to six writers working for the Everyman Theatre: Chris Bond, George Costigan, Adrian Henri, Adrian Mitchell, Bill Morrison and Willy Russell (ACGB1975, 5-6). This list indicates not only the commitment of the theatre to writing, but also something of the cultural context in which the Playwrights' Workshop started. Henri and Mitchell were locally based, established poets. Costigan was an actor and a regular member of the Everyman company. Bond had established a reputation for locally set, issue-based musicals such as *Under New Management* (1972), in a style similar to that of John McGrath, founder of the left wing theatre company 7:84, whose work for the Everyman included *Unruly Elements* (1971) (Coveney 1975, McGrath1975, Tanner 1974). This play has a further significance in the history of scriptwriting and the teaching of scriptwriting in Liverpool in that it is a work credited by Willy Russell with attracting him to theatre writing, particularly through the use of local accent and idiom:

> When I first came into the theatre, I thought you didn't work in those languages; you did in T.V. plays but not in drama at the theatre, and it was only through seeing *Unruly Elements* ... that I discovered I could work in this language in the theatre. (Gill 1996, 3)

Russell's writing at the time had developed from his involvement with local folk music[5] and it was clearly important to him, as it has been to other local writers since, to see the language and experience of his community validated in the theatre.

To say that this was a new experience in the early 1970s would be misleading, however. Alun Owen had several plays produced locally in the 1960s. Indeed, his 1959 play, *No Trams To Lime Street,* seen both in the theatre and on television, has been described by Gladys Mary Coles as 'significant in the author's use of the Liverpool accent and idiom, which he had to defend at the time and which can now be

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[5] Interestingly, one of the influences he cites is Peter McGovern, writer of the song *In My Liverpool Home,* who in 2003 was to become the first student to be awarded the University's Diploma in Creative Writing (see Chapter 5) (University of Liverpool Centre for Continuing Education Summer 2003).

seen as a milestone in the growth of Merseyside's sense of identity' (1993, xii). As far back as 1913 the Liverpool Repertory Theatre had produced at the Playhouse a play called *The Riot Act* by local writer James Sexton, then secretary of the National Union of Dock Labourers, about the dock strike of 1911, which attracted the kind of audience (and the kind of controversy) which Dossor and his colleagues were to court with some success 60 years later (Wyndham Goldie 1935). However, the importance of McGrath and Dossor's work does not lie only in its direct influence on writers such as Russell and Alan Bleasdale (both local schoolteachers when they started writing for the Everyman (Morrison Interview 2002)), thereby helping to create a continuing tradition of local writing of a kind that previous productions of local writers' work had failed to inspire. Their work also demonstrated that the encouragement of new, and specifically local, writing could lie at the heart of a regional theatre's policy and that that new writing could consistently attract audiences and revenue. In fact, several new plays commissioned by the Everyman during this period, such as Russell's *John, Paul, George, Ringo and Bert* and *Breezeblock Park*, were to have considerable success with audiences not just locally, but nationally and internationally (Gill 1992).

It was this artistic policy that made it possible for David Evans and the MAA to approach the Everyman for help with the new Playwrights' Workshop. The Everyman's writer-in-residence at the time was Bill Morrison, originally from Northern Ireland. His ideas about the role of writers-in-residence were important in helping to establish the Playwrights' Workshop and shape its direction and, as a consequence, the direction of the teaching of writing in Liverpool. Morrison had previously worked at the Victoria Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent with Peter Cheeseman, another director very conscious of his theatre's role in the community and, according to Morrison, 'a very considerable influence/ on all regional theatres' (Interview 2002).

Cheeseman's concept of a community-based theatre derived largely from the work of Stephen Joseph and Joan Littlewood, stressing the theatre's 'responsibility to its rate and tax payers to reflect the past and the present' (Cheeseman 1971, 77): 'the idea was/ a regional theatre fed its region/ it was about the people in that region' (Morrison Interview 2002).

However, although Cheeseman regularly employed writers-in-residence, there does not appear to have been any specific encouragement of local writers; Morrison's role there was 'to do the pantomime/ [he] had to do the kids' show in the summer/ [he] had to do the adaptation of the [examination] text' (Ibid.). Arriving in Liverpool in about 1974 (a place he describes as '**creative** in a different way'), Morrison began to develop his own idea of what a writer-in-residence's role should be, feeling that part of his role was 'to go out and find writers/and encourage writers' (Ibid.).

The active and positive tone of the statement, coinciding as it did with notions of reaching out into the theatre's local community, is quite important. There is not, and probably never has been, a shortage of people wanting to write for the stage; but it has never been common practice for theatres to actively encourage or seek out writers in their local communities. Morrison sees the writer-in-residence's role as more than simply reading scripts that have been submitted to a theatre and deciding whether or not they should be performed, believing that 'you don't just put a stamp on an envelope/ and eventually an envelope comes back/ it's that you talk to somebody' (Ibid.). Even the relatively straightforward practice of some theatres of inviting in promising writers and discussing their work requires resources of time and money that are often lacking. Morrison, funded by the Arts Council, was able to go even further than this and become actively involved with local writers because of the approach by

David Evans, who had financial backing from the University and the MAA, with his proposal to start a workshop for theatre writing:

> I was fortunate to meet up with David Evans/ who I think is a seminal figure ... Dave asked me to run workshops in association with the External StudiesDepartment/ which was half and half/ it was people who wanted to write/ and ... people who were on Second Chance. (Ibid.)

Morrison's account of the origins of the Playwrights' Workshop differs slightly from Evans's, in that there is no mention of the director Pedr James's part in the process. His reference to the involvement of students from the University's 'Second Chance to Learn' courses is interesting, given that David Evans, who was running general writing workshops as part of this programme, found most people on it uninterested in and, indeed, resistant to the idea of creative writing (Evans Interview 2001). The presence of such students, as well as the large numbers referred to by Evans, may well have contributed to a lack of focus and direction in the early days of the workshop. Certainly, Evans found it, after a while, to be a less than satisfactory experience:

> There wasn't enough discipline to it/ it wasn't really getting anywhere/ with which we went back to Merseyside Arts/ or they came to us/ came to me and said/ 'are you prepared to oversee a structured kind of course?'/ and I think by then I had other courses at the University/ and I said / 'okay I'll organise it'/ some money from Merseyside Arts/ some money from the University/ and we would restrict membership to twenty/ so it would become a class. (Ibid.)

Significantly, the end result of this process is described as a 'course' and a 'class', although its title contained - and still contains at the time of writing - the word 'workshop'. The ways in which the philosophy and practices of the Playwrights' Workshop differed from those of the established writers' workshops and, as a consequence, made the terms 'course' and 'class' seem more appropriate will be discussed below.

The fact that Evans made two attempts at launching this workshop partly explains the difficulty in accurately attaching a date to its foundation. The most likely

date for the first attempt is during the autumn of 1979, only six years after the start of the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop, with the re-launch probably in 1980/81.[6] It was not long after this that the workshop moved from the Everyman to the Playhouse Theatre, as a result of a change of Artistic Director at the Everyman. The new director, Ken Campbell, had a highly individual style and a policy which did not suggest that new writing would be encouraged, Morrison feeling that while the Everyman 'had a way of doing things/ bringing writers on and all the rest/ Campbell didn't want any of that ... suddenly [they] were lost' (Morrison Interview 2002).

Fortuitously, however, the incumbent artistic director of the Liverpool Playhouse, William Gaunt, resigned soon afterwards and four writers closely associated with the Everyman (Russell, Bleasdale, Bond and Morrison, often collectively referred to at the time as 'The Gang of Four') applied jointly for his job and were appointed in 1981 (McMahon and Brooks 2000, 26). This joint appointment created the unique situation of a leading repertory theatre's artistic policy being in the hands of a group of writers, rather than a single director, giving an even higher profile to writers than they were already enjoying in the city because of the success of Russell, Bleasdale, Morrison and others. The four men took with them their commitment to new writing and, specifically, their commitment to the Playwrights' Workshop, which for the next few years was held at the theatre's rehearsal rooms in Mathew Street, a move described by Morrison as 'crucial' to its development (Interview 2002). The rule of the 'Gang of Four' did not last, partly because of

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[6] The February 1980 edition of the local arts magazine published by the MAA, *Arts Alive*, includes in its list of recent grants made by that organisation a grant of £125 to the Playwrights' Workshop, Everyman Theatre 'to support a further seven sessions of the workshop'. This would suggest that the workshop was started in 1979, a date supported by the presence in Liverpool of Bill Morrison, then on a Resident Dramatist's Attachment funded by the Arts Council (Arts Council of Great Britain 1979). The date of 1980/81 is suggested by that year's *Annual Report of the Institute of Extension Studies*, and subsequent references in *Learning In Liverpool* and WEA and University of Liverpool prospectuses (1982/3 onwards).

problems with funding, particularly as a result of the abolition of Merseyside County Council, and partly because the writers' individual professional commitments prevented them from devoting sufficient time and energy to the theatre.[7] Nevertheless, by 1984, when the last of the four writers left the Playhouse, the Playwrights' Workshop was firmly established, with its own policies and practices. To a great extent it is these practices, developed during the early 1980s, which have changed the way in which writing was, and is still, taught to adults in Liverpool.

4.2 The philosophy, aims and methods of the Playwrights' Workshop

It is clear that David Evans initially saw the Playwrights' Workshop as a more specialised version of the writers' workshops which had been established in the area since 1973. According to him, the idea for a playwrights' workshop came initially from two members of that workshop, John Small and Jimmy McGovern, and the first participants were recruited by him from existing writers' workshops (Interview 2001). The partnership between Evans, a socialist, who had for the last few years applied what he called his 'workerist' principles to his work at the University's Institute of Extension Studies, and the Everyman Theatre, with its commitment to local communities and in particular local working-class communities, might also suggest that the policies and methods of the Playwrights' Workshop would closely follow those of the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop.

Evans had always resisted the role of 'teacher', and to some extent continued to do so in the Playwrights' Workshop. Bill Morrison also felt it was important that all participants should be seen to be equal. He focussed on the concept of the circle:

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[7] Arts Council reports show that from this time on local recipients of writing awards were employed not by the Everyman or the Playhouse, but by small companies such as Merseyside Young People's Theatre and Liverpool Lunchtime Theatre (1984 et seq.).

The moment you put people in a circle you take away the educational fear/ you don't any longer have someone standing up in front and telling you what to do ... and once you were in the circle you were together ... everybody knew it was going to be their turn/ and that meant that people were constructive and creative/ not destructive at all. (Interview 2002)

The fact that participants in the workshops sat in circles might well have given the appearance of equality and informality but, as in the early writers' workshops, somebody had to organise, convene or co-ordinate the group. Indeed, somebody (presumably Morrison) must have told them to sit in a circle in the first place. Furthermore, although the circle might have taken away the feeling of 'teacher and taught' there is implied in Morrison's account a degree of compulsion insofar as 'everybody knew it was going to be their turn'. In other words, participants were required to contribute and not allowed, as in less formal workshops or groups (and indeed in many classrooms), to sit quietly and listen until they were ready to contribute. Given the lack of confidence felt by many would-be writers and the effort of will it can take for them to attend a group or class, let alone share their work with others, to some this experience might be more intimidating than a conventional classroom situation.

After four years of running workshops, Evans was beginning to see the value of imposing a certain amount of form on the learning situation. Although he saw writers' workshops as groups where members, including himself, would encourage each other to write by demonstrating a positive response to their work, he could also see that there was limited value in simply inviting comments from other students on pieces that had been read to the group. While Morrison felt that the awareness that one's own work must be read out and criticised might prevent people from being unduly negative, Evans realised that there was often a tendency in workshops to say only positive (and generally rather vague) things about fellow students' work. While

such comments might help to boost confidence, they had little value in terms of practical advice which might help writers to improve their writing. It was this kind of experience that encouraged him to start taking a slightly more formal and structured approach:

> I used to say to people/ 'you must say some critical things as well as some supportive things'/ I got an idea at some point from the women's movement/ consciousness raising groups/ that you could say two critical things and two positive things/ but you **had** to say the two critical ideas/ and I should say that we were drifting towards structure. (Interview 2002)

Evans had by now also had the experience of conducting writers' workshops in more formal contexts, chiefly as part of the 'Second Chance to Learn' scheme (see Chapter 3.3), which he says 'moved in a more organised sort of way/ because it was part of a more organised structure than the workshops' (Ibid.).

As a permanent lecturer with tenure at the University, Evans was also asked to run courses or workshops within the Extension Studies Department:

> My colleagues ... said/ 'you've got to do this as part of a formal fee paying structure'/ I very much resisted it/ but eventually/ after me dragging my heels a bit/ I agreed to run courses in Liverpool and one or two other places. (Ibid.)

Operating within such a 'structure' must, in turn, impose a certain degree of structure on any course, if only insofar as it has to operate for a limited number of sessions within university terms and, in the simplest terms, must have a beginning, a middle and an end. After the first attempt to set up the Playwrights' Workshop, as we have seen, Evans had realised 'there wasn't enough discipline to it/ it wasn't really getting anywhere' (Ibid). When re-established, like 'Second Chance to Learn' and his classes for the Institute of Extension Studies, the Playwrights' Workshop had to operate within an organised structure. The result of a joint initiative between the Everyman Theatre, the University of Liverpool and the MAA, it soon became an integral part of the University's adult education programme, for a while run jointly with the WEA

(Liverpool Education Authority 1982 et seq.).[8] With numbers limited to twenty, fifteen sessions only on the course,[9] fees charged and regular attendance expected, it could not be as informal and even casual in style as the early writers' workshops undoubtedly were. Perhaps more importantly than the expectations of the institutions providing them, it seems that courses offered by institutions such as the University of Liverpool and the WEA create different expectations in their (fee- paying) students. Evans found that he ' was offering ... workshops/ using much the style to begin with of the working class workshops [but] they wanted the more structured thing' (Interview 2001).

The subject matter of the new course also seemed to demand a more structured and planned approach. The work being produced was specifically for performance on the stage. Drama, by its very nature, requires an audience. A script is a starting point, not a finished product, but if it is to become a piece of drama performed for an audience, it must be written in such a way that it can be performed by actors and appreciated by an audience. For the aspiring writers of the Playwrights' Workshop this meant that their writing could no longer be personal, private and individual in the way that much of the prose and verse produced in the writers' workshops was.[10] The implication for a learning situation was that notions of equality, in terms of the contributions made within the group when discussing participants' work, had to take second place to the quality of criticism and guidance demanded by those participants or (as we can now call them in light of the more formal educational situation) students. This was recognised by John Small and Jimmy McGovern when, having

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[8] Co-operation between the University and the WEA had been a recurrent feature of adult education provision in the city, as in many other cities, echoing the early interdependence of the WEA and University tutorial class movement described by Mansbridge (1920).
[9] In spite of this, according to Evans, 'workshops would meander through the summer' (Interview 2001), demonstrating that the spirit of the writers' workshops survived in the Playwrights' Workshops.
[10] Although at times it still might be. See Catherine Hayes's comments below (Chapter 4.3).

attempted to write drama in the Scotland Road Workshop, they expressed the desire for 'a specialised theatre person' (Evans Interview 2001). The association with the Everyman allowed access to a pool of experienced theatre professionals. According to Bill Morrison, 'what changed at that point was that we needed a professional situation/not a writers' group situation' (Interview 2002).

The idea of 'professionalism' is crucial when considering the way in which the practices of the Playwrights' Workshop changed the experience of the teaching and learning of writing in the adult education sector in Liverpool. There were three main aspects to this increasing professionalism: the involvement of theatre professionals, including writers, actors and directors; a change in the perception of the role of the group leader or teacher; and a change in the expectations of the students. These three were interdependent, each one feeding and encouraging the others.

The policy of involving professionals from the theatre had a very direct and practical effect on Evans's organisation of the course. First, the professional writers who had become involved insisted that 'the best thing that can happen to writers of theatre is to see their work performed' (Evans Interview 2001). This experience might not seem a huge step from the common workshop practice of writers reading their work aloud, but now the work was being performed by professional actors, who were being paid for their time. According to Evans: 'the informality of the workshops would not have worked in a theatre workshop because you had to have actors/ and if you wanted them performing scripts they had to come in at a certain time' (Ibid.). Professional writers and directors would also be brought in. This, of course, necessitated forward planning, as did the need to photocopy scripts and get them to the actors in advance of the class. According to Evans: 'we had this tremendous application of professional skill/ with me being a sort of secretary/ keeping the paper

flowing/ going to see the scripts were handed in etcetera/ and hiring people' (Ibid.).

In such a situation, students and tutors alike were beginning to look for a sense of progress over the duration of the course. The result was that a scheme of work was developed that, simple though it was, might have seemed too formal and teacher-led to many members of the writers' workshops. Evans describes it thus:

> I would do a very basic warm up on how you lay out a play and what did they see as a playwright … and we would very quickly get people … to write a very short piece/ mainly going for the form … 'two people stuck in a lift' was the actual one/ twenty-two lines/ two and at most … three actors … next they had to write a fifteen minute script … and then a rather longer one/ which could be developing from the fifteen minute ones/ and that was a very successful format / and people at least saw the shorter script in hand/ the longer ones we couldn't/ there was an ambition to do them/ but we never got that far because of the logistics of the thing. (Ibid.)

In structuring the course thus, Evans was taking on a responsibility for the content and direction of the course, which is now the norm for writing tutors in adult education but would have been resisted in the writers' workshops. Visiting writers, although not unknown in Scotland Road Workshop, would have taken a back seat, 'dropping in' more or less casually. Here they took more of a leading role than might have been acceptable previously. Having been invited in as experts they would, naturally, be expected to impart the fruits of their experience to the students, so that workshop members 'were now getting the thing that people had resisted a bit before/ [they] were now getting interaction between professionals and working class writers' (Ibid.). Evans recalls that 'some of them turned out to be really good teachers', showing an awareness of the importance of the role of teacher in the group (Ibid.).

Writers such as Bill Morrison brought with them an awareness that writing had to be worked on. Their experience had shown them that there was craft involved in writing and that that craft could be taught. Morrison thought that it was 'vital to try and teach the craft and structure' (Interview 2002). It is interesting that he uses the

word 'teacher' (in a slightly derogatory way) to explain what he sees as the importance of bringing in professional writers. He describes himself as 'a working guy' (meaning a working writer), whereas 'they had teachers up to that point/ what they got was a working guy/ and [he] had a different attitude/ because of that' (Ibid.).

Their value to the students of the Playwrights' Workshop lay not only in any advice and criticism they were able to give to the students, but also as examples of what could be achieved, the sense that for 'the first time there was an idea you could make a living out of this ... presumably they thought/ if he can do it/ I can do it' (Ibid.). Willy Russell had been given the confidence to write for the stage by seeing John McGrath's work at the Everyman Theatre and realising that drama could be written in his vernacular about the kind of people he knew. Now, Russell himself and other professional writers were showing the students of the Playwrights' Workshop that people from their area, and perhaps with similar backgrounds, had written for the stage and could earn a living from their work. Such an experience could validate both the work the students were doing and their ambitions.

4.3 The significance and success of the Playwrights' Workshop

While the writers' workshops of the 1970s were breaking new ground in many ways, they were not, as we have seen, the first groups or classes in which learning about creative writing took place. The Playwrights' Workshop, however, was undoubtedly original in being the first class or group in the area to be concerned purely with scriptwriting. Indeed, I have not been able to discover any evidence of 'specialised' courses (i.e. courses concentrating on specific forms, genres or audiences) offered to adults in the Liverpool area at all before the Playwrights' Workshop is mentioned in the Institute of Extension Studies annual report for 1982/3. This is not to say, of

course, that would-be scriptwriters would not have attended classes or groups prior to the founding of the Playwrights' Workshop, but scriptwriting for any medium was not the main focus of any class; only one WEA class in the environs of Liverpool, to my knowledge, offered to cover 'plays and scripts' among other forms of writing.[11]

This new specialisation is indicative of a change in attitudes towards the teaching of writing among both teachers and students. Groups such as the Scotland Road Workshop were used by participants for many different purposes: for example, to gain access to further education, to explore political and social issues, to improve practical writing skills and to explore their own creativity. The desire to write professionally and to improve their skills in order to be able to achieve this goal was not necessarily on the participants' agendas. As I have shown in the previous section, this ambition was much more likely to be the motive for attending the Playwrights' Workshop.

This is not to say that there was a dramatic shift in style or philosophy from the writers' workshop to the Playwrights' Workshop. The retention of the word 'workshop' demonstrates a desire to retain the same philosophy and atmosphere. In its early form, participants were drawn from existing writers' workshops, particularly Scotland Road. Furthermore, classes still centred on the workshop practice of asking students to bring in work, which would then be read and discussed by the group, a method now commonly referred to by writing tutors as 'workshopping'. David Evans and his colleagues sought in this way to retain both the informality and also, as is shown by his reference to 'working-class writers' (Interview 2001), the political ethos behind the writing workshops; although there could be no control exercised over the social base from which students came, certainly in later years, as the course would be

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[11] 'Creative Writing', Formby 1976/7, taught by Ron Ellis (WEA 1976).

advertised to the general public throughout the Liverpool area. While Evans and Morrison, the driving forces behind the Playwrights' Workshop, shared broadly similar political principles, and these principles lay behind their involvement in the workshop, they applied them in very different ways. Evans had developed his ideas about writers' workshops through his work with the CDP in Vauxhall (see Chapter 3) and was employed by the University. His stance was basically that of an educationalist, seeing writing workshops as a way of opening up opportunities for working-class people. Morrison, on the other hand, was concerned with the arts, specifically drama, and wanted the theatre to reflect the lives and ideas of its community. He wanted, in his own rather romantic phrase, to find the 'voice of the generation' and put it on the stage (Interview 2002).

That the Playwrights' Workshop, initially at least, retained a lot of the atmosphere of the writers' workshops, including some of their negative aspects, is clear from the account of Catherine Hayes who, as an established writer, was invited to take part in several sessions by Bill Morrison. She remembers that her function was reading scripts that had been handed in by members before the class, in order to give comments on them in the class. She found this an unsatisfactory experience because of the quality and type of work, which she describes as 'self-indulgent' and based mainly on reminiscence and personal experience; the resistance of the students to criticism; and the 'soft', overly positive, criticism of the work of others (Interview 2002). Her account of the kind of work being produced recalls Barbara Shane's description of the work produced at the Scotland Road Workshop (Interview 2002), borne out by reference to the Workshop's publications (Scotland Road Writers' Workshop 1975, c.1976), demonstrating that the move to specialisation in itself did not necessarily make for a more professional or rigorous situation. Hayes's opinion of

the criticism offered to members suggests that the professional writers were not all giving the kind of useful, practical advice that people like McGovern and Small might have been looking for when they first sought more specialised teaching. This kind of criticism shows that the move towards 'professionalism', the importance of which is emphasised by both Morrison and Evans, did not immediately involve a huge shift away from the ways of the workshops. Evans himself acknowledges that the early sessions were rather 'formless' and lacked 'discipline', and it would seem that after 1980/1 the situation described by Hayes would have been less common for the reasons outlined in the last section (Interview 2001).[12]

The changes in teaching methods, however gradually and uncertainly made, are important in signifying a change of perception in teachers and students about the purposes and value of a writing class. There was in the methods of the Playwrights' Workshop an acknowledgement, not always present in the writers' workshops, that students needed and wanted guidance from experts. There also seems have been a greater contribution made by tutors and other professionals in terms of planning and organisation. The differences between the methods of the writers' workshops and the Playwrights' Workshop can be looked at in terms of Groombridge's idea of the three modes of adult education: prescriptive, popular or personal, and partnership. The mode which perhaps most aptly describes the writers' workshops, with their emphasis on equality, informality and lack of intervention by 'teachers', is mode two, 'popular or personal', 'the only tests of which are pragmatic and subjective', although there were probably elements of the partnership mode (1983, 12-13). Writers' workshop members attended for many different reasons and with differing aims and expectations. Organisers such as David Evans, Barbara Shane and Janice Sear felt it

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[12] Although she is unable to date her experiences accurately, it seems that Catherine Hayes's experience took place before 1981, as she was not yet Writer-in-Residence at the Liverpool Playhouse (McMahon and Brooks 2002).

was important that they intervened as little as possible, thus allowing participants to use the experience in whatever way they felt appropriate (see Chapter 3.2) With the Playwrights' Workshop, however, the teaching of writing is moving further into mode three, the partnership mode, which Groombridge considers the most usual in adult education:

> The strength of this mode lies in its recognition that knowledge can be generated in different ways (through scholarship and training, through experience), that it can be organised in different ways (for use by interested men and women, not only for elaboration within a disciplinary framework by scholars) and that it can be validated in different ways (formally or experientially). (1983,16)

David Evans thinks the involvement of theatre professionals in the course, together with the demands of the students and the need for greater organisation, gave him a more professional attitude in his role as a teacher, perhaps reflecting a change in attitude to the business of being an adult education tutor which had been growing since the 1950s when 'the assumption … was that professionalism was bad, though this was nowhere convincingly shown to be the case' (Harrison 1961, 352).

There was also in the Playwrights' Workshop an implied acknowledgement that writing could be an aim in itself and that it was acceptable, even desirable, for a student to aspire to write professionally; whereas in the writers' workshops self-expression and personal satisfaction were more to the fore - although it appeared to others that some members, like Jimmy McGovern, were personally ambitious (Shane Interview 2002). This change of attitude was largely fostered by the presence of successful writers such as Russell, Bleasdale, Morrison and Hayes. Meeting and listening to them might, at the very least, make people think, in Bill Morrison's words, 'if he can do it/ I can do it/ he's not that special' (Interview 2002). This idea that ordinary men and women could become professional writers was reinforced at quite an early stage when two of the original students, McGovern and Jim

Hitchmough, started to receive professional commissions, something which probably would not have happened had they not been in regular contact with professionals from the Everyman and Playhouse theatres who were willing to read, criticise and develop their work.[13] Their experience would have validated the aspirations of other students, the more so because they both returned to the Playwrights' Workshop as tutors (Morrison Interview 2002, WEA 1983), thus helping to establish a tradition of established and successful writers giving the benefit of their experience and expertise to students. In a sense, then, success bred success. The achievements of individual students can certainly be seen as a measure of the course's success.

The course also succeeded in terms of longevity and demand from students, as it is still part of the University's programme of evening classes, now based at premises within the University. The workshop parted company with the Liverpool Playhouse in 1984, the victim, along with many other projects, of the abolition of Merseyside County Council and a subsequent reduction in public funding available for the arts locally (Evans Interview 2001, Morrison Interview 2002, McMahon and Brooks 2000, 22). This dissociation from the professional theatres did necessitate some change in its style and methods, but in many ways the course is still recognisable as the workshop started by Evans and Morrison (see Chapters 6, 7 and 8).

The perceived success of the Playwrights' Workshop was of great significance in the development of the teaching and learning of writing. Not only did it show that there was a demand for specialised writing courses in the adult education sector, a demand which would be met by a significant increase in the number of such courses

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[13] McGovern was commissioned to write a local version of Dario Fo's *Can't Pay? Won't Pay,* which was produced at the Everyman Theatre in February 1980 (Merseyside Everyman Theatre 1980). Hitchmough's *Watching,* later the basis for a radio play and a long running television comedy series, was seen at the Playhouse in about 1981.

in subsequent years; but in its ethos, style and methodology it acknowledged the value of teaching scriptwriting and the need for greater professionalism in that teaching.

Chapter 5

Scriptwriting Courses in Liverpool in the 1980s and 1990s

In this chapter I shall consider the development of scriptwriting courses in Liverpool in the period from the foundation of the Liverpool Playwrights' Workshop to the end of the twentieth century, exploring the ways in which such courses developed and some of the factors which contributed to that development.

5.1 The expansion in the provision of courses in Liverpool (1985/6 to 1999/2000)

The first written record I have been able to discover of the Playwrights' Workshop being offered as a course to the general public is from the academic year 1980/81 (University of Liverpool Institute of Extension Studies 1981). For the next few years it was run jointly by the University of Liverpool and the WEA, then solely by the University from 1987/8 (Liverpool Education Authority 1982 -2002, University of Liverpool Centre for Continuing Education 1993-2002). Indeed, it was the only scriptwriting course provided by either agency and probably the only such course available in the city until 1986/7. At the beginning of that year the LEA advertised courses in writing for television and writing for radio at South Mersey College (later part of the Liverpool Community College) and the University itself offered a course in writing for radio (Liverpool Education Authority 1986). It was from about this time that the number of writing courses, particularly those specialising in specific areas or aspects of writing, began to increase quite dramatically. In order to present as clear a picture as possible of the changing provision in that period, I have constructed a table summarising the provision of writing courses during the academic years 1985/6 to 1999/2000.

Scriptwriting courses	85/6	86/7	87/8	88/9	89/90	90/1	91/2	92/3	93/4	94/5	95/6	96/7	97/8	98/9	99/00
University															
University/WEA	0	1	1	2	2	2	4	6	6	6	5	6	8	7	8
WALL[1]	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WEA	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LEA	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
General creative writing courses University	1	4	3	3	2	4	4	7	6	6	6	6	8	8	10
WALL	0	2	2	1	1	3	4	7	8	8	6	8	6	6	6
WEA	-	-	-	-	-	9	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LEA	1	2	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	3	1	2
Total	3	4	6	6	7	12	4	9	9	9	8	6	6	9	10
Other specialised courses University	4	8	9	9	9	25	13	16	17	18	15	16	15	16	18
University/WEA	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	4	3	10	7	10	5	6
WALL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
WEA	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LEA	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Total (all courses)	1	0	2	0	1	2	4	6	5	4	11	8	11	7	7
	6	12	14	12	12	31	21	29	28	28	32	30	34	31	35

Table 1: Writing courses offered in Liverpool by the three main providers 1985/6 - 1999/2000

This table does not claim to be a complete representation of all writing courses on offer in the city. Given the number and variety of potential providers and the essentially ephemeral nature of archival evidence, it would be impossible at this distance to ensure that all courses were covered. Indeed, in 1991 Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) listed among the providers of adult education: 'LEAs, WEAs, University Extra Mural departments, voluntary and community organisations, polytechnics and other higher education institutes, adult residential colleges,

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[1] A joint initiative by the University of Liverpool, the LEA and the WEA administered by Liverpool City Libraries.

employers, trade unions and a range of distant learning agencies including the media'
(HMI 1991, vii). I have chosen to concentrate on the three main providers of courses
for adults in the area: the University of Liverpool, the Workers' Educational
Association and Liverpool Education Authority. This is not to say that there were no
other classes or workshops offered by other agencies. For example, several writers'
workshops continued as independent groups, although some, such as the Old Swan
workshop, were advertised in the local authority's annual prospectus, *Learning in
Liverpool*, as courses run by the local authority and are therefore included in the table.
There were also courses run by voluntary agencies and not advertised to the general
public, such as the one run by Keith Birch in the mid 1980s for NACRO (Birch
Interview 2001). The 1980s also saw higher education institutions beginning to offer
writing courses to full-time undergraduates and postgraduates. Although such courses
do not form a major part of this study, their origins, practices and influence are of
interest and they will, therefore, be considered later in this chapter.

The three organisations included in the table are, however, the only agencies
to have consistently offered writing classes and courses to the general public over the
period, usually separately but occasionally jointly. They have also left archive
material, in the form of prospectuses and annual reports, in which the researcher can
have confidence as accurate accounts of courses offered.[2] Unfortunately, it is not
possible to ascertain from surviving material whether individual courses attracted
enough students to run, but it is reasonable to assume that a course would not be
offered more than once if it did not attract sufficient students to continue in its first

[2] Figures in the table are taken from Liverpool Education Authority's *Learning In Liverpool* (which
covers courses by all three agencies) and University of Liverpool and WEA prospectuses for the
relevant years.

year.[3] It is possible, therefore, to draw conclusions about writing classes in the area from these figures with a fair degree of confidence.

Clearly, there was a large increase in the total number of courses offered, from six in 1985/6 to 35 in 1999/00. This was not the result of a steady year-on-year increase in the supply of, and by implication the demand for, writing courses. Indeed, after a significant (100%) rise in 1986/7 numbers settled down, remaining at twelve in 1989/90. The huge jump to 31 in the following year can largely be attributed to an initiative originating from Phil Taylor, the newly appointed Writing Liaison Officer at Liverpool City Libraries, involving all three main providers and known by the acronym WALL (Liverpool Education Authority 1989, 1990, 1991, Birch Interview 2001). A sharp decrease the following year and the subsequent disappearance of WALL from the records suggest that the initiative was not altogether successful. These classes were based in local branch libraries, often in inner-city areas,[4] and it may be that a desire on the part of the provider to base writing activities in local neighbourhoods (possibly hoping for the sort of success some local writers' workshops were already enjoying) was not reciprocated by sufficient interest from the targeted communities. However, it is clear from contemporary issues of *Learning In Liverpool* (Liverpool Education Authority 1990, 1991, 1992) that several of these classes survived under the auspices of either the University or the local authority. From 1992/3 onwards the local authority has been responsible for almost all the

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[3] During the period under discussion, as at the present time, different agencies had different criteria for deciding whether courses had sufficient students to be considered viable. These criteria also changed from time to time. A constant would appear to be that the University's test of viability was based on the number of students at the first meeting, after which the course would continue for the advertised period, while LEA courses would be reviewed from time to time and cancelled if and when student numbers fell below a given level. Anecdotal (and non-attributable) evidence from a number of tutors and students suggests that both systems, but more often the latter, would occasionally lead to the falsification of registers so that courses would be allowed to continue. I myself have seen evidence of this practice on more than one occasion.
[4] *Learning In Liverpool* (1990) lists courses in Allerton, Central, Childwall, Edge Hill (x2), Larkhill, Mossway, Spellow and Toxteth libraries. In 1991 it lists only Allerton, Central, Edge Hill, Larkhill and Wavertree.

courses provided outside the city centre, with the University of Liverpool and the WEA keeping to their traditions by taking responsibility for courses in the city centre. By 1995/6 the number of courses on offer had surpassed the 1990/1 level. That the total number of courses provided has remained fairly constant at between 30 and 35 over the last few years suggests that the city's provision of writing courses may have reached the optimum number in terms of demand from the general public.

Another difference between providers can be seen in the number and distribution of 'specialised' courses on offer. By 'specialised courses' I mean courses whose advertised subject is not 'writing' or 'creative writing' in general, but which seek to narrow the field somewhat. This can be done in several ways. First and most commonly, a course can specialise according to the medium for which the students intend to write, for example, 'Writing for Television' or 'The Short Story and the Novel'. Some courses specialise according to genre, for example, 'Travel Writing' or 'Situation Comedy'. Others might target the intended students (and, by implication, the intended audience for their work) by specifying the ethnic origin or gender of the participants, for example, 'Asian Voices, Asian Lives' or (specialising in two ways: by medium and gender) 'Scriptwriting for Women'. Finally, the occasional course defines its specialisation by reference to the intended audience for the work, such as ' Writing for Children and Young People'.[5]

Table 1 shows that it has become very rare for any provider other than the University of Liverpool to offer specialised courses of any sort. One reason for this could be the local authority's concentration on local community venues, whether libraries or schools. It might be difficult to attract sufficient numbers to a specialised course from a relatively small target area, whereas the city-centre based University

[5] All the above course titles were offered for at least one year in Liverpool during the period 1986/7 to 1999/2000 (Liverpool Education Authority 1986-1999, University of Liverpool Centre for Continuing Education 1993-1999).

courses have the advantage of a well-established and comparatively accessible central venue. Its 'constituency' is the whole city plus surrounding areas. But there is more to it than this. The traditions of the University might suggest a more 'serious' and precise approach to any subject on offer, a tradition reinforced by recent developments in the curriculum around assessment and accreditation (see Chapter 5.4). Perhaps more importantly, though, in the case of the University of Liverpool, the history of the development of writing courses, particularly scriptwriting courses, in the city has been inextricably linked to the history of the University's adult education service. The Scotland Road Writers' Workshop was the result of a University-based initiative and the Playwrights' Workshop was connected with the University from the start (see Chapters 3 and 4).

By the early 1990s scriptwriting courses were almost entirely the preserve of the University, which offered a variety of courses to suit different interests. The prospectus for 1991/2 lists courses in 'Writing for Film and Television', 'Scripting for Comedy' and 'Radio Drama: Writing and Production', as well as the long-established 'Theatre Playwrights' Workshop'. The prospectus for 1999/2000 offers two courses entitled 'Scriptwriting for Radio and Television' (one of them aimed exclusively at women), 'Scripting Situation Comedy', two courses in 'Scriptwriting for Film and Television', 'Comedy Scripting,' 'Theatre Playwrights' Workshop' and the 'Liverpool Playwrights' Forum', a workshop-style group intended for former students of other courses. Of these eight courses, six had been offered every year for the previous six years, often with the same tutors, with the Playwrights' Workshop about to start its twentieth recorded year (University of Liverpool Centre for Continuing Education 1999). In the same year the local authority offered two courses in scriptwriting, one at Croxteth Community Comprehensive School and the other at New Heys Community

Comprehensive School, but the classes were not successful in terms of attracting enough students to continue and were not offered the following year.[6] The evidence would suggest that in Liverpool the University has become the proper home for specialised writing classes, including those in all forms of scriptwriting.

5.2 Courses in scriptwriting for film, television and radio: background and development

It is evident from archive sources that in the mid 1980s most writing classes on offer to the public in Liverpool were general 'creative writing' classes or groups. Of the six courses offered by the three main agencies in 1985/6 only two specialised in any way: 'Writing for The Media', run by the WEA but based at the University, which was taught by Eric Newell and was concerned with writing for newspapers and magazines, and the Playwrights' Workshop. Furthermore, it would appear that the informality of the writers' workshop or group provided the preferred model for teaching and learning writing at the time. One of the three courses offered by the local authority is described as a 'club' and another as a 'workshop' (Liverpool Education Authority 1985). It was in 1986 that the Merseyside Association of Writers' Workshops (MAWW), founded the previous year (MAWW 1990, 154; Ryan *c.* 1991, 6), published its guide to writing classes and workshops, *Writing In Merseyside*, in which the editor asserts that 'writers' workshops are not teaching classes' (Birch 1986,13).

Nevertheless, it would seem that any distinctions that might have been made between the concepts of 'workshops' and 'classes', and indeed 'groups', were already becoming blurred. I have already described how, for various reasons, the Playwrights' Workshop metamorphosed from being a writers' workshop along the lines of the

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[6] I was the tutor on the New Heys course that year and the previous year. The 1999/2000 course was discontinued after one term because of a lack of students. At the same time I was teaching a very similar course at the University of Liverpool, which easily attracted enough students to continue .

Scotland Road workshop into what would generally be referred to now as a writing course. It would appear that other 'workshops' might have been undergoing similar shifts in emphasis, perhaps because of their association with formal educational institutions such as the LEA.

In 1986/7 courses or workshops in scriptwriting were offered to the public in Liverpool for the first time. The first University course in writing for radio started in January 1987. Meanwhile, South Mersey College had advertised something described in *Learning in Liverpool* as a 'writers' resource group', including writing for radio, writing for television and a 'writers' tutorial session'.[7] This is presumably the same course referred to in *Writing in Merseyside* as 'Writing for Stage, Television and Radio', the tutors being listed as Carol Durden and Ian Ralston. Although the college, and the LEA in general, did not continue to offer scriptwriting classes in any numbers or with any consistency during the following years, the existence of this course at South Mersey College in 1986/7 is significant in that it provides a bridge between locally based writers' workshops and the more formal and specialised writing classes which would become the norm in the 1990s. As we have seen with the development of the playwrights' workshop, the establishment of classes in scriptwriting for radio and television depended on a number of factors: the involvement of the established providers of adult education; the economic, social and cultural conditions of the time; and the initiative and interests of certain individuals.

Durden and Ralston had been closely involved in the foundation of the Childwall Writers' Workshop, whose genesis was very similar to that of the Old Swan Workshop (see Chapter 3.2). Durden and Ralston were lecturers at Childwall Hall

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[7] Writing for television and radio might well have been touched on in more general classes, groups and workshops, of course. Indeed, the long-established Liverpool Writers' Club, according to *Arts Alive* (MAA/Bluecoat Forum) for April 1978, offered 'advice ... on works suitable for publication, T.V. and radio scripts'.

College of Further Education, working on an access course 'very loosely based on "Second Chance to Learn "', according to Keith Birch. Birch recalls that there was a 'community resource group' attached to the college, which 'quickly became a writers' resource group because mostly the people involved with it … were members of writers' workshops', including one he himself had set up in a community centre in the area (Interview 2001, Birch 1989). Keith Birch was asked to take over the writers' group at the college, in a role he describes as 'facilitator' rather than 'teacher'. Later, Childwall Hall College and Riversdale College of Further Education were amalgamated to form the South Mersey College, and it was at this institution that the writers' resource group was advertised in 1986/7 as a group for writers of television and radio, rather than as the 'writers' club' listed in *Learning In Liverpool* the previous year. So the first attempts at teaching writing for the broadcast media occurred within the contexts of both the writers' workshop movement and an established educational institution. Durden and Ralston's role was important in helping to form this link, their background and the Childwall workshop's background in 'access' courses recalling both the Scotland Road Workshop's beginnings and the Playwrights' Workshop's early links with 'Second Chance to Learn'. There is another link to the early writers' workshops, through Birch's involvement in the Scotland Road Workshop (see Chapter 3), from which that he took his 'model' for running or facilitating writing workshops (Interview 2001). Later, having been employed originally as a 'research associate' at the Department of Continuing Education and then more or less succeeding to David Evans's old job on the latter's retirement, Birch would be largely responsible for the expansion of scriptwriting courses at the University of Liverpool.[8]

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[8] Birch was also, with Libby McKay, responsible for creating and editing *The Merseysiders*, a radio

Birch's interest in introducing classes in writing for radio and television derived from his experience on a course for unemployed people which he attended as a student in 1985, and whose provenance and stated aims explicitly demonstrate its links to the economic and cultural life of the city in the 1980s in a way which provides interesting parallels with the early days of the writers' workshops and the Playwrights' Workshop.[9] The course was not provided by an established educational institution or agency but by a company called MerseyScreen, which described itself as 'a television and video training facility within the established company Merseyside Education and Training Enterprise Limited', funded jointly by Merseyside County Council and the central government agency, the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) (MerseyScreen 1985). So, as with the University-based project which led in the 1970s to the foundation of the writers' workshops, this enterprise can be seen as a tool (deliberately kept at arm's length from government) for applying government policies, using government money, at a local level.

At the time probably the government's chief concern, as far as regional policy was concerned, was the high level of unemployment in cities such as Liverpool.[10] The inner-city riots of 1981 had led to the appointment of Michael Heseltine as 'Minister for Merseyside' and the establishment of the Merseyside Development Corporation as an agency for using government funds to redevelop and revitalise the inner-city (*The Times* 1981b, 1984). As much of the unemployment was caused by a decline in

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soap opera, using writers from existing workshops and classes, and funded by the University, the Polytechnic and local education authorities, which ran on Radio Merseyside from July 1988 to March 1990 (Birch 1989, Coles, 1993).
[9] I am indebted to Keith Birch for letting me have copies of original documentation from this course. Birch himself has written about it in 'Working Through Words' (1989).
[10] The 1981 Census gives a figure of 9.01% of Merseyside's population 'seeking work', being 13.94% of men and 4.6% of women. Among the 'economically active' the figure is 14.89%, being 18.07% of men and 10.09% of women (OPCS 1982,16).

traditional industries, such agencies were keen to promote 'new' industries in cities, leisure and tourism among them. Initiatives such as that by METEL in promoting the training of workers for the television industry should be seen in this context. The teaching of writing might not have been central to this or any other MSC-sponsored initiative, but its inclusion in the course implies that it was seen, in this case, as a vocational subject, in contrast to its role in the early workshops as a tool for social change.[11]

In the course documentation for MerseyScreen's 'Training for Television' course, the manager of MerseyScreen, Philip Draycott, specifically links the course to the perceived needs of an industry which is comparatively new to the area and which he sees as providing employment opportunities for local people:

> The development of more accessible and less expensive video equipment ... has opened up new market opportunities for specialist video recordings ... On Merseyside now, there are around eight established companies making this non-broadcast material, as well as a number of industrial and educational in-house units. Brookside Productions is an expanding concern, the BBC's regionalisation policy has brought more broadcast work to the area, both HTV and Yorkshire television have interests in the region and finally Granada Television in late 1985 will open its substantial studio commitment which is part of the refurbished Albert Dock complex in central Liverpool. This growth ... is bringing with it an increased need ... for technicians and production personnel ready to enter the industry equipped with a wide range of relevant skills that can be applied immediately in practice. MerseyScreen is Merseyside's response to that need. (MerseyScreen 1985)

This manifesto, aimed at prospective students - or 'trainees' as they should properly be called in this context - is clearly hyperbolic in its account of the opportunities presenting themselves in the area. It does, however, give a sense of the shift then taking place in the sort of expectations people in the area had about the kind of jobs and careers that might be open to them. MerseyScreens's stated aim in offering this course was to 'enable trainees to secure full-time employment in the television and

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[11] The MSC was established on 1 January 1974 under the Employment and Training Act 1973. For a fuller account of its origins and its influence on adult and post-compulsory education, see Pennington (2003, 148 et seq.).

video production industry' (Ibid.). The aim of the course, typically of many schemes and courses for unemployed people at the time, was specific and practical: to retrain adults in order to reduce unemployment figures, a change of emphasis from the more general and perhaps vaguer aims of the CDP in the early 1970s.[12]

A key feature of the MerseyScreen course was its association with Mersey Television, the producers of the locally based soap opera *Brookside*, which had been broadcast since 1982 on Channel Four (*The Times* 1982, *Sunday Times* 1982, Redmond 1987). The company provided placements for several students and, as the biggest and most visible television company in the area, would be the company for which local people might reasonably aspire to work. Indeed, from the very beginnings of Mersey Television its founder, Phil Redmond, had emphasised its local roots and its importance to the local economy:

> I was born and bred on Merseyside and with the opportunity to spend £4 million a year on one programme, I could not think of another local economy that needed the money as badly.
> Apart from that, Liverpool and the North West have always played a traditional role as a pool of creative talent. (Redmond 1987, 8)

Although it is likely that Redmond exaggerated the use of local people in the production of *Brookside*, there is no doubt that people from Liverpool were being seen on television in numbers and with a regularity previously unknown. Most of the actors were local and so were a number of writers, including Jimmy McGovern and Jim Hitchmough, who had been among the first members of the Playwrights' Workshop (Kibble-White 2000).[13] As with the pair's earlier success in the theatre,

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[12] Figures from the 1991 Census, however, show little change from ten years earlier. Those counted as 'unemployed' make up 8.9% of the adult population (13.42% of men and 4.98% of women) and 15.75% of the 'economically active' (19.42% of men and 10.84% of women). A further 2.71% of economically active males and 2.3% of economically active females are listed as being 'on government schemes' (OPCS 1992, 80). For comparable figures for 1981 see footnote 10 above.

[13] *Brookside*'s connection with local writing classes continued throughout the twenty years of its production. Other writers who had attended University of Liverpool courses included Arthur Ellison and Roy Boulter, while Mina Parisella and Bill Dawson both taught writing courses at the University,

their success in television must have made other aspiring writers feel that they too could write professionally. Whereas in the late 1970s theatre writers such as Russell and Bleasdale provided role models for local writers, in the mid 1980s it was more likely that the very visible success of these television writers provided inspiration. The perception of television writing being more as a 'job' within an industry than theatre writing, providing greater financial rewards and more opportunities for employment, is also important in view of the economic and social background of Merseyside at the time.

However, the MerseyScreen course of 1985 was not a writing course as such.[14] Why then was it so important in the development of the teaching of scriptwriting? There was an element of scriptwriting included in the course, one of its eight modules being entitled 'Script development and storyboarding; copyright clearance procedure' (MerseyScreen 1985), but writing was clearly not considered of major importance. Nevertheless, Keith Birch, who was already involved in running writers' workshops when he became a trainee on the course, sees his experience there as the catalyst for his later work in promoting scriptwriting courses at the University:

> I brought those skills here to the university and I did a television production course/ but I'd also acquired scriptwriting skills as well when I was on that particular course ... so I combined them both and I used to run a course for David Evans here as part of a media production course where a section of it for ten weeks was about writing scripts and actually producing the script. (Interview 2001)

Birch dates a change in his own teaching style and methodology from his move to the University, recognising as Evans had before him in the Playwrights' Workshop, the different demands made by the new situation he found himself in. For

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Parisella and Maurice Bessman also having worked on the University-based radio soap, *Merseysiders* (Kibble-White 2000).
[14] Since then several agencies and companies, backed by indirect government funding, have offered similar courses aimed at unemployed adults, notably First Take, whose video production course included an element of scriptwriting taught by visiting specialists (Harwood 2000).

the first time he was 'asked to submit an outline of what [he] proposed to teach/ over how long/ and what form it would take/ and that's when it became really structured' (Ibid.).

For Birch the basic difference from his previous experience was a loss of flexibility in terms not only of course content but also of participation, in the sense that students[15] were more likely to show their commitment by regular attendance, whereas participants in workshops would often drop in and out as they pleased. However, again like David Evans, he brought with him to the more formal situation of the evening class the democratic instincts of the writer's workshop, seeking to create the informal atmosphere which he feels is conducive to creativity:

> The way I approached it/ and I've kept this way and lots of other people do it as well ... if you can very quickly become accepted as another member of the group and not as the teacher in a conventional way/ hiding behind the desk/ and/ you know/ the title of teacher/ you become just a member of the group/ just somebody who happens to have ... information or knowledge to pass on to that group ... you're learning yourself all the time with that group. (Ibid.)

It is interesting to note that when Evans and Birch started to offer courses in television at the University they were still not exclusively about scriptwriting. The course in 1988/9 was called 'Television Drama: Creation and Criticism', changing the following year to 'Television Drama: Theory and Practice' and the next year to 'Television Drama: Writing and Production'. It was not until 1991/2 that there was a course simply about writing for the screen: 'Writing for Film and Television'. In the same year the University offered courses in writing for radio and scripting comedy, bringing the total number of scriptwriting courses to four (including the Playwrights' Workshop). The increase in separate scriptwriting courses represented a conscious policy on Birch's part, in response at first to a perceived demand amongst potential

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[15] At first he was even uncomfortable with the term 'student', being used to referring to participants in workshops as 'members of the group' (Interview 2001).

students, such as people he was in touch with through the MAWW, and fairly soon amongst the large number of students who enrolled on the early scriptwriting courses (Ibid.).

From then until 1999/2000 the number of scriptwriting courses at the University varied between five and eight, usually seeking to cover stage, radio, film and television. The fact that these courses became an established part of the University's adult education provision reflects not only the interests and enthusiasm of those promoting the courses, but also a shift in attitude within education towards the teaching of writing, especially writing within the television, radio and film industries. This situation brings with it ideas of professionalism on behalf of both tutors and students, which could be seen as a natural development of the increasing professionalism which was evident in the developing Playwright's Workshop (see Chapter 4). I will explore the concept of 'professionalism' further when discussing the attitudes of students and tutors to the subject in later chapters.

5.3 The teaching of scriptwriting within degree courses: its relationship to and influence on practice in the adult education sector

In 1913 Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch used the first lecture in his inaugural series as King Edward VII Professor of English at the University of Cambridge to assert his belief that students of literature should also learn to write:

> I propose to you that, English Literature being ... an Art, with a living and therefore improvable language for its medium or vehicle, a part – and no small part – of our business is *to practise it.* (1916, 19)

Whether he intended that writing should be taught to Cambridge students, except insofar as his own lectures constituted teaching, is unclear. What is clear is that no British university offered a course in writing as a distinct subject to its students until

1970, when Malcolm Bradbury and Angus Wilson started the 'massively successful creative writing course' at the University of East Anglia (*The Times* 2000). Writing after Bradbury's death, Erica Wagner, an ex-student, remembers that 'when he began the course … there was no such thing as a creative writing course in Britain. Indeed the idea was often greeted with scorn' (2000). This is not strictly true, as there were certainly creative writing courses in the adult education sector as early as the 1950s (see Chapter 3.2), but the East Anglia MA course did predate the writers' workshop movement and was almost certainly both the first such course provided by a British institution of higher education and the first British writing course to lead to an academic award.

Although it was some time before a similar course was offered in scriptwriting, Bradbury undoubtedly led the way in establishing that writing could and should be taught within a university. In 1989 the playwright David Edgar developed from existing undergraduate options an MPhil in Playwriting at the University of Birmingham, which he ran until 1999, and which has subsequently been run by April de Angelis and Sarah Woods (Woods 2003). Since Bradbury established his course the climate in higher education has changed so much that in the academic year 2002/3 no fewer than 23 universities and colleges of higher education were offering courses in scriptwriting to undergraduates, usually as an element in a combined honours degree (UCAS 2001). The fact that most of these institutions were colleges or former polytechnics, and very few were older 'redbrick' universities, might suggest that writing had not been accepted everywhere as an academic subject. Nevertheless, the expansion in provision is remarkable in such a short time.

The University of Liverpool was typical of older universities in not offering writing courses of any sort to either undergraduate or postgraduate students until

1999/2000, when courses run from the Centre for Continuing Education were offered as part of the Combined Honours Flexible Degree programme (University of Liverpool Centre for Continuing Education 1999). The fact that the creative writing element of this degree was based in and taught by tutors from the Centre, with places made available to certain students who were not registered for the degree and enrolled through the Centre, makes it different in origin from writing courses offered to undergraduates elsewhere. This is because the University of Liverpool writing courses are the successors to a tradition with its roots in the writing workshops of the 1970s. Most other degree-bearing writing courses derive their model from the work of David Edgar and, before him, Malcolm Bradbury, who in turn seem to have taken their inspiration from American models, and to have developed their philosophies and methods largely without reference to developments in the adult education sector in Britain.

The American tradition of 'writing programs' was already long and respected when Bradbury started his course in 1970. Indeed, the first classes in writing were offered at Harvard University in 1880, 33 years before Quiller-Couch's Cambridge lectures. In 1942 Paul Engle founded the Iowa Writers' Workshop at the University of Iowa, where creative work had been accepted for advanced degrees since 1922 (Graham 2001). This course was significant not only in its use of the word 'workshop' over thirty years before David Evans used it in this context for the first time, but also in that it led to a Master of Fine Arts degree. The methods of this workshop are, according to Robert Graham, 'recognisable as the form of writers' workshop that has been proliferating in Britain ever since the University of East Anglia began Writing degrees in the early 1970s' (Ibid. 21), suggesting a link between the methods and style developed by Engle and his successors and those adopted by Bradbury and other

British academics. Engle's use of the term 'workshop' begs the question of whether such courses had any influence on the practices of David Evans and the worker writers' movement. Evans's own account, however, backed by evidence from other sources, would suggest that these workshops developed independently of and without reference to classes in either British or American universities (see Chapter 3). Indeed, Graham's account of the practices of the Iowa workshop describes a style quite different from that employed in the Liverpool writers' workshops, implying a certain degree of formality and a greater degree of rigour in questioning and criticism than would have been thought appropriate by Evans and his colleagues (2001).

According to David Fenza's succinct account of the history of creative writing classes in the USA, the number of writing classes in American universities also rose dramatically between 1975 and 1998. At the beginning of the period there were 27 undergraduate and 53 postgraduate degrees including writing, rising to 330 undergraduate and 256 postgraduate degrees in 1998 (2000). Interestingly, in the light of this history, Fenza does not feel that writing courses have achieved academic respectability, even in America. He describes his article as 'an apology for the profession of writers who teach' (Ibid., 18) and uses it to enumerate the reasons for and benefits of teaching creative writing. Perhaps the 'scorn' to which Erica Wagner referred has not entirely disappeared.

Liverpool's experience of degree courses in creative writing dates from 1993 when the School of Media, Critical and Creative Arts of Liverpool John Moores University (JMU), formerly Liverpool Polytechnic, first ran its MA in Screenwriting. In the same year, modules in creative writing (or 'imaginative writing' to use the terminology preferred by that institution), including writing for stage and screen, were offered as part of its 'Life, Literature and Thought' BA course. In 1999 the JMU began

its single honours BA in Imaginative Writing, including modules in scriptwriting, also offering opportunities for students to study the subject for a combined honours degree with various other subjects (Liverpool JMU 1999). This provision is fairly typical of the higher education institutions offering writing courses since the early 1990s (UCAS 2001). It was also at the beginning of the 1990s that Liverpool Institute of Higher Education (later known as Liverpool Hope and subsequently as Liverpool Hope University College) started to offer an optional course in writing for the stage in the Department of Drama and Theatre Studies. Just outside the city, Edge Hill College in Ormskirk started its own MA in Writing Studies, also including scriptwriting as one of its options, in about 1993.[16]

While these courses will not be considered in great detail in subsequent chapters, as they do not fall within my definition of scriptwriting classes in the adult education sector (see Chapter 1), their existence locally is important in several ways. First, it confirms the idea that economic, social and cultural conditions in the late '80s and early '90s were conducive to the expansion and increased specialisation in writing courses that took place in the city at that time. Indeed, in its recent recruitment material for the MA in Screenwriting the JMU asserts that 'screenwriting is one of the city's fastest growing industries' (Liverpool JMU 2002b), recalling MeresyScreen's conscious attempts to link its training courses with industry and by implication career progression and financial gain. Second, there has been has been a certain amount of cross-fertilization between the institutions. Several tutors have taught on both the University of Liverpool's continuing education courses and the writing courses at JMU (see Chapters 6, 7 and 8). Perhaps more importantly, there have been many examples of students who have taken writing courses at more than one institution,

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[16] According to promotional material for the course starting in 2003. Graham suggests it started earlier, in the mid 1980s (2001, 21).

suggesting a blurring of distinctions between adult education classes and degree courses. This process has been accelerated during the 1990s by practices at both institutions. The JMU's MA in screenwriting has always been offered to part-time students, with classes held in the evening, the traditional time for adult education classes, reflecting a policy of recruiting more mature and local students on to such courses, sometimes by 'access' routes. Meanwhile, the University of Liverpool, in common with other universities, has introduced accreditation into its traditionally non-award-bearing courses, enabling students to work towards a Certificate in Higher Education, and has recently introduced scriptwriting courses at levels two and three into its Flexible Degree programme (University of Liverpool Centre for Continuing Education 1994-2002).

5.4 Accreditation: its influence on scriptwriting courses

One of the biggest changes in the provision of adult education during the period under review was the introduction of accreditation. The University of Liverpool first offered accreditation to students on twenty courses, including one general creative writing course, in 1994/5, extending the scheme to cover almost all its continuing education courses the following year (University of Liverpool Centre for Continuing Education 1994, 1995). At the time the change was not universally welcomed among tutors, many of whom saw it as a threat to their courses' very existence (Birch Interview 2001). That such concerns were rife amongst adult tutors throughout the country during the early '90s can be seen in contemporary issues of *Adults Learning*, the journal of the NIACE. McAlister, for example, argues that 'like other "leisure courses", creative writing in adult education is endangered by White Paper proposals to make such non-vocational courses self-financing' (1992,157).

It is interesting that McAlister, in common with many other tutors at the time, assumes that writing courses are essentially non-vocational. This assumption may also have underpinned the attitude of Liverpool's tutors. In the Centre for Continuing Education as a whole there was a worry that 'traditional Liberal Adult Education courses would not survive' (University of Liverpool Centre for Continuing Education 1995), exacerbated by concerns that a perception of increased formality and academic content might put off the kind of people, especially working-class people, that the writers' workshops had sought to attract. In spite of the existence of both first and higher degrees in the subject and related subjects elsewhere, doubts about the validity of awarding certificates and degrees for creative writing were present in the minds of many tutors, including Keith Birch, who does not 'really see that having a degree or MA - or whatever it may be - in Creative writing is going to help you as a writer' (Interview 2001).[17]

So why was accreditation introduced, how did it affect the University's scriptwriting courses and how successful has it been? Accreditation, the system whereby students acquire credits which can be used towards the acquisition of a Certificate in Higher Education or even a degree, was introduced in response to pressure from the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFC), the government agency responsible for subsidising adult education courses. Courses which were not accredited did not attract grants from the Council (University of Liverpool Centre for Continuing Education 1995, Wright Interview 2002). This change in funding policy resulted from the creation of the HEFC and its sister agency the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), following the passing of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act (HMSO 1992). Accompanied by the government's agreement to fund a

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[17] See also tutor questionnaires and interviews.

25% increase in student numbers, this change in policy has been described as 'the biggest fillip to adult participation in vocational and adult education' (Tuckett 1997). The 1992 Act emphasised the principle of credit-bearing courses, setting great store by the acquisition of formal qualifications and their possible use as a means of accessing higher education. In doing this, the government may simply have been responding to existing trends in adult education, as in 1992 HMI had reported that 'adult education is no longer always clearly distinguishable from the mainstream work of further and higher education' (1992, vii). Its review recommended that providers should 'develop arrangements that facilitate and encourage progression between adult, further and higher education' (Ibid, 18). In 1996 the government confirmed this stance:

> The Government will continue to encourage the higher education sector to become even more accessible to lifetime learners, for example by its support of the development of work-based learning and of credit accumulation and transfer systems. (DfEE 1996, 26)

Liverpool University followed a 'liberal' interpretation of HEFC guidelines, choosing to advertise courses not as 'modules' but as individual courses open to all, giving students the choice of whether to seek credits, and gradually introducing the Certificate in Higher Education for those who chose to pursue it.[18] It would seem, however, that the worst fears of tutors about the effects of the new system were not realised, possibly partly because of department's 'softly softly' approach. In the 1995 Centre for Continuing Education prospectus Ray Derricott and Rodney Wright, respectively the Director and Deputy Director of the Centre, claim that their 'pilot study' conducted during 1994-95 showed that some students were apprehensive about taking on the challenge of accreditation, but those that did 'enjoyed the experience and

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[18] Other institutions such as Birmingham University chose a different path (Braekken Page Interview 2002. See Chapter 6.2).

did very well' (University of Liverpool Centre for Continuing Education 1995). Of course, one might expect them to make the most of a situation which had been forced upon them when writing in such a publication. However, the Centre did not suffer any decline in take-up of its writing courses, to the surprise of Keith Birch, who recalls that 'it was expected that ... figures would be halved almost immediately ... and it was just amazing really/ because they increased' (Interview 2001).

So, far from putting off potential students, these changes appear to have resulted in increased recruitment. Birch estimates that there was a roughly fivefold increase in numbers on writing courses during the 1990s, which he attributes partly to accreditation (Ibid.). There is, of course, no way of knowing whether this increase would have occurred anyway. Certainly, the number of scriptwriting and other writing courses at the University was already growing by the time accreditation was introduced, but there is no doubt that provision continued to expand (see Table 1).

Birch also noted a change in the profile of the student population, perceiving an increase in students who already held degrees and other advanced qualifications, particularly on the more specialised courses (Interview 2001). This might suggest that writing classes did lose some of their traditional supporters; although, in view of a lack of available statistics, it is impossible to evaluate this assertion with any degree of confidence.[19] It may be that potential students who disliked the idea of accreditation were attracted to courses run by the local authority, which remained unaccredited as a matter of government policy via the Learning and Skills Council (Kingston 2002). One of the effects of the introduction of accreditation might, therefore, be a sharper differentiation between university-provided and LEA-provided courses for adults. As far as writing courses in Liverpool were concerned, this

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[19] The Department of Continuing Education does not keep detailed records of student numbers or of their background. Details collected from the students at the start of each course are forwarded to the Higher Education Statistics Authority without being analysed. (Wright Interview 2001)

development confirmed the existing trend for the LEA to concentrate on general courses, often aimed at beginners, leaving the more specialised provision to the University (see Table 1).

Accreditation brought with it a certain amount of formalisation in terms of administrative tasks, such as the submission of schemes of work and mark sheets to university committees, thus continuing a trend in the teaching of writing which, for Keith Birch, David Evans and others, had started with the move from being 'facilitators' or 'co-ordinators' of writers' workshops to being 'teachers', 'tutors' or 'lecturers' within educational establishments such as the University (Evans Interview 2001, Birch Interview 2001). This change was not entirely unwelcome, Birch feeling personally that his style of teaching was 'enhanced by accreditation', in that the demands of having to produce and follow a syllabus made him prepare more thoroughly: 'therefore/ my presentation of the course has improved' (Interview 2001). Another experienced tutor, with a background in the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop, found that the enforced advent of accreditation changed his attitude to assessing writing:

> Originally I was emotionally against assessment in the formal sense; I believed the work should speak for itself. Now I can see that there is a place for formal assessment and it can be a great help to the students. (Tutor Questionnaire K)

During the period covered by this chapter a large expansion in the number of courses on offer and a trend towards greater specialisation accompanied a shift in attitude towards the teaching of scriptwriting, not just in Liverpool but throughout Britain. One of the effects of these changes was a continuation of the move towards greater 'professionalism', on which I commented in the chapter on the Playwrights' Workshop. This showed itself most clearly in the recruitment of tutors for the new classes. Keith Birch, at the Centre for Continuing Education, aware that there was 'no

recognised training for a creative writing teacher' (Interview 2001), developed a policy of hiring part-time tutors who were themselves professional writers and had experience of teaching adults. The background, practices and philosophies of some of the tutors he recruited will be discussed in the next three chapters, wherein I shall be discussing scriptwriting classes for adults held in Liverpool during the years 2000/1 to 2002/3.

Chapter 6

Scriptwriting Courses and Tutors 2000/1 to 2002/3

This chapter is concerned with scriptwriting tutors and their courses in the three academic years from 2000/1 to 2002/3. It acts as a 'bridge' between the preceding discussion of the history of writing courses up to and including 1999/2000, and the detailed study of practice in Liverpool in the year 2002/3 which forms Chapters 7 to 10 of the thesis. It begins with a consideration of writing courses offered to adults in Liverpool during the period, seeking to define which of those courses fall within the parameters of this study, on the basis of definitions proposed in Chapter 1.2. There follows a comparison of Liverpool's provision of scriptwriting courses with that of other major English cities, identifying ways in which Liverpool's provision may differ from theirs and proposing some possible reasons for these differences. Finally, the backgrounds and attitudes of those who taught scriptwriting in that period are considered, giving a wider context to the detailed study of 2002/3 tutors in Chapters 7 and 8.

6.1 Courses offered to adults in Liverpool in the years 2000/1 to 2002/3

The process by which the courses falling within my definitions of 'adult education' and 'scriptwriting' were identified has been described in Chapter 2. A course that is 'not a continuation of secondary or higher education' (Legge 1982, 1) implies, in the context of this study, a course without entry requirements in terms of previous qualifications gained in secondary, further or higher education. This definition effectively excludes provision offered by universities and institutes of higher education either as degree-bearing courses or as components of such courses. Such

courses were offered at both the Liverpool John Moores University and Liverpool Hope, neither of which offered the sort of open-access courses commonly thought of as adult education classes. The JMU ran an MA in Screenwriting and a more general MA in Writing, whose students could choose to specialise in scriptwriting. There were also single and joint honours BA courses in Imaginative Writing and a research degree programme. Liverpool Hope continued to offer a module in writing for the theatre as part of its undergraduate Drama and Theatre Arts programme (Liverpool JMU 2002, Liverpool Hope 2002). While these courses do not strictly fall within the parameters of the study, recent changes in adult education provision, particularly increasing accreditation, have led to some blurring of distinctions between such courses and the more traditional 'evening class' course (see Chapter 5.4). Consequently, although they have not been subject to the same detailed scrutiny as courses which do fall within my definition of adult education classes, their existence must be taken into account. They may, therefore, be referred to for purposes of comparison.[1]

A particular problem arises with courses which are offered as part of the Flexible Degree programme at the University of Liverpool, as they are also available to students who are not registered for the degree. There was only one such course in scriptwriting offered in both 2001/2 and 2002/3: 'Scriptwriting: Theatre and Radio' (University of Liverpool Centre for Continuing Education 2001, 2002). I have excluded this course for three reasons: most of its students were registered for the degree; other students were required to have acquired credits on other courses before

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[1] Of particular interest is the MA in Screenwriting at JMU, partly because a number of students have enrolled on it as a 'next step' after taking adult education scriptwriting classes and partly because the leading tutor on it was also a tutor in scriptwriting on the University of Liverpool's courses. I felt, therefore, that an observation of one of his classes at the John Moores University would be useful (see Chapter 6).

being accepted; and, finally, I was the course tutor, giving rise to possible concerns about objectivity and integrity had the course been included.[2]

Courses included in the study are, therefore, those offered to the general public with no prior qualifications or experience required. As with previous years, the three main providers of writing courses in the city were the University of Liverpool, the LEA and the WEA. The provision for the years 2000/1 to 2002/3 is summarised in the table below:

Year	2000/1	2001/2	2002/3
Scriptwriting courses			
University	8	9	7
WEA	0	0	1
LEA	0	0	0
Total	8	9	8
General creative writing courses			
University	5	3	3
WEA	2	1	5
LEA	8	8	8
Total	15	12	16
Other specialised courses			
University	9	10	12
WEA	0	0	5
LEA	0	0	0
Total	9	10	17
Total (all courses)	32	31	41

Table 2: Provision of writing courses in Liverpool 2000/1 to 2002/3

It is clear from this table that, on the whole, the trends observed during the 1990s continued (see Table 1, Chapter 5). While the local authority continued to offer a fairly steady number of general creative writing courses at locations throughout the city, it had ceased to offer specialised writing courses of any kind. The University of Liverpool, on the other hand, continued to offer mainly specialised courses, including a range of scriptwriting courses. The only significant change in provision during the period would appear to be the substantial increase in courses offered by the WEA in

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[2] I have, however, included my own details in the survey of tutors' background and experience in the third section of this chapter, as I was also a tutor on a level one course open to all adults in 2000/1 and 2001/2.

2002/3. In particular, that agency offered specialised writing courses, including one in scriptwriting, for the first time in over ten years. The main reason for this change of emphasis at the WEA was the appointment of a new Tutor Organiser, Tim Stone, to replace the long-standing incumbent, Andy Jurgis, in January 2002. Stone recruited a number of experienced tutors to run specialised courses, partly out of personal preference and partly in response to a perceived failure of more general courses, particularly those aimed at 'beginners', which had failed to recruit enough students to run in recent years. Most of these tutors had taught (and continued to teach) classes at the University of Liverpool, where Stone had previously held the post of Continuing Education Librarian. The response to these courses, according to Stone, was largely positive and encouraged him to continue to offer specialised courses, including scriptwriting, in future years (Stone Interview 2003).

Another significant development in the period was the creation of the independent company Productionline, based at the Unity Theatre, which provided courses for aspiring theatre writers in 2000/1 and 2001/2, as well as seeking to develop selected scripts through readings and a small number of full-scale professional productions. A completed questionnaire was obtained from the tutor on this company's courses in 2000/1 and will be referred to below. Productionline, however, did not offer a course in 2002/3 due to the cessation of its funding from the National Lottery (Tutor Questionnaire G).

Also falling without the parameters of the detailed study are day courses and 'one-off' workshops offered by organisations such as the 'Writing on the Wall' festival (WOW)[3] or the BBC through its 'Northern Exposure' scheme. In March 2003, for example, the Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse Theatres offered a series of events

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[3] The 'WOW Festival 2002' offered single sessions on a variety of subjects, including writing for radio and selling scripts to American markets, as well as readings and lectures by speakers including established writers (WOW 2002).

under the umbrella title 'New Works', aimed at new and aspiring writers. These included one-day 'taster workshops' specifically for 'young writers,' defined by the provider as those aged between fourteen and 25, and a series of three two-hour 'master classes' offered in association with the BBC's 'Northern Exposure' scheme (Liverpool Everyman Playhouse 2002). Such events would clearly attract and be available to at least part of the 'constituency' of adult learners to whom the more conventional adult educational courses appealed. They would appeal to those who were beginning to take a serious interest in writing professionally, and might help to provide a route into professional theatre or broadcasting. Such, indeed, was the explicit aim of the theatres' 'Playwright Support Scheme', supported financially by North West Playwrights, a new venture which sought contact with writers to an extent not seen in the city possibly since the Liverpool Playhouse's association with the 'Playwrights' Workshop' in the early 1980s (see Chapter 4.1). The BBC's involvement could be seen in a similar light. It might be particularly significant in terms of the development of the teaching and learning of scriptwriting that this scheme was the product of initiatives emanating from the 'market place' in which professional writers sell their products, and not from disinterested educational agencies. However, although such events could be said to constitute 'organised educational opportunities' (Legge 1982, 1), their occasional and transitory nature prevents them from being studied in the same way as courses which ran over several weeks or months.

My definition of 'scriptwriting' (see Chapter 1.2) encompasses all courses concerned with writing for stage, radio, television or film but excludes those concerned with poetry, the novel and short story, as well as non-fiction prose, such as

travel writing or autobiography. In the year 2002/3 eight proposed courses fell within my definition of scriptwriting courses.

In addition, there were sixteen 'general' creative writing courses on offer. According to the prospectuses in which they were advertised, none of these specifically dealt with scriptwriting. I did, however, send questionnaires to tutors on these courses in order to establish whether they intended to teach scriptwriting. The four completed questionnaires returned to me by such tutors, who between them were due to teach seven courses (see Chapter 2), indicate that two tutors intended to spend a very small proportion of their classes on scripts (L, M), one anticipated spending roughly half his classes on scriptwriting (K), and the fourth intended to devote most of one of her two proposed courses to the form (J). The general impression I received from these answers was that course content was flexible and would depend on the interests of both the students and tutors. Two other University tutors, when approached informally after not completing questionnaires, told me that they did not intend to cover scriptwriting on their courses, the emphasis in both cases being on poetry.[4] The University of Liverpool tutor (Ken) who proposed to devote half of his sessions to scriptwriting was contacted again before the start of the 2002 autumn term, but had to withdraw from the course due to family circumstances and the course was not run. It was not possible, therefore, either to interview him or observe his teaching. 'Jane' continued to teach creative writing with a bias towards scriptwriting on three LEA-run courses in 2002/3, including one which grew out of a 'taster' session at BBC Radio Merseyside's Open Learning Centre during the WOW festival. Her courses were not advertised specifically as scriptwriting courses: all were entitled 'Creative Writing', except for one 2002/3 course, which was called 'Creative Writing and

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[4] One of these tutors taught ' Intensive Creative Workshops', which was also offered in 2001/2 and 2002/3. The other taught 'An Introduction To Creative Writing', which was not offered after 2001/2 (University of Liverpool Centre for Continuing Education 2001, 2002).

Drama' (Liverpool Education Authority 2000, 2001, 2002). Although such courses strictly fall outside the remit of the study, I decided that, in the absence of any LEA scriptwriting courses, and because of her declared emphasis on scriptwriting, this tutor's practice merited consideration. I therefore observed one of her classes during the 2002/3 study (see Chapter 7). The completed questionnaires of all four tutors mentioned above will be considered in the final part of this chapter.

In 2002/3, reflecting the pattern of recent years, seven of the eight courses specifically concerned with scriptwriting courses were offered by the University of Liverpool. The other course, 'Scriptwriting', was offered by the WEA. This course ran for eight, two-hour sessions on Thursday mornings at Liverpool's Central Library. This was the first time the WEA had offered a scriptwriting course in Liverpool since 1990/1 (see Table 1, Chapter 5).

Among the University of Liverpool scriptwriting courses was the 'level two' course in writing for stage and radio referred to above.[5] Another course, 'Scriptwriting: An Introduction to Comedy Writing', did not run because the tutor had to withdraw due to professional writing commitments, students who had already enrolled being offered places on 'Scriptwriting: Situation Comedy'. The others that ran were 'Scriptwriting: An Introduction to Writing for Radio and Television,' two courses entitled 'Scriptwriting: Film and Television' (one in the evening, the other in the morning) and 'Scriptwriting: Theatre Playwrights' Workshop'. With the exception of the morning course referred to above, all courses took place between 7 and 9 p.m. on University premises either at 19 Abercromby Square or 126 Mount Pleasant, both in the centre of Liverpool, and all ran for twenty weeks from October to March. All the above courses offered students the chance to obtain credits at level one, which

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[5] The proposed 'level three' course in writing for film and television did not start until 2003/4 (University of Liverpool Centre for Continuing Education 2003).

could be used towards the Certificate of Higher Education in Creative Arts. All these courses were well established, the newest being 'Situation Comedy', which had first been offered in 1996/7, and the longest established being the Playwrights' Workshop, whose history has been considered in some detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis. Two scriptwriting courses were not repeated from 2001/2: 'Scripting for Soaps' and 'Liverpool Playwrights' Forum'. The former had been offered as one-day pilot course in 2000/1 before becoming a full twenty-week course the following year. The subject had not been offered since 1993/4, perhaps suggesting limited interest in such narrow specialisation; the only other scriptwriting course to be defined by genre rather than medium was 'Situation Comedy'. My study of prospectuses from 1985/6 onwards suggests that this is also the case with courses in writing in other forms, courses specializing by medium generally outlasting those seeking to specialise by genre, identity of participants or identity of audience (University of Liverpool Centre for Continuing Education 1985-2002). 'Liverpool Playwrights' Forum', although advertised as a course with a named tutor, was not considered by that person to be a 'course'; indeed neither did she consider herself to be a 'tutor' (Tutor Questionnaire I), recalling questions of definition similar to those aired by participants in the early writers' workshops described above (see Chapter 3). The tutors on both the above courses, however, completed questionnaires in 2001/2 and their answers will be considered, along with those of tutors who continued to teach scriptwriting in 2002/3, in the third section of this chapter, which is concerned with the identity, practices and philosophy of scriptwriting tutors. [6]

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[6] When quoting from tutors' and students' completed questionnaire I have retained the respondents' own spelling, punctuation and grammar (including their use of capital letters).

6.2 A comparison of scriptwriting courses in Liverpool with courses available in other major English cities

This study is concerned primarily with the teaching of scriptwriting to adults in one city, Liverpool. If it is to look at the experience of tutors and students in any depth its scope cannot allow for detailed comparison of practices elsewhere. However, in order to provide a context for the study in terms of experience outside the city, it is useful to look briefly at the provision of courses in other comparable cities. Such a comparison will indicate whether the Liverpool experience is typical of that of the country as a whole and identify how, if at all, it differs from that of other places.

For the purposes of this comparison I obtained details of courses provided in four other major cities in England: Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester and Sheffield. These cities were chosen, first, because with Liverpool they comprise five of the six[7] most populous local authorities outside London. According to the 2001 census, Birmingham had a population of 977,091, Leeds of 715,404, Sheffield of 513,234 and Manchester of 392,819. Liverpool's population was 439,476 (Office of National Statistics 2003). The five cities also have universities established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sheffield University was granted its charter in 1897 and Birmingham in 1900, while the Universities of Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds were all formed in 1903 from the Victoria University, which had been granted its charter in 1880. Furthermore, all five universities have long continuous histories of providing adult education courses and together formed the old Joint Matriculation Board (www.shef.ac.uk.2002, www.about.bham.ac.uk 2002, www.man.ac.uk 2002).

Information about courses was obtained from the prospectuses, both printed and on-line, of the five local authorities, the universities and the WEA districts for the

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[7] The other being Bradford.

cities concerned.[8] Table 3 (below) is a summary of the available information. While it may not include all courses for adults in those areas, it does include all those offered by the three main providers and, therefore, provides a sound basis for comparison.

City	Provider	Scriptwriting courses	Other specialised courses	General creative writing courses	Total number of writing courses
Birmingham	University	2	12	3	17
	WEA	0	0	0	0
	LEA	0	4	10	14
	Total	2	16	13	31
Leeds	University	0	3	4	7
	WEA	1	0	2	3
	LEA	0	0	0	0
	Total	1	3	6	10
Manchester	University	0	1	1	2
	WEA	0	0	0	0
	LEA	4	2	7	13
	Total	4	3	8	15
Sheffield	University	3	11	7	21
	WEA	0	0	3	3
	LEA	0	0	4	4
	Total	3	11	14	28
Liverpool	University	7	12	3	22
	WEA	1	5	5	11
	LEA	0	0	8	8
	Total	8	17	16	41

Table 3: Writing courses in major English cities 2002/3

It is clear from this table that more writing courses were available to students in Liverpool than in any of the other cities. Even Birmingham, with twice the population of Liverpool, offered ten fewer courses. The number of specialised writing courses was also higher than that in any of the other cities, while the number of scriptwriting courses was double that of Manchester, which provided the next highest number of courses. There would appear to be no 'norm' as far as the role of the three main providers is concerned. In four of the five cities the university provided the highest number of courses, but the local education authorities of Birmingham and Manchester

[8] All five cities also have 'new' universities, the former polytechnics, none of which has an adult education or lifelong learning department.

were much more active than those of the other cities; while WEA provision was generally very sketchy and, indeed, non-existent in two of the cities. Prospectus entries for the previous two years (2000/1 and 2001/2) show that the provision of courses did not change significantly in any of the five cities from the previous two years.

As in Liverpool, specialised courses, and particularly scriptwriting courses, were mostly provided by the universities. However, the only scriptwriting course available in Leeds, where all the other specialised writing classes were at the University of Leeds, was provided by the WEA. This was the twenty-week-long 'Scriptwriting for Film and TV' (WEA Yorkshire North District 2002). The exception to this pattern was Manchester, where all four of the scriptwriting courses available were offered by the local authority, perhaps countering the notion raised in the last chapter that more specialised courses sit more easily with the traditions of universities rather than those of local authorities. These courses comprised two one-term courses entitled 'Foundations of Scriptwriting' (one lasting twelve weeks and the other thirteen weeks), a 34-week course, 'Scriptwriting', and another 34-week course, 'Scriptwriting for Television' (www.manchester.gov.uk 2002). The University of Sheffield offered three 24-session scriptwriting courses: 'Writing for The Theatre' and 'Writing Playscripts' at level one, and 'Writing Comedy' at level two (www.shef.ac.uk 2002). Birmingham University provided two courses, the only scriptwriting courses in the city, one at level one and the other at level two of its 'integrated' Creative Writing Programme (www.education.bham.ac.uk 2002).

Birmingham's creative writing programme differed from those of the other universities in that courses were offered as 'modules' forming, at level one, part of a Certificate in Higher Education in Creative Writing and ultimately leading to a

degree. Students signed on for the whole programme. At the beginning of 2002/3 the first cohort of students was embarking on level three courses (Braekken Payne Interview 2003). This approach differed noticeably from the others in the survey which, like Liverpool, recruited students to individual courses, allowing them to choose whether or not to work towards a Certificate of Higher Education. None of them offered a degree as the end product of its creative writing courses.[9]

The University of Birmingham's approach would seem to be due to its interpretation of, or response to, the introduction of accreditation, which may in turn have arisen at least partly from its existing tradition of offering writing courses as part of first degrees and its long-established MPhil in Playwriting (see Chapter 5.3). Interestingly, although maintaining that the programme was fully subscribed, its organiser, Dr Elsa Braekken Payne, indicated that the programme was likely to become more flexible, allowing for the participation of 'occasional students' (Interview 2003). These comments demonstrate awareness that potential students of creative writing might not necessarily be interested in credits, especially when they are seen as stepping-stones towards a degree. This echoes Rodney Wright and Liverpool's preference for what he calls a 'softly softly' approach to accreditation, although he too seems to see a degree as the ideal outcome of the accumulation of credits, talking of 'converting' students who registered for individual courses (Wright Interview 2003). On the other hand, both Keith Birch and Tim Stone feel that a sense that the function of credits is to build up towards a degree might be off-putting to many students, especially as so many continuing education students already hold

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[9] The University of Liverpool's Flexible Degree programme was a combined arts degree. Students could take only one course in writing at each of its three levels. Apart from Birmingham, the University of Leeds was the only university offering creative writing courses as part of a traditional degree course. In Liverpool and Manchester the new universities, Liverpool JMU and Manchester Metropolitan respectively, provided such courses.

degrees (Birch Interview 2001, Stone Interview 2003).[10] The universities would seem, then, to be performing a balancing act between the demands of accreditation, which might be said to have found its natural home in institutions used to dealing with students on degree-bearing courses, and the perceived needs and desires of their traditional continuing education students.

Although the introduction of accreditation and the government's enthusiasm for Credit Accumulation and Transfer (DfEE 1998, 67) would seem to be moving institutions towards common ground as far as the administration and organisation of courses is concerned, the scope and content of the courses offered by all the main providers have remained disparate. All that can be said with any degree of certainty is that there is no typical pattern of provision of scriptwriting courses in the major English cities. Little has changed since Harrison wrote that, in the period immediately following the Second World War, 'the jungle of adult learning ceased to be a regrettable administrative confusion and began to appear rather as a normal part of a natural system of adult education in a mass democracy' (1961, 327).

It would appear, then, that the Liverpool experience of the teaching and learning of scriptwriting is unlikely to be typical of the experience elsewhere. It is far more likely that every city or area's experience is unique, just as the history of the development of its provision is likely to be unique.

Clearly, however, during the period under consideration, the University of Liverpool provided a more comprehensive programme of scriptwriting courses than any of the other universities or, indeed any of the other cities. Statistics released by the Department for Education and Skills, albeit based on enrolments in local authority courses, strongly suggest that this is not a reflection of a greater interest in adult

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[10] See Chapter 9.2 for figures on the educational background of scriptwriting students.

education in general. Figures obtained in November 2002, based on enrolments as a percentage of the population aged 19-59, show an enrolment rate in Liverpool of between 2% and 2.99%, compared to under 1% in Sheffield and Leeds, 3% - 3.99% in Birmingham and 4% - 4.99% in Manchester (DfES 2003). The history of the development of the Liverpool courses suggests a number of other possibilities, all of which have been explored in previous chapters: a strong tradition of writing workshops; the vision and energy of the individuals who have overseen this development; and a cultural *zeitgeist* with its roots in social and economic conditions.[11] The truth is probably a combination of all three, as the influence of all three is clear in the backgrounds, practices and philosophies of Liverpool's scriptwriting tutors.

6.3 Scriptwriting tutors 2000/1 to 2002/3

In Chapter 2 of this thesis I explained how, during the years 2000/1 and 2001/2, I established the parameters of the study and identified both the courses which fell within my definition of scriptwriting courses in the adult education sector and the tutors who intended to teach scriptwriting. My intention was to use their answers to the tutor questionnaire, whose design and distribution are also described in Chapter 2, to create a profile of those people who were teaching scriptwriting in Liverpool during the period of the study. Their details are summarised in the table below:

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[11] In chapters 3 to 5 I have linked developments in writing courses with particular movements or events in the arts and media in the city. Amongst these is the establishment of Mersey Television in the 1980s (see Chapter 5.2). While I am sure this has had some influence on increasing demand for scriptwriting classes, it seems odd that cities like Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester, which host larger and older broadcasting companies, all of which employ writers, have far fewer scriptwriting classes.

Tutor	Age	Higher qualifications	Subject (s) of degree(s) / higher qualifications.	Teacher training	Years teaching writing	Hours p.w teaching adults	Other employ ment	Professional writer?	Years teaching adults
Scriptwriting									
Andrew	59	BSc	Engineering	None	14	2(+)	Commu nity training	Yes	22
Brian	40	MA	Playwriting	C&G 7037 16+PGCE	3	4	Open-learning worker	Yes	3
Charles	46	CertEd	Community & Youth Work	Unfinished	8	4	P/t Lecturer	Yes	20
Diane	50	MA	Writing	None	0	2	None	Yes	0
Ernest	64	None	N/A	None	20	2	None	Yes	20
Frank	-	-	-	-	6(+)	12	None	Yes	6 (+)
Graham	46	BA MA	English Theatre Studies	Unfinished	11	6	Literary Manager	Yes	11
Helen	39	BA	Modern Languages	C&G 7037	3	10-14	P/t teaching	Yes	3
Norman	41	BA MA	Social Studies Screenwriting	PGCE	3	2	None	Yes	6
Irene	30+	BEd	English	BEd	3	2	None	Yes	3
Paul	46	BA MA	English Theatre Studies	PGCE	12	2	Teaching	Yes	12
General creative writing									
Jane	64	BA MA	English & History Theatre Studies	PGCE	3	10-12	None	No	16
Ken	67	BA	Sociology	None	19	16.5	None	No	21
Lilian	60	BA	History	DipEd	5	4	None	No	11
Margaret	58	BA MA	English & Latin English Literature.	CertEd	5	13	None	Yes	15

Table 4: Personal details and background of writing tutors

Each tutor has been identified by a letter and a fictitious name beginning with that letter, which will identify the tutor only in terms of his/her gender and which will be used henceforward to refer to that tutor in the body of the text; identifying letters only will be used when referencing questionnaires. In order that the table is as complete as possible, I have included my own details. So that these can be clearly

identified by the reader I have not used a fictitious name in this case, but kept my own first name.

Also for completeness, I have also included any details I was able to obtain from printed sources about the scriptwriting tutor (Frank) who did not return the questionnaire. All tutors who were identified as teaching courses in scriptwriting in the adult education sector in Liverpool at any time during the years of the research are, therefore, included. Three of these (Helen, Irene and Norman) did not teach in 2002/3 and, therefore, were not observed or interviewed. The four tutors on general courses who said they would include some scriptwriting in their courses are included separately, for the purposes of comparison. Only one of these (Jane) continued teaching into 2002/3. Because the information was taken from questionnaires completed over a three-year period, details such as age and years of experience have been adjusted to give the tutor's position at the start of 2002/3 or, if he or she ceased teaching writing before that, in the last known year of his/her teaching. I have not included the answers to the questions about gender and ethnic background, the former because the answer is obvious from the names given to the respondents and the latter because all the respondents answered 'White British' or gave an answer which meant roughly the same thing.[12] In such a small survey this result is of negligible interest. If one were using quantifiable data to compare scriptwriting tutors' ethnic origin with the population of the city or region, as I will in Chapter 9 when considering the student population, one might reasonably expect 96% of the tutors to be of white British origin (Office of National Statistics 2003, 67).

One of the most striking features of the group under consideration is the gender balance. Eight out of eleven scriptwriting tutors are men. Prospectuses show

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[12] 'White' (L), 'British' (C, H, I, J), 'White U.K.'(B, M) and 'Irish- Welsh' (K) are all interpreted as having the same meaning as 'White British' in this context.

that the gender balance amongst adult education tutors in Liverpool is more even in most subjects than it is in creative arts. In 2002/3 only two of the 23 creative arts courses provided by the University of Liverpool were taught by women. Across all subjects 93 courses were taught by women and 124 by men, the only subject area in which the imbalance was greater than that in creative arts being business studies, where all twenty courses on offer were taught by men; the balance was skewed the opposite way in art, with sixteen out of eighteen courses taught by women (University of Liverpool Centre for Continuing Education 2002). Similarly, of the 73 courses provided by the WEA in Liverpool, 41 were taught by men and 32 by women, while all but two of the eleven creative writing courses on offer were taught by men (WEA 2002).[13] When one considers that three of the four respondents among 'general' creative writing tutors, including both the LEA tutors, were female, the dominance of men amongst scriptwriting (and other specialised) tutors is all the more striking. Part at least of the explanation for this might lie in the history of the teaching of writing in Liverpool, as not only were the individuals most influential on the development of the courses male[14] but the 'role models', successful scriptwriters such as Russell, Bleasdale and McGovern, most often mentioned by both tutors and students are predominantly male (see Chapters 7 and 8, and Appendix E). There could also be a sense that scriptwriting is traditionally more of a 'job' than, say, poetry or novel writing, both of which have historically attracted more female writers than playwriting (see Chapter 9.1 for a consideration of gender imbalance among students).

Other factors, such as age and educational background, reflect a particular idea of professionalism which has developed in the area, encouraged by the recruitment

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[13] The local authority does not name tutors in its prospectuses.
[14] For example David Evans, Bill Morrison, Keith Birch.

policy of course organisers such as David Evans, Keith Birch and Tim Stone, who consciously sought to recruit tutors who were preferably both experienced and able teachers and experienced writers (Interviews 2001, 2002, 2003).

The average age of the scriptwriting tutors is between 40 and 50, unsurprising when one considers that they might be expected to have had careers outside teaching in order to acquire the knowledge necessary to teach the subject: a knowledge which, it might be argued, could only be acquired through the pursuit of a professional writing career (see Chapter 8.3). Although eight of them have degrees, including three with second degrees, these people are not academics in the generally accepted sense of the word. None of them has a doctorate and only one (Ernest) is employed as a full-time lecturer. They have clearly not acquired their knowledge of or expertise in the subject primarily through academic study. Only three tutors (Brian, Diane and Norman) have degrees in writing, all higher degrees. This situation would not be unexpected in a group of this age, given the relatively recent emergence of degrees in writing (see Chapter 5.3). However, in answer to question 30 on the questionnaire, several tutors state that they have been students on other writing courses in the past. They include three scriptwriting tutors and one 'general' tutor who have been students on the University's long established Playwrights' Workshop (A, B, I, M), giving a sense of continuity between current tutors and the courses and workshops discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis.[15] In addition, two tutors hold MAs in Theatre Studies, these two and one other holding first degrees in English, while a fourth tutor has a degree in modern languages, all subjects with a high literary content. These degrees would provide a grounding in such matters as genre, literary conventions and 'best practice' in scriptwriting or, at least, writing for the stage. On the other hand, there are

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[15] A and M had attended a number of other courses. Tutors E and K had been members of the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop, K also having attended writing workshops under the 'Second Chance to Learn' scheme.

also tutors with degrees in engineering and social studies, indicating that a traditionally literary background, although useful, is not a prerequisite for becoming either a scriptwriter or scriptwriting tutor.

In terms of teaching, there is a range of experience within the group. Five hold formal teaching qualifications, two more having started teacher training and abandoned it before completion. Length of experience of teaching adults varies, ranging from a tutor in her first year (Diane) to one with 22 years' experience (Andrew). Seven tutors have other employment, all related to teaching or writing. For most of these people the teaching of adults does not form a major component of their workload, the majority teaching for between two and six hours per week. The exceptions to this rule are Frank, whose twelve hours per week teaching are all in creative writing (although only two hours are specifically concerned with scriptwriting), and Helen, who also only teaches scriptwriting for two hours, her other hours being spent teaching basic skills to adults. The tutors on general courses have similar qualifications, but tend to be more experienced as teachers, also being a little older. Although several of the scriptwriting tutors have sought teaching qualifications at some point in their careers, it would seem that most of them do not see themselves primarily as teachers; a conclusion supported by the small number of hours per week that they devote to teaching. In contrast, the four 'general' tutors could fairly be described as career teachers, albeit teachers coming towards the end of their careers. Three of the four, indeed, are retired schoolteachers (J, L, M).

Strikingly, the one thing the eleven scriptwriting tutors have in common is that they all consider themselves to be professional writers, although Helen describes herself as an 'ex-writer', having not written for four years and Norman calls himself a 'part-time writer'. Only one of the 'general' tutors claims to write professionally. If we

define 'professional writing' as writing which one has been commissioned to do and/or has been paid for, all eleven are indeed professionals. While some may not have been commissioned for some time, Helen being the most extreme case, others were involved in professional writing projects at the time of completing the questionnaire. Although none of them claims to be enjoying successful writing careers in terms of regularity of employment or the size of their financial rewards, they have all at some time or other written work which has been produced professionally on stage, radio or television.[16] The only area of scriptwriting in which there is evidence of a lack of professional experience is writing for film, unsurprisingly in view of the relative scarcity of opportunity in this field.

From this evidence emerges a picture of a group of people with considerable experience and expertise in their subject who can be seen both as professional writers and teachers, but for whom teaching tends to be secondary to writing. That most of them are not full-time employees of the institutions or agencies for which they teach is, I think, significant. HMI's 1991 report on teaching in the adult education sector identifies what it sees as a weakness in the management of provision resulting from the low ratio of full to part-time staff, and recommends that all staff receive 'appropriate staff development' (1992, 18).[17] *The Learning Age,* produced by the DfEE in 1998, reiterates the importance of training and development, though without the implied criticism of the use of part-time staff.[18] It is hard to argue against the greater degree of professionalism in teaching that one would expect to result from

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[16] Tutor Questionnaires. Tutors C, D, G, H and I have written for television. B, E, H, I and P have written for radio. A, B, C, G, H, I, N and P have written for the stage. Only tutor C claims to have written a screenplay; I do not know whether this was ever produced. L has written poetry and short stories for publication.
[17] The University of Liverpool was among the providers whose inspection reports were drawn on in this document (HMI 1992, 23).
[18] The desirability of training part-time adult tutors has been a recurrent theme over the past thirty years or so. Proposals for training part-time adult tutors at Nottingham University were made as long ago as 1972 (Thompson 1972).

such measures, yet my own study of scriptwriting tutors does not suggest they would necessarily welcome such career development.[19] That such resistance to training might be a characteristic of all part-time staff, rather than just teachers of writing, is suggested by Woolfitt (1984), who sees training as a way of instilling a 'sense of belonging' in part-timers but found that, while some of the tutors in her survey embraced training, most appeared to be happy with their existing qualifications. Similarly, Harvey (1995), who also assumes the desirability of training for part-time tutors, expresses concern at their lack of interest in training and their resentment of any element of compulsion on behalf of employers. On the other hand, the NAWE's 2001 survey of its members' training needs, writers working in education, found that 35% wanted training specifically for work in adult education (NAWE 2002).

Although many of the Liverpool tutors have been teaching the subject, and sometimes the same courses, for a number of years, their perception of themselves as professional writers means that the part-time and casual nature of their employment fits in with their writing careers. This is borne out by the fact that one tutor (Norman) withdrew from his 2002/3 course in order to pursue a professional writing commitment abroad (Tutor Questionnaire N), an action which would obviously have been inconvenient for the course organisers, but must be seen as the price to be paid for employing people who see themselves primarily as writers. Indeed, their sense of their own professionalism seems to come from their status as professional writers rather than professional teachers (see Chapter 8.3).

This perception is reflected in the attitudes of those who have been largely responsible for organising the provision of scriptwriting courses in Liverpool. Both David Evans and Bill Morrison emphasise the importance of using working

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[19] The University instigated training sessions through its 'CE Lecturer Network' in 2004. It is too early to tell whether any scriptwriting tutors have taken advantage of this training (University of Liverpool Centre for Lifelong Learning 2004).

writers on such courses (Interviews 2001, 2002). This ideal has been embraced by both Keith Birch and Tim Stone who, nevertheless, acknowledge that tutors' experience of and expertise in writing should be combined with experience and skill in teaching. Birch describes his criteria for appointing tutors thus:

> Because there's no such thing ... as a recognised training for a creative writing teacher/ where did they come from? ... I set some standards ... on the type of person I was looking for ... that those creative writing tutors that I employed would have to be writers themselves/ professional writers ... someone who could relate to the problems of the writing students as well as ... still being involved and experiencing the whole thing ... but they also had to have the experience of dealing with adults ... some teaching experience as well. (Interview 2001)

The eleven tutors employed to teach scriptwriting to adults in Liverpool from 2000/1 to 20002/3 certainly fit Birch's criteria. This is perhaps the most important thing that they have in common, but it is not the only thing and the data obtained from them indicate quite a high degree of cohesion within the group. This might be expected in view of the fact that ten of the eleven were teaching for the University of Liverpool for at least one of the three years covered by the data and the eleventh tutor (Graham) had taught there up to 1999. Two tutors also taught for the WEA (A, N: the former's classes were not in scriptwriting), another for the JMU (C), and three had recent experience of teaching writing for the local authority (H, I, P); while others had experience of teaching writing for the Windows Project (A, B), the Everyman Theatre (B), First Take (P), Paine's Plough Theatre Company (H) and Wigan MBC (P).

During the three years under review in this chapter, then, scriptwriting was taught in Liverpool by a small group of professional writers who were not, for the most part, tied to one provider, but who had all worked for the University of Liverpool. There is a real sense in which they were the successors of David Evans, several having attended workshops or courses run by him and all having originally been employed as writing tutors either by him or his successor at the University,

Keith Birch. How far their philosophies and practices might be rooted in the workshops and how they might have developed in the thirty years since the workshops started, will be discussed in the next chapter, which is primarily concerned with observations of scriptwriting classes and interviews with tutors during 2002/3.

Chapter 7

The Role of the Scriptwriting Tutor: The Teaching of Scriptwriting Observed

7.1 Teaching methods employed by scriptwriting tutors

One of the purposes of the questionnaire sent to tutors during my research was to establish how the tutors intended to teach scriptwriting. Question nineteen offered ten common activities used in the teaching of adults and asked them to tick all those that they intended to employ (see Appendix B).

All respondents, including those who were not subsequently observed, signalled their intention to use the basic activities of teacher talk/lecture (a) and group discussion (b) in their classes and, indeed, these methods were employed by all five of the observed tutors in varying degrees - although in retrospect I think the phrase 'group discussion' was too vague, as it could be interpreted as meaning either discussion by the whole group (or class) or discussion in small groups within the class. The respondents all intended to have students' work read aloud in class (c); although there were variations in whether they intended to have the work read by the student writers themselves (ci), other students (cii) or guests such as professional actors (ciii). In the event, I witnessed no readings by guests and only two classes in which students read their own work, one of them being on a general creative writing course (Observations C1, J1). Students' work was read by their fellow students, with the writer listening, in seven continuing education classes as well as the MA class (AB2, B2, C2, C3, D1, D2, E1, E2). All the tutors intended to make use of both recordings (d) and guest speakers (f). All except one of the respondents intended to use examples of work by other writers (diii), while seven intended to use programmes about writing (di) and five to use examples of their own work (dii). I saw videotapes being used in three sessions, including the MA class; the tutors in those classes used

copies of broadcast programmes about aspects of writing for the screen (B1, C1, C3), one of them also showing an episode of *Cheers*, as an example of good situation comedy writing (B1). I also attended two classes involving guest speakers, one of which followed on from a theatre visit (j) made the previous week (AB1, E2: see Chapter 7.2). All but one tutor intended to use writing exercises both in class and at home, the exception being Irene who stated that she was not a tutor but, rather, the co-ordinator of a writers' forum and was not paid for her work. It was clear from the observation that all the tutors either set 'homework' exercises to develop a particular skill covered in the class, for example developing a group of characters from a picture stimulus (AB1), or expected students to work at home on their assignments for assessment and accreditation. Writing exercises in class were not used as extensively; I witnessed one exercise done in pairs, one in small groups and one by a whole class, all of them involving the same tutor (AB1, B1, B2). The least popular technique among those suggested by the questionnaire was the recording of students' work (e), which none of the scriptwriting tutors intended to use. Individual mentoring (j) featured in the plans of all but three of the respondents. By its nature this could not form part of the normal class, and no extra time was allowed for it on any of the courses, but I did witness informal mentoring being carried out by most of those observed, usually before the start or after the end of the class (B1, C1, D2, E2).

It is clear from this range of activities and the tutor's varying role that the classes observed clearly fall within Groombridge's 'partnership mode' of adult education, the ' popular or personal mode' (1983, 12-16) having been superseded not only because of increasing formality in the organisation of writing courses - or perhaps their 'institutionalisation' (see Chapters 3 and 4) - but also as a result of the

changes in the tutor's role. Such changes are, of course, hugely influenced by the contexts in which they work, as Brookfield has pointed out:

> The realities of curricular imperatives, grading policies, and institutionally devised evaluative criteria, as well as the difficulty of convincing administrators and sceptical faculty of education of the validity of a learning activity conducted in a self-directed mode mean that total self-direction is precluded. (1986, 67)

It is possible to categorise these 'classroom activities' using the frameworks proposed by Perrott (1982), Jarvis (1983) and by Cohen and Manion (1989), following Oeser (1960). Perrott proposes three common teaching activities: lecture-explanation techniques, discussion and independent studies. Cohen and Manion expand the categories to: teacher-centred activity; lecture-discussion; active learning; active learning with independent planning; group task-centred learning; independent work with no interaction; and individual work. Jarvis, writing specifically about the education of adults, groups teaching methods under three headings: teacher-centred methods; student-centred group methods; and student-centred individual methods.

The methods proposed by my questionnaire, with the notable exception of the reading of students' work, fit fairly comfortably into Perrott's model as follows:

- Lecture-explanation techniques: teacher talk/lecture (b); video/audio tape recordings (d); guest speakers (f); possibly, visits/trips (i).

- Discussion: group discussion (b); some writing exercises in class (g); individual mentoring (j).

- Independent studies: some writing exercises in class (g); writing exercises at home (h).

Alternatively, they could be grouped under Jarvis's headings thus:

- Teacher-centred methods: teacher-talk lecture (a); video/ audio-tape recordings (d); guest speakers (f); sometimes individual mentoring (j).

- Student-centred group methods: group discussion (b); reading of students' work in progress (c); taping of students' work (e); writing exercises in class in groups/pairs/whole class (g).

- Student-centred individual methods: writing exercises in class individually (g); writing exercises at home (h); sometimes individual mentoring (j).

Cohen and Manion's categories are, on the whole, less useful. The distinctions they make between 'active learning', 'active learning with independent planning' and 'group task-centred learning' are not clear when applied to practices within adult scriptwriting classes. However, their separation of the 'lecture-discussion' from teacher-centred activities is useful in this context, as in the classes I observed teacher talk or lecture often developed into whole class discussion, thereby becoming less teacher-centred and more student-centred. The terms 'independent work with no interaction' and 'individual work' could both be applied to the large amount of writing which most tutors expected students to do at home, but neither category allows for the ways in which such work was used in class.

Indeed, the emphasis placed by all the observed tutors on the reading and discussion of students' work, whether written as an exercise set by the tutor or as 'work in progress' forming part of a larger assessment task, was the single most outstanding aspect of their common practice. This is what they all referred to as 'workshopping', a practice which is not really covered by either Perrott's or Cohen and Manion's categories. However, 'discussion' and 'independent studies' in Perrott's terms cover parts of the activity, while in Cohen and Manion's terms, 'independent work with no interaction', 'individual work', 'active learning' and 'lecture-discussion' might all be said to be part of a workshop. Jarvis does specifically mention the workshop as

an example of a 'group student-centred method,' defining it as a situation where 'students are enabled to undertake a piece of work, either individually or in groups, and the product of the exercise may be subjected to the critical scrutiny of the class for discussion and appraisal' (1983, 148). However, my own observations of writing classes suggest that much, if not most, of the appraisal, is done by the tutor. So is this a student-centred or a tutor-centred activity? Perhaps such difficulties in defining tutors' methods should alert one to the danger of over-categorization. Indeed, Jarvis acknowledges that 'in any teaching and learning session it is possible to combine a number of approaches' (1983, 157).

With this in mind I have constructed from my observations a different model of activities which scriptwriting tutors use in adult classes, expressed in terms of two main roles played by the tutors:

- **The tutor as expert**, where the tutor shares knowledge about scriptwriting with the students, whether by means of lecture, his/her contribution to discussion or the introduction of the students to the work of other 'experts'. The tutor can play this role via teacher talk/lecture (a), group discussion (b), video/audio tape recording (d), guest speakers (f), visits and trips (i) and individual mentoring (j). The tutor might also play this role when responding to the reading of students' work (c) and setting writing exercises (g).

- **The tutor as facilitator,**[1] where the tutor's primary role is to chair a meeting, along the lines of the writers' workshops discussed in earlier chapters, and thereby to facilitate the sharing of students' work and the discussion of that work. This includes the reading of students' work (c) and group discussion (b), probably following on from writing exercises at home (h). Also in this role,

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[1] Heron (quoted in Tight 2002)) defines a facilitator as 'a person who has the role of helping participants to learn in an experiential group'.

the tutor could instigate taping of students' work (e) and writing exercises in class (g), which might form the basis of a 'workshop' type session. The tutor might also be said to be acting as a facilitator when he or she provides access to the expertise of others, via (f), (g) and (i).

Clearly these two roles are not mutually exclusive and overlap at many points. Of particular interest is the way in which the first role is constantly brought into play in the 'workshop' situation so that, while workshops form a major part of all the courses observed, there seems to be a noticeable difference between the workshops I observed during 2002/3 and the more traditional workshops described in Chapter 3, wherein the role of expert was consciously avoided. So, whatever teaching methods and styles are being deployed in a class, the tutor often plays both roles simultaneously, with the balance between them varying according to the activity taking place.[2]

It is possible, of course, to arrive at a greater number of discrete roles for the teacher of adults. Apps (1979) describes six possible roles (trainer, conditioner, counsellor, model, resource and guide), while Ruddock (1981) suggests eight (resource person, expositor, demonstrator, promulgator of values, taskmaster, assessor, helper and group manager). I would argue that over-categorisation is ultimately unhelpful when looking at what a tutor does in a class. I prefer to see the tutor's role as a continuum, with the 'tutor as expert' as one extreme and 'the tutor as facilitator' at the other. The diagram below demonstrates how common activities might be ranged between the two extremes. These are shown above the line. I have omitted 'group discussion' because of the possible confusion about its meaning mentioned above and because in practice it proved to be a part of most of the other activities rather than an activity in its own right. Below the line are some possible

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[2] Mimpriss (2002) questions the dominance of the workshop in the teaching of creative writing, citing the dangers of the 'group dynamic' and the shift in power from teachers to students. My observations would suggest that, in the Liverpool classes, the balance has been changing back in favour of teachers.

variations on the tutor's role, suggesting what he or she might be providing during the activities. This is, of course, inexact and open to argument, but, as a paradigm of what goes on in scriptwriting classes, it is arguably more useful than an attempt to categorise either classroom activities or aspects of the tutor's role in a series of lists.

Activities		
Teacher talk/lecture		Readings of student work
Mentoring	Guests/videos/trips	Writing exercises
Expert _____ **Facilitator**		
Transmission of knowledge	Advice	Access to knowledge	Development	Instigation	Chairing of meeting
Tutor's role		
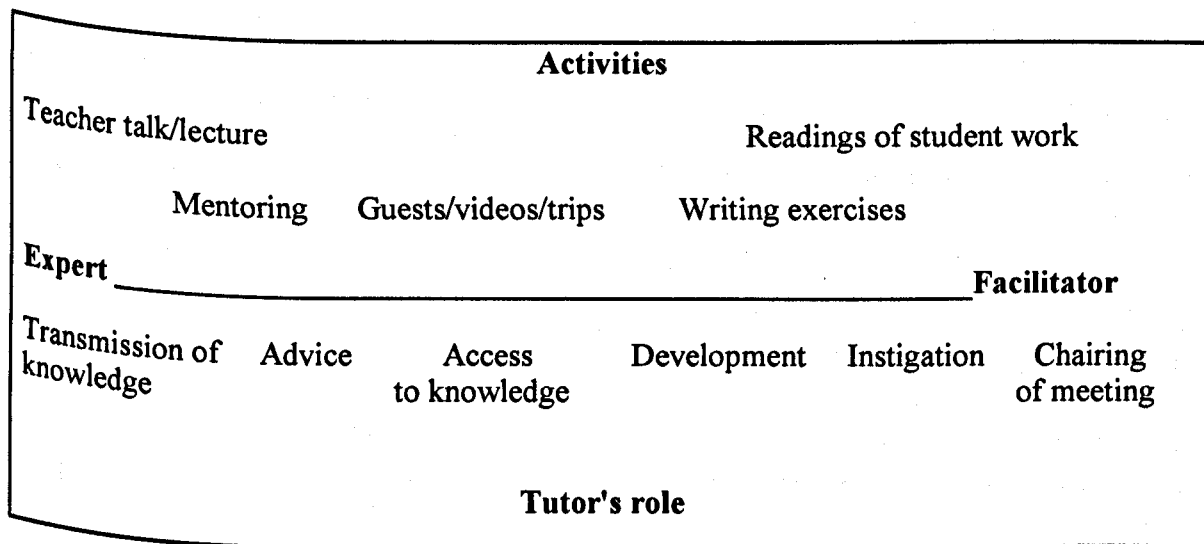
Figure 1: The role of the scriptwriting tutor

In the following two sections of this chapter, I shall illustrate how the tutors in the study fulfil these roles in practice. This will be done by looking at each role in turn, and considering how the scriptwriting tutors play that role through the medium of the activities on the continuum.

7.2 The tutor as expert

Writing is, broadly, a 'skills-based' rather than a 'knowledge-based' subject. This may, in part, account for the difficulties it has encountered in the past in being accepted as a suitable subject for study. Its defenders, such as Morley and Worpole, who refer ironically to 'the skill which cannot be taught' (1982, 124), point to subjects such as music, art, drama and even English literature as examples of skills-based subjects

which are well established and whose teachers are accepted as skilled professionals. Perhaps one of the most significant developments in the teaching of scriptwriting over the last twenty years is the growing belief amongst tutors that they have a role which goes beyond that of the workshop leader of the 1970s and '80s. This belief is accompanied by a growing confidence that they, as individuals, have skills and, indeed, knowledge which give them the status of experts.

A rare early description of the role of the tutor in a writing class, rather than a workshop, can be found in Jones (1981). Expressing surprise at 'the reliance upon authority manifested by [his] students' (20), he reluctantly embraces the role of the expert. However, his ideas about what he is teaching, and why he is teaching it, are very much of his time. Like Evans and other early workshop leaders, he sees his students' writing neither in terms of potential commercial success nor of artistic achievement: 'The job of the tutor is not to produce "artists", but people who are better enabled to use words to express themselves for their own enlightenment and for the pleasure and education of others' (Ibid., 21). It is interesting to compare his account with that of Burrows (1973), who also rejects commercialism but does see her students' work in terms of artistic achievement.

In simple terms the expert, in this context, is someone who knows things the students do not already know and, more importantly in the context of transmitting skills, knows how to do things that the students do not yet know how to do. It is his or her job to pass on this knowledge and these skills to the student. There are several ways in which the tutors in the study do this in practice: by sharing their knowledge explicitly in a fairly formal way; by enabling the students to access knowledge for themselves; and by responding to the students' needs and wants by offering help and advice. The knowledge which they share with their students is not, normally, the sort

of knowledge of a subject an historian, say, or a biologist might pass on. Rather, it is knowledge about how to improve one's skills as a writer and how to sell one's work. With this end in mind, most of the tutors in the study feel that they need to share specific information and/or advice about such things as character, dialogue, structure, layout and marketing. For example, Helen, in answer to question 28 on the tutor questionnaire (In what sense(s) do you think writing can be taught?) mentions 'general rules and principles ... such as layout, presentation, scene structure and characterisation'. Charles lists 'technical stuff - e.g. layout and "tricks of the trade"', while Brian maintains that, 'in playwriting there are fundamental rules about drama, theatre, character and plot, etc. Craft, and a mature reflection on craft, can help students truly appreciate the works of established playwrights; this in turn feeds into their own work'. Graham agrees that 'story structure and character development can be taught to some extent', but feels that 'dialogue needs an inner ear.' In answer to question 25 (What do you think your students will gain from your courses?), Andrew mentions 'skills and knowledge', Brian hopes for 'an awareness of basic playwriting skills and craft', and Graham thinks that the students might gain 'a little insight'.

The tutors' own knowledge seems to have come principally from three sources: other experts who have written, broadcast or spoken about the subject; examples of good and bad practice in scriptwriting from which they have drawn inferences and developed theories; and their own experience of writing. An example of the first of these came when Charles was talking to his students about story structure during the fourth of his twenty sessions. He had clearly prepared what he had to say, as he used notes on cards while speaking to the class, and the fact that he had adapted or developed his ideas from a written source was made explicit when he recommended a book about writing, which he himself had consulted, to the students

(Frensham 1996). In doing this he employed two of the three tools of his 'tutor as expert' role: sharing knowledge in a formal way and helping the students to access knowledge for themselves. The importance of the second source of knowledge, inferences drawn from examples of good and bad practice, was clear in every class I attended, with tutors making frequent references to scripts of which their students may or may not have had prior knowledge; in one class, on situation comedy, I counted 24 references to examples of the genre.[3] Most of these references arose naturally from discussion or were used to illustrate a point the tutor was making in response to a students; but 22 minutes of the class were spent watching a video recording of an episode of the American situation comedy *Cheers,* which was then discussed in the light of the work that had been done in the class about 'stock predicaments' (B1). In another class the same tutor made references to writers including William Shakespeare, George Bernard Shaw and David Mamet, drawing on a breadth of literary reference unusual in the classes I observed. Half of that particular class was devoted to discussion, with its writer and director, of a play which the students had attended in lieu of the previous week's class (AB1).

Knowledge drawn from the tutors' own experience was also frequently used, perhaps supporting the widely held idea that tutors need to be professional writers. Ernest, for example, talked about his experiences of 'studying the market' and 'targeting' (E2); while both Andrew and Brian contributed to a discussion about 'writing habits' with anecdotal material about their own experiences (AB1), and Diane stated her intention to use examples of her own writing to demonstrate layout and presentation (D1). I would argue that that these three sources form the 'body of knowledge' that a scriptwriting tutor requires in order to fulfil the role of expert.

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[3] A list of films, plays, television scripts and writers referred to by tutors and students during the classes observed can be found in Appendix E.

Having acquired the knowledge that makes them experts in the field, how then did the tutors transmit this knowledge to their students? I have already mentioned the three main ways in which this is done. The first of these, the explicit sharing of knowledge, is perhaps the purest manifestation of the tutor's role as expert and forms, therefore, one extreme of my continuum. Such explicit transmission of knowledge is, in higher education, associated mainly with the lecture. In the case of the observed classes, this is where Cohen and Manion's term 'lecture-discussion' becomes useful (1989). The traditional lecture, where the lecturer addresses an audience of students for a considerable length of time, possibly followed by questions or discussion, was not a method used by any of the tutors in the study, although sessions involving guest speakers resembled this model rather more closely. This is hardly surprising in view of the situation. First, the physical layout of the rooms used did not suggest the appropriateness of the lecture. None of the classes I observed took place in lecture theatres, most of them being in 'seminar rooms', where the tutor's desk was at the front, in front of a whiteboard and a monitor or screen, with the students sitting at tables arranged to form the other three sides of a rectangle. The exception was Diane's first class, which, because of a shortage of rooms large enough to accommodate the 27 students who had enrolled on her course, took place in a science laboratory (D1). By the time I observed Diane again, her class had been moved to a smaller room with a layout similar to that of the other classes (D2). The accommodation, therefore, suggested a 'semi-formal' structure to the classes.

Second, the numbers of students involved would suggest a bias towards an informal approach. The biggest classes I saw involved eighteen students (AB1, B1, D1) while the smallest contained only four (C2). A formal lecture would clearly be inappropriate in these circumstances, particularly as adult education course providers

so often stress the informality and friendliness of their classes. One must also take into account the nature of the students. A group of adults on an open-access course, comprising students with widely divergent social and educational backgrounds, is quite likely to include people who are either not used to listening to a tutor talk without interruption for any length of time, or unwilling to allow him or her to do so. In such circumstances, a session intended as a lecture might easily turn into a lecture-discussion. This was demonstrated in Charles's session on story structure (C1).

Charles defined his objectives for this class as 'to find out how to choose a story and what makes a story viable'. In all, he devoted 67 minutes, over half the session, to exploring this topic through the medium of lecture-discussion. The second half of the class was spent on the reading and discussion of students' work arising from an exercise set in the previous class. Having established a friendly atmosphere through informal chat, Charles addressed the class from a seat at the front, occasionally referring to notes on cards. At the start it appeared that this would be an example of planned teacher talk, with the tutor delivering something close to a lecture on his chosen topic. It was not long, however, before a student interrupted. Students continued to interrupt to ask questions or make comments, so that this section of the lesson became a mixture of prepared teacher talk and informal discussion arising from the contents of his talk, with students' comments and questions sometimes having little relevance to the subject matter. One student, for example, interrupted while the tutor was talking about the concept of the hero to ask a question about the requirements for course work. Many questions, however, were relevant. For example, Charles responded to requests for clarification of the phrase 'high concept' when he was talking about 'buddy films' and 'high concept films'. Later, arising from the tutor's

remarks about 'commercial' and 'art' films, there was a fairly shapeless discussion centring on attempts to distinguish between the two.

Charles seemed to be remarkably patient with the students, some of whom did not feel the need to adhere to generally accepted codes of classroom etiquette, such as putting up one's hand, allowing others to take their turn, or waiting for the tutor to finish making his point. After the class, however, Charles told me that he had made it clear in previous sessions that he encouraged interruptions and discussion. Certainly, at this stage in his course (the fourth of twenty sessions), he would not be able to assume any prior knowledge or experience on behalf of his students, a problem common to all open-access adult education classes. An uninterrupted lecture, in these circumstances, would probably not be appropriate as the tutor would have no way of knowing what these students already knew, what they needed to know and what would be the most appropriate way of delivering that knowledge. Interaction between the tutor and students was clearly necessary, then, if the tutor was to communicate his expert knowledge effectively. If the student had not asked him to explain the term 'high concept film', how could the tutor have known that an explanation was necessary? Other students might have had no difficulty with the term. In order to find the right level for this talk, and thereby ensure effective learning did take place, Charles created a forum in which his students felt comfortable asking questions and expressing their views. The price he paid for this was an occasional lack of focus on the task and the potential for certain students to dominate discussion and possibly alienate others. For example, one student persistently shouted out his opinions and thoughts, whether relevant to the discussion or not, including one occasion where the tutor was discussing science fiction and he responded by asking, 'Have you seen Amadeus?'

It was clear, however, that this tutor was aware of the constraints of time and the importance of retaining focus on his objectives. On several occasions I noted that, after discussion between students had gone on for some time or wandered a long way from the point made in the tutor's talk, he brought the class back to the subject with interjections such as 'okay' or 'let's get back.' Such interjections were sufficient to assert his authority. He told me after the session that he kept an eye on the time and was careful to keep to his plan, while encouraging lively discussion and not minding irrelevancies because, in his words, 'they've got to get it out'.[4]

This tutor was the only one I observed devoting a substantial amount of his time to the 'lecture-discussion', although several other tutors indicated that they had done so in classes I did not observe, an assertion supported by references back to these sessions during discussion. For example, Ernest started one of his classes, which was mainly devoted to the reading and discussion of students' work, by spending two minutes recapping briefly the subject matter (dialogue) of the previous session. Ernest also told me before this class started that one of the objectives of the session was to introduce the idea of 'the heroic journey'. Before the class arrived he had drawn a diagram on the whiteboard, with the title 'The Heroic Journey', which many of the students copied. At a later stage in the session he spent ten minutes talking about this, supporting his talk with a photocopied handout (E1). Several of the tutors indicated that lecture-discussion was used more often in the early part of their courses, as they tended to move on to sessions dominated by the reading and discussion of students' work later in the courses.

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[4] However, the great reduction in the number of students on this tutor's course, from eighteen registered in October 2002 to four at the time of the second observation in February 2003, taken with the comments of some of his students on their evaluation questionnaires (see Chapter 10) might suggest that these techniques were not altogether successful, possibly alienating some of his students.

The term 'lecture- discussion' can be extended to include the cluster of activities which I have grouped under the heading 'guests/videos/trips'. The tutor's role here might be said to be that of 'expert by proxy' as tutors are providing students with access to other experts. The tutors' own expertise is used here partly because they have knowledge, which the students do not, about where to find these resources and partly because they need expertise to interpret these resources to the class. The play that Andrew and Brian took their students to see formed the basis of discussion in class, led by the tutors (AB1). Similarly, video recordings of programmes about writing were used by both Brian (a documentary about situation comedy writer John Cleese) and Charles (an episode of a BBC documentary series about soap operas) to stimulate discussion after they had been put in context and explained by the tutors (B1, C2).

I observed two classes in which guest speakers were used in similar ways. In the first of these (AB1) there were two guest speakers: the writer and director of a play seen by the group the previous week. The session was divided in two, Brian taking responsibility for the first half, which was centred on the guest speakers, and Andrew being responsible for the second half. As in Charles's class discussed above, the tutors established a relaxed atmosphere by chatting to the class before the arrival of the guests. One of the guests was late and Brian started the session by introducing the director. This guest then spoke without notes for thirteen minutes about his background and his job as a 'dramaturg'. Both Brian and Andrew asked questions, apparently designed to encourage the guest and guide the direction of his talk (for example, 'Do you remember the first play you wrote?' and 'What are your habits as a writer?') In contrast with Charles's 'lecture-discussion' session, however, the speaker was not interrupted by students, except once with a very brief and quiet comment,

until Brian invited the students' participation. He did this by addressing to them a direct, closed question arising from the speaker's remarks, which elicited a show of hands in response. Shortly afterwards, the second speaker arrived and the discussion continued between the tutors and their guests for a further eleven minutes. After that, Brian invited the students to address questions to the speakers, which they did until they went for a break 28 minutes later.

Ernest's session with a guest speaker followed a similar pattern, although in this case there was only one guest and one tutor (E2). After being introduced to the class, this guest, a writer of television drama and a former student of Ernest, spoke without interruptions for thirteen minutes, again mainly giving autobiographical details, until the tutor signalled a transition from lecture to discussion ('Let me stop you ... let's put it in context of what we've been doing'). The discussion then continued for the rest of the session, excluding a fifteen-minute coffee break, with Ernest taking a chairman's role, encouraging the students to ask questions and directing the discussion by his own questions and comments.

In both these sessions, there was a clearer distinction between the 'lecture' and 'discussion' components than in Charles's session. There was also a greater degree of control exercised by the tutors in terms of inviting contributions from students and directing the discussion. This greater formality might have been due to the fact that they were dealing with outside speakers, a situation which demands a certain degree of formality in the tutor's role, accepted etiquette requiring that the tutors should introduce and thank the speakers, and make them feel comfortable. However, it was noticeable that in the other observed classes taught by Ernest, Andrew and Brian discussion was similarly organised and controlled by the tutors. The rather chaotic style of discussion in Charles's class could be attributed to the tutor's chosen style or

to the dynamics of the particular group of students. In view of my observation of his class at JMU (C3), where the students were far less assertive in manner and the discussion more focussed, I am inclined to the latter view.

This aspect of the tutor's role when dealing with guest speakers may seem to relate to the idea of 'tutor as facilitator' rather than 'tutor as expert', in that his or her function is to enable contact between the guest and the students to take place and to ensure that the meeting is well run. In both cases, however, the tutor's role as expert went beyond the function I have already mentioned of helping the students to access expertise. All three tutors took an active role in discussion and used their own knowledge to encourage, support and interpret the discourse between speakers and students. For example, Brian's questions to his speakers about the process of writing ('What problems do you encounter as a writer?' and 'What advice would you give?' (AB1)) helped to focus the discussion, and both he and Andrew contributed anecdotes about their own writing experiences to the discussion. Ernest also talked about his own experiences and on several occasions made explicit links between what the guest said and themes that he had covered in previous sessions: for example, clarifying the guest's remarks about 'directions' by making a distinction between 'cluttering the script with directions' and 'describing the action,' and using as an example a recent episode of *Brookside* which had been written by the guest speaker (E2).

These sessions were also interesting in terms of the type of knowledge to which the students were gaining access via the guest speakers. Whereas Charles's lecture-discussion session was mainly about improving skills, these two sessions tended to focus more on the processes of becoming and remaining a professional writer: how to be a successful writer as opposed to how to be a better writer. This focus came not only from the students, whose questions seemed to be mainly about

these aspects of writing (for example, 'How did you fit into *Emmerdale*?'), but also from the guests themselves, whose brief seemed to be to talk about their professional lives and, incidentally, to give advice to the students about their own writing. Most of this advice was about marketing their work: for example, advising students that they should write a half-hour script to use as a 'calling card' or, when talking about writing for series and serials, explaining that 'you've got to decide what kind of writer you are/ it's your voice/ but it's not your show' (E2). On both occasions, the guests actively encouraged the participation of students by asking them about their own writing. Other examples of how tutors played the role of expert by giving advice to students will be discussed below. In this context, that role was shared by the tutors and the guests speakers, in such a way that a good deal of both sessions consisted of discussion between the tutors and the guests, as if they were 'panels' of experts.

It also struck me that one of the purposes of the guest speakers was to inspire the students in a way that their tutors, whether because of familiarity or comparative lack of success in professional writing, might be less able to do. The choice and availability of the speakers was significant here, all of them having pre-existing connections with the tutors, one having been a course tutor and another having been a student on one of the tutor's courses. They all sought to create a sense that becoming a professional writer was an achievable goal. Ernest's speaker's remark about herself, 'If she can do it [so can I]' (E1), echoed Bill Morrison's comments about his role in the early playwrights' workshops (Morrison Interview 2002). Both this speaker and the director who spoke in Brian and Andrew's class made explicit connections with the recent scriptwriting tradition of the area, one of them referring to Willy Russell and

Jimmy McGovern as influences, the other comparing Russell and Alan Bleasdale to The Beatles in terms of their influence (AB1).[5]

Other ways in which tutors provided students with access to expertise included making recommendations of useful texts (B1, C1), distributing handouts and leaflets either prepared by themselves or obtained from sources such as the BBC (AB1, B1, D1, D2, E1), and encouraging students to use the University's Continuing Education library and the 'book boxes' (containing appropriate texts selected by each tutor specifically for his or her class) provided by the library (AB1).

The third way I have identified in which tutors share their expertise is through responding to students by giving them specific help and advice. I have already mentioned how this was done during sessions involving guests. In this semi-formal context students took advantage of the discussion or question and answer format to seek advice, while the tutors and guests drew inferences from what was said to give general advice to the students. Similarly, opportunities arose for the tutor to give specific advice in Charles's 'lecture-discussion' session. Perhaps the most effective vehicles for giving individual help and advice, however, are mentoring and marking. Both give the tutor the opportunity to focus advice on specific aspects of a student's work. While I did not witness any formal mentoring sessions, and I understand that there was no specific time set aside for such sessions, I did see tutors giving personal advice to students before and after classes, and during breaks.[6] I also saw students submitting work to be read by their tutors and tutors returning work to students. While

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[5] This speaker, in his role as 'dramaturg' at Productionline was trying to offer a service to local writers in developing their work for stage that had probably not been seen in the area since the early 1980s, when Russell and Bleasdale were involved with the Playwrights' Workshop. Not long before this session was observed, the directors of the Everyman and Playhouse started once more to attempt to forge links with local writers (Everyman Playhouse 2002).

[6] Charles, for example, spent several minutes in the corridor talking to student about his script before the start of a session (C1). Diane spent her coffee break in the classroom talking to a student about her work (D1).

the formal assessment of work did not take place until the end of the courses, one would expect that such marking would provide an opportunity for tutors to use their expertise to help students improve their skills. However, this idea was not supported by the tutor questionnaire, their replies to the question about the advantages of assessment (question 27) being couched in rather vague terms, not giving much of an idea of what sort of advice or help might be given: '[Assessment] gives a sense of worth to [people] that academia may have bypassed' (C); 'useful for students with little formal education' (A); and 'seeing the students' creative efforts, to see if their 30 minute plays reflect the teaching and learning on the course' (B).

On the other hand, such help and advice, whether in the form of specific advice addressed to an individual student or general advice and 'tips' addressed to the whole class, was given throughout all the classes observed. Most often the advice arose from the discussion of students' work in workshop situations, a format that dominated the sessions observed, taking up the whole of five of the ten scriptwriting classes observed (AB2, C2, D1, D2, E2) and part of another two (C1, C2), as well as roughly half the MA class (C3) and the local authority creative writing class (J1). That the tutors dispensed such advice when playing the role of workshop leader shows how much their role in the workshop has developed from simply being that of a 'facilitator', in the sense understood by early workshop leaders, to a more complex role, whose effectiveness depends to a large extent on successfully playing the role of 'expert' at the same time.

7.3 The tutor as facilitator and the changing role of the workshop leader

You wrote a poem/ read it out/ everyone gave a little round of applause and you had a cup of tea and a Jaffa cake. (E2)

This is how the guest speaker at one of the classes I observed in 2002/3, a professional television writer, described her early experience of attending writers' workshops. In this section I shall explore how much the concept of 'workshopping' has changed and how that activity was used by scriptwriting tutors in 2002/3.

I have already discussed the reluctance of workshop leaders such as David Evans, Barbara Shane, Janice Sear and Keith Birch to describe themselves as teachers, tutors or lecturers, preferring such terms as 'chair', 'convenor' or 'facilitator' (see Chapter 3). The last of these terms remains popular amongst educationalists working with adults, probably for much the same reasons that the early workshop leaders used it - the feeling that it lacks connotations of authority, thereby creating a sense of equality; and that it creates a sense of the student or learner being independent and in charge of his or her own learning, with the facilitator's purpose being to help students to gain access to knowledge, skills and opportunities. Brookfield has described how 'educators and trainers regularly declare themselves to be facilitators of learning rather than teachers or instructors, and the term has now entered the mainstream of educational literature', citing its usage in the 1970s and '80s by a number of academics (1986, 62-63). Tight sees the rejection by many people working in adult education of the term 'teacher' as arising 'in part from a wish to distinguish themselves from schoolteachers, and in part because of the perceived inappropriateness of what are seen as typically schoolteaching methods to adults' (2002, 28). However, it is clear from my research that writing tutors, including some of those mentioned above have, over the past thirty years, become increasingly comfortable with the idea that they are tutors or teachers, just as they have become

comfortable with the idea of classes or courses, rather than groups or workshops (Interviews: Birch 2001, Evans 2001, Brian 2003, Charles 2003).

Nevertheless, all five tutors observed for this study continued to use the term 'workshop', not to describe the group in which learning took place, but rather to describe one of several ways in which learning took place in their courses. All five, and most of the additional respondents to the tutors' questionnaire, signalled that they would devote a large proportion of their classes to 'workshopping' students' work, the term commonly understood by tutors and students to describe the reading out by students of work written at home followed by discussion of that work by tutors and students.[7] In the event, seven of the ten University of Liverpool classes observed contained some 'workshopping', as did both the Liverpool John Moores University MA class and the LEA class (AB2, B2, C1, C2, C3, D1, D2, E1, J1). Consideration of the format and conduct of these sessions will form a useful basis for a discussion of how the tutor's role in this situation has changed from that described by participants in earlier, less formal writers' workshops.

In the classes observed during 2002/3 workshop techniques were used in two different ways. In three University classes and the local authority class students read work which had been written as the result of an exercise set by the tutor in the previous class and which focussed on a specific aspect of writing. In his first observed class Charles asked students to give a three-sentence 'pitch' of a story idea. The 'workshopping' of these ideas occupied 50 minutes of his two-hour class (in which there was no break), and fitted in with the lecture-discussion of the first half of the class, reflecting his stated aim: 'to find out how to choose a story and what makes a viable story' (C1). The first class I observed taught by Diane was devoted entirely to

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[7] When interviewed, Brian and Ernest both confirmed that they devoted the second half of their courses almost entirely to considering work in progress in a 'workshop' situation (Interviews B and E).

the reading and discussion of short scripts for two characters, given as an initial exercise in writing dialogue (D1). Ernest also focussed on dialogue, but in his case the exercise was the reduction of a script, written for a previous session, from four pages to two, concentrating the issue of whether the dialogue was 'moving the plot forward' and 'revealing information about the character' (E1). These sessions took place in the fourth, sixth and fifth weeks of the respective courses. Jane, whose class was only partially about scriptwriting, had set two different tasks: one on openings to short stories, and the other a short piece of dialogue based around a situation and characters provided by her (J1).

The second way in which workshop techniques were used was demonstrated by Brian, Charles, Diane, Brian and Andrew in their joint class, and Charles in his MA class. In all cases except in Charles's two classes the workshop took the whole of the session. In Charles's University of Liverpool class, the original intention had been to spend the whole class on the workshop, but there was not enough work brought in to last more than half the session (C2). In his JMU class he spent (as planned) only the second half on the workshop, the first half being spent on a lecture-discussion (C3). In all cases the work read and discussed was 'work in progress'. However, in no case was it a matter of students simply bringing in work of their own choosing. Rather, tutors had asked specific individuals to bring their work for that particular session. Also, all the work brought in comprised sections of scripts that the students were working on with the intention of submitting them for assessment at the end of the course. All sessions observed at the University of Liverpool took place in the second half of the planned courses (weeks fifteen, sixteen, seventeen and eighteen).

It is apparent, therefore, that the structure, and to some extent the content, of these workshops sessions were predetermined by the tutors, albeit more rigidly in the

first than in the second group. Tutors did not simply turn up and wait to see what the students presented, as they might have done in the workshops and writers' groups of the 1970s. This version of the tutor as facilitator could not work within the more formal system imposed by the institutions within which they worked, given the demands made on tutors to produce schemes of work, to have clear aims and objectives and to work towards the production of work which was capable of being assessed for accreditation. The students' influence on the direction taken by these sessions was limited to making choices about whether or not they brought in work to be discussed and on their contributions to the discussions.

It could be said that the tutors played the role of facilitator by structuring their courses in such a way that opportunities were given to their students to do three things: to work independently (writing scripts on subjects of their own choosing); to make decisions within the workshop sessions both about what was discussed (by choosing what to present to the workshop for discussion); and to influence the direction of the discussion (by making contributions to the discussion of their own and other students' work). However, the tutors were clearly not acting simply as equal members of the groups in the way described by the leaders of early writers' workshops. In the first group of workshops the structure and, to some extent, the content, of the workshops were imposed by the tutors who, by setting writing exercises for their students, had used their expertise as writers and teachers to determine what aspect of writing should be explored in that particular session and how it should be explored.

In all the observed classes, the tutors imposed structure within the workshop sessions. It was clear that all five University tutors had established routines and practices that, by the time their classes were observed, were familiar to the students.

Brian and Andrew, for example, began every class by spending between five and ten minutes on an exercise they called 'overheard voices', wherein students volunteered snatches of conversation they had overheard during the previous week (AB1, AB2, B1, B2). This not only helped the students to relax and start talking, but also emphasised the importance of observation and of establishing routines in writing. In all the workshops observed, with the exception of Charles's first session, students either brought several copies of the script with them or had previously given the script to the tutor to copy. All the tutors routinely asked the writer of each script to 'cast' it from among their fellow students. Both Diane and Ernest stressed that the writer should not read his or her own work, Diane explaining that 'the object is to let the person hear' (D1). Interestingly, Diane changed an aspect of her routine during her first observed class. After a particularly halting reading early in the session, she suggested that in future those reading should 'have a quick read through first'. This quick response to an unexpected situation resulted in subsequent readings being much more fluent and, presumably, more helpful to the writers. In Brian's workshop session and the class taught jointly by Brian and Andrew, which were the most highly structured of those observed, students were asked after reading to discuss the scripts in pairs before 'feeding back' to the tutor at the front of the class, where he wrote brief notes on the whiteboard. In Brian's solo class the students' comments were written under the heading 'What's working in the script?' while Andrew had written three headings: 'Characters', 'What works' and 'Developments'. These headings provided a clear focus for discussion, as the tutors returned to them as each script was discussed. In these classes, the students whose work was being discussed tended to listen silently until invited to give their reactions at the end of each discussion (AB2, B2). Charles, Diane and Ernest had a seemingly looser approach to the workshops. Charles's habit

was to start a general discussion at the end of each reading by a remark such as 'okay /what do we think?', while Diane usually invited the writer to comment first ('What did you think yourself?') before inviting other students to make comments. Ernest's routine was to make a general comment himself, then invite comments from the floor ('Comments for Tom?'), have a brief conversation with the writer about how to improve the script and invite further comments before moving on to the next piece.

In all the classes observed tutors appeared to be very conscious of time, attempting, in the role of 'chairperson', to ensure that all students who had brought work were given a chance to hear it read and that a roughly equal amount of time was devoted to each piece. However, the amount of time given to each student's piece of work varied greatly between classes. In Charles's first session an average of just over four minutes was given to each student's work. Ernest's students were given just over nine minutes on average. In Diane's first session each piece was given an average of just under seven minutes. The time spent on each piece of work was noticeably longer in the second group of classes, partly because of a reduction in numbers on the courses, but also because of the increased length of the pieces and the fact that the tutors had limited the number of scripts to be considered in each session. In Diane's class three scripts were read and discussed. The first, which only took two minutes to read, was discussed for ten minutes. The second lasted seven minutes and was discussed for twenty minutes. The third, which took 21 minutes to read, was discussed for ten minutes (D2). In Brian's class only two scripts were read, one lasting fifteen minutes and being discussed for 30 minutes, the other being read for 30 minutes and discussed for 35 minutes (B2). In both cases the initial 'pair' discussion of the piece was limited to ten minutes. In Charles's second class only one student had work to read. This script lasted fifteen minutes and was discussed for 26 minutes (C2).

The short amount of time available to each student in the first group of workshop sessions had the effect of limiting the scope and perhaps the value of comments made about each piece. In all classes the tutors gave brief comments on all pieces, with students contributing occasionally. Students' comments in almost all cases seemed vague and of limited value to the student writers, except insofar as they gave some encouragement to those who were new to writing and may have lacked confidence. Typical comments from students in Diane's class were 'I quite like it' and 'you're a natural writer' (D1). Ernest's class provided more focussed comments, such as a suggestion that an incident in a script be moved from one scene to another, but most comments were still along the lines of 'that was much better' (E1).

Talk by the tutors tended to be more precise and designed to focus students on the object of the exercise, through a mixture of questioning, comments focussed on particular aspects of the work and general comments arising from the work. Charles tended to aim direct questions at the student writer. Questions such as 'but what's the story about?', 'what's the situation?', 'if you think we're going to see it coming/why should you write it?' and 'what's his journey?' were designed to focus the students on the ideas about story structure that had been discussed in the class previously (C1). Ernest used fewer questions to the students, those he did employ being mainly designed to bring students into the discussion or open it out: for example, 'Beverley, you wanted to say something?' and 'any comments for Pauline?' (E1). Diane used similar questions, like 'what did you think?' and 'anyone got any comments?' (D1).

Comments on particular aspects of scripts included 'at the moment it sounds like a travelogue' and 'it's a classic story' from Charles, and 'there was a little confusion' and 'all about thinking visually' from Ernest. Diane's comments included 'a lot of humour in it', 'you've got two clear characters coming out' and 'I think there

were a couple of lines you could have lost.' General comments included 'that's the sort of script they always get' (Charles), 'you don't rewrite for the sake of rewriting' (Ernest) and 'you write what you want to see on screen' (Diane). All the above questions and comments derived from the tutors' confidence in their own expertise, rooted in their experience as both writers and teachers.

In all three of these classes the tutors sought to create a supportive atmosphere, with slight but noticeable differences between the styles of the three tutors. Charles, although generally positive and encouraging in his response to the students, used both open and closed questions more than the other two and seemed by his questions and comments to be seeking to encourage greater detail and precision from the students. He was particularly critical of students whose work did not fit the requirements of the exercise. Ernest, while encouraging a certain amount of relaxed and informal discussion, made a lot of comments that focussed on particular aspects of students' work and which could have been interpreted as being quite negative. Diane, on the other hand, was almost always positive in her response, risking at times the kind of mutual admiration implicitly criticised by Ernest's speaker in her 'Jaffa cake' story. While these differences must have been due partly to the differing personalities of the tutors involved, I would suggest that there were other factors involved. First, the exercises that the students had been given might have demanded different responses from the tutors. Charles's exercise was designed to be short and sharp, his comments and questioning perhaps seeming a little harsh at times because he was to some extent imitating the possible reactions of a producer in a commissioning situation; although his awareness of the students' inexperience and his need to encourage them probably softened his responses. Ernest's exercise was essentially an exercise in rewriting and cutting, perhaps demanding a focus more on what the students should not have done

than what they should have done. Diane's exercise was a fairly simple one, appropriate to inexperienced writers starting out on the course. Also, there were discernible differences in the atmosphere of the three classes that were due to the make-up of the student group as much as to the tutor. Many of Charles's group, as mentioned earlier, seemed very confident when it came to offering their opinions and, when criticised, would argue with the tutor and seek to justify what they had done. Ernest's class contained quite a few students who had some experience of other writing classes and as a result seemed more relaxed with the workshop format and more willing to criticize and be criticized; whereas Diane's students appeared to have little experience of writing or of writing classes, shown by their nervousness about reading and by the fact that several of them had misunderstood the tutor's instructions, in spite of the apparent simplicity of the exercise. There was a lot of laughter in her class as well as mutual support, with the student writers often (at times with little justification) seeming very pleased with their own work. A third probable factor was the previous experience of the tutors, Diane being in her first year of teaching adults, which might have made her more cautious about offering criticism than the very experienced Charles and Ernest (Tutor Questionnaires C, D, E).

What the three sessions in the first group of workshops had in common was a degree of control by the tutors which would have been anathema to leaders of earlier writers' workshops. This control was exhibited through the planned structure both of the courses and of individual sessions, as well as through the way in which the tutors ran the workshop sessions in terms of controlling and dominating discussion from the vantage point of the expert.

The main difference between these three sessions and the workshops observed later in the year was the amount of time spent reading and discussing each piece of

work. In the early sessions, as the tutors tried to include all those students who had brought work to the class, time limits meant that very rarely did any detailed discussion take place about a piece of work. The response to each piece tended to be in the form of a little bit of encouragement and one or two brief hints about how to improve the piece. The value of such a limited exercise to the students might be questionable, although it must be borne in mind that these sessions took place early in the courses, and not only did the work itself tend to be quite brief but the tutors may have thought that too detailed criticism might not have been appropriate at this early stage. In the second group of workshops much more time was available, with no more than three scripts being considered in each class. It was clear from the observations, as well as the tutors' comments on their questionnaires, that all five University tutors intended to spend most of the second term on workshopping students' assessment pieces.

However, if all those students who registered for the courses had remained on them, with official course numbers ranging between seventeen and 27, it would have been impossible to spend a great deal of time on each piece. In fact, the number of students attending the four workshops observed in the second term ranged between four and fourteen. So the fall in student numbers which is common in evening classes (and therefore can be tentatively planned for), although often the subject of regret and sometimes of recrimination, can result in the remaining students and their work receiving a lot more time and attention from their tutors and fellow students.

One notable result of the extra time available for discussion, combined with a perceptible growth in confidence, was that students seemed more willing to make contributions to the discussion which, as a result, was a little less tutor-dominated. In Diane's class the majority of the fourteen students present contributed to the

discussion of such matters as writing for different accents and the difference between writing scripts and short stories. The tutor was more critical of the work than she had been in the previous class, although she seemed to me to be much harsher in her criticism of one script than of the other two (incidentally the script that I thought was the strongest of the three), possibly indicating that she was making judgments about individual students' likely reaction to criticism, and thereby differentiating between them. Diane seemed, by her own criticism and her invitations to the students to comment on the second script, to be opening up a far more lively and candid debate than that which had taken place about the first student's work, when the discussion had remained largely at the level observed in her previous class, with comments such as 'it's nice writing' and 'I thought it was excellent' and little discussion of detail. Nevertheless, it was apparent that the students in the class had begun to acquire some expertise, showing familiarity with the kind of technical register employed by the tutors by their use of words such as 'exposition' (D2).

Similarly, in Charles's second class, the students were willing to make suggestions about possible improvements to the one script read, again displaying increasing familiarity with terms such as 'exposition' and 'genre' (C2). In both Diane's and Charles's classes, the tutors answered detailed questions about layout and presentation of scripts as well as possible markets, and in both classes the tutors drew on their own professional experience to answer questions and illustrate general points arising in discussion. For example, Charles remarked that he had 'come to the conclusion that one of the revisions should be going back over conflict', while Diane spent several minutes explaining how television companies preferred scripts to be presented ('Nothing too fancy').

I have mentioned above the slightly greater degree of organisation and formality apparent in Brian's class and his and Andrew's joint class. In both these classes, the tutors' practice of giving ten minutes for pair discussion and then collecting and making notes on the board under headings seemed to lead to a greater precision and relevance in the students' comments. The whole class discussion was led by open questions from the tutor, such as 'what sort of a character is he?', 'what do we glean from that as an audience?' (AB2) and 'for the next draft what would we want the writer to look at?' (B2). The students in both these classes seemed to be very comfortable with the routine as well as with the terminology employed by the tutors, which they themselves were starting to use with confidence. Brian used phrases such as 'linear story structure' without explanation, while students themselves used words like 'exposition' and 'antagonist'. In both these classes, as in Charles and Diane's classes, the tutors referred back to other sessions, thereby putting the workshop in the context of the learning that had already taken place on their courses. Brian and Andrew also used their own experiences to illustrate points and made general points based on their expertise ('There's that old rule about playwriting/ everyone in a play meets everyone else'), as well as particular points directed to individual students ('You probably shouldn't rewrite till you get to the end') (AB2). Like Diane, Brian appeared to differentiate between students by being more rigorous and less 'positive' in his criticism of one student than another. As in Diane's class, I felt that he was 'softer' on the weaker script.

So, although the primary function of a tutor in a workshop session can still be described as being that of a facilitator, the way in which the role was played by the tutors observed in Liverpool in 2002/3 was very different from the function described by David Evans, Barbara Shane and others who ran writers' workshops in the city in

the 1970s and '80s. For one thing, these tutors did not seek to avoid the role of teacher and expert, rather embracing it via their questioning and comments as well as by their willingness to lead and, at times, dominate discussion. Also, in this way, and by carefully structuring courses and individual lessons, they provided scaffolding for their students' learning.

Thus the tutors could be said, whether consciously or not, in common with many teachers in primary and secondary education, to have abandoned an approach to learning based largely on the theories of Piaget and others about cognition - or, perhaps, a misunderstanding or over-simplification of those theories - which was popular amongst teachers from the 1950s into the 1970s (Wood 1988). Such practitioners emphasised the concept of 'readiness' to learn and probably influenced the 'hands off' approach of the workshop leaders of the 1970s, although, as Tennant points out, 'Piaget does not provide us with an account of cognitive development past the adolescent years ' (1997, 59). Nevertheless, the wholesale embrace of such ideas may well have resulted in the 'folk wisdom ... in which the facilitation of adult learning is seen as a non-directive, warmly satisfying encounter through which learners' needs are met' (Brookfield 1986, vii). The teaching styles and methods observed during this study owe more to the approach of social constructivists such as Vygotsky and Bruner, who rejected the idea that children can learn simply through being exposed to stimulating experience, feeling instead that 'a child's potential for learning is revealed and indeed is often realised in interactions with more knowledgeable others' (Bennett and Dunne 1994, 52), those 'others' sometimes including fellow students, but primarily being the tutors.

While it is unlikely that all the tutors observed were familiar with such ideas, only one of the five having completed a formal teaching qualification (Tutor

Questionnaire B), it is interesting that they should all have arrived in practice at a style of teaching that is similar in so many ways to the pedagogical practices currently widely accepted as the norm in British schools, most strikingly perhaps in its acknowledgement of the value of using a variety of techniques, resources and teaching methods. Indeed, the importance of such variety in teaching has been stressed by writers on adult learning, such as Brookfield (1986), citing, amongst others, G.E. Barton (1964), and Alan Rogers (2002). The latter also asserts the importance of not overstating the difference between child and adult learners, a stance echoed by Sutherland in his consideration of the potential benefits of 'blending' the ideas of experiential learning and constructivism (1997). In the next chapter, through a consideration of interviews with all five tutors, I shall explore their own ideas about the teaching of scriptwriting to adults and how these ideas relate to the practices observed in their classes.

Chapter 8

Scriptwriting Tutors: Reflections on Philosophy and Practice

The purpose of this chapter is, in a sense, to allow the scriptwriting tutors to speak for themselves, and thereby to discover more about the individuals involved in the teaching of scriptwriting in terms of their backgrounds, their teaching practices and the philosophies that underpin those practices. The conduct of the interviews has been described above in Chapter 2.

8.1 Background and experience of scriptwriting tutors

Brian, Charles, Diane and Ernest could be said to be typical of the eleven tutors who taught scriptwriting in Liverpool in the period from 2000/2001 - 2002/3, if only insofar as their backgrounds in terms of qualifications, training and experience differed greatly from each other (see Chapter 6.3). Ernest, the only one to hold a full-time University post, differed from the other three in not holding a degree or teaching certificate of any kind; Charles had a Certificate in Education in Youth and Community Work; whilst Brian would seem to have had the highest and most appropriate qualifications, holding an MA in Playwriting, a City and Guilds qualification in adult teaching and a PGCE. Diane also had an MA in writing, but no formal teaching qualifications (Tutor Questionnaires, Interviews 2003). As for teaching experience, both Ernest and Charles had taught adults for over twenty years, although Ernest at 65 was nearly twenty years older than Charles. Ernest's experience was entirely of teaching writing to adults, whereas Charles had only been involved with the subject for the last eight years. Brian, aged 40, had only three years' experience of teaching adults, and 50-year-old Diane had just completed her first year's teaching. All four considered themselves to be professional writers (Tutor

Questionnaires B, C, D, E). Given this range of age and experience, it is possible to see in their own stories of how they became scriptwriting tutors a reflection of the development of the subject from the 1970s to 2000 (see Chapters 3 to 5).

Ernest describes 'falling into' the teaching of scriptwriting, in a way that may be familiar to many adult teachers who have not consciously embarked on a teaching career:

> My first teaching took place in Childwall Hall College/ when the teacher never turned up/ and the principal came in ... and ... asked if there was anyone who would like to ... stand up and talk about creative writing/ and I just did it without even thinking. (Interview 2003)

The situation here described might seem astonishingly informal, even casual, and perhaps romanticised by the teller; but Ernest is describing a writers' workshop taking place in the early 1980s within the context of an access course at a college of further education. Both access courses and writers' workshops were comparatively new concepts at the time. Also, the Childwall course was, according to Ernest, modelled closely on 'Second Chance to Learn', one of the two lasting results of the Community Development Plan of the early 1970s, the other being the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop (see Chapter 3). Both these initiatives were characterised by an emphasis on informality and accessibility, and an impetus to democratise adult learning. Ernest had experienced both the Scotland Road Workshop and University classes run by its founder, David Evans, and it is from him that he derived his model for teaching writing:

> I used David Evans because I was so impressed by him on that first course I went on ... and I used him as a model/ in fact I still do ... I was that impressed by him/ and the other thing was that I went on quite a few creative writing courses/ and I wasn't very impressed by the people that were teaching them/ and I just came to the conclusion that I could do better. (Interview 2003)

Ernest's ideas about teaching writing, therefore, clearly derive from his own experience, both positive and negative, as a student on early courses. He appears to

have felt quite secure in his subject knowledge, as well as in his ability to communicate that knowledge and run a class or workshop:

> I held them for two hours ... and after ten minutes or so they just treated me as a tutor/ so I got confidence from that ... and I got a phone call asking me if I could prepare something for next week as well /and I did that and two members of the full-time staff at the college sat in/ and at the end of it I was offered a job. (Ibid.)

He was also apparently confident of being able to learn how to teach and to develop his own approach to the job, stating that 'whatever [he does, he tries] to do it as professionally as possible' (Ibid.). The circumstances of the time, with a burgeoning of writing classes in Liverpool, meant that one job led to another; and during the next few years Ernest 'very quickly/ got other part-time tutoring jobs', working for a variety of agencies, including other local colleges of further education and the probation service, as well as the University. There appears to have been no desire on his part, nor pressure from his employers, for him to undertake any kind of training: he learned 'on the job', drawing on his own experience and the example of other tutors (Ibid.).

Diane, interviewed after her first year's teaching, also says she learned 'as [she] went along', having no formal teaching qualifications. She might be seen as being in a similar position to that of Ernest, who recruited her, when he first started teaching. She had been a student on two University of Liverpool writing courses, as well as having completed the JMU MA in writing. While a student on Charles's course, she won a writing competition run by the BBC, which resulted in regular commissions. Her considerable early success would indicate that her reasons for

teaching writing are not primarily financial, but related to her 'passionate' belief in adult education (Interview 2003).[1]

Charles also, by his own account, started teaching writing 'by accident' (Interview 2003). Having started teacher training, he moved into youth and community work in the North East of England in the late 1980s, doing 'lots of training'. Charles's teaching and writing careers developed side by side out of his youth work:

> I was raising some money for a youth project ... someone said would I write them a show/ I said 'no'/ I was far too busy to write a show/ they said 'we'll pay you a thousand pounds'/ so I wrote the show. (Ibid.)

Charles's account of the artistic environment in which his development as a writer occurred recalls the kind of lively artistic atmosphere from which the Liverpool writers' workshops emerged in the 1970s, with public money being made available to the arts, in particular theatre writing:

> Up there in the North East there's lots of youth theatres/ it's massive ... it was like a way in/ well supported by - all the councils in the North East - I got the proper rate ... it wasn't like/ 'here's a little bit of money/ go and write us something' ... it was a different ethos/ I mean Northern Arts gave money to writers - they gave it to Northern Playwrights/ and we actually had to decide/ pretty much/ where that money went. (Ibid.)

A further parallel with the situation in Liverpool at the time Evans and Morrison set up the Playwrights' Workshop and the 'Gang of Four' ran the Liverpool Playhouse (see Chapter 3) lies in the influence enjoyed by established playwrights. In the case of the North East, this was done via Northern Playwrights, an agency set up specifically to encourage and develop new writers in their region:

> It was started by C.P. Taylor [and] Alan Plater/ and they were strong writers [who] took control/ said 'we'll take the money/ we'll decide where it goes' ... so it came across as innovative/ different/ so there was lots of community theatre up there/ and that was like the next step/ then/ eventually/ professional/

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[1] At the time of the interview Diane was working for the BBC as a scriptwriter on *Doctors* and *Casualty*.

again you get money from Northern Playwrights to do professional stuff. (Interview 2003)

Charles also acknowledges the importance to him of attending courses with the Arvon Foundation, although their main value to him seems to have been in the opportunities provided for 'networking' (Ibid.).[2]

Charles, unlike Ernest, was a professional writer before he started teaching writing, and brought to his teaching two strands of experience: writing professionally and training adults in the community. These two aspects of his experience had already come together through his work as a writer for youth and community groups. The difference between Charles's experience as a professional 'trainer' and Ernest and Diane's previous experience as 'consumers' of adult education and participants in writers' workshops may be significant in shaping their differing attitudes to the role of the scriptwriting tutor.

Brian, younger than the others, made more of a conscious decision to go into teaching, but still saw it as a way of supplementing his income from his fledgling writing career. A graduate of David Edgar's Birmingham MA in Playwriting (see Chapter 5.3), he seems from the beginning to have been happy with the idea of teaching writing, taking courses in the teaching of adults at the suggestion of his wife:

> I signed up for the 7307 course ... and it just opened my eyes to the science of teaching ... the following year I did the PGCE post-sixteen at John Moores University/ which wasn't as beneficial to me as a teacher/ because it was more about ... management/ organisation/ structure ... in terms of teaching practice it wasn't that valuable ... the 7307 is the one that has really stood me in good stead. (Interview 2003)

Brian's enthusiasm for teaching and what he calls the 'science' of teaching comes across vividly in the interview; and he is explicit about the way in which the teaching on the courses he attended influenced his own practice, citing educationalists such as

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[2] The Arvon Foundation had been running residential writing courses since 1968, when it was founded by poets John Moat and John Fairfax (Feinstein 2001, 189).

David Kolb, the leading promoter of experiential theories of adult learning (Kolb and Fry 1975, Kolb 1984), as well as the tutors on his course and fellow scriptwriting tutor Andrew, on whose course he did his teaching practice:

> It was a real eye opener/ saying that each lesson that you teach has to go through a learning cycle/ there are four stages on that cycle ... this part of the lesson would be about that aspect of the learning cycle/ [Kolb] reckoned that until you've gone through a cycle the learning isn't really complete ... you design a course ... and you design a lesson like that. (Interview 2003)

Ernest also learned about the importance of planning, albeit while already employed as a teacher, and explains it in rather more vague terms and without reference to educational theories:

> One of the things I learned very very quickly was how important it was to prepare beforehand ... preparation I found was really really important and brought structure to the whole thing ... not necessarily structure for the two hour or the one hour ... session you were going to do/ but also in the context of the whole. (Interview 2003)

Brian, unlike his colleagues, is clear about making connections between theories of learning (something never referred to by either Charles or Ernest) and his own experience of teaching:

> People learn in one of three ways/ one particular way is of paramount importance to a particular learner/ it's either aurally/ visually or kinetically ... what I've found is that most people learn visually/ it's essential to make the lesson as visual as possible. (Interview 2003)

Brian would appear to have started his teaching career better equipped than the others and with firmer ideas of what he intended to teach, how he would teach and why he was doing it. Although not a 'career teacher', he seems to have made more conscious decisions about his career path and approached it in a more systematic way, taking advantage of training that was available to him. In part at least, this reflects changes in the status of creative writing teaching during the twenty years since Ernest first 'fell into' it. There was only one specialised scriptwriting course in Liverpool when Ernest started teaching (see Chapter 5). The pioneering postgraduate course at

Birmingham University, which Brian would later take, did not exist. Ernest and Charles both took advantage of writing courses available to them, but regarded the teaching of writing as something to be learned on the job, although Charles brought with him his formal training in youth and community work. It is apparent from their interviews, supported by the evidence of lesson observations described in the last chapter, that the differing backgrounds of these tutors have had a significant impact on their ideas about the role of the scriptwriting tutor.

8.2 The role of the scriptwriting tutor in practice

When asked to describe their role as scriptwriting tutors, all the tutors interviewed attempt initially to define that role in terms of the relationship between the tutor and students. Diane defines her role as being 'to teach skills mostly ... to stimulate people and give them creative interest' (Interview 2003), which simple though it may appear, can, nevertheless, be seen as succinctly defining the dual role of expert and facilitator.

Ernest sees his role in terms of building a relationship with the students:

I see it hugely as being one of support - because I'm aware that as tutors we don't know anything about the students who come on that course ... so you've got to find out ... who they are and what their needs are ... but you've also got to structure yourself ... and although you've got to support them all/ you've got to move them along to some kind of common ground / I've found/ very early on that if you go at the pace of the slowest/ you're going to lose the rest/ they become disinterested [sic]/ and disruptive ... what you've got to do is either give some extra attention to those very slow people/ or people who take a little time before they clock on/ ... and be a bit more supportive to them ... and usually ... you find things calming down / about the fourth meeting ... and we can all move on together/ but still everyone has different needs in that group/ some need a pat on the back and some need a kick up the arse/ you learn very quickly the different requirements of people. (Interview 2003)

Three key words emerge from this account: 'support', 'structure' and 'different'. In stressing his responsibility to support the students, Ernest would seem to see himself firstly as a facilitator/mentor figure, very much in the tradition of the writers'

workshops of his early career. However, he quickly mentions the need for structure, saying that he structures 'himself', thereby acknowledging a need for planning and structure, which in turn implies a level of input from the tutor more appropriate to the more formal and institutionalised courses on which he now teaches than the informal, somewhat ad-hoc situation of before. His emphasis on differentiation is also significant, displaying an awareness of the differing needs and requirements of adult students (see Chapter 9 for a consideration of students' expectations of courses).

Charles's immediate reaction to the explicit question about the tutor's role is more tutor and subject-centred:

> I suppose for me/ it is about/ setting ... ground rules - and making sure they understand them - and once they've clicked with them you see a change in their writing ... till they accept that there are rules you're never going to see a change - they might write nice dialogue or/ you know/ a scene might be particularly good/ but they're not going to get a - holistic piece. (Interview 2003)

It would seem that his approach is focussed on what he wants his students to learn, rather than what they want to learn. Given that tutors are required to plan schemes of work before meeting their students and that a student starting a new course might not know what is involved in learning about scriptwriting, this distinction may in practice be of little importance. Perhaps a more significant difference between his approach and Ernest's is that Charles sees the students as scriptwriting students, rather than as adult learners. In other words, he is concerned only with teaching people how to become better writers; whereas Ernest, in the liberal tradition of adult education, is also interested in their personal development and, therefore, is more concerned about how they react to the experience of adult classes, taking a 'pastoral' interest in their well-being.

In order to elicit a clearer idea of Charles's perception of his role, he was asked about his preferred terminology. His initial response, 'I don't care/ you know/ I'm just

the bloke at the front', develops into a consideration of the titles 'teacher' and 'lecturer':
'I am teaching/ so why get upset about being called a teacher? I **do** lecture them ...
especially early on'. However, the term with which he appears most comfortable is
'facilitator', because he 'put[s] them in a position where they can learn' and 'set[s] the
environment' (Ibid.). This is interesting in view of his previous statements on the role
of the tutor, which imply a degree of control and a teacher-centred style which would
not usually be associated with adult educators who favour this term. He says that he
first came across the idea of the 'facilitator' when working as a youth and community
worker:

> We grabbed it first/ facilitate is now being used by business/ you know a lot of
> community development training/ it's now been transposed into business/ into
> teaching ... we were the pioneers with/ facilitate ... community development
> workers say ... you can take a horse to water but you can't make it drink/
> which is what I would say as well. (Ibid.)

So the word 'facilitator' for Charles would seem in practice to involve a sort of 'take it
or leave it' attitude to his students. While he is very clear about what it is he wants
them to learn and how he should go about teaching it, he is not overly concerned
about whether or not they choose to drink from his waters.

Brian, as might be expected in view of his background and training, takes a
more active view of his role, and his account is a little more considered and articulate
than those of his more experienced colleagues:

> The way I was trained/ and it accords with my own philosophy anyway ...
> places the students so they're at the centre ... they're as **active** as possible ...
> getting them to learn through experience/ to make it as experiential as
> possible/ to get them to learn through play/ through discovery ... and the other
> thing I am adamant about/ in my own sort of discipline as a teacher/ is to be as
> well-prepared as possible ... the lesson is meticulously planned ... with a clear
> lesson objective. (Interview 2003)

Brian's ideas about learning through play and discovery seem to make the students
and their experience the focus of his teaching, with the tutor almost as a neutral

bystander; but his references to planning and preparation show that such experiences are not only facilitated but also carefully structured by the teacher, providing secure 'scaffolding' for the learner, as was witnessed in both observed classes (B1, B2). He also demonstrates, like Ernest, a desire to take into account the different needs of students - although, typically, he expresses the process by which he takes their needs and expectations into account more explicitly and with reference to established practice:

> I did a year's teaching in the WEA and they've got quite a good approach to adult education ... where the aims and objectives of each course and lesson are negotiated with the students ... I always try to do that. (Interview 2003)

The idea of 'negotiation' with students might seem idealistic and a little impracticable when applied to the kind of course under consideration, where the tutor normally has no previous knowledge of the students' interests and prior experience,[3] or indeed of their identities, yet is expected to plan and structure a twenty-week course in advance. Brian, however, gives an example of how this idea can work in practice by referring to the additional ten weeks (or 'bolt-on') which he taught in 2002/3:

> I was struggling for topics to cover ... for the further ten weeks/ so I put it to the students ... and it was one of the students who came up with the task/ when they've finished the script/ when they send the script out into the big world/ TV and so forth/ they will have to send out synopses/ of five other episodes ... and that was how we decided what to do in the other ten weeks. (Interview 2003)

This practical example is helpful in establishing how Brian functions as a tutor and how theoretical ideas of facilitating learning and being in partnership with adult students can work in reality.

Although similar ideas underpin the approaches of Ernest and Charles, their practice betrays very different interpretations of the idea of the tutor as facilitator. The

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[3] There are, of course, individual students who progress from one course to another or even return to the same course, as Ernest acknowledges: 'They start turning up again don't they? The same students' (Interview 2003).

relationship between the roles of facilitator and expert, explored in Chapter 7, becomes clearer in their responses to questions about what they teach and how they teach. All four tutors see their roles changing as a course progresses, moving from a more active role in the first ten weeks, in which the explicit sharing of their knowledge and expertise is to the fore, to a 'workshop' situation in the second half of the course.[4] In Ernest's case, the first part is 'mostly [him] talking and/ encouraging them to talk' (Interview 2003). His preferred style, then, is clearly the 'lecture-discussion', in which his knowledge is transmitted to the students. As for what he talks about, he has this to say:

> I teach the importance of story ... how that story can be - used in how to test that story/ how to develop it ... that what we're dealing with is a - a visual medium that needs to be told in pictures/ and if I can sum it all up ... I break it all down/ into all its different elements ... the most important thing is story first of all/ and where do stories come from ... and about how important it is to write about something you know - they've experienced themselves or they're aware of that might have happened to someone else ... and how to **test** that ... and then/ I talk about **inhabiting** that story - with the characters and developing how to create three dimensional characters ... to give them a background/ to give them a biography ... and then I talk about/ they've got to talk/ to one another as well/ so we go into dialogue ... the different elements that there are in writing ... I give them a writing assignment based on what we've talked about. (Interview 2003)

Here, then, is a summary of the content of the first part of a scriptwriting course. The three basic elements of writing that Ernest believes he has to 'teach' the students before they can move on to writing a script which can be presented to the class and, ultimately, submitted for assessment are story structure, character and dialogue. Diane follows a similar pattern in her first ten meetings, albeit putting greater emphasis on 'structure and timing' (Interview 2003). Neither of them starts by giving students the task of writing a script and trusting that thereby they will learn these things for themselves. Rather, they take on the role of the expert and actively impart knowledge

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[4] This was also the practice of Andrew and Diane (Tutor Questionnaires A and C, Observations AB 1, AB2, D1 and D2) and has, indeed, been my own practice when teaching scriptwriting classes.

to their students. Charles also says that he 'break[s] it down into three main areas' (Interview 2003); although he appears to emphasise story structure almost to the exclusion of everything else, seeing the ability to structure a script as the basic requirement of scriptwriting, and also holding very firm ideas about what is meant by story structure:

> The three-act structure/ you need that to move on/ then I start using techniques that help people use the three-act structure/ things like using the card system … when you've got cards/ and each card represents a scene / it suddenly becomes so much easier to just move that scene over there/ and that scene shouldn't be there/ throw that scene away … it's like - a washing line - you know where the pegs are going to go/ you know where the stirrup in the middle goes … and the third one needs to be - I suppose the higher form - of actually finding a style - creating your own style/ within … that structure. (Ibid.)

Charles also makes it clear that the knowledge he is imparting about story structure comes not only from his own experience and observation but from study, citing Aristotle (in Dorsch 1965) ('It all keeps coming back to what Aristotle said [about] the three-act structure'), as well as writers such as Field (1994) and Vogler (1996), whose work is based on the analysis of film screenplays in relation to mythology:

> It doesn't matter whether you're in the Middle East/ aboriginal/ even South American Indian/ the stories and mythologies/ they follow the same pattern … so those two books/ really everything else is a variation on them. (Interview 2003)

The influence of the ideas of such 'screenwriting gurus' was observed not only in Charles's two classes but also in one of Ernest's, which focussed on the idea of the 'heroic journey' (C1, C3, E1, see Chapter 7).

Brian, in describing what typically happens in the first ten weeks of the course he runs jointly with Andrew, shows an awareness of the reasons that he needs to spend the first ten weeks sharing his expertise:

> The first ten weeks are all taught sessions - what we teach them are the fundamentals of writing for stage/ and usually in the first class we ask people to list their favourite plays/ favourite dramatists/ and the last play they saw/

and often you find people that - haven't been to the theatre - ... so we go and see a play and reflect on it/ have a class discussion ... the theatre is a visual medium/ and actually when they write for the theatre what they see on the stage/ this misconception that all they see is lines of dialogue ... one of the best ways ... is actually to be visual and physical and see what's going on ... if you're going to write for stage/ imagine the audience/ or a member of the audience who's ... deaf/ could they still follow the action by what they see? ... so there's that first and foremost - negotiations/ conflict ... for the first ten weeks/ we do entirely focus on universals. (Interview 2003)

Brian and Andrew then, specialising in writing for stage, focus on what they consider to be the particular and unique demands of the medium. Like Charles, their expertise in this field comes not only from their own experience of writing for the stage (Tutor Questionnaires A, B), but also from reading (mainly American) writers on the subject.[5] Brian's second course, which he was asked to teach because of the absence of Norman (see Chapter 6.3), was in an area of scriptwriting with which he was less familiar:

> I said 'well/ do you have [Norman]'s scheme of work? ... but there wasn't any ... I had a month/ so in that month I just researched situation comedy/ and designed a course/ from scratch/ and for the last two years it seems to have worked okay. ... it does seem to conform to very strict conventions ... so *Bilko* for example/ and *Blackadder*/ you can see the same conventions at work ... the same kind of characters keep cropping up in sitcoms. (Interview 2003)

In fact, the first of Brian's two observed classes centred on the idea of stock characters. With no experience of writing scripts in the genre, Brian sought to compensate for what he perceived to be a lack of expertise by research, although he found that there was little relevant writing on the subject: 'two or three that were any use ... both Americans ' (Smith 1999, Wolff 1988). I have already described how Brian used a variety of methods, some of them developed in his joint classes with Andrew, to put into practice his newly-acquired knowledge about the genre (Chapter 6).

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[5] Brian, in an e-mail sent shortly after the interview, kindly provided a list of the text books he used on this course: Egri (1946), Hatcher (1996), McKee (1997), Packard (1987), Sweet (1993) and Wright (1997).

All four tutors regard the first half of their courses as a preparation for the second part, which is devoted mainly to the 'workshopping' of students' work. In the course of this process they see their roles changing and to some degree diminishing; although I would suggest that tutors tend to underestimate their own input into these sessions (Observations AB2, B2, C2, E1). Ernest's explanation of his changing role recalls Barbara Shane's description of her role in the later Scotland Road workshops (see Chapter 3.2):

> I'm part of the group as much as what they are ... I'm here as a mentor/ as
> well as tutor/ and I just happen to **have** - information they don't have through
> experience - and that's my role ... to offer and suggest to them how
> they may improve their work ... towards the end I'm part of the group/ I'm
> still **chairing** the group. (Interview 2002)

All the workshop sessions observed took place in friendly and relaxed atmospheres, and certainly the relationships between tutors and students appeared to be more equal than in earlier, more consciously 'taught' sessions - although tutors still tended to dominate the sessions, offering far more in the way of comment and criticism than the students. So, while it may seem disingenuous for a tutor to refer to himself as simply 'chairing' a group, the continuing use of such terminology does suggest a philosophy of teaching and learning firmly rooted in the ideas and practices of the early workshop leaders. Such practices could be seen as ideal examples of experiential learning, with learners' own experiences being drawn on and developed by the tutors. Indeed, Sutherland uses the example of a student's 'emotionally charged' experiences being used as a basis for creative writing as an example of experientialism as opposed to constructivism (1997, 90).

Both experiential and constructivist theories tend to assume the superiority of this type of teaching and learning experience to the kind of teaching practised by the tutors earlier in their courses. In those sessions, in order to help their students 'shape'

their own experiences - in a manner not of the students' own choosing, but dependent on the accepted practices of the scriptwriter as conveyed to the students by their tutors - the tutors introduced ideas and concepts that may have been completely foreign to the experience of many students. Here, the lecture-discussion was the dominant method, certainly when such matters as structure and presentation were being covered (C1, D1, E1). Students were, however, able to take a more active role in sessions about character development (AB1) and, indeed, in one session about story; although in that case the 39-minute group exercise was immediately preceded by twenty minutes of lecture-discussion (B1).

One of the most striking themes to emerge from the interviews is the tutors' awareness of their own varied and changing roles. Such awareness could be seen as a warning to the researcher against seeing teachers as 'types' and labelling them accordingly. Prosser and Trigwell's notion of 'six conceptions of teaching' (1999, 145-147), for example, although useful in focussing the researcher on a range of possible approaches to teaching, implies that an individual's approach to teaching is usually both consistent and restricted. My interviews and observations suggest that none of the five tutors studied would fit easily into any one of their categories. Their approaches to teaching are, in practice, far more eclectic, using a variety of both teacher-focussed and student-focussed styles and methods as and when they deem them appropriate.

8.3 Writers who teach or teachers who write?

I have already mentioned the fact that all the scriptwriting tutors who completed questionnaires consider themselves to be professional writers and have discussed the importance of this status (see Chapter 6). During the interviews, tutors were again

asked whether they thought of themselves as writers or teachers and invited to explore the relationship between the two jobs.[6] Ernest, the only tutor to be employed full-time by the University, seems to give greater priority, or at least more time, to his teaching role:

> There are times when I think of myself as a writer/ but it's usually when I'm working on something/ when I'm not working on something I'm a teacher of writing. (Interview 2003)

Brian's response, although superficially similar, indicates different priorities:

> When I'm teaching I'm a teacher/ when I'm writing I'm a writer/ but if you had to split it between the two/ I'm a writer first and a teacher second. (Interview 2003)

Unsurprisingly, Diane, by far the busiest of the four in terms of writing commitments, has no hesitation in describing herself as a writer first, despite being 'very committed to adult education' (Interview 2003).

Charles's answer, seemingly frivolous, betrays a feeling that, for him, the balance between the two is not as it should be, stating that he is 'a writer who's doing more teaching than he should' (Interview 2003). His explanation of how teaching came to dominate his working life is fairly typical of how many writers 'drift into' teaching: 'I suddenly became very popular in schools/ because screenwriting and the breaking down of story/ is a big interest in schools at the minute ... most teachers don't know about writing' (Ibid.). Here Charles is referring to 'one-off' workshops and classes in schools, some organised by agencies such as the Windows Project, others the result of 'word of mouth' recommendations. Such engagements, mostly funded by government initiatives like Excellence in Cities and literacy summer schools, have

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[6] The interdependence of teaching and professional creative work is not unique to writing tutors, yet there appears to have been very little consideration given to it by writers on adult education. An exception is Woolfitt (1984) who remarks that 'freelance artists and craftspeople can get a minimal financial security without giving up their freedom or feeling that they have "given into teaching". Equally important to them is the break from isolation and ivory tower of creativity, and the contact with students enables them to expand and focus new ideas' (44). Interestingly, she ends her article with the question, 'Has the part-time tutor become an anachronism?' (46).

become a valuable source of occasional income for many writers. That they, as well as adult education courses, provide something of a lifeline for writers who are not being commissioned is demonstrated by Charles's explanation of how for him teaching started to take over from writing:

> I got badly burned in the industry ... I was just lucky ... I got asked to do the John Moores [course]/ they asked me to go in [and said] 'would you write it?' ... you couldn't have a better course than one where you're in absolute control/ so I did/ then/ as I said/ I've become very popular in schools - you know you get paid. (Ibid.)

Being 'badly burned' for Charles meant being let down by a production company for whom he had written a screenplay and losing regular work on a television soap opera. The seriousness to a self-employed writer of losing all one's work should not be underestimated,[7] and Charles speaks of the devastating effect it had on him personally:

> When I fell I **really** fell/ it actually cost me my marriage ... it actually makes you not want to write because you don't want to be hurt again ... my ex-wife and I are really close/ we were really close at the time/ but she was someone who just couldn't handle/ somebody who was depressed - her type couldn't/ she tried/ God bless her she tried/ you know/ but it didn't work/ she did the right thing/ she left because that was the start of my ... depression/ I thought depression was something other people got/ I thought it was - feeling miserable all the time/ when in fact you feel nothing ... and it's basically only this year - no last year/ that I started taking writing seriously/ but interestingly enough/ I'm writing a novel ... I just wanted to try something else/ to ease my way back into writing. (Ibid.)

This experience, it seems, not only made Charles start teaching but also profoundly influenced his ideas about what should be taught on a writing course:

> I realised just how hard it was/ because when you're riding high/ it's a doddle/ people are optioning this/ optioning that/ it's fantastic/ you know everything's good/ then - so you don't realise there's a big downside to it/ so when I wrote the MA I was very much concerned that would be part of/ this writing thing/ because I didn't want to encourage people to be a writer and not see the downside/ and I think ... writers are ... prone to depression/ because we're

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[7] I myself started teaching writing under similar circumstances, as did scriptwriting tutor Helen (Tutor Questionnaire H).

basically putting ourselves on the line/ the thing about writing/ is it's all in here isn't it? (Ibid.)

In talking about the negative side of professional writing, Charles might risk alienating some of his students (see Chapter 9). However, he, more than the other tutors under consideration here, sees his classes as training for what he calls 'the industry', and it is important to him that anyone seriously intending to go into that industry should do so with eyes fully open to its dangers as well as its possibilities: 'Letting people perceive before they get to that stage/ it ain't all going to be lovely for them'. In fact, he has gone as far as inviting counsellors into his MA course to talk about dealing with rejection.

Charles also sees the importance of the interface between his writing and his teaching. He lets his students influence his writing in a very practical way:

> Every time the first script that anyone ever reads on my course is my script ... I tell them to rip it to bits/ the first time they're all going 'wow wow wow' ... the second part/ I think it was last year/ I gave them a script which was optioned by a film company ... and they ripped it to bits/ it wasn't 'let's get [Charles]'/ it was 'why are you doing that?' (Ibid.)

At the same time he has no doubt about the value of his experience as a writer to his teaching: 'Realising I had something to say/ because what I was saying was correct/ it's of value ... I am a writer but I'm a writer who teaches' (Ibid.). Brian concurs with the idea that a scriptwriting tutor needs to have experience of professional writing:

> I don't think that would be remotely possible/ I think the students - almost demand that you be a writer ... I don't think the MA at Birmingham would have nearly the impact as it has had in terms of creative writing courses/ the first one exclusively in playwriting/ now/ if it hadn't been taught by David Edgar ... students do expect if you teach it/ you are a writer/ you have experience. (Interview 2003)

Also like Charles, Brian sees benefits accruing to his own writing from teaching others scriptwriting:

> I was quite surprised by - how much the teaching informed my own writing/ improved my own writing/ because when I got into teaching/ I'll be honest/

because it was just a way of making some extra money/ so few of us writers actually earn a living from it/ you have to do something else/ and once I got over my initial nervousness about teaching/ I started to **enjoy** it more ... I could see definite benefits to my own writing/ through research I'd done/ from interacting with the students ... that strengthened my own writing/ that was a kind of bonus I hadn't been expecting. (Ibid.)

Here Brian highlights two distinct ways in which teaching helps his writing: his increased knowledge about writing acquired through studying writing in preparation for teaching, and the experience of being part of a group of would-be writers where scriptwriting is discussed and analysed. Diane, who also believes it is essential for a scriptwriting tutor to have professional experience, cites the value of thinking about and analysing the mechanics of writing in order to be able to share her expertise with her students (Interview 2003). Ernest, also, is aware of what he, as a writer, gains from his students:

We learn as we go along ... as you teach each year/ and as each year goes/ at the end of each year/ we've **learned** a bit more/ not only about writing but about ourselves - and we've got that from the students/ so it's two-way traffic. (Interview 2003)

Characteristically, Ernest speaks in terms of personal development as well as learning about writing. This is typical of his approach, just as Charles's emphasis on learning how to be a professional is typical of his, and Brian's reference to research typifies his rather more academic approach.

Like Charles, Ernest sees difficulties in finding a balance between writing and teaching:

Not only because you haven't got much time/ but it also stops you writing - a little bit of premature editing comes in as well ... because you're listening to so much stuff/ you're reading so much stuff/ and you're giving feedback with so much stuff ... it's difficult ... to get focussed again/ on something original of your own ... you lose something/ you're giving up something/ to teach writing/ something of yourself as a writer. (Ibid.)

However, both Ernest and Brian stress the importance of writers giving their time to beginners, Ernest referring to the generosity of many successful writers:

> The other thing that I've become aware of over the years is … how much **time** professional writers - have **given** to students/ or to beginner writers/ not necessarily … in the pub or anything like that/ but in a controlled situation like a classroom/ people will come in … and they're there/ giving up their time … they don't do it for money/ that's for sure. (Ibid.)

Diane provides an excellent example of a newly successful writer doing just that. Many other writers, usually more successful, at least financially, than those who commit themselves to running courses for adults, have, as guest speakers, been an important part of writing workshops and classes since the early days of the Playwrights' Workshop (see Chapter 4). They have not only helped students through their advice but also provided a sense that success as a writer can be an attainable goal. Brian sums up his feelings about the role of writers in teaching scriptwriting thus:

> I don't think if I was ever successful/ as a writer … I would ever give up teaching/ as such/ I would always try to work some teaching in because I enjoy it so much and it does benefit me and keep me on my toes/ and without sounding sort of sentimental/ it's good to give something back/ because I've benefited from the fact that other writers have been generous enough to share craft and knowledge and experience/ and it's like an unwritten rule of the writing community that you do/ if you've got something to pass on/ pass it on. (Interview 2003)

8.4 Why teach scriptwriting?

In Chapter 1 of this thesis I suggested that the question, 'Can writing be taught?' has become largely irrelevant over the last thirty years. One would certainly not expect scriptwriting tutors to answer such a question in the negative. Some tutors and students feel, however, that doubts persist in the academic world about whether scriptwriting *should* be taught. I therefore asked the tutors to explain in what ways they think their subject can be taught and what they think is the purpose of teaching it.

As one might expect from the rest of their interviews, although they are in broad agreement, clear differences in emphasis emerged among the tutors, reflecting differences in their underlying philosophies. Diane feels that there is 'not any sense in which it can't be taught' (Interview 2003). Brian is clear about what he feels can be taught, although less definite about what cannot be taught:

> I don't think you can teach what is in each individual writer/ what makes that writer unique/ I think it is harder to teach - someone to find the muse or the spark ... but you can teach ... dramaturgy/ theories of drama/ conventions of drama/ you can quote countless examples ... dramatic irony for example ... so you can teach those sort of tricks/ techniques of writing/ that spark of individuality/ it's more difficult to teach/ in some respects it might be the one thing that is impossible to teach. (Interview 2003)

What I feel is interesting here is that Brian does not altogether rule out the idea that it might be possible to teach people to think creatively and perhaps find the 'muse'. Certainly, his use of games and exercises to stimulate creativity suggests that he is trying to bring our whatever 'talent' is inherent in his students. Charles, using somewhat different terms, is also clear about what he can teach:

> To me you've got to give the basics ... writing does follow a certain pattern/ everybody thinks they can write from the ether/ and inspiration and that will come down/ they'll write something fantastic ... well/ unless you're a genius ... that ain't going to happen - and those geniuses have got an understanding of the three-act structure/ they might not know it - most other writers aren't like that - they struggle ... now I'm always talking about structure ... once they understand that/ it doesn't become this thing that stops you creating/ it's a thing that allows you to create/ so **that's** what you teach/ you can't teach somebody to be brilliant. (Interview 2003)

Like Brian's account, this is surely describing what happens in most, if not all subjects. Perhaps Charles is here identifying one of the reasons for resistance to the idea of teaching writing: the romantic idea that he sees in would-be writers of writing coming 'from the ether'. One might equally imagine the same to be true of musicians or visual artists, yet few who are successful in those areas would deny that their art is,

in fact, the result of years of study and hard work. Ernest sees the question in rather different terms, discussing it first in terms of the demands of assessment:

> I think it's very very difficult for an academic institution to - accept creative writing/ whether it be scriptwriting/ short stories/ poetry/ or journalism/ the same as they do every other academic subject - and they're right/ because I don't believe it can be taught the same as - you know/ where people are given information and in an exam they have to regurgitate that information that they've been given - to be able to pass the exam - it is a form of exam ... to be accredited/ they have to produce a volume of work/ which is assessed by a tutor/ ... but what we're **not** doing is marking how good that work is/ that is not our role to say/ this is a good play/ this is - a bad short story/ but we can say that the elements we've taught ... haven't been applied. (Interview 2003)

It would seem from the above that Ernest is concerned primarily about the place of the subject in academic institutions and that he still perceives resistance to it. This may seem surprising, but it should be borne in mind that his experience is of one, fairly traditional university, whereas the growth in the subject, as far as degree courses are concerned, has mainly been in the newer universities. In Liverpool, up to and including the academic year 2002/3, creative arts was the only adult education programme not attached to an academic department of the University (University of Liverpool Centre for Continuing Education 1993-2003).[8] Many people might think that his analysis of the difference between teaching writing and other subjects is flawed because of a misunderstanding, or at least an over-simplification, of teaching and learning in other subjects. Nevertheless, he is keen that writing should be accepted as an academic subject:

> In terms of - the acceptance of creative writing ... I think lots of people see it and also teach it as a vocational course - it's only/ when it's accredited like our courses are/ so therefore structures/ and has been passed and validated by academic committee in the university/ that it's validated in the same way as **any other course** in the university/ so therefore should be viewed in the same way ... creative writing is still looked down upon as a poor relation at the university/ but funnily enough ... the English department have taken over

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[8] With effect from 2003/4 the programme was taken over by the English Department (correspondence from Dr. R. Wright 29.09.03.).

creative writing ... and it's only been accepted because of the quality of the teaching - by the creative writing tutors. (Interview 2003)

This tutor, with more responsibility for courses than the others, clearly also has more knowledge of and interest in the effect of university politics on the subject than they have. Whether his reading of the situation is correct is arguable. However, it does reflect the value that he places on his subject's acceptance as an academic subject. His main concern being the survival of writing courses for adults, he sees their future as dependent on their status within the institution. As we have seen in previous chapters, not only the existence of adult courses, but also their design and content almost always depend on the support of educational institutions and their ability to provide funding, which usually originates from national government and is hedged about with conditions according to the policy of the day.

Ernest's reference to 'people who teach it as a vocational course' is rather curious, as it carries an implication that vocational courses are somehow inferior to 'academic' courses, perhaps because of the common use of the term in adult and continuing education to describe work-related courses at colleges of further education, leading to qualifications which are below degree level and, therefore, have lower status than courses that might lead to a degree. Yet, surely, courses in medicine, dentistry and law are 'vocational', as indeed are many courses in drama, art and music, insofar as they involve training for professions.

Ernest himself, though often seemingly less concerned than the other tutors with seeing the teaching of scriptwriting in terms of training for a career in writing, nevertheless, when asked how his philosophy and practice have changed during his career, speaks much more in terms of the profession of writing:

> The industry itself has moved on and moves on every year/ and you've got to stay abreast of current ... practices ... we need to let people know that when they're ... writing there's a professionalism that they need to adopt ... if you

present [your work] and **act** in a professional way ... you'll be treated as a professional. (Ibid.)

Ernest also distinguishes writing from other subjects in terms of its relationship to what the Inland Revenue would term a trade, profession or vocation:

> If you're teaching mathematics/ for instance - or history - at the end of the course/ whether it be a degree course or not - those particular students won't necessarily go off and become maths teachers or whatever else a mathematician does ... they may use it in some professional way/ they may also do something completely different - I think with writers/ they're doing it to write/ because they have to write. (Ibid.)

Admittedly, 'having to write' does not necessarily mean wanting to make a career out of writing, or even wanting to be paid for writing, but scriptwriting, as Charles remarks, by its very nature cannot be done privately for oneself; its whole purpose is to communicate with an audience and, in the case of the broadcast media, that means becoming involved in the 'industry'. While appearing to acknowledge this, Ernest also points out that students do not always sign up for scriptwriting courses with the conscious intention of becoming professional writers:

> I think to start with/ it's - just wanting to write ... and they may have some idea in the back of their head/ that eventually they'll become a professional writer/ but they don't know what that means ... a beginner writer doesn't really know what a professional writer does. (Ibid.)

Charles has rather different ideas about the place of scriptwriting in academic institutions and displays a deep ambivalence, rooted in his belief that his classes are about training students to enter a profession, towards the concept of degrees in writing:

> When I got on the MA ... I was quite harsh and - I actually scared a couple of people/ and scaring people isn't what it's about ... now I've got a different approach/ yes I'm harsh ... but I also encourage people a lot more - I saw myself as a gatekeeper / you've got to get past me to get into the industry. (Interview 2003)

In spite of this change, Charles maintains that he has a reputation for honesty and can still be quite hard on students' work:

[Students on] writing courses are looking for that/ 'aren't we all nice?'/ 'aren't we all lovely?'/ and 'aren't we all great together?'/ and that's really **great** if it's a hobby/ screenwriting isn't about hobbies. (Ibid.)

Yet he feels his attitude sits uneasily with the demands of the institutions for which he works:

For instance on the MA course/ when people first gave me a script/ I was giving people marks of 41/ 42/ and that was a shock to people/ because they're on an MA/ ... I discovered people who'd done a degree/ are just not used to getting marks of 41 and 42- no - when they did their writing degrees or whatever they get marks in the 60s ... remember higher education now is so/ so desperate to keep people on/ you know/ you've got to attract them ... they just say/ 'oh all right/ lets make sure we get three or four with distinctions' ... whereas I refuse to do that/ I assume that an MA is better than a degree/ which is/ maybe my naivety. (Ibid.)

Although he is talking here specifically about his course at JMU, such doubts could be extended to University of Liverpool courses which are accredited and could eventually lead to a degree. On the other hand, Charles seems to see his own MA course, which he is determined to run as a 'vocational' course, as having real value because of rather than in spite of its vocational stance, citing the approval of an agency of some importance in 'the industry':

I suppose I'm a law unto myself/ that I've been given ... that flexibility/ but the thing is/ that flexibility is being recognised by the British Film Institute/ it looks like we're going to get their kite mark - because they're interested in producing the next generation of writers. (Ibid.)

In view of his experience on this course, he says his approach to his University of Liverpool course has changed:

I've just realised I can't teach them everything that they need - having said that you can still get them to a stage so you work with people who go into the industry/ which is great ... and you know you've helped them/ you've given them the basics/ and if they've got a talent they'll go on/ but now I suppose the link is / they've got an MA/ if they want to go and upgrade ... I always tell them about the MA. (Ibid.)

Again, Charles is defining not only the aims of his teaching but also its success strictly in vocational terms. His attitude to students who do not wish to or are not able

to work towards becoming professional writers forms a stark contrast to Ernest's more traditional view of adult education:

> The old ladies who say/ 'ooh we haven't done that one yet/ pottery we've done that/ architecture we've done that / ooh let's do screenwriting'/ you get them/ you get people who think/ 'oh screenwriting/ I can do better than that'/ everyone thinks they can write better than what they see on the telly/ they turn up and realise they've got to work/ you know/ they're not interested/ so you get people who suck it and see ... amongst that you get a core of/ I would say about five or six on each course/ who are genuinely trying to break into the industry ... the others?/ they're entertained/ I think that's about it/ they might get an insight/ and if they learn that they're not good enough/ then that's quite good as well ... if I was doing hobbies I'd be teaching poetry ...screenwriting's pointless unless you put it on. (Ibid.)

This may seem unduly harsh, but it should be borne in mind that Charles's course was advertised in the University's prospectus as 'advanced', albeit with no entry conditions attached (University of Liverpool Centre for Continuing Education 2002). Although he does not express himself in such stark terms, Brian also works on the assumption that he is teaching people who wish to enter a profession:

> I personally always work from that basis ... it's not a talk shop ... this is a serious process of learning/ writing is a very serious business. (Interview 2003)

Diane, too, says she teaches her students 'as though they're going to be professional writers'; but also sees her course, aimed primarily at beginners, in terms of self-development and access to educational opportunities (Interview 2003).

It would appear that, while there is no doubt in the minds of the four tutors that scriptwriting can and should be taught, there are considerable differences on the question of why it is taught. Although all four see it to some extent as a vocational subject, in the sense that it provides a degree of training for those who wish to become professional scriptwriters, there is a significant difference in the importance attached to its vocational aspect. Charles appears to take a hard line in his emphasis on 'the industry', seemingly uninterested in any other motivations his students might have for

studying the subject. Brian, although his rhetoric is not as extreme, takes a similar view; whereas Diane and Ernest embrace a more traditional, liberal view of adult education, believing that their courses can be of value in terms not only of training for a profession, but also of self-development and access to further educational opportunities. All four see themselves as responding to the needs of their students. It is my intention in the next chapter to ascertain who these students are, what their reasons for studying scriptwriting are and what they see as the purpose of their study.

Chapter 9

Scriptwriting Students in Liverpool 2002/3

This chapter aims to construct as complete a picture as possible of adults who chose to study scriptwriting in the year 2002/3 in Liverpool, based on the results of a survey of students conducted at the beginning of that academic year. Methods of data collection are described and discussed in detail in Chapter 2.6. The questionnaire sent to the students is reproduced in Appendix B.

9.1 Gender, ethnic origin and age of scriptwriting students

All 81 respondents to the questionnaire give their gender; 51 are male and 30 female (63% and 37% respectively). This figure is notable when compared to the usual gender balance in adult education. The DfES gives an overall balance of 73.4% female students to 26.6% male for enrolments in England on local authority- run courses in November 2002. For the North West region there is little difference, with 73% females to 27% males. HESA's figures for England show that 64.7% of all part-time students at universities in 2002/3 were female and 35.3% male (2004a).[1]

HESA's figures for the University of Liverpool for the same year show that 62.8% of part-time students were female and 37.2% male, a reversal of the figures for scriptwriting students in the survey (2004c). These finding are summarised in the bar chart below:

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[1] Figures for 2001/2 show 62.8% female / 37.2% male for England as a whole and 63.4% female /36.6% male for the University of Liverpool, indicating that the 2002/3 figures are not unusual in any way (HESA 2003, 2004b).
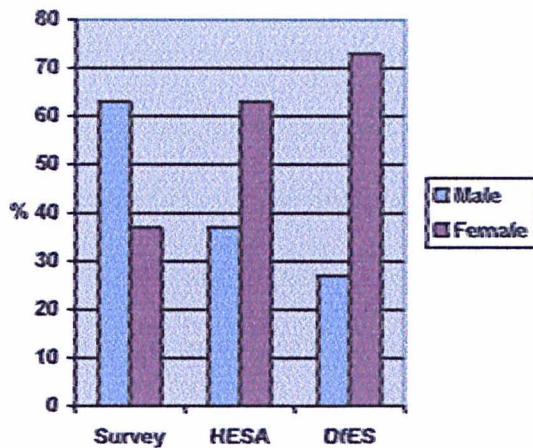
Figure 2: Gender of scriptwriting students 2002/3 compared to official statistics (DfES figures refer to enrolments on LEA-run courses in the North West; HESA figures to part-time students at the University of Liverpool).

Woodley et al, in their wide- ranging survey for the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE), also found evidence to suggest that adult students tend to be overwhelmingly female (1987). They found that 65% of students on courses run by University extra-mural departments, which would have included courses such as those attended by the students in my survey, were female. Furthermore, 77% of students on 'non-qualifying courses' were female although, intriguingly, there were more males than females (54% males) on 'qualifying' courses.

Clearly, there is an important difference here. Any notion that 2002/3 might be a 'rogue' year can be discounted, as the pilot study of scriptwriting students showed a similar, though not quite as dramatic imbalance, with 54.8% males and 45.2% females. The 'general' creative writing courses in the pilot study, however, showed an imbalance in favour of female students (57.1% to 42.9%), much more in line with what one might expect in view of the overwhelming evidence that students on adult education courses tend to be female (Woodley et al. 1987, 22 et seq.).

It has already been mentioned that there is a gender imbalance in favour of men amongst scriptwriting tutors, which also is not reflected amongst tutors of

'general' creative writing classes (see Chapter 6.3). This could indicate that students opt for courses run by tutors of their own gender, but such an explanation is not supported by figures from the survey, chi-square tests carried out on SPSS showing no significant differences between the gender balances on individual tutors' courses. Indeed, respondents from Diane's course include nine men and five women, whereas the highest proportion of females is on Ernest's course (six male/ six female). This could be because of its timing from 10.30 a.m. to 12.30.p.m. (University of Liverpool Centre for Continuing Education 2002, 22). Morning classes effectively exclude most people in full-time employment, as well as possibly appealing to women who might be worried about issues of personal safety.

Woodley et al's figures for students on 'qualifying' courses suggest that, although writing courses would not have come under this heading at the time, the profile of the scriptwriting students has more in common with that of students on courses leading to formal qualifications than with courses that have traditionally been identified as 'leisure' courses. This, in turn, suggests a perception of the 'seriousness' of the subject, based perhaps on a sense of its being a vocational subject or one which is academically demanding. This idea is supported by the fact that the gender imbalance in favour of females is narrower in HESA's figures, based on enrolments at universities, than it is in DfES figures, based on enrolments on local authority courses, which not only lack the academic 'prestige' of university-run courses, but also tend not to carry accreditation. Woodley et al's 1987 (pre-accreditation) figures support the idea that men might be more attracted to 'qualifying' courses and to university- based courses.

Interestingly, the one source of official data which contradicts the idea that adult learners are more likely to be female, is the DfES's *National Adult Learning*

Survey (NALS) (Fitzgerald et al. 2003). This survey shows that 79% of male respondents and 74% of female respondents reported some kind of learning in the previous year. The surveyors' own conclusion is that:

> This is primarily due to the difference in the proportion of men and women undertaking self-directed learning (66% and 56% respectively), while there is very little gender difference in relation to taught learning. In 2002, women were less likely than men to have done vocational learning (65% and 73% respectively), but more likely to have done non-vocational learning (29% and 23% respectively).

The survey includes under 'learning' not only 'self-directed' learning, but also 'taught' learning done in the workplace. These figures suggest that, while women are certainly more likely to attend adult education classes, particularly those classed as 'non-vocational', men are more likely to opt for learning that takes place outside traditional educational institutions or is associated with work or professional development. This idea is supported by ACACE's contention that 'men attach more importance to the idea that education is a way of getting on in the world' (1982a), based on research showing that men prefer to study work-related subjects while women are more interested in 'creative' subjects. Whether scriptwriting should be seen as 'work-related' is debatable (see Chapter 8 for scriptwriting tutors' views on this issue); it is certainly 'creative.' Perhaps it is both at the same time.

Possible reasons for the 'maleness' of the subject in Liverpool, such as the existence of mainly male role models in the area and the status of scriptwriting as a profession in an area of recent high male unemployment, have been suggested above (Chapter 6.3). Such conclusions can, in the context of this study, only be speculative, although the latter idea is given credence by the NALS figures quoted above. Perhaps many students on scriptwriting courses see them as vocational. Although the survey includes questions about students' motivations and choice of course, the answers to these do not shed much light on the matter, as might be expected when all those

questioned have chosen scriptwriting courses. One could only say that, given the fact that a majority of students were male, the motivations given might be more typical of male students than female students. A wider survey of students on all writing courses, in Liverpool and elsewhere, would be needed to provide meaningful comparisons from which one might draw conclusions about this phenomenon with a greater degree of confidence.

In response to the question about ethnic origin, for which they were given a range of options based on the categories used in University's enrolment form for forwarding to the HESA (University of Liverpool 2002), 76 (93.8%) students described themselves as 'White British', compared to 96.7% of the population of Merseyside described as 'white' in the census (Office for National Statistics 2003, 67) and 95% of Liverpool University part-time students whose ethnic origin was known to HESA. Of the remaining five students, two described themselves as 'Indian,' one as 'Black African', while one ticked the three boxes for 'Black Caribbean', 'Black African' and 'Black Other' and one ticked 'Other', describing himself as 'Wales/Mauritius'. There were no students of Chinese origin, which is the largest ethnic minority group in the region (Office of National Statistics 2003, 67). Given the small numbers of ethnic minority students involved, it is impossible to draw any firm conclusions about whether various groups are under- or over-represented on scriptwriting courses, except to say that in terms of white/ non-white populations the student body is not unrepresentative of the balance in the region. No significant correspondences between the ethnic origin of students and any other variables were shown by chi-square tests, as would be expected given the numbers involved.

The age profile of students, on the other hand, did not reflect the profile of the general population of Merseyside. The bar chart below is based on students who give

their age (76 out of a possible 81), grouped by percentage of respondents in ten-year periods, compared to the population of Merseyside according to the 2001 census and omitting persons aged under twenty (Ibid. 25); and HESA's figures for part-time students at the University of Liverpool in 2002/3, omitting those under twenty and those whose ages are unknown. The DfES was unable to provide detailed breakdowns of the age of students under 60 (Rose 2003).
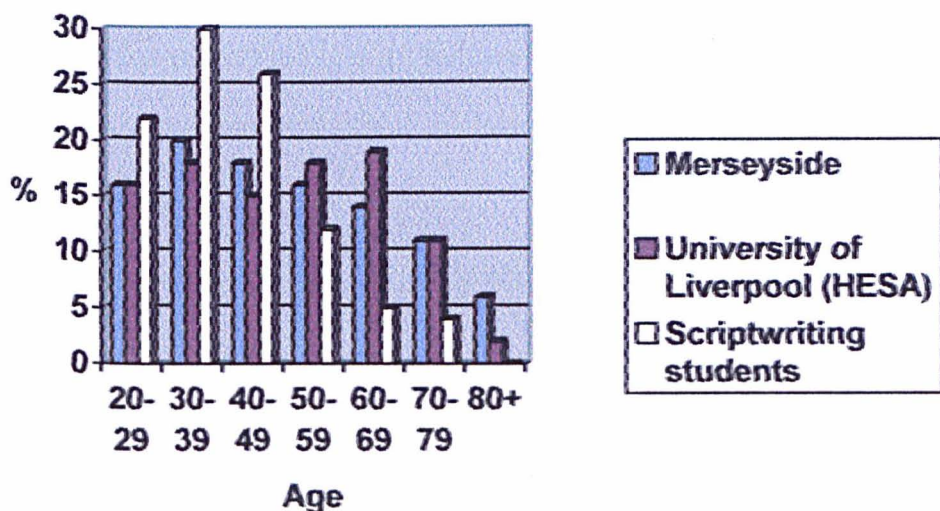
Figure 3: Age of scriptwriting students (2002/3) compared with age of Merseyside population (2001) and part-time students at the University of Liverpool (HESA)

It can be seen from this chart that the younger age groups appear to be over-represented, while the older age groups are under-represented in the sample. This contrasts with HESA's figures for all part-time students, where the age profile is much closer to that of the general population, students tending to be a little older. The youngest student in my survey of scriptwriting students was aged 21 and the oldest 78, with a mean age of 41.2. Seven (9.2%) students were aged 60 and above,

compared with 29.6% of the Merseyside population aged over twenty.[2] DfES figures show that 27.7% of local authority students in the North West of England were over 60 in 2002/3, a figure far closer to that of the general population (DfES 2003). In Woodley et al.'s survey 20% of students on all 'non-qualifying' courses (22% in University extra-mural departments) were aged 61 or over, whereas only 1% of 'qualifying students' were aged 61 and above (Woodley et al. 1987, 23). NALS, as might be expected, records a falling-off of interest in learning among adults after the age of 50, with the decrease more dramatic for vocational than for other sorts of learning. Participation in learning (except for non-vocational learning, which is most popular amongst people aged 60-69) does not differ greatly between age groups under 50 (Fitzgerald et al. 2002).

Again, the survey of scriptwriting students gives a result which is strikingly different from what might be expected from typical students in adult education. As with the male/female balance, it is possible that the explanation for this lies in potential students' perception of the status of a scriptwriting course and their motivations for studying scriptwriting, which will be considered below (Chapter 8.3). Certainly, a consideration of the student body's profile in terms of age and gender yields a picture that is quite different from what might be expected from the study of data provided by official bodies. Adults who studied scriptwriting in Liverpool in 2002/2 were not typical or representative of the general population of the area, nor of adult learners in general.

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[2] This finding is supported by the pilot study which, on the basis of a smaller and less representative sample, gives a figure of 12.5% of students aged 60 and over.

9.2 Social class, employment status and educational background of scriptwriting students

Any analysis of social class is fraught with difficulties of definition and interpretation, with attempts to define class by occupation becoming increasingly problematic as new occupations are developed, old ones are renamed and individuals' working patterns become more varied. This is acknowledged by the replacement of the old Registrar General's Social Class measurement with the more complex National Statistics: Socio-Economic Classification (NS: SEC) system for use in analysing the results of the 2001 census (The Stationery Office 2000). In response to my initial questionnaire, 50 of the 81 respondents (62%) gave details of their current or last job. These details were then assigned categories according to the NS:SEC guidelines. Following NS: SEC advice, because of the small scale of the survey they were then grouped into four classes: 1.1, 1.2 and 2, covering 'large employers and higher managerial occupations', 'higher professional occupations' and 'lower managerial and professional occupations'; 3-4, comprising 'intermediate occupations' and 'small employers and account workers'; 5-7, being 'lower supervisory and technical occupations', 'semi-routine occupations' and 'routine occupations'; and 8 and non-classified, including those who have never worked, the long-term unemployed, full-time students and those not classified for other reasons. Those who did not give an occupation were included in the last category. 42% of survey respondents came from classes 1.1, 1.2 and 3; 22.2% from classes 4 and 5; 8.6% from classes 5 to 7; and 27% were from class 8 and the non-classified. A comparison of the survey results with the 2001 census figures for Merseyside is summarised in the bar chart below (Office for National Statistics 2003, 199):
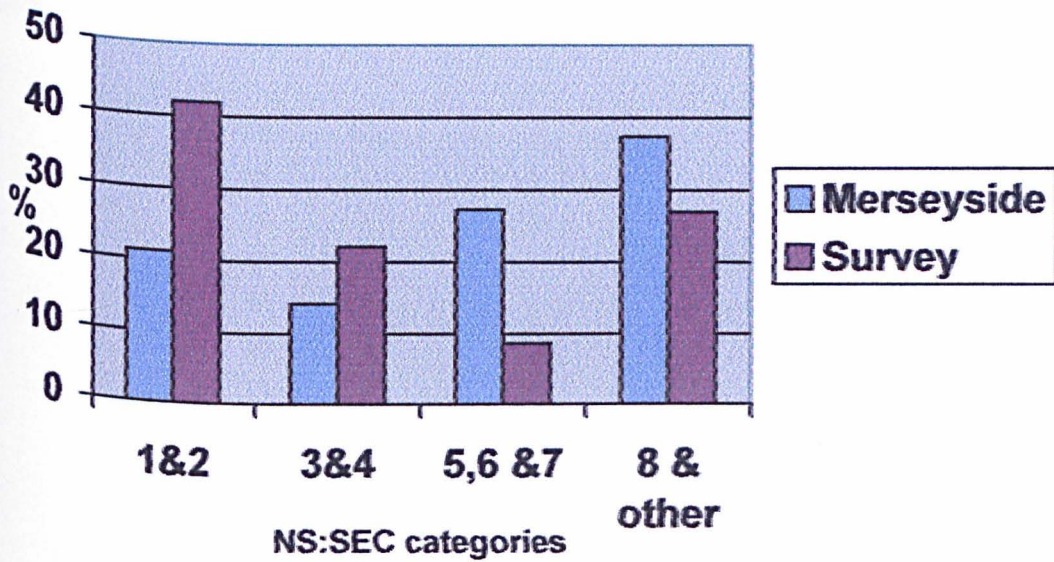
Figure 4: Social class of scriptwriting students 2002/3 according to NS:SEC compared with Merseyside Population 2001

If we ignore those in categories 8 and 'non-classified', there is clearly a bias amongst the students towards the higher classifications: those which might usually be referred to as 'professional' or 'middle class' .In contrast, 21.2% of the population of Merseyside fall within classes 1.1, 1.2 and 2; 14% are in classes 4 and 5; and 27% in classes 5 to 7, the group which would traditionally be described as 'working-class'.

The large number of students (29 or 39%) included in class 8 and 'non-classified' poses a problem. This group covers not only economically inactive students (unemployed, retired, housewives/carers and full-time students) who do not give, as requested, details of their last employment, but also people who simply do not answer the question. It is probably unwise, therefore, to equate it with the group derived from the census returns. A comparison of figures leaving out these 29 students might, therefore, give a clearer picture of students' social class, with the caveat that one is now dealing with a population of only 52 people, just over half the total number of

students enrolled on scriptwriting courses. Of these, 58% fall into classes 1.1,1.2 and 2 (compared with 34% of the Merseyside population), 30% into classes 3 and 4 (22%), and 12% into classes 5 to 7 (44%). These results are summarised below:
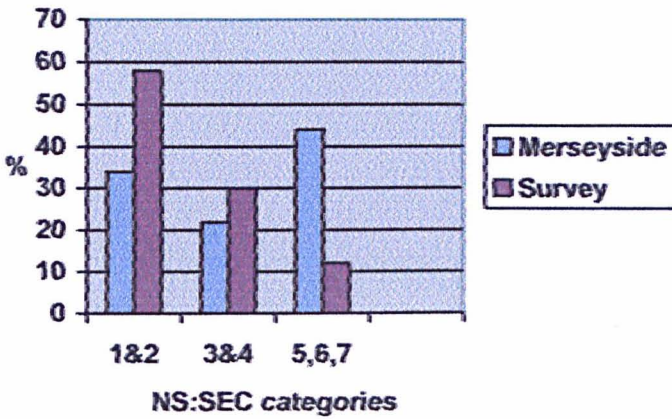
Figure 5: Social class of scriptwriting students omitting those in class 8 and 'non-classified'

Unfortunately, neither HESA nor the DfES was able to provide any comparable data on socio-economic classification and it is, therefore, impossible to draw any conclusions about whether this group of students is typical or atypical of students in adult education classes in 2002/3 (Rose 2003, Cookson 2003). However, Woodley et al.'s 1987 survey, using Hope Goldthorpe classifications, does present a similar pattern. Using three groups (services, intermediate and working), which roughly correspond to the three groups used above, they show that on 'qualifying' courses 54% of students were from the first group, 34% from the second and 12% from the third; while on 'non-qualifying' courses the figures were 45%, 47% and 8% respectively (1987,70). As with gender, my figures are closer to those for 'qualifying' students.

Given the lack of information about some students' occupations and the large number of students, and indeed members of the general population, who are

economically inactive, it could be argued that classification according to occupation

should not be the sole indicator of 'social class'. Students were, therefore, also asked

about their employment status and their previous qualifications. The questions on

employment status yielded the results which are shown in the table below. Figures for

Merseyside from the 2001 census are also shown for comparison (Office for National

Statistics 2003, 99):

Group	Number	Percentage	Merseyside
Employed/self-employed	49	60.5%	51.5%
Unemployed	17	21%	6.8%
Full-time Student	1	1.2%	8.2%
Retired	9	11.1%	14.7%
Housewife/carer	3	3.7%	6.7%
Sick or disabled	2	2.5%	10%
Other economically inactive	0	0%	4%

Table 5: Employment status of scriptwriting students 2002/3 (figures may not add up to 100% because of rounding)

The distribution of students between these groups can be seen in the pie chart below:
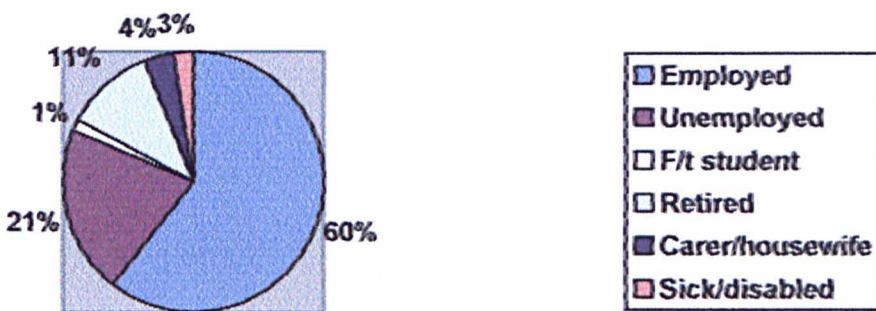
Figure 6: Employment status of scriptwriting students 2002/3

The most striking feature of these figures is the large proportion of students

describing themselves as unemployed. The proportion of those described as

carer/housewife, sick or disabled and 'other economically inactive' is much lower in

the survey sample than in the general population. This result is not unexpected, as common sense would suggest that people in those categories would be less likely to commit themselves to a taught course in an institution, as they might find it difficult to leave home. Similarly, full-time students would also not be expected to feature in the sample, as they would not normally take on part-time study in addition to full-time study. The unemployed, however, form over a fifth of the sample. It is possible that, the survey relying on self-definition, this group includes some that would be categorised elsewhere in the census figures. However, the alternative categories were offered on the questionnaire, and it could be argued that an individual's choice of 'unemployed' would imply that he or she is actively seeking employment. Taking these figures with the age profile of the student body, and the fact that the majority of the students are employed, one might conclude that this is a group of people who could be considering career changes; once again, there emerges a profile associated with vocational rather than 'leisure' classes.

A consideration of students' academic qualifications on entry to the courses gives a result strikingly different from the Merseyside population as a whole. Census figures show that 13.9% of the population aged over sixteen held qualifications at degree level or above in 2001, while 31.5% had no qualifications (Ibid., 227). In contrast, 46 (56.8%) students who completed the questionnaire are graduates.[3] Only one student who answered the relevant question has no qualifications; six did not answer. Therefore, the number without qualifications of any sort could not exceed seven (8.6%). Of the non-graduates, 6.2% of students held HE credits or similar qualifications; 11.1% had GCE 'A' levels or the equivalent; and 17.3% had GCE 'O' level or GCSE. The pattern can be seen in the pie chart below:

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[3] The pilot study gave similar results, showing that 57% of students on 'general' creative writing and 54% of students on scriptwriting courses to be graduates, while only two respondents (4.8%) from scriptwriting courses and three (10.7%) from general courses declared no qualifications.
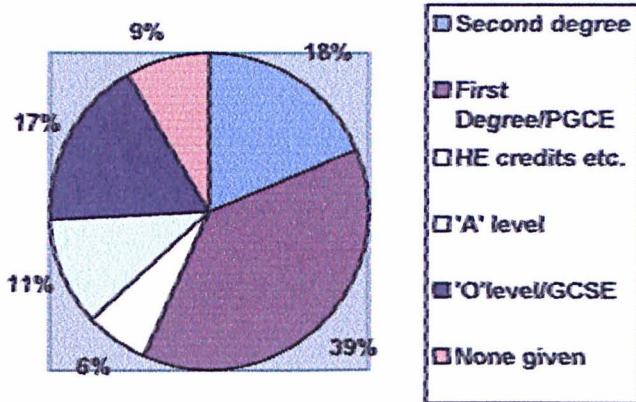
Figure 7: Highest qualification on entry of scriptwriting students 2002/3

Comparing these figures with HESA's figures for 'other undergraduates', which includes all students on adult education courses at universities in England, one can see a far greater proportion of graduates than might be expected were the scriptwriting courses typical of such courses. HESA's figures show that in 2002/3 19.9% of part-time 'other' students in England were graduates, 7.1% had no qualifications and 16.6% did not give details of their qualifications (HESA 2004a, 116).[4] Figures for the University of Liverpool provided by HESA show that 19.5% of students were graduates. However, 67.9% of Liverpool students' qualifications are shown as 'not known/sought', calling into question the wisdom of drawing any conclusions from these figures (2004c). Nevertheless, the fact that the proportion of graduates is so similar for Liverpool and England suggests that this figure at least might be fairly accurate and that the much higher proportion of graduates on the scriptwriting courses is notable.[5]

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[4] The DfES was unable to provide comparable figures for students on local authority courses.
[5] HESA's figures for 2001/2 show that in England 20% of part-time students were graduates, the equivalent figure for the University of Liverpool being 22%. 63.7% of University of Liverpool part-time students were shown as 'not known/sought' (HESA 2004b).

So, taking qualifications, employment status and occupational classification together, a picture emerges of a student body that is, broadly speaking, well-educated and 'middle-class', although not necessarily in employment.[6] This constituency is certainly untypical of the local population to whom the University of Liverpool seeks to appeal. The results, however, are not surprising when seen in the context of adult education in general. The National Adult Learning Survey (NALS) 2002 shows that interest in learning declines through the NS:SEC groups from 88% in the 'professional/managerial' group through to 47% in the 'unskilled manual' group. There is a similar decline according to level of learning from 94% of both graduates and undergraduates to 29% of those with no qualifications (Fitzgerald et al. 2002, 25 et seq.). Such figures indicate little change in the years since Woodley et al.'s extensive survey which led them to the conclusion that their findings 'confirm and extend those of earlier researchers; adult education is largely the preserve of the middle classes' (1987, 85).

Historically, providers of adult education have always sought to appeal to the working classes and the economically deprived, only to find that the classes they provide are more popular amongst those from 'higher' social classes. Writing about the situation in the nineteenth century, Harrison observes:

> The need for adult education...was felt to be primarily a need of the working class; and this conviction was not basically altered by the common experience of adult educational institutions that provision which had been intended for manual workers was not infrequently utilised mainly by clerical and shop assistants. (1961, 4)

At that time, education was often seen by its providers as an instrument for the improvement of the 'condition and morals of the people' (Brougham 1835, quoted in

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[6] Chi square tests revealed no statistically significant differences in social and economic groups, qualifications or employment status in terms of gender or ethnicity. Age was only a significant factor when compared to employment status and then only because the retired, naturally, came from the higher age groups.

Harrison 1961, 57). By the 1970s, when the writers' workshops were established, the rhetoric had changed and they were seen more as an instrument of political change or a 'collective cause' (Evans 1990, 5), being welcomed by the University of Liverpool as a good example of 'what a University might contribute to working class students who attend our normal classes in such small numbers' (University of Liverpool Institute of Extension Studies 1973, 13). In 1982 *Learning In Liverpool* declared that 'provision for women, black people and the unemployed are priorities' (Liverpool Education Authority 1982, 4).

Even today, many educationalists would see the composition of the student body in adult education as a failure to reach those for whom the provision is intended, and some would argue that the results of my survey of scriptwriting students confirm that failure. Whatever their political or philosophical views, however, it is important that providers of scriptwriting classes for adults recognise the reality of the situation. The students attending these courses include people of all ages, both genders, many classes and varied educational backgrounds; but if one wished to construct a 'typical' Liverpool scriptwriting student he would be a 41-year-old white male graduate, employed in a professional or lower managerial occupation. It is reasonable to assume that most of these students would not see the courses as a rung on the educational ladder (making the acquisition of credits largely irrelevant to their needs), nor as a means of acquiring the tools to change society. David Evans describes the people who attended the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop as 'simply working-class men and women who wanted to write' (1990, 5). Possibly one could say the same thing about the 2002/3 scriptwriting students, though in most cases one would have to omit 'working-class.' The question of *why* they want to write is one that I shall explore in the remainder of this chapter.

9.3 Motivation and expectations of scriptwriting students

In an attempt to discover what motivates adults to take classes in scriptwriting, the student questionnaire includes, in Section B, a tick list of likely motivating factors, based on the work of Daines et al. (1993); and two open questions, one asking why they had chosen their particular course(s) and the other asking how they hoped to benefit from their courses (see Appendix B). Students were invited to tick as many boxes as they wished in answer to the first of these three questions. The results are summarised in the table below, listed in order of the most frequently ticked:

Order	Motivating factor	Number	Percentage
1	To learn to develop a skill (b)	76	91.6%
2	To create something (d)	62	74.7%
3	To follow up an existing interest (a)	61	73.5%
4	To learn to develop ideas (c)	54	65.1%
5	To meet like-minded people (k)	40	48.2%
6	To discover if 'I can' (g)	38	45.8%
7	To make money (f)	21	25.4%
8	To access a further learning opportunity (j)	18	21.7%
9	To satisfy curiosity (e)	17	20.5%
10	To make social contact (l)	15	18.1%
11	To gain self-confidence (m)	11	13.3%
11	To enhance my self-esteem (n)	11	13.3%
13	To obtain a qualification (i)	10	12.0%
14	To gain the approval of others (h)	4	4.8%

Table 6: Motivations of scriptwriting students 2002/3

Alan Rogers defines motivation as 'a drive directed towards meeting a need or achieving an intention, those factors that energise and direct behavioural patterns organised around a goal', and makes a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors (2002, 95). At first sight, it would appear that extrinsic factors would not apply to adults taking scriptwriting courses, as the learning is not 'demanded by the learner's situation' (Rogers, J. 2001, 18), with most of the factors listed above apparently coming from social and personal impulses. However, one

should not discount the idea that some students might be motivated, at least in part, by external factors such as financial need. As we have already seen, a high proportion of the students are unemployed and just over a quarter mention the desire to make money as a motivating factor. A factor such as the one most often cited (To learn to develop a skill) could be simultaneously intrinsic and extrinsic, as some students might feel that their circumstances demand that they learn new skills.

It is possible to interpret most, if not all, of these motivating factors, in terms of all three of the main theories of motivation summarised by Alan Rogers: that motivation is an inner impulse based on needs or drives; that motivation can be learned; and that motivation relates to goals set or accepted by oneself (2002, 95). The idea of the students' motivation being learned cannot be tested using the survey data, but the fact that the majority of the respondents had previous experience of adult education courses shows that these courses form part of a continuing process of adult education. This prior experience begs the questions of whether and how students' motivations change and develop, not only while they are on a particular course (a possibility explored by May (1985) and Norris (1985)), but also over the whole of their lives. Certainly, the more popular factors would seem to relate to personal desires, the question of whether or not they also represent 'needs' being subjective; many people who want to write might well regard the act of writing as necessary to their well-being. Similarly, one could say that the students are setting themselves 'goals' as they seek to develop skills or follow up an interest. The idea of each student having personal goals is supported by the responses to question seventeen, which asks students how they feel the courses would benefit them (see below). Again, these goals can, in many cases, be interpreted as being both intrinsic and extrinsic.

Woodley et al. (1987) identify three main areas of motivation for adult learners: instrumental, self-development and social. Categories f, i and j of question fifteen fall fairly clearly into the first group, as all three of them are concerned with using the course to achieve a stated aim. None of these is cited by a majority of the students, with only one (To make money) being cited by more than a quarter of the group. Categories k and l are clearly 'social factors'. 'To meet like-minded people' is much more popular than 'To make social contact', even though they could be interpreted as meaning roughly the same thing. The reason for the difference may lie in a difference between the 'image' each of them might be felt to be giving of the respondents; the first gives an impression of people making an active and positive choice, while the second sounds rather negative and a little desperate. 'To gain the approval of others' (h), which was ticked by only four people, might sound similarly unattractive. Factors a, b, c, g, m and n are broadly concerned with 'self-development', but there is a distinction to be made between a, b, c and g, and the less popular m and n. The former group is concerned with a sense of wanting to develop one's creativity or intellect, while the latter group is more to do with developing one's confidence as a person, carrying implications about the respondents similar to those of h and j. Indeed, factors b, c and d could also be viewed as instrumental, as it could be argued that the students would not wish to develop a skill, create something or learn to develop ideas unless they had specific reasons for doing so. It seems from this that the respondents do not, generally, see themselves as shy, diffident or lacking in confidence. Rather, a picture emerges of a group of people who, for the most part, have chosen their courses with a clear sense of purpose. While some clearly have social reasons for starting the courses, the motivating factors most commonly mentioned by students are concerned with the process of learning itself. The top four motivating factors are almost 'subject

specific', suggesting that most students already have a good idea of what might be involved in learning to write scripts and what skills their courss might help them to develop.[7]

Answers to questions nine to thirteen, which seek to discover something about students' previous experience of adult education and creative writing, support this idea. Sixty students (74%) have previous experience of attending adult education classes, 49 (60.5%) having attended creative writing classes. Seventy (86.4%) say that they have written or attempted to write scripts, stories, poetry or articles, 53 (65.4%) having tried to write scripts for television, cinema, stage or radio. Thirty-three students (40.7%) have submitted work to publishers or producers, with twenty (24.7%) claiming to have had their work published or produced.

Tests carried out on the data to try to discover any correlation between individual motivating factors and data about the characteristics of the population yielded little of interest. Partly because of the size of the sub-groups under 'age in decades,' chi-square tests showed no correlation of significance between motivating factors and age groups. Further tests were run to see if there were any significant variations between older students (those over 60) and others. Again, as only seven students declare their ages to be over 60, nothing of statistical significance emerged. However, it should be noted that four factors are cited by none of the older students. These are: 'To make money' (f); 'To gain the approval of others' (h); 'To gain social self-confidence' (m); and 'To enhance my self-esteem' (n). With the exception of the first of these results, which is to be expected among retired people, these factors are about personal, non-subject specific goals, concerned with self-development and self-image. Clearly, the older students are not lacking in confidence. Withnall and Percy,

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[7] Fitzgerald et al. (2003, 72) give 'to improve knowledge about subject' as by far the most popular motivation for taught learning (72%), with 'to do something interesting' second with 44%. 'Gaining a qualification' was much more popular (37%) than it was in my survey.

citing Yarn, suggest that older adults who choose creative or artistic subjects are concerned with relaxation, and that 'middle-class older adults want especially to understand and appreciate the creative process in general' (1994, 41). There is nothing in my survey, however, to suggest that such motivating factors are present in the older respondents to any greater or lesser extent than in the group as a whole. The difference might lie in such desires being less likely to be connected either with personal profit or issues of self-esteem. Jarvis (1983) includes creative writing among the 'top ten hobbies' identified by retirement and pre-retirement aged students, which might, when taken with Yarn's assertions and the results of my survey, indicate that older students see writing classes primarily as a leisure activity, and that their motives may be less complex than those of other students.

Only one factor produced a statistically significant difference in gender terms. 'To discover if I can' is cited by nineteen of the 30 female respondents, but only by eighteen of the 51 men, the chi-square test showing an 'assymp.sin.' of 0.014, sufficiently low to demonstrate statistical significance. The factor with the next biggest difference is 'To learn to develop ideas', cited by 24 women and 30 men, giving an 'assymp.sin' value of 0.051.[8] Both these factors can be seen in Woodley et al.'s terms as being concerned with self-development, and both are concerned with developing one's own abilities in rather general terms. There were no significant differences found between ethnic groups. Only one factor yielded a significant difference when tested against prior qualifications: only one of the ten people who want to obtain a qualification is a graduate. This is to be expected, but is not unimportant, as the preponderance of graduates amongst the students might suggest that the emphasis on qualifications in prospectuses could be mis-directed. On the

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[8] Values are taken from chi-square tests, performed in SSPS, where they are labelled as 'assymp.sig. (2-sided)'. According to Robson (2002, 419) a value below 0.05 is statistically significant.

other hand, all those who mention gaining a qualification have previous experience of classes (giving an 'assymp.sig' of 0.029), the same factor throwing up a statistically significant result (0.004) when correlated with employment status. Five of the ten people who tick box i are, in fact, unemployed, with only two (from a possible 49) being employed. Similarly, gaining access to a further learning opportunity is much more popular among the economically inactive and unemployed (fourteen out of 32 in the categories of unemployed, retired, disabled, carer and student; four out of 49 employed people). Although these figures should, of course, be treated with caution because of the numbers involved, the results for the three factors taken together might indicate the existence of important differences in motivation between the employed and the economically inactive. It would appear that the pursuit of qualifications is more important to the latter group, while the subject itself, or 'existing interest', attracts the former group. So, although the figures for the most part describe a fairly cohesive group of people, with few differences in motivation according to background and circumstances, those differences that do emerge indicate that employment status and age are, for the scriptwriting students, more divisive in terms of motivation and attitude than gender, ethnic origin or previous qualifications

Students are given an opportunity to express more precise and/or personal reasons for taking their courses in their answers to question sixteen on the questionnaire (Why did you choose this particular course?). Seven students do not answer the question or simply refer to their answers to the previous question.[9] Five state that the course has been recommended to them, giving no indication of why a scriptwriting course in particular should have been recommended to them or whether they had already decided to study the subject before the recommendation. Similarly,

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[9] Details of which students (identified by their code numbers) gave which answers to open-ended questions, when their answers are not quoted in the text, are given in the tables in Appendix G.

two students say they were attracted by the course description in the prospectus and three students mention the tutor's reputation, but do not say why the subject attracted them. Four students are taking their course because another one (Norman's comedy writing course) has been cancelled, but give no reasons for wanting to do a comedy writing course. Three students mention 'convenience' of location and/or timing and one (rather surprisingly, as all the University's adult courses use the same fee structure) says that 'it's cheap' (81cd). Two students say they are doing their course because 'Italian was full' (61b, 64b).

Many of the above replies might, at first sight, appear unhelpful in establishing why students choose to study scriptwriting, but, taken together, they give a picture of a section of the student population that is not driven by specific ambitions or a developing interest in the subject they intend to study. Some students might be motivated simply to do an evening class, with the subject of the class being of secondary importance and possibly dictated to some extent by the location and timing of the course. 'Italian was full' might seem an odd or frivolous reason for taking a scriptwriting course, but if the two people involved had already decided that they would take a class on a certain evening of the week and their first choice was fully booked, why not try something else?

A further nine students express their motivation in terms of a vague interest in the subject and a desire to learn more about it: for example, 'it's what I want to do' (16bc), 'interested' (20bc), or the slightly more specific 'interest in sitcoms' (54b) and 'I am interested in playwriting' (76e). In view of the answers to question fifteen, it is worth noting that no students mention factors such as gaining self-confidence or meeting people, nor does anyone give reasons connected with gaining qualifications or accessing learning opportunities. This might appear to be inconsistent with

students' responses to the 'tick list' of motivating factors, as all the given choices attract some support. However, it could indicate that factors h, i, j, l, m, and n, none of are ticked by more than a quarter of the respondents, are secondary motivating factors even for those who did tick them. Where enjoyment or pleasure are mentioned (by three students), they are connected with the subject, rather than the social aspect of classes. One student simply writes, 'I enjoy writing' (14d), but for the other two it is one of several factors. Student 30ab is doing the course 'as a follow on from creative writing. [She] enjoyed scriptwriting. Would like to know more & develop skills'. This student is one of nine who mention their previous experience of scriptwriting or writing classes as a motivating factor: we have already seen that the majority of respondents had some such experience before starting their courses in 20002/3. Student 1d puts: 'explore potential in a new area which would also be fun, creative and possibly lead to a career change', making her one of only five who mention factors clearly connected to writing as a profession. The others are: 'I think I have what it takes to go far' (2d); 'to learn about good sources of knowledge and contacts' (12abd); 'films & T.V. need good scriptwriters - hoping to join these ranks' (22c); and 'would love to write soaps for a living' (23c).

While the lack of answers connected to changing career or making money might suggest that students do not see scriptwriting as a vocational course, giving access to a possible new career, it may be that they feel their intention to produce scripts implies a desire to have them produced and thereby make money. Certainly, 35 students, almost half those answering the questions, express their reasons for choosing their courses specifically in terms of developing writing skills: for example, 'to develop a skill and structure a script' (3d), 'to learn writing techniques for drama' (13d) and 'to broaden my scriptwriting knowledge' (36ab). Some students are more

precise, several specifically mentioning the medium or genre with which their course was concerned, such as 'interested in stage plays' (42c), 'I believe it will develop my comedy writing skills' (57a) and 'it's relevant to my aims i.e. to write a tv play' (75e). This student, like several others, expresses his motivation in terms of a very specific and personal goal, choosing the course because it fits what he perceives as his 'needs'. Other replies which give a sense of students setting themselves personal goals are: a desire to 'test my scriptwriting skills' (2d); a 'personel [*sic*] crusade to write about the people I know and & live amongst, before somebody less qualified does it again' (10cd); 'appeared appropriate to my needs, to develop my writing, to learn new approaches etc., to see if I'm on the right track (26c)'; 'needed to find out more about the staging requirements of playwriting' (37ab); and ' have lots of ideas for scripts and sketches that I'd like to develop' (48b).

The answers to question seventeen (How do you think the course will benefit you?) provide an opportunity for students to be more specific about what they expected to learn on their chosen courses. While thirteen students do not answer, say they do not know or refer back to questions fifteen and/or sixteen, nineteen mention 'writing', 'skills', technique' or 'craft' in vague terms which expand little or not at all on their answers to question sixteen. Seven mention a specific genre or medium, albeit also in rather vague terms, for example, 'insight into film script writing' (70e). The more interesting answers are those which - as the question intends them to - focus on specific areas which they feel they will, or should be, taught. Several specific aspects of writing are mentioned: story and plot (by four students); structure (seven); character (two); having and developing ideas (four); presentation (three); and developing 'creativity' (three). Four students mention gaining feedback about their work, six mention aspects concerned with professionalism and career and, in a

reversal of normal expectations, one writes of turning his former career into a hobby. In answer to this question, in contrast to the last, four students mention issues of self-confidence and motivation; but these are specifically linked to writing rather than personal development. One student, for example, seeks 'to gain confidence for future submissions' (10d) and another 'motivation to write sitcoms/other tv/film ideas' (54b). Along the same lines, five students express a desire to gain 'discipline' in their writing.

Taking the answers to questions fifteen, sixteen and seventeen together, a picture is emerging of a fairly diverse group of people, most of whom are motivated by a desire to improve their skills and knowledge, specifically in scriptwriting. Many of them would appear to see their courses as a stage in their development as writers, an idea supported by the large number that has undertaken other writing courses. While some are confident about expressing their intention of becoming professional writers, for others such a desire, if present, is only implied. A few seem to be starting from a standpoint of curiosity, those who might, in Charles's words, 'suck it and see' (see Chapter 8.4). Motivating factors cited by the students might suggest that his apparent disregard for such students and emphasis on professionalism could be misplaced. On the other hand, an apparent lack of interest in gaining qualifications and a failure by the students to see the courses as a means of accessing education in general, taken with the social and educational profile of the group, support the idea that to see the courses as a tool for social change and improvement (in the tradition of university extra-mural departments) is at least out-dated, if not irrelevant.

On the whole, though, it would appear that the scriptwriting tutors in 2002/3 intended to give the students what they were looking for in terms of the content of the courses. They also, with the possible exception of Charles, seem to have recognised the variety of students on their courses and the complexity of their motivation. Alan

Rogers asserts that 'within any group of adult learners there will be a wide variety of needs, and within each participant there will be a different mixture of needs' (2002, 97), an idea supported by Jarvis's summary of research into adult learners' motivation (1983, 65-68). This is certainly the case in the group discussed herein, although the research suggests that certain needs and desires are more prevalent than others among scriptwriting students. The following chapter will attempt to discover whether, and to what extent, those students feel that their needs and desires have been met by their courses.

Chapter 10

Students' Evaluation of Scriptwriting Courses 2002/3

The purpose of this chapter is to discover how students who have attended scriptwriting courses feel about their courses, and whether their evaluation of various aspects of these courses (specifically, whether their initial expectations have been met; teaching methods used on the courses; and the quality of teaching and learning) reveals anything of value or interest about such courses. Students' evaluations will be considered in the light of their own expectations of the course, and of the ideas and opinions of their tutors.

10.1 Motivating factors for studying scriptwriting: how successfully were students' expectations and desires met?

Students embarking on scriptwriting courses at the University of Liverpool in the autumn of 2002 were invited to give their reasons for choosing to study the subject, choosing from a range of options. The resulting data have been discussed in Chapter 9. When all the relevant courses had been completed, those who had agreed to complete an evaluation questionnaire were invited (in question eight) to say whether or not they felt they had been successful in fulfilling each of these aims, expressing their answers on a 'rating scale' from one (very successful) to four (not at all successful).[1] The results taken from the 42 replies are shown in the table below and are sorted in descending order by, first, the number rating their achievement in each

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[1] One student (17c) appears to have radically misinterpreted the rubric on the evaluation questionnaire, as in spite of ticking '3' or '4' to all questions using rating scales, his answers to open-ended questions are, without exception, positive. Furthermore, he answers question sixteen (What did you like/ enjoy least about the course?) with 'nothing'. I have therefore reassigned all his answers to questions eight, nine and ten by reversing his scores.

aspect as 'very successful' (1) and, second, by the number rating their achievement as 'successful' (2):

	1	2	3	4	N/a	Total
a) To follow up an existing interest	27	8	6	1	0	42
b) To learn or develop a skill	23	12	5	2	0	42
d) To create something	20	10	7	3	2	42
c) To learn to develop ideas	16	12	7	6	1	42
g) To discover if 'I can'	16	4	3	7	2	42
k) To meet like minded people	14	12	10	3	3	42
e) To satisfy curiosity	9	6	9	6	12	42
j) To access a further learning opportunity	6	10	4	7	15	42
m) To gain social self confidence	6	9	8	8	11	42
i) To obtain a qualification	6	6	3	9	18	42
l) To make social contact	5	10	8	10	9	42
n) To enhance my self esteem	3	10	8	9	12	42
f) To make money	3	5	10	13	11	42
h) To gain the approval of others	0	7	7	11	17	42

Table7: Students' answers to question eight of the evaluation questionnaire

One of the most striking features of this table is an apparent inconsistency with the replies to the original questionnaire. Students were asked to circle 'n/a' (not applicable) if a given motivating factor had not been ticked by them in the initial questionnaire. With just over half (42/81) of the original respondents completing the second questionnaire, however, the aggregate number of students circling any number for a given factor in several cases exceeds the number who originally ticked that factor (e, f, g, h, i, m, n). There are a number of possible reasons for this. It could be that some students failed to read or misread the rubric, or that they had forgotten which factors they had identified, and circled numbers for the ones they felt that they *might* have cited. On the other hand, it could be that their motivations changed and developed during the course of the year (a possibility discussed in Chapter 9) or that they are now acknowledging motivating factors which were present at the start of the course but which they chose not to acknowledge at that time. Whatever the reasons, it is worth comparing the above figures with figures based on a comparison of the

answers to question eight with the motivating factors given by individual students in the initial questionnaire. The table below includes only the ratings of those students who ticked each factor at the start of their courses:

	1	2	3	4	N/a	Total
a) To follow up an existing interest	24	2	6	1	0	33
b) To learn or develop a skill	22	10	5	2	1	40
d) To create something	19	4	5	2	1	31
g) To discover if 'I can'	12	5	1	2	1	21
c) To learn to develop ideas	12	5	7	6	0	30
k) To meet like minded people	9	6	3	2	0	20
i) To obtain a qualification	4	2	0	0	1	7
j) To access a further learning opportunity	4	2	1	2	1	10
l) To make social contact	2	2	1	1	1	7
f) To make money	2	1	1	3	3	10
n) To enhance my self esteem	1	4	0	1	0	6
e) To satisfy curiosity	1	1	0	1	5	8
m) To gain social self confidence	0	4	1	1	0	6
h) To gain the approval of others	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 8: Students' answers to question eight, including only those who have cited given factors in the initial questionnaire

Perhaps the most noticeable difference between the tables is that Table 8 shows far fewer negative responses than Table 7, possibly indicating that, when students choose to express an opinion about the success or otherwise of factors which were not featured amongst their own motivating factors, they are more inclined to rate those factors negatively. One could infer from this that their perceived lack of success in achieving such aims might be due simply to a lack of interest in those aims. On the other hand, for four factors the number of students giving positive ratings outstrips the number of students who ticked those factors initially. These are h, l, m and n, none of which was rated highly in the initial survey. All four are concerned with either self-developmental or social aims and were amongst the least popular motivating factors. It was suggested in the preceding chapter that such factors might be unpopular because of possible negative connotations they carry about the respondents. It was

also noted that none of these factors was referred to by students in response to the open-ended questions on the initial questionnaire (see Chapter 9.3). Perhaps students feel more able to acknowledge these aims in retrospect, or perhaps they did not have or are not aware that they had such aims at the start of their courses. Achieving 'success' in those areas might be seen as an unexpected bonus for students who feel they have also achieved their stated aims.

Both tables show that the areas in which students feel that they have been most successful are the ones which were cited most frequently as motivating factors (a, b and d); although a substantial minority, in all three cases, feels that those aims have not been achieved. All three of these factors were identified in the previous chapter as 'subject specific,' and all can be seen, in Woodley et al.'s terms, as being both instrumental and self-developmental (1987, 2-4). The other areas in which most students feel that they have been successful according to both tables are g, c, k, i and j. The first two of these have been identified as motivating factors concerned with self-development. Factor k (to meet like-minded people) would, in Woodley et al.'s groupings, be considered a 'social' factor. The difference between this and 'to make social contact', discussed in the previous chapter, is again evident in both tables. Factors i and j are clearly 'instrumental' and are concerned with learning in general. 'To obtain a qualification' (i) is the only one of the factors that can be measured objectively, as all the courses qualified successful students for ten HE credits. It is curious, then, that seven students who completed the course and the work set also rate i negatively (15c, 27c, 42ab, 44ab, 52b, 65b, 75b). As none of these students ticked this factor in the initial questionnaire, it could reasonably be inferred that they did not read the rubric for the question correctly; they may be trying to express a sense of the unimportance to them of gaining a qualification.

Perhaps this discrepancy indicates the greater validity of the figures in Table 8, as does the tendency of students to give negative ratings to factors which they did not cite initially, resulting in the five factors which were least often cited in the first questionnaire (e, h, i, l, m and n) receiving more negative than positive ratings. Indeed, when only the responses of those who initially cited them are considered, all these factors, with the exception of h (which was not cited by any of the respondents to the second survey) receive more positive than negative ratings. The only factor to receive a majority of negative ratings in both tables is 'To make money' (f), a result which would be expected as, however effective the courses might have been, it would be surprising to find many students making money from writing within six months of completing their courses. Nevertheless, three students do claim to have been 'successful' or 'very successful' in achieving this goal.

The general picture emerging from these data is that most students are broadly satisfied with the outcomes of their courses, considering that they have been 'successful' or 'very successful' in achieving their stated aims in over 70% of cases.[2] However, this leaves a substantial minority of the population claiming to be unsuccessful in achieving at least one stated aim. In fact, all the negative responses shown in Table 8 come from fifteen students (12ab, 18c, 21c, 22c, 25c, 26c, 27c, 35ab, 42ab, 44ab, 63b, 66b, 70e, 73e, 74e). Indeed, seven students, including four of the thirteen respondents who failed to complete their courses, state that they have been unsuccessful in most of their aims (21c, 22c, 63b, 66b, 70e, 73e, 74e), which suggests a general level of dissatisfaction amongst a significant minority of students.

Further evidence of how successful respondents feel the courses have been in meeting their expectations can be found in their answers to questions eleven to

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[2] If all the '1's and '2's are added together in Table 8, the total (166) represents 72% of the aggregate of ticks given to factors a -n in the initial survey by the students who completed the evaluation questionnaire (229).

fourteen, which ask: what were the most important things learned; how, if at all, the courses have changed their attitude/approach to writing; whether and how they feel their writing has improved; and what they intend to do next in terms of both writing and continuing education. Questions fifteen and sixteen, asking the students what they liked or enjoyed most and least about their courses, and question seventeen, which invites comments on anything the respondents feel has not been covered elsewhere, also give opportunities for students to comment on motivating factors.

Responses to question eleven (What do you think were the most important things you learned?) are overwhelmingly concerned with the acquisition of skills, 34 of the 42 respondents citing discrete skills to do with writing. The words 'structure' or 'structuring' are used by ten students and 'plot' or 'plotting' by a further three.[3] Typical responses are 'the structure inherent in each script' (1d), 'how to structure a situation comedy (57b)' and 'structure and planning' (19c). Although the above responses suggest that all the tutors discussed structure, as would be expected given the emphasis given to the teaching of that aspect of writing in their interviews (see Chapter 8), two students feel that aspects of structure have not been covered. One, in answer to question sixteen, claims that 'some basic structures such as "the three act play" weren't covered' in Diane's class (9d). A student from Andrew and Brian's class, in response to question seventeen, considers that 'the main aspects omitted in [her] opinion were practical details with regard to length of acts, length of play, how many pages of script, when to have an intermission, etc.' (30ab).

The importance of planning, related mainly to structure, is reflected in the two answers to question eleven which refer to writing a synopsis. Seven people mention 'character' or 'characterisation': for example, ' I have learned the importance of conflict

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[3] See Appendix F, Table 14 for details of which students mentioned which skills etc. in response to open questions.

and negotiating when developing characters' (42ab) and 'how to build your characters' (6d). Presentation and layout are mentioned by two students, as is dialogue. Other skills mentioned are concerned with awareness of the specific medium for which one is writing and its audience: for example, 'show, don't tell' (34ab), 'thinking cinematically' (17c) and 'how to engage an audience' (31ab). One student, however, says that he 'would have appreciated more explanation of the physical problems of staging' (37ab).

Answers to question twelve (How, if at all, has the course changed your attitude/approach to writing?) reflect the emphasis placed on developing particular skills, with four students referring specifically to structure, one to dialogue and one to character. In addition, one student refers to the 'technicalities of scriptwriting (e.g. structure, scenes, sequences)', which he described as 'fascinating' in his response to question fifteen (76e). Answers to question thirteen (Do you feel your writing has improved? If so in what way(s)?) also tend to focus on skills that have been acquired, eight students referring to aspects of structure and plotting, five to character, one to layout and one to awareness of the medium. These answers echo the answers given to question seventeen of the initial student questionnaire (How do you think the course will benefit you?), which also elicit references to story and plot, character and presentation (see Chapter 9.3). The responses to the evaluation questionnaire tend to be more detailed, however, and suggest that students have refined and defined the somewhat vague ideas of what scriptwriting entails that they had when they started their courses. Another way in which the answers to the open-ended questions echo those from the initial questionnaire is in the emphasis placed by some students on concepts such as 'discipline' and 'focus'.

These answers might at first sight appear to relate only to motivating factor b (To learn to develop a skill), yet this factor, as we have already seen (Chapter 9.3), cannot be separated from factors c (developing ideas) and d (creating something). Although the development of ideas is mentioned specifically by only two students and the notion of 'creating something' by one, the discrete skills cited above are surely those needed to develop the students' ideas and thereby create the script or scripts which they intend to write. Furthermore, the fact that the majority of respondents (29/42) have completed their courses and the work set shows that they did, indeed, create something.

An acknowledgement of the hard work involved in writing a script is inherent in many of the above answers, and is made explicit by some students, such as student 15c, who says that the most important thing he has learned is 'how difficult screenwriting is!' Three more students emphasise the importance of re-drafting. Most answers imply that the respondents think that such work is worthwhile. Given the number of students who, on embarking on their courses, declared that they were 'following up an existing interest' (see Table 6, Chapter 9), this must have been expected.

Some of the answers to questions eleven and twelve are revealing about how individuals' sense of their own abilities can change or develop during a course. Six students refer directly to their sense of their own ability. Two students seem to have achieved a greater belief in their own ability: 'it helped me realize that I was better than I thought' (21c) and 'it feels more achievable - seen it as something you can develop. Not just divine inspiration!' (12ab). One writes: 'I think I learned the actual extent of my capabilities. I feel I know what skills I lack and possibly how to fill the gaps' (59b). Another answer that suggests the importance of understanding one's own

weaknesses as well as strengths, although not incorporating any sense of using this knowledge as a spur to improvement, is 'I'm not as good as I thought' (40ab). Finally, one student, having stated baldly: 'I can't write' (22c) in answer to question eleven, answers the following question with 'helped me recognise my limitations.' While such an answer might be seen as an indication that this student's experience of the course has been one of failure, it is also possible to see it as a positive outcome. After all, if some students sign up for courses out of curiosity or a desire to test their ability, surely the discovery that one is not suited to or committed to scriptwriting can at least be seen as step forward in terms of self-development and self-awareness.

That most of the students feel that their writing has improved - a much more conventional idea of a successful outcome - is confirmed by the answers given to question thirteen (Do you feel your writing has improved? If so, in what way(s)?). Seventeen respondents begin their answers with 'yes'. A further six give reasons for their work's improvement without using the word 'yes'. Two say 'no', one adding 'left course' (73e); one replies 'can't say - haven't written in a while (nothing to do with the course, I hasten to add)' (12ab); and one is at pains to point out that any improvement is not due to anything he has learned on the course ('not due to the course. My writing improved only after I asked the advice of other writers' (21c)). Two respondents put down any improvement to 'practice', begging the question of whether they would have practised writing had they not attended their course (See Appendix G, Table 15 for student codes).

Interestingly, seven respondents see their 'success' (expressed in answers to questions eleven, twelve and fifteen, as well as fourteen) in terms of developing self-confidence, which might be related to two of the six motivating factors which were identified as 'secondary' reasons in Chapter 9.3: m (to gain social self-confidence) and

b (to enhance my self-esteem). However, in most of these cases 'confidence' is related to belief in one's ability as a writer rather than social skills: 'now feel more confident, not so precious about work, more productive' (52b); 'getting confidence about my work' (18c); ' a much more confident outlook to writing backed with practical skills and knowledge' (8d); and 'I am not as self-conscious about my work. The course has given me confidence with regard to the quality of my writing' (30ab). In one case the student says the course 'made [him] confident (a little too much considering no major works)' (26c), the parenthetical qualification suggesting that this confidence is related directly to writing. Another simply put 'self belief', which could be related to social or self-developmental aims of a more general nature.

Similarly, three answers to question fifteen (What did you like/enjoy most about the course?) can be related directly to factor 1 (To make social contact), indicating the importance for some adult students of the social aspect of evening classes. These are: 'interaction with others' (53b); 'meeting like-minded people from various social and economic backgrounds' (75e); and 'meeting like-minded people & forming friendships' (77e). The views of students about the value of interaction with other members of their groups will be discussed further below (Chapter 10.2).

Question fourteen on the evaluation questionnaire was intended to elicit information about how far students might feel their courses have given them access to further learning opportunities (j) and enabled them to make money (f), by asking them what they intend to do next in terms of writing (14a) and continuing education (14b).

Perhaps the most striking feature of the respondents' answers to the first part of question fourteen is that they, like answers to other open questions, appear to contradict the responses given to question eight, when one considers whether students regard the courses as a way into professional writing. According to the responses to

question eight, very few scriptwriting students feel that they have been successful in their aim of making money. This might be expected in view of the fact that a relatively small number (21, including ten who subsequently completed the evaluation questionnaire) of the respondents have ticked 'to make money' as a motivating factor in the initial questionnaire, only five referring to potential professional work in answer to question seventeen (see Chapter 9.3). However, evidence from elsewhere in the questionnaire suggests that, while very few, if any, of them, have, at the time of completing the questionnaire, made any money (none specifically mentioning it), a substantial proportion of students have emerged from the courses with a clear aim of trying to make money.

Thirteen responses to question fourteen make references to submitting their work to theatres or television companies; for example, 'create new radio pieces, submit to the BBC' (5d) and 'I intend to submit my plays to local theatres for consideration' (30ab). Another writes that that he has 'ideas to promote [his] work, and [is] doing so at present' (59b), without giving any details of what this might involve; and two mention work in production which may or may not be earning them money: 'an animated series (pilot episode) is in Cannes. 10min short filmed in L'pool. 90 min film to be made in L'pool' (21c) and 'currently writing a sketch show to be performed at Edinburgh Festival (Theatre Workshop)' (66b). A further three express themselves in terms that indicate that they might try to make money from their writing in the near future. Twenty respondents, although not expressing their answers in terms of marketing their work, clearly indicate their intention to carry on writing. These answers range from vague expressions of a desire to continue writing ('continue to write at home' (73e) and 'try to do more' (53b)) to answers which include references to specific objectives connected to their own writing: 'to continue converting a

screenplay I had written into a stage play' (39ab); 'develop my script from a 30 min play into a full length play, particularly in line with feed back from [Brian] and [Andrew]' (34ab); and 'write a feature length script' (27c). Student 9d intends to 'form a writing partnership with a fellow student'. Another student intends to 'wait a while' before writing again and only one expresses a firm intention of not writing ('retire') (12ab, 22c). In addition, four students include in their answers to question twelve ('How, if at all, has the course changed your attitude to writing?') references to professional writing. Student 76e refers to a more professional 'approach' to writing, 15c mentions joining BAFTA and 52b has learned that 'its [sic] just as important to sell yourself as a writer as it is to finish your ideas'. The fourth student in this group, one of only two who express a desire to give up scriptwriting, says that she has decided to concentrate on writing short stories for women's magazines, 'as ... the market for this is extensive and would enable [her] to produce more pieces in a shorter time' (6d). Another student answers question thirteen (Do you feel your writing has improved? If so, in what way(s)?) with 'Yes. It has become more professional' (5d).

Rather oddly, in the light of so many respondents' declared intention to submit their work and their apparent confidence in knowing how to go about it, two students, answering question seventeen, seem to think that they were not given enough guidance about becoming professional writers. One writes: 'I believe that all these courses should have a final section which aids the students in their attempt to get their work published broadcast or accepted' (9d); and the other asks: 'After completing a script, what do you do next, where do I send it?' (55b) [4]

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[4] In fact Brian says that he spent much of his ten-week 'bolt on' course looking at this issue (Interview 2003). Possibly the student did not attend the extra sessions.

Just as many of the answers to the second part of question fourteen appear to contradict students' answers to question eight, so do answers to the first part. In spite of the fact that the results of both the initial student survey and the evaluation survey appear to show that accessing further educational opportunities is of little or no importance to most students, 25 respondents indicate that they intend to take other courses, a further three having already taken or started courses at the time of writing. Two more say they will consider other courses in the future; one says she will only do so if a sign language interpreter is provided (66b); two say they are 'not sure' (35ab and 63b); and one is considering 'none' (38ab).

This apparent inconsistency might be explained by the nature of the courses the students intend to take. While seven respondents are not specific about what sort of course (either in terms of subject, institution or qualifications) they intend to join, giving answers such as 'always!' 'continue' and 'professional continuing education is a way of life' (59b, 40ab, 25c), sixteen indicate that they are interested in further writing courses but make no reference to progression in terms of qualifications (for example, 'further courses in writing & song writing & poetry if available' and 'other related courses if possible' (34ab, 73e)). Two more students mention courses in other subjects, one looking for a course in philosophy or oceanography (19c). The other says that he intends to 'attend cookery classes', but in the context of his questionnaire as a whole this is almost certainly ironic (22c). Only three respondents answer the question in terms of progression and qualifications: 'I'm in Edinburgh studying an MA/MFA in Theatre Production which also has creative writing modules' (46ab); 'Depends what's on offer. Am starting an MA in Creative Writing in October 2003' (74e); and 'Yes, to attempt to get a degree' (9d). Another student, although not planning further courses, clearly thinks in terms of progression, referring (mistakenly)

to the University not offering any courses beyond level one (70e). It would seem then, that, although many students intend to take more classes, few see their courses as leading to other, more structured programmes of study, such as degree or postgraduate courses. This result *is* consistent with the answers to question eight. Undertaking further study appears to be, in most cases, a way of continuing with the work they have done on their recently completed courses, rather than a reason for having taken those courses. Signing up for further, similar courses cannot, therefore be seen as the achievement of one of their aims. Nevertheless, the fact remains that some students, albeit perhaps not as many as supporters of accreditation might wish, do seem to be using the courses as a route into higher education, thereby continuing in the tradition of the early writers' workshops (see Chapter 3.3).

Overall, it would appear most students have left their courses feeling that their stated reasons for taking those courses have been largely satisfied, showing that the courses have, for the most part, successfully embraced the wide variety of needs and desires expressed by adults embarking on scriptwriting courses. Although some students feel that their needs have not been met and they have not been successful in their aims, these feelings of dissatisfaction are not associated with any particular motivating factor or group of factors. In order to discover reasons for the perceived 'failure' of some students and 'success' of others, it is necessary to look at students' reactions to the teaching methods and techniques employed on their courses and their perception of the quality of various aspects of the delivery of those courses.

10.2 Students' feelings about teaching methods and styles

Students were asked to rate, in question nine of the evaluation questionnaire, again on a scale of one to four (one being 'useful' and four being 'useless') the efficacy, in their view, of various methods and techniques used by their tutors. The list is the same as that that given in the tutors' questionnaire, except that, for clarity, sub-divisions were eliminated (for example ci, cii and ciii in the tutors' questionnaire were relabelled as c, d and e, and subsequent options renumbered accordingly) and the two separate categories of guest speaker were combined, because no tutor had expressed an intention to use a guest speaker who was not a writer (see Appendix B). In the event, it was clear from the students' replies that none of the tutors had taped students' work (i), that Brian did not employ any guest speakers (j) or use any examples of his own work (g), and that only in Brian and Andrew's joint class were guests (actors) used to read students' work. All the other methods listed were used by all the tutors.

Answers to question nine are summarised in the table below. In order to arrive at a rank order for which methods were judged most effective, I have assigned to each one a value, arrived at by adding two each time a particular method was judged 'very useful' and one for 'useful', and subtracting two for 'totally useless' and one for 'useless'. For each method a maximum value, based on the number of students giving it a rating, is included in the ninth column. If all 42 students have given a rating to a particular method the maximum value will be 84 (42x2). Reasons for maximum values of less than 84 include tutors not using the method and individual students missing the class or classes wherein it was used. The final column shows an 'average value' per student, calculated by dividing the 'value' figure (column eight) by the number of students who gave a rating for that method (column seven), rounded to two

decimal places. This figure has been used to rank the methods in order of the most useful.

Rank order		1	2	3	4	Total	Value	Max. Value	Average Value
1	p) Individual mentoring	14	5	2	1	22	29	44	1.32
2	e) Reading of work by guests (e.g. actors)	4	2	1	0	7	9	14	1.29
3	a) Teacher talk/lecture	27	7	5	2	41	52	82	1.27
4	h) Examples of work by other writers	17	18	5	0	40	47	80	1.18
5	o) Writing exercises at home	20	10	3	3	36	41	72	1.14
6	k) Writing exercises in class: individually	12	11	4	1	28	29	56	1.04
7	d) Reading of work by other class members	21	9	4	5	39	37	78	0.95
8	g) Examples of tutor's work	12	11	6	1	30	27	60	0.9
9	b) Group discussion	19	10	8	3	40	34	80	0.85
10	j) Guest speakers	8	11	6	0	25	21	50	0.84
11	c) Reading of students' work by the writers	19	5	5	6	35	26	70	0.74
12	m) Writing exercises in class: small groups	10	7	9	1	27	16	54	0.59
13	l) Writing exercises in class: in pairs	8	8	6	2	24	14	48	0.58
14	f) Recordings of programmes about writers	6	15	10	2	33	13	66	0.39
15	n) Writing exercises in class: whole class	7	4	6	3	20	6	40	0.3

Table 9: Students' answers to question nine of the evaluation questionnaire, showing methods used by tutors ranked in order of 'usefulness'.

Although none of the methods used has been given a negative value by the surveyed group as a whole, some methods have been deemed 'useless' by a substantial minority of students. The method considered most useful is individual mentoring, although only 22 of the 42 respondents have experienced this, perhaps reflecting the essentially informal and *ad hoc* way in which this seems to have been carried out, there being no specific times or sessions set aside for the activity by the tutors observed (see Chapter 7.1). If we look for a connection between this activity and other activities/methods which are highly rated (say with an 'average value' of more than

one), they appear to range across the continuum between the tutor's roles as 'expert' and facilitator' proposed in Chapter 7.1. 'Teacher talk/lecture', the third most useful method, sits firmly at the 'expert' extreme of the continuum, while 'Writing exercises at home', 'Individual writing exercises in class' and 'Reading of work by guests' are all from the 'facilitator' end of the continuum. 'Mentoring' and 'Examples of work by other writers' come somewhere in the middle, the facilitation of each being more dependent on the tutor's expertise than are the instigation of writing exercises and reading.[5] The methods deemed less useful also range across the continuum, although tending a little more to the 'facilitator' end.

There is, however, a pattern of a different kind emerging from the data. Many of the less popular activities are either those which require students to work in a group (Group discussion: Writing exercises in class, in small groups, pairs or involving the whole class), or those which are simply provided by the tutor and whose 'usefulness' might depend on the content of what is provided and/or the use made of them by the tutor (Recordings of other writers' work; Guest speakers; Examples of the tutor's work). An analysis of responses by tutor suggests that the quality of these resources, or the use to which they were put by particular tutors, might well be an issue in h (Examples of work by other writers) and g (Examples of the tutor's work), as the negative responses come mainly from Charles's and Brian's classes in the case of the former,[6] while half the negative responses to the latter are from Charles's class. Negative responses to the use of guest speakers (j) are more evenly spread across the classes, but half of the six, again, come from Ernest's group.[7]

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[5] See Chapter 6 for a discussion of how the tutor plays more than one role during each activity.
[6] The number of students rating c either 3 or 4, broken down by tutor, is as follows: AB 1/9; B 5/6; C 4/8; D 0/6; E 1/5 (18c, 21c, 22c, 25c, 39ab, 53b, 57b, 63b, 65b, 66b, 73e). For g they are: AB 2/11; C3/7; D 0/7 and E 2/6 (15c, 18c, 21c, 40ab, 42ab, 73e, 74e). Tutor B did not use g.
[7] Negative responses to j were as follows: AB 2/10; D1/5; E 3/5 (6d, 37ab, 42ab, 70e, 73e, 77e).

The activities which are deemed more useful suggest an idea of 'usefulness' based on a relationship between the tutor and student, centring on that student's own work. During teacher talk/ lecture the students might be largely passive, but they are effectively connecting with that tutor's expertise and taking from it what is useful to their work.[8] They might be doing the same while listening to a guest speaker or watching a video about writing, but there are several differences between these two activities and teacher talk/lecture: the first two experiences tend to be 'one-off' events and the content might not be relevant to all the students' needs; the students might not feel able to question a guest (and cannot question a recorded programme) about their own concerns; and guest speakers may not have the expertise in teaching or sufficient knowledge of the students to understand the students' needs and share their subject expertise effectively. Perhaps 'examples of other writers' work' are more effective than guest speakers or programmes about writing because of the way in which they are used, usually to illustrate points made by the tutor and to stimulate discussion. Such examples would (presumably) be carefully chosen as examples of 'good practice' in scriptwriting, whereas the work of the guest speakers or the tutors might not be considered by the students to be of such high quality. However, the reactions of a number of students to the examples of other writers' work suggest this is not always the case. Five students cite videos or live shows that they have seen as the aspect of the course they liked or enjoyed least, one mentioning 'videos that [he has] seen several times' (70e) and another feeling that 'the plays were not suitable for learning and [he] thought it was a waste of time' (39ab); while none mentions these in answer to question fifteen (What did you like/enjoy most about the course?). None of the respondents feels sufficiently strongly about examples of tutors' work or guest

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[8] Although 'lectures' is only given by one student (38ab) as the aspect of the course most liked or enjoyed, other students comment enthusiastically on their tutors' expertise or knowledge. This will be discussed in Section 3 of this chapter.

speakers to comment on them either positively or negatively in response to the open-ended questions.

Writing exercises to be done at home are clearly considered more useful than those done in class, with five students focussing on this aspect in their answers to question fifteen. One mentions a specific exercise ('we had to redraft a scene from our original script in line with "negotiations" and "objects"' (34ab)); another cites 'the challenge of completing the final draft' (65b). Three others write in more general terms, one liking 'the fact that we all had to turn up work' (37ab) and two, 'homework' (39ab, 57b). The one negative response to work done outside the class refers to 'overheard negotiations' (a variation on the 'overheard voices' referred to in Chapter 7.3), his concern seemingly referring to the difficulty of the exercise rather than any sense of its being unhelpful (34ab). One answer to question seventeen is of interest here, as it gives a clear sense of the student's sense of the relationship between tutor and student. She writes that she feels more assignments should have been set 'providing the tutor with more of an idea of [her] style of writing which would have enabled [the tutor] to offer more personal advice as to [the student's] future writing' (6d). The same student's answer to question sixteen is that there was 'not enough personal - one to one discussion', suggesting that, although individual mentoring is highly valued by many students, not everyone feels that there is enough of it.

Turning to writing exercises in class, it appears that individual work done in class is rated more highly than group work, the table seeming to show that the more students are involved in an exercise the less useful individuals consider it to be. Although two students mention exercises in class as the aspect of the course they enjoyed most, five mention exercises or games as the part of the course they liked or enjoyed least, one of these specifying individual work and two group work.

This mixed response to the use of writing exercises in class is rather surprising, as the classes wherein these were used (AB1, B1, B2) seemed to the observer to be the most stimulating and dynamic of all those observed. Perhaps that should act as a *caveat* to researchers and other observers. Could it be that that observers can see teaching situations almost as a form of entertainment, placing too much emphasis on variety and innovation, while undervaluing teaching styles and methods which appear to them to be dull or uninspiring? On the other hand, one should bear in mind that these activities were still given positive ratings by most of the respondents who experienced them, and that the negative comments are to some extent balanced by the reactions of those who value them highly. The response of student 44ab could be illuminating: 'Group work!! Why???! I don't work well with others!' This is indicative of a student's awareness of her own preferred way of learning and could be seen as an endorsement rather than a rejection of Brian's practice, based on his faith in theories about differing learning styles.

Looking at the three different ways in which students' work may be read, it is clear that almost all students who experienced it (in Andrew and Brian's class) feel that having their work read by actors was useful. There is less agreement about the value of having work read by other students or the writers themselves, although the former is more popular than the latter. It was noted during the observations that two tutors specifically requested that students did not read their own work because they felt that writers should listen to their work (D1, E1), a policy that also seemed to be the norm elsewhere (B1). In the light of this, it is a little surprising that so many students gave a rating to the reading of work by its writer; it could be that they are referring to the reading of short ideas and synopses, which tended to be read by the writers in the observed classes, rather than the reading of dialogue (C1, E1).

As with group discussion and exercises, interaction with other students is considered less than useful by a substantial proportion of scriptwriting students. A sense that there might be a lack of interest in 'the group' on the part of many students is supported by the low numbers including 'social' aspects among their motivating factors (See Chapter 9.3). This is intriguing, as it flies in the face of the principles behind writers' workshops and some tutors' assumptions that much of the value of writing classes is derived from sharing one's work with and having it discussed by one's peers. The large proportion of time devoted to 'workshopping' by all the tutors in the study, as well as their references to it in interviews, suggests that they accept, almost as a 'given', the value of such methods. Their students, however, while certainly not rejecting such methods *en masse*, seem to be assigning more value to teaching methods which centre either on the tutor's knowledge about the subject or on themselves as individuals rather than members of a group. Rob Mimpriss has written about his disaffection with workshops, admitting a 'temperamental bias against group work':

> After several years of teaching and participating in creative writing workshops, I have become increasingly disaffected with the way writers work in groups. I have been moving towards the conclusion that the workshop has little to offer the writer, and may at times do harm. I have also learned through conversation, that a number of students and teachers feel as I do, and their feelings are affirmed by writers who dissociate themselves from creative writing teaching. (2002, 23)

Mimpriss especially values, as a PhD student, 'one-to-one tuition from a writer whose supervision reflects his talent, intelligence and insight' (Ibid.), echoing the Liverpool students' apparent appreciation of accessing their tutors' expertise through mentoring. He acknowledges that many people are still enthusiastic about workshops, but his voice does reflect a growing unease amongst teachers of writing about over-dependence on the workshop.

The teaching of writing in Liverpool has moved from relying almost entirely on workshop methods to the varied practice observed during 2002/3. The survey of students might suggest that such changes are welcome. It might also suggest that tutors could move even further from the workshop model of teaching writing. However, a consideration of students' answers to open-ended questions, particularly questions fifteen and sixteen, gives a more complex picture of students' feelings about the use of workshop techniques. Three respondents cite the reading and discussion of students' work as the thing they liked or enjoyed least,[9] with a further two mentioning 'discussion' in more general terms and two mentioning the reading out of their own work. Negative student responses to the reading and discussion of work include: 'I find it hard reading out my own work as I am a shy person' (76e); and 'the reading of other people's scripts and the feedback from the class...went on for too many weeks. And became a talk shop' (57b). On the other hand, 21 students give answers to question fifteen (What did you like/enjoy most about the course?) which relate closely to workshop sessions. Seven of these include references to the reading of their work or that of others, including one who adds that he would have liked 'more time to have other people comment on the script' (15c). Three of these students also mention criticism or feedback, one especially enjoying the 'reading of the scripts and hearing the differing styles and ideas of fellow students and feedback and analysis of each others work' (34ab). A further three mention feedback or criticism without reference to reading as such. One of these also says, in answer to question eleven, that the most important thing she learned was 'to listen, take advice not be afraid of criticism' (14d), this student being one of four who mention feedback and/or criticism in response to this question (9d, 14d, 30ab, 42ab). Another joins student 15c in wishing there had

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[9] For details of teaching methods mentioned in response to questions fifteen and sixteen, see Appendix F table 17.

been more time: 'personally I would have liked more time to read/workshop scripts after they had been worked on as this I felt was a bit hurried' (77e). Student 37ab refers, in answer to question thirteen, to improving his work by incorporating suggestions made by others. Ten students, answering question fifteen, talk about the class or group as whole in rather more general positive terms, such as 'swapping ideas with other writers' (35ab), 'the atmosphere in class' (42ab) and 'the shared experience of a group of students' (9d).

These results suggest a degree of enthusiasm for workshop methods, so how can they be reconciled with the idea, proposed above and based on responses to question nine, that students prefer teaching methods which are concerned with a personal relationship between the student and tutor and centre on the student's work? The key lies in the respondents' frequent use of the words 'criticism' and 'feedback'. Class readings and discussions are seen as valuable primarily because they are the arena in which the writer (the individual student) is normally given criticism of his or her own work, not because students necessarily enjoy listening to and criticising other students' work. Indeed, those students who mention criticism without relating it to readings or discussion could be thinking of criticism given to them individually by the tutor, whether in informal mentoring sessions (reflecting the positive reaction to individual mentoring seen in Table 9) or as comments on assessed work. Their ideal might be the sort of one-to-one tuition described by Mimpriss (2002, 24), but these are not PhD students. They are members of adult education classes and, while it might be feasible for tutors to consider making more time available for mentoring, they also have to take into account not only the practical restraints of time and money, but also the learning preferences of the many students who do value the group experience.

It is clear, in view of the above responses, that any attempt to consign the writers' workshop to the dustbin of history would not only be premature, but could also have a detrimental effect on adult scriptwriting students' learning. The students' responses might indicate, however, that workshops alone are no longer enough; and that tutors are probably wise to avoid over-reliance on any one teaching method or group of teaching methods, as the students' reactions to those in use in Liverpool in 2002/3 are as complex and varied as the make-up of the student population itself.

10.3 Students' perceptions of the quality of scriptwriting courses

As well as ranking the success or otherwise of the courses in meeting their expectations and the effectiveness of teaching methods used on the courses, students were invited (in answering question ten) to assess the overall quality of their courses by rating seven aspects of the course on a scale of one (excellent) to four (very poor). The responses to these questions were analysed in the same way as the responses to question nine. As the table below shows, the overall impression given by the data is that the majority of students are happy with their experience of scriptwriting courses, all seven aspects gaining many more positive than negative ratings.

Rank order		1	2	2/3	3	4	Value	Max. value	Average value
1	a) Tutor's subject knowledge	27	9	0	4	1	57	82	1.39
2	b) Tutor's ability to communicate	28	7	0	4	3	53	84	1.26
3	g) Atmosphere in class	29	5	0	4	4	51	84	1.21
4	d) Organisation and planning	20	15	0	4	3	45	84	1.07
5	f) Attitude of students	23	9	1	7	2	44	84	1.05
6	c) Content of course	16	18	0	4	3	40	82	0.98
7	e) Standard of work	17	14	1	5	3	37	80	0.93
Total		160	77	2	32	19	327	580	1.13

Table 10: Students' perception of the quality of scriptwriting courses

The table shows very little difference between the various aspects of the courses, with between five and nine people responding negatively to each aspect. A closer look at the completed questionnaires reveals that only seven students give a rating of three or four to more than half of the aspects, forming a 'hard core' of disaffected students, all of whom who also answer questions eight and nine mostly negatively (18c, 21c, 25c, 66d, 70e, 73e, 74e). All but one of these students attended either Charles's or Ernest's course, the exception being a student on Brian's course whose negative experiences seem to have arisen entirely from her deafness, on which she comments in several answers: for example, 'Communication difficulties (I am deaf). Unfortunately the University did not have funds to provide a sign language interpreter' (66b).[10] The fact that the other six are concentrated on two courses suggests that it is worth analysing responses by tutor. The table below shows ratings given to all aspects of the quality of courses arranged by tutor.

	No.	1	2	2/3	3	4	Value	Max value	Average value
Diane	7	39	10	0	0	0	88	98	1.80
Andrew/Brian	12	58	20	0	4	1	130	166	1.57
Brian	8	29	18	0	5	3	65	110	1.18
Ernest	6	15	10	2	14	1	24	84	0.57
Charles	9	19	19	0	9	14	20	122	0.33
Total	42	160	77	2	32	19	327	580	1.13

Table 11: Students' ratings of the quality of scriptwriting courses by tutor

This table clearly demonstrates the clustering of negative responses in two of the five courses. Although the table suggests no great disparity in levels of satisfaction between the seven aspects listed in question ten, answers to open questions do suggest

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[10] Other criticisms concerned with matters of planning and organisation which are without the remit of individual tutors were: 'There should be day classes' (14d); 'A time of 6-8 p.m. would be better' (8d); and 'I think the issues of rooms should be considered. A poor environment does not put you in the mood for writing' (65b). Each of these issues was mentioned by one student only.

certain common concerns. These concerns can be grouped into three main areas: the contents of the course; the other students on the courses; and the tutors themselves.

Perhaps the most telling general criticisms of the contents of courses concern what one student calls 'misrepresentation' (25c). One student objects to her course being advertised as 'Scriptwriting for Film and Television' when it 'only ever covered tv' (74e). For others, the issue is essentially one of standards and levels of achievement. Three students (25c, 70e, 73e) criticise the fact that their courses were advertised as 'advanced' in the prospectus (University of Liverpool Centre for Continuing Education 2002, 22-23). One considers Ernest's course to have been 'very basic' (73e), and another student on the same course states that 'some course members had no previous writing tuition so this inevitably affected the way course time was used. They would have been better served in the introductory classes' (70e). Answers to question ten of the initial student questionnaire (Have you previously attended writing classes or workshops?), however, do not support this assertion, as only two of the thirteen respondents from Ernest's course say they have no previous experience; in contrast, nine of the fifteen respondents from Charles's course, also described as being 'advanced', say they have not previously attended courses or workshops.

On the other hand, two students, one from Andrew and Brian's course and another from Diane's, display some doubt about whether they were ready for the courses. Yet, according to the prospectus, for the first of these 'no previous experience of playwriting is assumed' (University of Liverpool Centre for Continuing Education 2002, 23); while the latter is described as being 'for students who wish to acquire the basic skills and craft required to write for radio and television' (Ibid., 21). Student 30ab writes that 'when the tutors mentioned famous plays that [she] hadn't read, [she]

sometimes felt out of [her] depth', and student 12d says that she was 'not sure what stage of writing [she] was supposed to be at.'

All this suggests that ideas about what an 'advanced' or a 'basic' course might vary considerably from student to student and, perhaps, from tutor to tutor. These variations could indicate a problem arising from the 'open-access' nature of the courses. Tutors and administrators cannot 'police' entry to the courses on the basis of ability or, indeed, previous experience. They can, at best, advise prospective students about appropriate courses on the basis of information given by the students. Ultimately, it is up to potential students to define for themselves what the prospectus means by terms such as 'advanced' and 'basic', and to decide whether they are ready for a particular course. However, this does not let tutors and organisers 'off the hook' entirely. They may not be able to control the intake into their courses, but they should have a clear idea of what they mean by the terms they use in their prospectus entries and may be entitled, having used those terms, to assume a certain amount of prior experience (or lack of any experience) on the part of their students when planning their courses.

Nevertheless, the observations made of Charles and Ernest's teaching do lead me to agree with the student quoted above, in feeling that the pace and content of these courses were dictated to a large extent by the needs and demands of the students (C1, C2, E1, E2). Such a response to student need by a tutor would usually, and properly, be considered an aspect of good teaching, as the tutor is assessing and responding to the students' needs and attempting to provide, in the terms of social constructivism, the appropriate scaffolding to enable them reach the 'zone of proximal development' where effective learning can take place (Bruner 1985, 24-25). But it is almost inevitable that an open-access adult class will include students at very different

stages in their learning. Effective differentiation between students in the same class (except by outcome) is extremely difficult to achieve within the constraints of the twenty-week adult course. Possible solutions to this problem would be not to advertise any courses as 'advanced', or to demand a certain number of HE credits from students enrolling on these courses, thereby making them into level two or level three courses and so reducing the number of courses that are truly open to all. But this would not address the issue of students who are not ready for the 'basic' course and would ignore the fact that many students on the 'advanced' courses, who do have previous experience of writing classes, appear to be satisfied with the level of those courses.

The issue of standards of work, the attitude of students and the atmosphere in class can be related both to tutors and fellow students. As discussed in the previous section of this chapter, issues surrounding group work and interaction with fellow students throw up the sharpest divisions between the views of different respondents. Responses to question ten show that a large majority of students rates both the atmosphere in class and the attitude of the students as 'one' or 'two'. All those who give negative ratings are, with the exception of two students, from Charles's and Ernest's classes: six from the former and two from the latter. The exceptions are the student with hearing difficulties referred to above (66b), and student 38b, who rated only these two aspects and the tutors' subject knowledge negatively, but whose answers to open questions throw no light on the reasons for these ratings. Indeed, only one student gives answers which expand on her disaffection with her fellow students: student 73e, who says that 'on occasions there was a definite hostile atmosphere in class'.

This student's responses deserve closer attention, as she is one of the few to provide a detailed analysis of her reasons for dissatisfaction, including both tutor and students in a rather impassioned rejection of her course, which, she says, 'was biased in favour of an anarchic and controversial genre'.[11] In answer to question twelve, she writes:

> The course has lead [*sic*] me to believe that anything that is written which is not:
> a: left wing
> b: working class
> c: northern
> d: containing expletives
> is not worth the paper it's written on (73e).

I did not detect a 'hostile atmosphere' in Ernest's class in either of the observed sessions, but I did notice a common thread through the scripts being read out which lends some credence to this student's critique. Most of the scripts were certainly 'northern' (surely to be expected, though, in a class taking place in the North of England), centring mostly on 'working class' characters and containing many more 'expletives' than I heard in any of the other classes. Whether this was the result of the tutor's preferences, the result of a kind of peer pressure or simply coincidental, it is impossible to say; but it is not difficult to see how the dominance of such a style could contribute to a feeling of alienation amongst some students. This student's reaction is echoed to some extent by student 44ab, who feels that 'there is an underlying prejudice for bland, predictable plays about jolly scouse wags in amusing situations', suggesting perhaps the continuation of the kind of insularity noted in the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop and the Playwrights' Workshop by Janice Sear and Catherine Hayes respectively (Interviews 2002).

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[11] In view of the rest of her answer, I think she may mean 'archaic' rather than 'anarchic'.

Other disaffected students lay the blame squarely on their tutors. Two of Ernest's students mention him in answer to question sixteen: 'Inconsistency of tutor...his suggestions for improving script changed weekly'; 'Tutor's attitude and inconsistency' (74e, 73e). One of Charles's disaffected students mentions a 'lack of direction/ organisation' (25c), while another gives him as the reason for not completing the course, calling him 'a bitter self-obsessed arsehole who had no qualifications to teach anyway', the same student claiming, inaccurately if the ratings given on the evaluation questionnaire are to be believed, that 'every single person on my course has negative feedback regarding the tutor. All but 3 left the course after only a few weeks' (21c).[12] The only other student who gives a reason for leaving directly connected with the quality of the course is 25c, who says that 'it was like a self help group for film and tv junkies. Tutor did not control class.' Ten other respondents did not complete their courses but do not cite their tutors or the quality of the courses among their reasons for dropping out. Three of these (14d, 30ab and 70e) give illness as the reason and three give other personal, work and/or family commitments (19c, 38ab and 46ab). Student 66b again mentions her communication difficulties and 35ab cites the difficulty of attending classes in the evening. 22c dropped out when it was 'time to hand in work set', while 12d thinks she was not 'doing course at right time'.

These results echo Wilkinson's study of adult education 'drop-outs', which concludes that 'most students who stop attending classes do so for personal reasons rather than because of any dissatisfaction with the class (the figures in the exercise show a ratio of three to one)'. Only 5% of drop-outs in his study criticised their tutors (1982, 36). May, however, in her study of the attitudes and attendance behaviour of

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[12] The class which was the subject of observation C2, made in the eighteenth week of the course, was attended by four students.

students at a Camden college, suggests that a tutor's personality and methods are key factors in determining levels of satisfaction. She finds no difference in external pressures or demographic variables between regular attenders and drop-outs, but does note a higher degree of satisfaction with internal and educational aspects of courses among regular attenders. The most noticeable difference between the two groups studied is that 'regular attenders found their teachers to be interesting, encouraging and demanding, whilst students who dropped out perceived their teachers as lacking in these qualities'. She also identifies a degree of 'anger' directed towards tutors by the drop-outs (1985, 9).

It should be said here that six of the nine respondents from Charles's course and three of the six from Ernest's course give their tutors positive ratings for both knowledge and communication. Indeed, student 26c praises the 'encouragement given by tutor' and 27c 'liked the tutor's style.' From such replies one gains an impression of tutors capable of arousing very different reactions in different students. Much of this might be due to their personalities and/or teaching styles. Other factors, such as the perceived 'misrepresentation' of their courses and the attitude of fellow students, undoubtedly played a part in alienating some students. Certainly, I was not surprised to find some students having a negative reaction to Charles's class for several reasons. First, during the first observation I made, it seemed that a small number of students were allowed to dominate discussion (C1). Second, there was a severe fall in his student numbers between the two classes observed (see Appendix D). Finally, his strong views about his role as a scriptwriting tutor might well have alienated some students (Interview 2003). I also noted that there seemed to be no such problems with his students at JMU, suggesting that the make-up of his class may have had a lot to do

with the unsatisfactory experience of some of his students. The negative ratings and responses to Ernest's class were, however, quite unexpected.

Andrew, Brian and Diane, on the other hand, receive no negative comments about their teaching. Brian is praised for being 'very good, non threatening, non pressurised, helpful' (63b), and because he 'had a good attitude and was knowledgeable about subject' (66b). His and Andrew's 'sweeping knowledge of playwriting' is mentioned by student 44ab and their 'expert preparation' by 42ab. Diane is called a 'very gifted and supportive teacher' (8d) and praised for her 'enthusiasm and humour [which] communicated some really insightful ideas in fun, interesting ways' (12d). As with Andrew and Brian, her expertise as a practising, professional writer is highly valued. Two of her students answer question fifteen thus:

> The tutor [Diane] was 'one of us' - a writer, not just a teacher telling us how they think it should be done. Her work experiences were relevant to what we wanted to learn. (6d)
>
> 1) Having a successful professional writer as tutor
> 2) Having such a great group of fellow students. (5d)

On this tutor's course there would appear to have been no students with any negative criticism of either the tutor or the other students, all those who completed the questionnaire reporting an entirely positive experience.

On the basis of students' responses to the evaluation questionnaire, one might say that Diane's course was entirely successful, Brian and Andrew's courses were overwhelmingly successful and Charles and Ernest's less so. However, it would be unwise to measure the success or otherwise of a particular course, or of scriptwriting courses in general, only in terms of students' responses. Other ways in which the success of these courses might be measured are considered below.

10.4 Are these scriptwriting courses successful?

The difficulties involved in deciding whether or not adult classes are successful have already been discussed with reference to the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop and the Playwrights' Workshop (Chapters 3.3 and 4.3). It was suggested that their success, in retrospect, could be judged chiefly by their longevity, influence and the success of their members or students in subsequent years. The courses studied in 2002/3 might certainly be judged to be successful courses in terms of the first of these criteria. The courses taught by Charles, Diane, Ernest and by Brian and Andrew jointly have all been part of the University of Liverpool's programme for over ten years. Brian's course was in its fifth year in 2002/3 (University of Liverpool Centre for Continuing Education 1993-2002). Their influence on practice elsewhere is more difficult to assess, although clearly one course, the current incarnation of the Playwrights' Workshop, has been influential historically (see Chapter 4.3). Furthermore, several of these teachers also teach, or have taught, on courses run by other providers, suggesting that ideas and practices learned and developed at the University of Liverpool have been transferred to their work elsewhere (see Chapter 6.3), their influence thus reaching far beyond the University. The success or otherwise of the students, whether in terms of professional achievement or further education, cannot be measured so soon after the end of their courses. However, it is clear from their answers to question fourteen of the evaluation questionnaire that many students intend to pursue a professional writing career and/or access further educational opportunities. A longitudinal study of former students, with the object of gauging their success or otherwise in these areas, would be of great interest. As no such study has been undertaken in the past, the only evidence we have at the moment of former

students' achievements is little more than anecdotal, although it can be said that several students from previous years have achieved some professional success.[13]

It might be thought that, with the introduction of accreditation and increasing assessment of students' work, the success of courses could be measured in terms of students' progress. However, with open-access courses such as these, one can only say that most students completed the course and achieved HE credits. It is impossible to measure whether the students' writing has improved, as they are not assessed on entry to the courses and there are no standards of prior achievement on which any 'value added' measurement can be based. This also suggests opportunities for further research. It would be of great interest, for example, to collect examples of a student cohort's work both on entry and on completion and have it assessed by independent tutors.

When considering the success or otherwise of these courses we are, then, left with the students' subjective assessments of their own experience, which have been analysed above. There are some problems with this, especially when looking at individual teachers. First, the survey shows that what one student may consider good or successful, another student on the same course might consider poor or unsuccessful. Second, students have different prior experiences of education. Because of this, their ideas of what is or is not good teaching may differ enormously. The course attended in 2002/3 may differ from the same course in other years, due to variables such as the attitude of the group and changes made to its content by the tutor (or, indeed, a change of tutor). Finally, students may not be the best judges of whether or not they have been well taught. Bearing all this in mind, however, it is possible to assert, on the evidence of the evaluation survey, that for the most part the tutors taught

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[13] For example Roy Boulter, Karen Brown, Arthur Ellison, Tony Green, Fred Lawless, Joanne McAndrew, Linda Miller, Lynn Papadopoulos, Val Syms.

what they set out to teach, and that the vast majority of the respondents feel that they learned what they set out to learn. Nevertheless, the survey also reveals important differences between the experiences of individual students and groups of students.

The next, and final, chapter of this thesis will seek to draw some conclusions about the teaching and learning of scriptwriting in Liverpool from the evidence which has been gathered about scriptwriting students and tutors, and about the history of scriptwriting classes.

Chapter 11

A Community of Writers

In this thesis I have explored both the history of the teaching and learning of scriptwriting in Liverpool and its practice there, chiefly during the academic year 2002/3, in order to discover how and why the subject is taught and learned. In doing so, I have shown how current practice is influenced by and, indeed, dependent on, the subject's history. I have also explored the uniqueness of the Liverpool experience and, by detailed consideration of the evidence, established how, why and by whom scriptwriting has been studied in the city.

My consideration of the history and development of the subject starts with David Evans's foundation, in 1973, of the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop. At that time there was no such thing as a scriptwriting course in the city or, as far as I can discover, anywhere else in Britain. The first scriptwriting course, the Playwrights' Workshop, grew out of the Scotland Road Workshops, whose ideas and methods had by that time been widely imitated throughout the country. Courses in writing for radio, television and film followed in the 1980s. The fact that they were usually offered by the University of Liverpool reinforces a sense of continuity in the provision of such courses. Evans was employed by the University at the time of the founding of the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop, which began as part of a University-based, government-funded Community Development Project. He developed the Playwrights' Workshop with Bill Morrison and Pedr James of the Everyman Theatre, backed by the Arts Council, Merseyside Arts Association and the WEA, as well as the University. When other sources of funding were withdrawn, the Playwrights' Workshop survived as a mainstay of the University's provision of writing

courses, which widened under Evans and his successor, Keith Birch. These two men employed all those who taught scriptwriting in the city in 2002/3, several of whom had previously been participants in writers' workshops or students on University classes. While both Liverpool Education Authority and the WEA occasionally offered scriptwriting courses and other specialised writing courses (often taught by people who had gained their teaching experience on University classes), these agencies tended to concentrate on more general 'creative writing' courses, the University seemingly becoming the natural home of the more specialised course.

This provenance is important, as the methods and philosophies of current scriptwriting tutors display strong links to the practices of earlier writers' workshops. Writing classes (although not scriptwriting classes) and writers' groups did exist before 1973, but the development of the subject in Liverpool seems to have owed little to them. Similarly, the Liverpool classes developed with little reference to the huge growth in classes offered at universities and colleges as part of degree-bearing courses during the 1980s and 1990s. However, the introduction of accreditation, which has influenced the way many tutors approach their courses, does link provision more closely to such courses as well as to practice in other cities. Furthermore, the growth of award-bearing courses has had an influence on the Liverpool classes via the experience of current tutors, two of whom have MAs in writing, several others having taught on degree-bearing courses at other institutions. Nevertheless, as my comparison of provision in Liverpool to that in other English cities shows, Liverpool provides both a greater number and a greater variety of writing classes than any other comparable city.

There are several reasons for the Liverpool scriptwriting courses developing in

the way they did. I have already mentioned some of the individuals involved, whose ideas about the teaching and learning of writing, and commitment to adult education in the city have been so influential. Their work must be seen in the context of legislation and funding. The early workshops owe their existence to a Home Office project concerned with inner cities. The University's commitment to the project grew not only from its historical commitment to adult education but also from its response to the *Russell Report* (DES 1973). The Playwrights' Workshop might not have existed had it not been for the Arts' Council's stated aim in the 1970s of linking the arts more closely with adult education (Shaw 1978). A key point in the development of courses in writing for the media can be identified in the METEL course attended by Keith Birch in the 1980s, which owed its existence to funding from the Manpower Services Commission (MerseyScreen 1985). More recent changes, such as accreditation, originated in the legislation which spawned the HEFC (HMSO 1992). The very existence of these courses, then, cannot be separated from the politics of the last thirty years. Politics have shaped the courses in two ways: through the political beliefs and aspirations of those who have instigated them and taught them; and through the funding which has trickled down to them, via many routes, from successive governments.

When I began the research on which this thesis is based, I saw scriptwriting courses as rather delicate flowers, springing from the seed lovingly planted by David Evans in the peculiar conditions of inner-city Liverpool in the 1970s, and watered by various agencies and tutors. Now, in the light of the evidence of history, I would liken them to sturdy weeds. The scriptwriting courses provided in 2002/3 bear little resemblance to the writers' workshops of the early 1970s. The practices and philosophies of the tutors have developed in ways unimagined by the earnest pioneers

of that time, as indeed have the attitudes of the students. In the 25 years since the Playwrights' Workshop was founded, the courses have multiplied and transmogrified. They have been watered with stray drops of government funding; and they have been buffeted by changes in policy, personnel and educational fashion. They have never fitted easily into narrow theories about what and whom adult education is for. But they have survived mainly because a demand for them exists amongst students who continue to believe in their value. The evidence I have gathered about tutors and students on these courses can, I believe, help us to understand not only why and how this particular subject is taught to adults, but also why adult education classes are so important to so many people.

David Evans speaks of a 'community of writers' in Liverpool (Interview 2001), a phrase echoed by a current tutor, Brian (Interview 2003), and, while the word 'community' seems to be used rather loosely now to describe any group or section of people, I believe that in this context the phrase has a real meaning. I have already mentioned the links across time between pioneers such as Evans and current teachers of scriptwriting. In addition, scriptwriting tutors have forged links between course providers in Liverpool and beyond, using experience gained in one situation to inform and enhance practice in another. A sense of continuity has been provided, not only by students moving from one course to another and a few students becoming tutors, but also by the return of former students as guest speakers. Former students have been unstinting in giving their time, thereby enriching the learning experience and providing models of achievement in the field. In allowing access to their experience and expertise such writers are continuing a tradition established by writers such as Morrison, Bleasdale, Russell and Hayes.

This sense of professionalism and expertise represents the biggest shift in the attitudes of tutors, underpinning changes in their practice, since the 1970s. Early workshop leaders were characterised by a resistance to the idea of being teachers, lecturers or tutors. They preferred terms such as 'chair', 'co-ordinator' and 'facilitator' and liked to see themselves as equal members of a group. The change in the tutors' role has been due partly to the demands of formalisation and institutionalisation and partly to demands by the students that they should play a more active part and share the benefits of their expertise. This expertise, however, is seen to lie mostly in their experience of professional writing, rather than teaching. All the tutors observed and interviewed regard themselves as professional writers and see that status as being essential to their credibility as teachers of scriptwriting. Similarly, students place great value on their tutors' subject knowledge, which many of them see as emanating from the tutors' experience of professional writing. The importance of this status has implications for their status as professional teachers: if they are to pursue their own writing careers, then they must remain part-time tutors. It also implies that for most students and tutors scriptwriting courses are, by nature, vocational.

There is, however, some variation in tutors' attitudes to the 'how' and 'why' of teaching the subject. While none of them sees the teaching and learning of scriptwriting only as a means of achieving social or general educational aims, the emphasis placed on scriptwriting as a potential career varies. All five practising tutors work from the assumption that most, if not all, of their students wish to write professionally; but while Charles, for example, cannot see the point in taking his course if a student does not want to become a professional writer, Ernest and Diane are more willing to acknowledge the existence of other motivating factors in some students. For them and for others, the 'liberal tradition' of adult education remains

important; although they too have all but abandoned any notion that the main purpose of their teaching lies in creating the conditions for social and political change - except insofar as the arts can always provide catalysts for such change.

Changes in the approach to teaching scriptwriting would seem, in practice, to have come about mainly through external pressures, rather than a conscious adoption of changing theories of pedagogy and andragogy. Such ideas are, at best, only partially understood by the tutors, whose training and experience in teaching does not necessarily match their understanding and experience of writing. Students expect to be 'taught' aspects of scriptwriting and tutors have responded to this expectation. They have, however, retained an attachment to the methods of the workshop, using their expertise to lead and shape 'workshop' sessions much more actively than their predecessors did. It seems to me that current tutors are not only more confident than the early workshop leaders about the value of what they are doing and their own role, but are also, in a sense, more honest about the nature and purpose of what they are doing.

My study of students on scriptwriting courses gives an answer to the question of who takes these courses that is strikingly different from what would be expected in the light of official figures about adult students. In terms of social class the group, being overwhelmingly 'middle-class', does not differ from expectations; nor does it in terms of ethnic origin. However, there are a lot more men than might be expected and the students are a little younger than might be expected. Such characteristics have more in common with adult students on vocational courses or courses leading to qualifications than they do with the 'leisure' classes traditionally associated with the adult education 'evening class'. Students' declared reasons for studying the subject, and their subsequent evaluations of the contents of the courses, support the idea that

most of them take the courses with specific goals in mind. These goals are usually concerned with developing their skills as writers, often with the intention of writing professionally. Again, the findings of the research suggest that scriptwriting courses are seen by students primarily as 'vocational' courses. Yet they do not (in the tradition of courses usually regarded as vocational) lead to qualifications which would be recognised as a measure of competence by potential employers. Indeed, there is one sense in which the surveyed students differ strikingly from students on vocational or award-bearing courses: over half of them are graduates and most are not interested in gaining qualifications. Clearly, one cannot 'train' to be a scriptwriter in the same way as one might train to be a plumber, say, or an electrician; and, therefore, a qualification in scriptwriting could not be used in the same way as a qualification in one of those subjects. But is there a huge difference between a writer undertaking education or training to improve his or her skills and an actor or musician doing the same thing? Courses for such professionals are as much vocational as are courses concerned with training for traditionally 'working-class' occupations.

Thus, a study of scriptwriting students brings us to the heart of the debate about whom and what adult education is for. In 1919 the Adult Education Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction, whose members included Mansbridge, Tawney and Yeaxlee, declared that 'adult education should cater for the varied needs and tastes of the people' (HMSO 1919, Para 332). Yet by 1924 'liberal' and 'technical' courses in Britain had been officially separated, which 'cemented the gap between liberal and adult education from all other forms of education' (Cross-Durrant 1987, 60). According to Harrison, the attitudes of politicians and educationalists caused 'the antithesis between liberal and vocational education [to harden] into a dogma' in post-war Britain (1961, 325). Such attitudes, however, seemed to be dying out by 1973, the

year when Evans started the Scotland Road Writers' Workshop, when the *Russell Report* declared that:

> The value of adult education is not solely to be measured by the direct increases in earning power or productive capacity or by any other materialistic yardstick but by the quality of life it inspires in the individual and generates for the community at large. It is an agent for changing and improving our society; but for each individual the means of change may differ and each must develop in his own way, at his own level and through his own talent. No academic subject or social or creative activity is superior to another provided that those who engage in it develop a greater awareness of their own capacities and a more certain knowledge of the totality of their responsibilities as human beings. (DES 1973, Para 6)

This might seem like a resounding endorsement of the all-embracing nature of adult education, with no subject or activity 'superior' to any other. However, it does imply a hierarchy of motivation - social change and responsibility are stressed at the expense of personal gains in material terms. Surely this is typical of the kind of academic snobbery that leads to disdain of the 'vocational'. It seems to me that educationalists and educational institutions have continued to resist the idea that students might undertake study in order to help them to make money. Such motives are seen somehow as 'impure' when compared to the desire to vaguely 'improve' oneself in academic terms or to acquire the tools for instigating social or political change. On the other hand, the creation of the MSC in the 1970s has been described as forming 'a wedge between academic education and vocational training' (Pennington 2002, 148), with the need for job-related training being paramount. Subsequently, government policy and funding have continued to support both vocational courses and academic courses which carry formal qualifications at the expense of 'leisure' courses (HMSO 1992). Nevertheless, the government in 1996 claimed that its 'emphasis on diversity, together with a funding approach which encourages innovation and entrepreneurial activity, has led to much greater activity, by universities in lifetime learning than can be seen in the rest of Europe and elsewhere' (DfEE 1996, 10).

Perhaps it was this emphasis on diversity that allowed scriptwriting courses to flourish in Liverpool at the end of the twentieth century, but in order to do so they had to find a niche within an academic, qualification-based framework, while more general creative writing classes survived in the local authority sector as 'leisure' classes. The idea that these courses might be vocational, it seems, cannot be acknowledged, whatever the people who teach them and study on them might think, because 'vocational' courses are still seen as something separate from, and perhaps inferior to, liberal adult education.

But why should subjects be categorised in this way? Scriptwriting courses in Liverpool have survived partly because they refuse to be 'pigeon-holed'. The evidence suggests that most students and most tutors see them as primarily 'vocational', but it also shows that this is not the whole story. Students take these courses for many different reasons. Many of them will never earn a penny from writing; some have no intention of doing so. Some students are using the courses as a step on the educational ladder; most do not need that boost. Some students start their courses with clear ideas about how they want to improve their writing; others are motivated by curiosity. The fact is that the Liverpool scriptwriting courses can and do cater for all these students. The students studied for this thesis are sophisticated consumers of education. They do not fit easily into 'compensatory' models of adult education, but they are true believers in 'lifelong' education. Whatever their ages or their educational and social backgrounds, they have their own reasons for wanting to learn and they take what they want from the courses on offer. There is room on the same course both for the retired person who wants to explore her creativity, the unemployed young man who wants to be a professional writer, and the friends who fancied a night out in the week and found that 'Italian was full'.

I have discussed, in Chapter 10, the difficulties encountered in attempting to judge whether or not these courses can be considered 'successful'. It would certainly appear that the overwhelming majority of students considers that they have been successful in achieving their aims and has formed a positive view both of the tutors and their courses. The responses of the minority which believes the courses to have been largely unsuccessful are illuminating in suggesting some of the limitations of such courses. The members of the 'community of writers' who have been successful professionally certainly seem to be endorsing the value of scriptwriting courses by their continued participation and recommendation of them. What can never be known is whether they would have been equally successful in achieving their aims had they pursued them through independent self-directed study or via different kinds of learning situation: for example, degree courses or writers' groups.

My study of the Liverpool courses ends in the academic year 2002/3. In the following year, after the retirement of Keith Birch, the courses were taken over by the English Department of the University of Liverpool. While no major changes were made to the courses in that year - and four of the tutors whose work is discussed in this thesis returned to teach the same courses - these two linked events raise the possibility of future transformations in the way the subject is taught. It is impossible to predict what these changes might be, but history suggests that there will be changes and developments, not only as a result of these events, but also as the result of government policy, funding, changing theories of adult education, the ideas and practices of individual teachers and the demands of students.

I believe that this thesis can contribute to knowledge and learning in several ways. First, although its purpose is in no way to tell people how they should teach, it can help tutors, by a consideration of current practice and the motivations and

attitudes of students, to develop and improve their own practice. It can also be of use to course providers and policy makers by giving them a greater understanding of the needs and desires of both tutors and students. Furthermore, I would argue that the evidence produced herein about scriptwriting courses can contribute to the understanding of teaching and learning far beyond the confines of the subject. For example, it may well be that adults who study cake decorating or furniture restoration, say, come to their classes with a range of experiences and expectations similar to those present in the scriptwriting students. A comparison with tutors and students in other subjects might form a suitable study for further research. Other research projects that might arise from this study include: a study of standards of students' work and assessment practices: a detailed comparison of classes in Liverpool with those elsewhere in Britain; a comparison of scriptwriting courses with other writing courses; or a longitudinal study of the progress of former students.

The hybrid nature of its methodology is central to this study's contribution to knowledge and learning. It enables the researcher to make connections between the history of the teaching and learning of scriptwriting, and current practice. I have argued that, if we are to understand how and why the subject is studied, we need first to understand the historical and social context in which it is being studied. In this thesis I have shown how current practice in the field is influenced by the philosophies and practices of those who instigated the writers workshops of the 1970s and '80s, as well as by developments in the wider educational world. I have also demonstrated the 'provenance' of the current classes, tracing their connections to those workshops. In the course of my research, I have not discovered any other studies which look at the teaching and learning of writing in the way in which I have studied its practice in Liverpool. In doing this, I have presented a rounded picture of a unique aspect of

adult education. Nevertheless, I believe that this study can also act as a prism through which we can gain insights into a number of aspects of adult education in general. While the history described herein is unique to Liverpool, the way in which legislation, educational theories and social and economic circumstances impact on adult education are not. An understanding of these issues can only strengthen the teaching and learning of any subject, scriptwriting included.

Scriptwriting courses, with their emphasis on professionalism and marketing, may seem rather narrow or even venal to some observers. I would argue that they stand in the great tradition of adult education because of the variety of opportunities for change and development they offer to so many individuals, not least because some of those opportunities may come as a surprise to them. It is true that most students, and most tutors, want to make money from their work and that success in the field might then be measured by a 'materialistic yardstick'; but if these writers cannot get their work broadcast, then they cannot communicate to others their vision of the world. By putting themselves in a position to do this, they are surely, in Russell's terms, contributing to 'the quality of life' for themselves and the community, having through their 'own talents' developed 'a greater awareness of their own capacities and a more certain knowledge of the totality of their responsibilities as human beings' (DES 1973, Para 6).

Elsey, reflecting on the legacy of Tawney, writes:

The heroic age of adult education is just about spent. Today adult education is managed, little enough by inspiration and too much by careerists. Adult education with a fiery will is a thing of the past and with each year beginning to radiate a romantic glow. (1987, 72)

It is easy to see that 'romantic glow' hovering about the reminiscences of Evans, Shane, Morrison and others; and equally facile to see their 'fiery will' as a thing of the past. I would argue that their commitment and idealism survive in today's tutors.

Acknowledging the complexity of the personal motives and ambitions of their students in no way diminishes the value of what they teach or their achievement in teaching it. Indeed, it is my view that the outstanding achievement of Liverpool's writing tutors and students over the past thirty years has been to create and sustain a true 'community of writers' firmly rooted in the rich soil of adult education.

Appendix A

Interviews and Telephone Conversations

During the course of my research I conducted a number of interviews. These fall into two categories. The first group covers those conducted with named people, who agreed to be quoted directly or indirectly in the thesis. Longer interviews, covering a range of topics and views, were recorded and transcribed; they are sometimes quoted directly in the text. Shorter interviews and relevant telephone conversations, normally on a specific topic, were not recorded. Notes were made during the interview and indirect speech is used in the text, unless a precise note of the exact words used by the interviewee was taken at the time. Information and opinions gleaned from this group are ascribed to the interviewee by name.

The second group covers tutors whose work is also the subject of the questionnaire and observations used in the course of my research. These people are never identified by their real names in the text, but are referred to by a letter or a fictitious forename beginning with that letter, the same name/letter being used for a given individual whenever he or she is mentioned, whether in connection with a questionnaire, interview or observation.

All interviewees were apprised of the purposes of the research at the time of the interviews and all gave permission for the interviews to be used in this thesis and for their words to be quoted. The named interviewees also gave permission for views and opinions expressed in their interviews to be quoted and credited to them by name.

Transcription conventions

Where material is presented from interviews, the intention is to reproduce the vocal patterns of the speakers while allowing the material to be easily read and, in Thompson's words, to 'allow [my] writing to remain as faithful as possible both to the character and the meaning of the original' (2000, 262). In this way quotations from oral sources are also distinguished from quotations from written sources. Transcription conventions are taken largely from David Crystal's *Rediscovering Grammar* (1988,15).

Pauses are shown by   -
Units of rhythm by   /
Direct speech by   ' '
Editorial ellipses by   ...
Questions by   ?
Exclamations by   !
Emphatic speech is indicated by **bold type**

Longer quotations, indented in the text, start with capital letters and end with full stops for clarity and consistency with quotations from written sources.

Interviews and telephone conversations with named persons

1. Keith Birch, 5 February 2001.

2. David Evans, 14 February 2001.

3. Barbara Shane, 31 January 2002.

4. Bill Morrison, 13 February 2002.

5. Janice Sear, 22 February 2002.

6. Catherine Hayes, 11 July 2002.

7. Dr Rodney Wright, 21 October 2002.

8. Dr Elsa Braekken Payne, 21 October 2002 (by telephone).

9. Maeve Middleton, 20 January 2003.

10. Tim Stone, 17 February 2003 (by telephone).

Interviews with scriptwriting tutors 2002/3

11. Tutor E (Ernest), 10 June 2003.

12. Tutor C (Charles), 5 August 2003.

13. Tutor B (Brian), 8 August 2003.

14. Tutor D (Diane), 29 September 2003 (by telephone).

Appendix B

Questionnaires

The Teaching and Learning of Writing by Adults

Questionnaire for Tutors

Please note that this questionnaire is purely for the purposes of academic research and your replies will not be seen by anyone other than the researcher and his academic supervisors.

If you do not wish to answer any of the questions, please leave blank.

It would be very helpful if you could attach an up-to-date c.v. and schemes of work for your current course(s) if available. If any of your answers are covered by these documents please put "see attached".

PART ONE

1. Name
2. Age
3. Sex
4. Ethnic origin

5. Qualifications post 16 (please give details of level, institution, subject and date)

6. Please give details of any formal teacher training

7. Have you taught "creative writing" before this academic year?

8. How long have you been teaching (a) adults?
                                                         (b) creative writing for adults?

9. Please give details of previous creative writing teaching

10. Are you employed full-time as a teacher of adults? If so, by whom?

11. If part-time, how many hours per week do you currently teach?

12. Do you have other paid employment? Please give details.

13. Do you consider yourself to be a professional writer?

14. Please give details of writing credits (or attach c.v.)

PART TWO

15. Please give details of all writing courses/workshops you are teaching in the current academic year (2002/3):

(a) at the University of Liverpool

(b) for a local authority

(c) for any other provider

16. Which, if any, of the above include scriptwriting for theatre/radio/television/film?

17. Please state whether each course specialises in one or more of the above fields or whether they are more general "creative writing" classes? If the latter, please state what proportion, if any, of each course is specifically concerned with scriptwriting.

18. Do your courses lead to any formal qualifications, whether on their own or as an element/module etc. within a formal qualification, e.g. degree, certificate of higher education? Please give details.

19. Do you intend to use any of the following in your teaching? Please tick all that apply:

(a) Teacher talk/lecture ☐
(b) Group discussion ☐
(c) Reading of students' work in progress by (i) the writers ☐
                                                         (ii) other members of the class ☐
                                                          (iii) guests (e.g. professional actors) ☐
(d) Video/tape recordings of   (i) programmes about writing/writers ☐
                                                      (ii) examples of your own work ☐
                                                      (iii) examples of work by other writers ☐

(e) Taping of students' work ☐

(f) Guest speakers: (i) professional writers ☐
                         (ii) others ☐ (please specify)

(g) Writing exercises within the class: (i) individually ☐   (ii) in pairs ☐
                         (iii) in small groups ☐ (iv) Whole class ☐

(h) Writing exercises at home ☐

(i) Visits/trips ☐

(j) Individual mentoring ☐

20. Will you be formally assessing students' work? If so, please state the requirements of your course for assessment.

21. Do you intend to assess students' work/progress during the course? If so, how? (e.g. written comments on work, grades, informal/formal verbal response)

22. Have you taught this course/ these courses before?

23. If "yes" to the above, have you made any changes to the course(s) for this year?

24. What do you see as the aims and objectives of your course(s)?

25. What do you think your students will gain from your course(s)?

26. What do you think will be the most helpful part of the course(s) to the students?

27. What do you consider to be the advantages/disadvantages of formal assessment (e.g. for accreditation) of your students' work?

28. In what sense(s) do you think writing can be taught?

29. Have you ever been a student on a writing course? Please give details.

30. If you have, what (if anything) have you gained from the experience?

31. Would you be willing to be interviewed about your teaching?

32. Would you be willing to be observed teaching?

33. If you are happy to be contacted again about your work, please give day and evening telephone numbers.

Signed   Date

Thank you for your help and co-operation

The Teaching and Learning of Scriptwriting by Adults
Student Questionnaire

Please note that this questionnaire is purely for the purposes of academic research and that your replies will not be seen by or divulged to anyone other than the researcher and his academic supervisors. Students will not be referred to by name in the thesis and your anonymity will be preserved at all stages of the research process.
If you do not wish to answer a question please leave blank.

SECTION A
1. **Name**
2. **Date of Birth**
3. **Gender** (please tick): Male ☐   Female ☐
4. **Ethnic origin** (please tick one):

White	☐	Indian	☐	Asian other	☐
Black Caribbean	☐	Pakistani	☐	Other (please state)☐	
Black African	☐	Bangladeshi	☐		
Black Other	☐	Chinese	☐	Prefer not to say	☐

5. **Employment status** (please tick one):

Full time employment ☐		Part time employment ☐		Self employed ☐	
Unemployed	☐	F/t Housewife/carer	☐	Retired	☐
Full time student	☐	Other (please specify)	☐		

6. **Current or last job** (if applicable)

7. **Qualifications** : Please state the highest achieved before starting the course:

Qualification		Subject
Postgraduate Degree	☐	
First Degree	☐	
A Level	☐	
GCSE or O level	☐	
Other (please state)	☐	

SECTION B
8. Please state the title of the course you are attending this year and the name of the institution or agency providing it:

9. Have you previously attended adult education courses?

10. Have you previously attended creative writing classes or workshops?

11. If so please give details of the course(s), year(s) and institution(s):

12. Before attending this course have you written or attempted to write:

Short stories/novels	☐	Stage plays	☐	Film scripts	☐
Articles	☐	Radio scripts	☐	Other (please specify) ☐	
Poetry	☐	Television scripts ☐			

13. Have you submitted any of your work to a publisher or producer? If so, please give details:

14. Have you had any of your work published or produced? Please give details:

15. What made you decide to attend the course?

I wanted …(please tick all statements that apply):
a. To follow up an existing interest ☐
b. To learn or develop a skill ☐
c. To learn to develop ideas ☐
d. To create something ☐
e. To satisfy curiosity ☐
f. To make money ☐
g. To discover if 'I can' ☐
h. To gain the approval of others ☐
i. To obtain a qualification ☐
j. To 'access' a further learning opportunity ☐
k. To meet like minded people ☐
l. To make social contact ☐
m. To gain social self confidence ☐
n. To enhance my self esteem ☐

16. Why did you choose this particular course?

17. How do you think the course will benefit you?

18. Would you be willing to fill in an evaluation questionnaire after you have finished the course?

19. Would you be willing to be interviewed in more depth about your experience of writing classes?

20. If you answered to question 18 and/or 19, please give your address and telephone number.

Thank you for your help and co-operation

The Teaching and Learning of Scriptwriting in Adult/Continuing Education

Evaluation Questionnaire

Please note that this questionnaire is purely for the purpose of academic research and your replies will not be seen by anyone other that the researcher and his academic supervisors. Any information you give may be used in the researcher's thesis, but your anonymity will be protected.

If you cannot or do not wish to answer any of the questions please cross through them or write 'n/a' (not applicable).

1. Name:

2. Name of scriptwriting course attended in the last year:

3. Did you complete the course?

4. If not, when did you stop attending?

5. If you did not complete the course, why did you stop attending ?

6. Did you complete the course but not the work set?

7. If you did not complete the work, why not?

8. <u>Expectations of the Course</u>

The initial questionnaire included a ' tick list' of possible reasons for going on a scriptwriting course. Please indicate, by circling the appropriate number on a scale of 1 to 4 (1 being 'very successful' and 4 being 'not at all successful') whether you feel you were successful in fulfilling each aim. Please circle 'n/a' (not applicable) for those which were not included amongst your reasons.

a) To follow up an existing interest   (very) 1   2   3   4   (not at all) n/a

b) To learn or develop a skill   1   2   3   4   n/a

c) To learn to develop ideas   1   2   3   4   n/a

d) To create something   1   2   3   4   n/a

e) To satisfy curiosity   1   2   3   4   n/a

f) To make money   1   2   3   4   n/a

g) To discover if 'I can'   1   2   3   4   n/a

h) To gain the approval of others   1   2   3   4   n/a

i) To obtain a qualification   1   2   3   4   n/a

j) To access a further learning opportunity 1   2   3   4   n/a

k) To meet like minded people   1   2   3   4   n/a

l) To make social contact   1   2   3   4   n/a

m) To gain self confidence   1   2   3   4   n/a

n) To enhance my self esteem   1   2   3   4   n/a

9. Teaching Methods/ Techniques

The following methods/teaching techniques may have been used on your course. Could you please rate their usefulness on a scale of 1 to 4 (one being 'very useful' and four being 'totally useless'). Please put 'n/a' if the method was not used.

a) Teacher talk/ lecture   (useful) 1   2   3   4 (useless)   n/a

b) Group discussion   1   2   3   4   n/a

c) Reading of students' work by the writers 1   2   3   4   n/a

d) Reading of work by other class members 1   2   3   4   n/a

e) Reading of work by guests (e.g.actors) 1   2   3   4   n/a

f) Recordings of programmes about writers 1   2   3   4   n/a

g) Examples of tutor's work   1   2   3   4   n/a

h) Examples of work by other writers   1   2   3   4   n/a

i) Taping of students' work   1   2   3   4   n/a

j) Guest speakers   1   2   3   4   n/a

k) Writing exercises in class: individually 1   2   3   4   n/a

l) Writing exercises in class: in pairs   1   2   3   4   n/a

m) Writing exercises in class: small groups   1   2   3   4   n/a

n) Writing exercises in class: whole class   1   2   3   4   n/a

o) Writing exercises at home   1   2   3   4   n/a

p) Individual mentoring   1   2   3   4   n/a

10. Quality of the Course

Please rate the following aspects of the course on a scale of 1 to 4:

a) Tutor's subject knowledge   (excellent) 1   2   3   4   (very poor)

b) Tutor's ability to communicate   1   2   3   4

c) Content of the course   1   2   3   4

d) Organisation and planning   1   2   3   4

e) Standard of work   1   2   3   4

f) Attitude of students   1   2   3   4

g) Atmosphere in the class   1   2   3   4

11. What do you think were the most important things you learned?

12. How has the course changed your attitude/ approach to writing?

13. Do you feel your writing has improved? If so, in what way(s)?

14. What do you intend to do next in terms of:

a) your writing?

b) continuing education ?

15) What did you like/enjoy most about the course?

16) What did you like/ enjoy least about the course?

17) Please make any comments about the course which have not been covered by the questions.

Signed   Date

Thank you for your help and co-operation.

Appendix C

Observation Sheet

During the academic year 2003/3 a number of writing classes were observed. The methodology underpinning these observations and their conduct have been described in Chapter 2.4. The 'observation sheet' which follows was designed to give some structure to the observations. The first page was used to record facts about the class and relate methods used by tutors to their 'tutor questionnaire' answers, the second to record a chronological account of the class and the third for notes on anything else of potential interest which arose during the course of the class. Notes were taken throughout the classes and were subsequently typed up. After all the observations had been competed (see Appendix D for a schedule of observations), the notes were analysed and compared with each other as well as with the results of the survey of scriptwriting tutors. The results of this exercise form the basis of Chapter7 of the thesis.

<u>Lesson/ Group/ Tutorial Observation Sheet</u>

1. Institution

2. Title of Course

3. Session no./out of

4. Date

5. Time

6. Number in group

7. Number on register

8. Aims and objectives of session

9. Resources used

10. Teaching Methods Used:

a. Teacher talk/lecture
b. Whole group discussion
c. Reading of students' work by   (i) the writer
                                      (ii) other members of the class
                                      (iii) guests
d. Video/tape recordings of   (i) programmes about writers/writing
                                     (ii) examples of the tutor's work
                                     (iii) examples of work by other writers
e. Taping of students' work
f. Guest speakers: (i) professional writers
                    (ii) others
g. Writing exercises in class: (i) individually
                                    (ii) in pairs
                                    (iii) in small groups
                                    (iv) whole class
h. Writing exercises at home
i. Visit/ trip
j. Individual mentoring

Chronological account:

Time   Activity

Notes

Appendix D

Schedule of Observations

C1
Tutor: Charles
Course provider: University of Liverpool
Date: Wednesday 30.10.02
Time: 7.00.p.m. - 9.00.p.m.
Session Number: 4/20
Number in group: 13 (11m/2f)
Number on register:18
Aims and objectives: to find out how to choose a story and what makes a viable story.

AB1
Tutors: Andrew and Brian
Course provider: University of Liverpool
Date: Wednesday 6.11.02.
Time: 7.00.p.m. - 9.00.p.m.
Session Number: 5/20
Number in group:18 (10m/8f)
Number on register: 20
Aims and objectives: Visiting writer and director to discuss play seen by students and to discuss opportunities for writers; to establish ideas about physical presence of characters.

E1
Tutor: Ernest
Course provider: University of Liverpool
Date: Thursday 14.11.02.
Time:10.30.a.m. - 12.30.p.m.
Session Number: 6/20
Number in group: 11 (6m/8f)
Number on register: 17
Aims and objectives: to workshop writing assignments; to introduce the idea of 'the heroic journey.'

B1
Tutor: Brian
Course provider: University of Liverpool
Date: Thursday 14.11.02.
Time: 7.00.p.m.- 9.00.p.m.
Session Number: 6/20
Number in group: 18 (13m/5f)
Number on register: 24
Aims and objectives: first of three sessions on story; students will recognise the importance of story telling to their craft and be aware of the stock genre predicaments which they can use for their own storylines.

D1
Tutor: Diane
Course provider: University of Liverpool
Date: Monday 18.11.02.
Time: 7.00.p.m.- 9.00.p.m.
Session Number: 7/20
Number in group: 18 (9m/9f)
Number on register: 27
Aims and objectives: to read and discuss writing exercises done at home.

C2
Tutor: Charles
Course provider: University of Liverpool
Date: Wednesday 12.2.03.
Time: 7.00.p.m.
Session Number: 15/20
Number in group: 4 (4m)
Number on register: 18
Aims and objectives: To workshop students' work in progress (half-hour script for assessment); if not enough material to be read, to watch and discuss a video about soap opera.

D2
Tutor: Diane
Course provider: University of Liverpool
Date: Monday 17.2.03.
Time: 7.00.p.m.- 9.00.p.m.
Session Number: 16/20
Number in group: 14 (7m/7f)
Number on register: 27
Aims and objectives: to workshop the work in progress of some of the students (half-hour scripts for assessment due to be submitted the following week).

E2
Tutor: Ernest
Course provider: University of Liverpool
Date: Thursday 20.2.03.
Time: 10.30.a.m.- 12.30.p.m.
Session Number: 16/20
Number in group: 10 (3m/7f)
Number on register: 17
Aims and objectives: to listen to and discuss the professional experience of the guest speaker.

B2
Tutor: Brian
Course provider: University of Liverpool
Date: Thursday 20.2.03.
Time: 7.00.p.m.- 9.00.p.m.
Session Number: 16/20
Number in group: 12 (9m/3f)
Number on register: 24
Aims and objectives: reading and discussion of students' work in progress (half-hour sitcom scripts for assessment).

J1
Tutor: Jane
Course provider: LEA
Date: Friday 21.2.03.
Time: 1.30.p.m.- 3.30.p.m.
Session Number: 3/10
Number in group: 6 (1m/5f)
Number on register: 9
Aims and objectives: beginnings/ dialogue.

AB2
Tutors: Brian and Andrew
Course provider: University of Liverpool
Date: Wednesday 26.2.03.
Time: 7.00.p.m.- 9.00.p.m.
Session Number: 18/ 20
Number in group: 13 (10m/3f)
Number on register: 20
Aims and objectives: to read and criticise students' work.

C3
Tutor: Charles
Course provider: Liverpool John Moores University
Date: Tuesday 4.3.03.
Time: 6.00.p.m. -9.00.p.m.
Session Number: unknown; session occurred during the third of four semesters over which the course was run.
Number in group: 13 (6m/7f)
Number on register: 24
Aims and objectives: to consider 'rewrites'; to workshop rewrites of students' 90 minute assessment pieces.

<u>Appendix E</u>

<u>Television Programmes, Films, Plays and Writers Referred to by Tutors and Students During Observed Classes</u>

1. Television programmes

Title	Class	Writer(s)/Creator(s)	Year(s)
Are You Being Served?	B1	Jeremy Lloyd/David Croft	1972-1984
Blackadder	B1	Richard Curtis/Rowan Atkinson/Ben Elton	1983-1989
Boomtown	C2	Not known	2002
Brookside	C1 E2 C2	Phil Redmond	1982-2003
Cheers	B1	Les Charles/James Burrows/Glen Charles	1982-1993
Coronation Street	E2 C2	Tony Warren	1960-
Crossroads	C2	Hazel Adair/Peter Ling	1964-1988; 2001-2003
Cutting It	B2	Debbie Horsfield	2002-
Dad's Army	B1	Jimmy Perry/David Croft	1968-1977
Dallas	C2	David Jacobs	1978-1991
Desmond's	B2	Trix Worrell/Joan Hooley	1989-1994
Doctors	D1 D2	Various	2001-
Eastenders	C2	Julia Smith/Tony Holland	1985-
Emmerdale	E2	Keith Laffan	1972-
The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin	B1	David Nobbs	1976-1979
Farscape	C3	Rockne.S. O'Bannon and others	2001-2003
Father Ted	B1	Graham Linehan/Arthur Mathews	1995-1998
Fawlty Towers	E2 B1	John Cleese/Connie Booth	1975-1979
Frasier	B1 B2	David Angell/Peter Casey/David Lee	1993- 2004
Friends	E2 B1	David Crane/Marta Kauffman	1995-2004
Just Good Friends	B1	John Sullivan	1983-1986
Men Behaving Badly	B1	Simon Nye	1991-1994
Mr Bean	D1	Rowan Atkinson/Richard Curtis/Robin Driscoll/Ben Elton	1990-1996
Neighbours	C2	Reg Watson	1986-
Not Only...But Also	B1	Peter Cook/Dudley Moore/John Law/Robert Fuest	1965-1966; 1970-1973
On The Buses	B1	Ronald Wolfe/Ronald Chesney	1970-1975
Only Fools and Horses	D2 B1	John Sullivan	1981-1996
The Phil Silvers Show	B1	Nat Hiken	1955-1959
Phoenix Nights	D1	Peter Kay/Neil Fitzmaurice	2001-

Porridge	B1	Dick Clemet/Ian La Frenais	1974-1977
The Rag Trade	AB2	Ronald Wolfe/Ronald Chesney	1961-1963
Red Dwarf	B1	Rob Grant/Doug Naylor	1988-
Rising Damp	B1	Eric Chappell	1974-1978
Roseanne	B2	Matt Williams	1989-1997
The Royle Family	B1 D2	Caroline Aherne/Craig Cash/Carmel Morgan/Henry Normal	1998-2000
Second Coming	C2	Russell T. Davies	2002
The Simpsons	B1	Matt Groening	1990-
Steptoe and Son	B1	Ray Galton/Alan Simpson	1964-1973
Third Rock from The Sun	B1	Bonnie Turner/Terry Turner	1996
Up Pompeii	B2	Talbot Rothwell/Sid Colin	1969-1972
Where The Heart Is	E2	Ashley Pharoah/Vicky Featherstone	Not known
Will and Grace	B1	David Kohan/Max Mutchinik	2001-
Yes, Prime Minister	B1	Anthony Jay/Jonathan Lynn	1986-1988
The Young Ones	B1	Rik Mayall/Ben Elton/Lise Meyer	1982-1984

2. Films

Title	Class	Writer(s)	Year
Adaptation	C3	Charlie Kaufman/Donald Kaufman	2002
Alfie	B2	Bill Naughton	1966
Amadeus	C1	Peter Shaffer	1984
Amelie	C3	Guillame Laurant/ Jean-Pierre Jeunet	2001
American Beauty	C3	Alan Ball	1999
Apocalypse Now	C1	Francis Coppola/John Milius	1979
Day of the Dead	C3	George A. Romero	1985
Educating Rita	E1 E2	Willy Russell	1983
Gangs of New York	C3	Jay Cocks/Steve Zaillian/Kenneth Lonergan	2002
Goodfellas	C3	Nicholas Pileggi/Martin Scorsese	1990
Midnight Cowboy	C1	Waldo Salt	1969
Moonstruck	AB1	John Patrick Shanley	1987
Nosferatu, A Symphony of Horrors	C3	Henrik Galeen	1922
Nosferatu, the Vampire	C3	Werner Herzog	1979
Notting Hill	C3	Richard Curtis	1999
Pulp Fiction	C3	Quentin Tarantino/Roger Avary	1994
Reservoir dogs	C3	Quentin Tarantino	1991
Schindler's List	C3	Stephen Zaillian	1993
Sleepless In Seattle	E1	Nora Ephron/DavidS.Ward/Jeff Arch	1993
The Full Monty	C3	Simon Beaufoy	1997
The Green Mile	C3	Frank Darabont	1999
The Magdalene Sisters	C3	Peter Mullan	2002
The Usual Suspects	C3	Christopher McQuarrie	1995

| Three Colours Blue | C3 | Krysztof Piesiewicz/Krysztof Kieslowski | 1993 |
| You've Got Mail | E1 | Nora Ephron/Delia Ephron | 1998 |

3. Plays

Title	Class	Writer
Abigail's Party	J1	Mike Leigh
Educating Rita	E2	Willy Russell
Of Mice and Men	AB2	John Steinbeck
Othello	AB1	William Shakespeare
Surf's Up	AB1	Laurence Wilson

4. Writers

Allen, Woody	E1, B2
Bleasdale, Alan	AB1
Cleese, John	B1
Coen Brothers	C3
Edgar, David	AB1
Fay, John	E2
Greene, Graham	J1
King, Stephen	B1
Mamet, David	AB
McGovern, Jimmy	C1 E2
Potter, Denis	C1
Russell, Willy	AB1 E2
Shakespeare, William	AB1
Shaw, George Bernard	AB1
Tarantino, Quentin	C1
Unsworth, Barry	E2

Details of television programmes are taken from Lewis, J.E and Stempel, P (2001) or from 2002/3 issues of *The Radio Times*. Details of films are from Fane-Saunders (2003).

Appendix F

Students' Answers to Section A of the Initial Student Questionnaire

Student code	2.Age	3.Gender	4.Ethnic origin	5.Employment status	6.Current/last job	7.Highest qualification	Subject of degree
1d*	24	F	White	Employed (F/T)	Charity Development Officer	Degree	Politics/Theology/Sociology
2d	21	M	White	Unemployed	-	A level	N/a
3d	46	M	White	S/Employed	Conference Room Manager	O level/GCSE	N/a
4d	44	M	White	S/Employed	-	Postgraduate degree	Computing
5d*	58	M	White	Housewife/carer	-	-	-
6d*	42	F	White	Housewife/carer	Transport Manager	O level/GCSE	-
7d	40	F	White	Employed (F/T)		Postgraduate degree	Marketing
8d*	43	M	White	Employed (F/T)	Library Resource Assistant	Degree	Librarianship
9d*	48	M	White	Employed (F/T)	Software Engineer	O level/GCSE	N/a
10abd	43	M	White	Unemployed	Building trade	O level/GCSE	N/a
11d	49	M	White	Unemployed	-	City & Guilds	N/a
12abd*	24	F	White	Unemployed	Secretary	Degree	English Literature
13d	52	M	White	S/Employed	-	HNC	N/a
14d*	71	F	White	Retired	-	HE credits	N/a
15c*	28	F	White	Employed (F/T)	IT Consultant	Postgraduate degree	English Literature
16bc	52	M	White	Employed (F/T)	-	-	-
17c*	35	M	White	Employed (F/T)	Gardening Instructor	Degree	Literature and History
18c*	38	F	White	Employed (F/T)	Advice worker	Degree	Politics
19c*	48	M	White	S/Employed	Accountant	Postgraduate degree	-
20bc	21	M	White	Unemployed	Actor	-	N/a
21c*	33	M	White	Employed (F/T)	Security	O level/GCSE	N/a
22c*	33	M	White	Employed (F/T)	Support worker	Degree	English and American Literature
23c	26	F	White	Employed (P/T)	-	Degree	English Literature
24bc	31	M	Indian	S/Employed	Ice-cream Vendor	A level	N/a
25c*	34	F	White	Employed (F/T)	Solicitor	Postgraduate degree	Legal Studies
26c*	34	M	Black	Employed (P/T)	-	O level/GCSE	N/a
27c*	35	M	White	Employed (F/T)	Corporate Account Manager	-	-

28c	30	M	Wales/Mauritius	Employed (F/T)	Information Manager	Degree	-
29abc	27	F	White	Student	-	Degree	-
30ab*	53	F	White	Employed (P/T)	-	O level/ GCSE	-
31ab*	39	F	White	S/Employed	Support worker	-	-
32ab	49	M	White	Employed (P/T)	Tutor	Degree	Fine Art
33ab*	53	M	White	Retired/Disabled	Painter/Decorator	-	-
34ab*	36	M	White	Unemployed	Civil Servant	O level/ GCSE	N/a
35ab*	48	F	White	S/Employed	Conveyancer	Degree	Law
36ab	41	F	White	Housewife/ Carer	-	HE credits	N/a
37ab*	73	M	White	Retired	Clerk	Postgraduate degree	-
38ab*	29	M	White	Unemployed	-	Degree	Media Studies
39ab*	78	M	White	Retired	Clerical Officer	O level/ GCSE	N/a
40ab*	26	M	White	Unemployed	-	O level/ GCSE	N/a
41ab	29	M	White	Employed (F/T)	-	Degree	-
42ab*	57	M	White	Retired	-	Degree	Metallurgy
43ab	38	F	White	Unemployed	Lawyer	Degree	Law
44ab*	34	F	White	Employed (F/T)	Nurse	Postgraduate degree	-
45ab	29	M	White	Unemployed	Civil Servant	Degree	Film/ Media Studies
46ab*	29	F	Black	S/Employed	Lighting Technician	Degree	Theatre Studies
47ab	-	M	White	Employed (F/T)	-	O level/ GCSE	N/a
48b	22	F	White	Employed (F/T)	Receptionist	O level/ GCSE	N/a
49b	38	M	White	Employed (F/T)	IT Specialist	Degree	Zoology/ Marine Zoology
50b	47	M	White	S/Employed	PR Consultant	Postgraduate degree	American Studies
51b	49	M	White	Employed (F/T)	Computer Analyst	Postgraduate degree	History of Art and Architecture
52b*	37	M	White	Employed (F/T)	CAB Manager	None	N/a
53b*	53	F	White	S/Employed	-	Postgraduate degree	-
54b	33	M	White	Employed (F/T)	Music Technician	A level	N/a
55b*	30	M	White	Employed (F/T)	Software Analyst	A level	N/a
56b	-	M	White	Retired	-	Degree	-
57b*	42	M	White	Employed (P/T)	Support Worker	O level/ GCSE	N/a
58b	33	M	White	Employed (F/T)	Programme Analyst	Degree	-
59b*	48	M	White	S/Employed	Sales	-	-
60b	29	F	White	Employed (P/T)	-	Degree	Ancient History and Archaeology
61b	25	M	White	Employed (F/T)	Accountant	Postgraduate degree	-

62b	58	M	White	Employed (F/T)	Teacher	Degree	English/ History
63b*	47	F	White	Unemployed	Teacher	Degree	-
64b	24	M	White	Employed (F/T)	Accountant	Degree	Accountancy
65b*	36	M	White	Employed (F/T)	Teacher	Degree	English
66b*	47	F	White	Unemployed	-	-	-
67b	38	F	White	Employed (F/T)	Local Government Officer	Degree	English/ Russian and Soviet Studies
68b	34	M	White	Unemployed	-	A level	N/a
69e	43	F	White	Disabled	-	Postgraduate degree	Victorian Literature
70e*	69	M	White	Retired	-	Degree	Electrical Engineering
71e	-	M	White	Employed (P/T)	-	A level	N/a
72e	56	F	White	Employed (P/T)	Teacher/ Administrator	Degree	-
73e*	67	F	White	Retired	-	A level	N/a
74e*	52	F	White	Retired	Teacher	Degree	-
75e*	66	M	White	Retired	Telecom Design Engineer	A level	N/a
76e*	33	F	White	Unemployed	-	O level/ GCSE	N/a
77e*	39	F	White	Unemployed	-	Postgraduate degree	Creative Arts (Art and Design)
78e	48	M	White	S/Employed	Actor	A level	N/a
79e	36	F	White	Unemployed	Teacher	Degree	-
80e	-	M	Indian	S/Employed	-	Degree	-
81ab	-	M	White	Unemployed	-	Postgraduate degree	-

*indicates respondents who also completed and returned the evaluation questionnaire.

Appendix G

Student Responses to Open-ended Questions

	Student codes	Number
Development of new skills	2d, 3d, 4d, 5d, 6d, 8d, 9d, 10cd, 13d, 15d, 21c, 26c, 27c, 30ab, 31ab, 35ab, 36ab, 37ab, 38ab, 40ab, 44ab, 45ab, 48b, 53b, 55b, 57b, 60b, 66b, 67b, 68b, 70e, 71e, 75e, 77e, 78e	35
Previous experience of writing classes	1d, 30ab, 33ab, 34ab, 44ab, 52b, 59b, 66b, 67b	9
Vague interest in the subject	16bc, 20bc, 36ab, 41ab, 42b, 54b, 58b, 62b, 76e	9
Preferred course full or cancelled	49b, 50b, 51b, 61b, 63b, 64b	6
Career/profession	1d, 2d, 12abd, 22c, 23c	5
Recommended	18c, 43ab, 52b, 72e, 73e	5
Convenience/cost	60b, 69b, 79e, 81cd	4
Enjoyment/pleasure	1d, 14ad, 30ab,	3
Tutor's reputation	19c, 29c, 80e	3
Prospectus	46ab, 69e	2
No answer	11d, 24c, 65b, 74e	4
Referred to q. 15	17c, 28c, 32c	3

Table 12. Student Questionnaire: Students' answers to question sixteen (Why did you choose this particular course?) The total number exceeds 81 because some respondents gave more than one reason.

	Student codes	Number
Skills & techniques expressed in vague terms	2d, 5d, 6d, 7d, 27c, 36ab, 38ab, 40ab, 43ab, 47ac, 59b, 62b, 66b, 69e, 72e, 73e, 74e, 76e, 81bd	19
Specific genre or medium referred to	9d, 42ab, 45ab, 54b, 55b, 57b, 70e	7
Structure	3d, 12abd, 17c, 26c, 31ab, 65b, 67b	7
Professionalism	23c, 26c, 33ab, 76e, 77e, 80e	6
Discipline	63b, 69e, 75e, 78e, 79e	5
Developing ideas	8d, 12abd, 77e, 79e	4
Getting 'feedback'	156d, 52b, 60b, 63b	4
Self-confidence & motivation	10d, 15d, 54b, 60b	4
Specific skills: story & plot	2d, 3d, 8d, 67b	4
Creativity	53b, 56b, 62b	3
Specific skills: presentation	26c, 48b, 57b	3
Specific skills: character	65b, 67b	2
Career into hobby	25c	1
No answer/ referred back to questions 15 & 16	1d, 11d, 16cd, 17c, 22c, 24c, 28c, 32ab, 30ab, 35ab, 49b, 50b, 68b	13

Table 13. Students' answers to question seventeen (How do you think the course will benefit you?) Total number exceeds 81 because some students gave more than one expected benefit.

	11	12	13	15	16	17
Building confidence	8d , 26c, 77e	30ab	52b,	18c		
Character	6d, 30ab, 35ab, 39ab, 42ab, 65b, 66b	75e	6d, 14d, 39ab, 66b, 77e			
Creativity				1d		
Developing ideas	52b, 58b					
Dialogue	5d, 39ab	39ab		76e		
Discipline/ focus		17c, 53b	57b			
Planning	70e, 75e					
Plot	35ab, 39ab, 63b					
Presentation and layout	6d, 76e		14d			
Professionalism		15c, 22c52b, 76e,	5d			
Redrafting		39ab	27c, 34ab, 65b			
Social interaction				53b, 75c, 774		
Structure/plot	1d, 17c, 18c, 19c, 32ab, 56b, 57b, 63b, 66b, 75e	18c, 19c, 26c, 35ab	8d, 15c, 18c, 26c, 44ab, 55ab, 63b, 70e	22c	9d*	30ab*
Writing for a specific medium	12ab, 39ab		31ab			37ab*

* negative responses

Table 14. Evaluation Questionnaire: aspects of courses mentioned in responses to open- ended questions

	Student codes	Number
Students answering 'yes' and giving reasons	1d, 5d, 9d, 17c, 19c, 22c, 33ab, 37ab, 38ab, 39ab, 42ab, 46ab, 53b, 57b, 59b, 65b, 75e	17
Students giving reasons for improvement without using the word 'yes'	27c, 30ab, 34ab, 35ab, 52b, 76e	6
Students answering 'no'	25c, 73e	2
Student stating that improvement is not connected to course	21c	1
Student crediting improvement to 'practice'	36ab, 38ab	2

Table 15. Students' answers to question thirteen (Do you feel your writing has improved? If so, in what way(s)?)

14a	Student codes	Number of students
Students intending to continue writing, but not referring explicitly to professional work	1d, 6d, 15c, 17c, 19c, 25c, 26c, 27c, 33ab, 34ab, 35ab, 37ab, 39ab, 40ab, 42ab, 46ab, 53b, 63b, 73e, 77e	20
Students referring explicitly to selling or submitting work	5d, 8d, 14d, 18c, 30ab, 31ab, 381b, 55b, 65b, 70e, 74e, 75e, 76e	13
Students considering marketing work in the future	9d, 44ab, 57b	3
Students referring to work in production	21c, 66b	2
Students not intending to write	22c	1
14b		
Further writing courses	6d, 8d, 15c, 26c, 34ab, 37ab, 39ab, 42ab, 44ab, 52b, 53b, 65b, 70e, 73e, 76, 77e	16
Intending to continue, but subject or type of course not specified	5d, 14d, 18c, 25c, 33ab, 40ab, 59b	7
Students intending to, or already taking, degree or postgraduate courses	9d, 46ab, 74e,	3
Undecided/conditional	12ab, 30ab, 35ab, 55b, 63b, 66b	6
Students interested in courses in subjects other than writing	19c, 21c, 22c	3
No intention of continuing	55b	1

Table 16. Future plans of students: summary of answers to question fourteen. The total number of responses is less than the number of students taking part in the survey because some students did not answer one or both parts of the question.

Method	15: What did you like/enjoy most about the course?	16: What did you like/enjoy least about the course?
Methods associated with workshops		
Discussion		1d, 9c
Reading and discussion of students' work	15c, 19c, 26c, 30ab, 34ab, 40ab, 55b, 65b, 70e	38ab, 46ab, 57b
Reading one's own work		46ab, 76e
Reading of work by guests (e.g. actors)	15c	
Criticism/ feedback	14d, 17c, 19c, 26c, 34ab, 77e	
Generalised comments on class/group	5d, 8d, 9d, 35ab, 42ab, 44ab, 52b, 63d, 75e,	
Other methods		
Lectures	38ab	
Examples of work by other writers		30ab, 39ab, 52b, 55b, 70e
Handouts	66b	
Writing exercises (not specified)	30ab, 39ab	5d, 35ab
Writing exercises in class: individually		40ab
Writing exercises in class: small groups		37ab, 44ab
Writing exercises at home	37ab, 39ab, 57ab, 65b	34ab
Generalised comments about tutor	5d, 6d, 12d, 26c, 44ab, 63b, 66b	18c, 25c, 27c, 73e, 74e
Individual mentoring		6d

Table 17. Students' reactions to teaching methods employed on scriptwriting courses: key words or phrases mentioned in answers to open-ended questions fifteen and sixteen on the evaluation questionnaire.

Bibliography

This bibliography is divided into four sections: primary sources; government reports and publications; secondary sources; and websites. 'Primary sources' comprises archival material, including correspondence and 'ephemeral' material in the possession of the writer. That section is subdivided into five parts, listed in alphabetical order, according to the location of the material.

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