DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 357 230   CE 063 633

AUTHOR   O'Rourke, Rebecca; Mace, Jane
TITLE   Versions and Variety: A Report on Student Writing and
                Publishing in Adult Literacy Education.
SPONS AGENCY   Leverhulme Trust, London (England).
PUB DATE   92
NOTE   148p.
AVAILABLE FROM Avanti Books, 8 Parsons Green, Boulton Road,
                Stevenage SG1 4KG, England, United Kingdom (4.50
                British pounds).
PUB TYPE   Reports - Research/Technical (143) --
                Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE   MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS   Adult Basic Education; *Adult Literacy; *Educational
                Attitudes; Educational Philosophy; Foreign Countries;
                *Literacy Education; Student Attitudes; *Student
                Writing Models; Teacher Attitudes; *Writing for
                Publication; *Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS   Great Britain

ABSTRACT
        Publication of student writing in adult basic
education (ABE) or adult literacy classes in Great Britain was the
focus of a research project. Discussions with 120 tutors and 136
students took place during field visits to 12 classes, 21 tutoring
projects, 2 prison education departments, 2 further education
colleges, 5 open learning centers, and 7 special projects. Additional
data were collected from 185 responses to a questionnaire, a
conference, and review of student publications. The research revealed
the following: (1) student publishing is declining compared to the
last 2 decades; (2) purposes include documenting achievement, group
project, souvenir, organizational promotion, internal circular, and
literary production; (3) learning beyond writing skills is an
important gain; (4) publishing student writing enhances self-esteem,
provides a meaningful context for skill development, and counters
isolation; (5) critics and advocates disagree about whether and how
student writing should be edited; (6) many feel that usefulness is
limited by poor design and presentation; (7) the real value of
student publishing lies in the process, not the products; and (8)
publishing deserves more recognition and financial support. Results
of the study included the following: a clear outline of a variety of
models of student writing; documentation of the reflections of a wide
range of students, tutors, and program developers; and
recommendations for good practice and national support. (Three
appendixes are as follows: (1) 48 references and 5 resource
addresses; (2) a list of project participants; and (3) the
questionnaire used in the project.) (KC)

VERSIONS AND VARIETY

A report on student writing and publishing
in adult literacy education

Rebecca O'Rourke
with Jane Mace

1992

Versions and Variety

A report on student writing and publishing
in
adult literacy education

Rebecca O'Rourke
with
Jane Mace

Contents

Foreword

This project was funded by a grant awarded to me by the Leverhulme Trust in 1991 to fund a study of the extent, rationale and effects of student publishing in adult literacy.

Rebecca O'Rourke was appointed as research associate in July 1991 and began work with me, on a one-year contract, in September. I invited seven people to form an advisory group for the project. These were:

Roxy Harris	Afro-Caribbean Project, Language and Literacy Unit, London.
Ruth Lesirge	Head of Adult Education Service, London Borough of Waltham Forest.
Wendy Moss	Staff Trainer, Adult Education Training Unit, City Lit, London.
Elizabeth Plackett	Faculty of Education, Goldsmiths' College, London.
John Richmond	Co-ordinator, Language in the National Curriculum, North London Language Consortium.
Irene Schwab	Communications Lecturer, City & East London College.
Judy Wallis	Writing Development Worker, East Sussex ABE Project.

(The employment in all cases refers to posts held at the start of this project.)

The group's role was to support the work of the project by responding to initial reports, facilitating decision making as the project developed and advising on the dissemination of the findings.

The group met on 4 occasions.

Student publishing in adult literacy education has generated strong reactions, both in its favour and in opposition. I saw this project as an opportunity to get behind the rhetoric of both these positions.

Its aim was to explore a number of issues to do with the practise of publishing student writing in adult literacy over the last twenty years in this country, and to try and find out just what student publishing meant to tutors and students now. As the project began, we also agreed that it would be interesting and important to explore the uses, and opportunities for use, of student publishing in adult numeracy.

1

It's important to clarify how we shared the research work. Rebecca has been the full time worker on the whole project; I, with other teaching and research, was her part-time co-ordinator. Rebecca carried out the large majority of the fieldwork: some 46 journeys around Britain and Ireland, meeting with groups and individuals, discussing the research questions, and returning to the word-processor to turn her notes into an intelligible record. She also drafted the tutor questionnaire, and, after we discussed and amended this in the advisory group, organised its distribution and, more significantly, did the weeks of reading, re-reading, charting and cross-checking of the returns, collating the figures, and grouping and interpreting the answers that people wrote.

The six meetings with students which took place between January and March, we planned, travelled to, and carried out together.

All the report that follows, with the exception of Student Views, is Rebecca's work. My role has been as editor and reader, to read and discuss drafts and to co-organise the consultative conference in July at which tutors from all over the country, invited as having already contributed to the project in some way, met to offer their comments on the draft report too.

<div align="right">Jane Mace, August 1992</div>

Starting Points

As the research project developed, two, related, questions needed to be clarified: firstly, to whom would the findings of the research be addressed ? and secondly, what was its purpose ? Participants in the project asked us questions about these issues; and a number suggested that our purpose was, quite simply, to campaign for improved funding for adult basic education in general and for student publishing in particular. Our experience as teachers in ABE lent sympathy to this view but we also knew that we had to be clear that our job was to collect and describe information. The research had to identify problems, not seek to solve them.

The reports of research studies do not always make easy (or interesting) reading, for the people who have been studied for the research. This, of course, is especially true in adult basic education. Much writing, including that specific to student publishing, has been by tutors and organisers for other tutors and organisers - or by people writing as academics, for other academics. Curiously, however, despite the fact that the publishing of student writing has been a noticeable feature of adult basic education in Britain and Ireland since the onset of the 'campaign' in the mid-1970's, I found very little analysis of its effects. A notable exception is the work of the Write First Time Writing Development Project, 1981 - 1984, and its publication - deliberately written with the intention of being read by students, as well as tutors - of **Conversations with Strangers** by Sue Shrapnel Gardener in 1985. (See: Useful Reading for further references).

This project's original aim had been to give renewed time and analysis to the experience of students. Its intention was to find out how students perceived the value of student publishing, in what ways they were involved in publishing activity, and what effects - good or not so good - an experience of bringing their own and other student's writing into print might have had on their perception, both of themselves and of printed writing.

This focus changed early on, and in significant ways. Between September and May my meetings and visits around the country had been with both students and tutors. While the postal questionnaire had remained very much a survey of tutors' experience, the project visits had become an important opportunity to see the contexts and settings in which both students and tutors worked - and from which their perceptions (sometimes similar, sometimes markedly different) of student publishing were developed.

In my view, what was needed was a greater understanding of the role of *tutors* in the various uses (or lack of use) of a student publishing practice. No student that we had met with had ever asked to have their writing

published without either seeing another student publication or being encouraged, by a tutor, to think of developing their writing for others to read. Students' experience of student publishing as an idea, and practice, is dependent on that of their tutors.

In advisory and project meetings, we therefore began to talk about the **student / tutor relationship,** believing that when student publishing is understood as a relationship there is most potential for its educational value to be realised.

Shifting focus like this had methodological implications. Although there was some separate data gathering: the students consultation and the tutors questionnaire; the main data gathering was done through project visits which weaved contact with students and tutors. The next section indicates some of the complexity of this method of data collection.

Making Contact

The project first advertised its existence in July and advertised and mailed out in September 1991. We asked for participants in three ways. First, we used word of mouth, utilising our existing contacts within adult basic education. Secondly, we had notices, either paid for or as news items, in adult education journals, such as RaPAL Newsletter, WEA Reportback, Adults Learning and ALBSU Newsletter. Thirdly, we mailed an information leaflet, with a tear off reply slip, to approximately 300 contacts. This asked people to indicate how they would prefer to participate: visit, questionnaire, a 24 hour student event. The mailing list was put together from the membership of the National Federation of Voluntary Education (formerly Literacy) Schemes, [NFVES] and the current directory produced by the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education, [NIACE]. We wanted our leaflet networked within schemes, institutes and departments.

Our publicity targeted providers of adult basic education and we therefore only made contact with English as a Second Language (ESOL) providers in the few areas with integrated provision and so had very little contact with projects working to publish writing by ESOL students. ESOL work's particular demands suggested it would require separate investigation beyond the scope of a 12 month project. During visits, we discussed ESOL issues if it was appropriate or raised by the project. We made contact with two numeracy schemes and a number of individuals with publishing experience in literacy and numeracy, although most people found the idea of numeracy and student publishing initially strange.

We received 149 replies from projects throughout Britain and Ireland. The lack of response from Wales and Scotland caused us concern and we followed it up. We mailed to contacts supplied by the Scottish Community Education Council and by Margaret Morris, co-ordinator of the ALBSU Writing Development Project in Wales, 1987-1989. This produced several responses from Wales but only one from Scotland.

The returns showed a good spread geographically and the variety of educational context we had hoped for:

Voluntary Literacy Schemes
Statutory Adult Education Schemes
Community Education Schemes
Open Learning Centres
Special Projects
Further Education Colleges
Prison Education Departments
Numeracy Projects

We tried to keep this range throughout the research.

Research Visits

This variety of response was reflected in the visits which were subsequently made. As the research developed, the research visits took on a higher profile than was at first envisaged. There were four pilot visits, in October, to Hackney Reading Centre, London; Weymouth ABE, Dorset; Right to Learn Centre, Walsall and Community Education Department, South Shields.

The main fieldwork visits, which took place between October 1991 and March 1992, entailed visits to:

                     12 classes
         14 statutory schemes [tutors & organisers]
          7 voluntary schemes [tutors & organisers]
    2 prison education departments [tutors & organisers]
     2 further education colleges [tutors & organisers]
                  5 open learning centres
                  7 special projects

In some cases a visit involved meeting a single group for a single session; in others, a whole day or 2 day visit involved meeting a number of classes and separate interviews with the organiser, tutors and students. Altogether I was able to have discussions or meetings with a total of approximately 120 tutors and 136 students.

We wanted to both respond to the particularities of each visit and achieve a consistency that made it possible to compare across projects. A check-list of two kinds of questions formed the basis for each visit. One set gave the context of the project's work: staffing, funding, resources, student profiles, length of stay and numbers. The second set asked about definitions of student publishing, reactions to it, different approaches to producing and using student publications and, finally, access to and information about student publications.

Individual Visits

The role of the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit [ALBSU] in promoting student publication has been the subject of some controversy. As the national agency, their attitude towards this curriculum area is significant. Initiatives in the area, or support for those taken independently of ALBSU, influence resourcing and the general regard in which this area of work is held. A number of people we spoke to felt that ALBSU were hostile to student publishing: either implicitly, through their promotion of competence-based systems of accreditation, or explicitly, citing remarks made at conferences by senior members of staff.

In order to evaluate the situation, I visited Jim
Pateman, the officer responsible for publications,
including the initiative to publish readers for students
using Newmat and Peckham Publishing Project. I also
corresponded with Alan Wells in order to clarify ALBSU's
attitude towards student publishing.

The project made contact with a number of individuals who
were doing research which complemented our project. Sammy
Palfrey shared her findings about the role of writing and
publishing in the 1984 Miner's Strike and Merlyn Bell
discussed her work towards a M.Ed. on the learning
outcomes of student publishing.

A number of individuals, including Sue Gardener and Diane
Coben, who were actively involved in developing student
publishing in Britain agreed to meet and talk about their
contribution and subsequent developments in the field.

We also met with Rosamond Phillips and Geraldine Mernagh
of Ireland's National Agency for Adult Literacy [NALA]
who both facilitated our visits in Ireland and discussed
the wider implications of the research project with us.

Student Events

The original proposal had suggested that, apart from visits and questionnaires to tutors, the main method of discovering students' views would be via two national 24 hour meetings of students, each involving a Friday evening and all day Saturday meeting, in which structured discussion of their experience as learner writers would give insights into student experience of student publishing.

By the second month of the project, however, we decided to abandon this idea, in favour of a more effective method of meeting with students. We made this change for two reasons:
a) my visits to centres round the country were already including students; and instead of keeping these meetings separate from those with tutors, this was a pattern we could actively develop (and did, as already indicated);
b) our combined recollections of the stresses and limits of past residential meetings as research events.

For our purposes, we decided that the project, and the student participants, would gain more from regional meetings than national ones; that the funding for two national residential events could more effectively be used for six regional half-day meetings; that we would, thereby, be able to meet with a larger number of students and the student participants would gain a more useful experience than would have been possible with larger meetings in a more distant meeting-place.

We identified 5 centres in which to hold meetings: in Swansea, Norwich, Manchester, Dublin and Weymouth. The visits took place in February and March 1992. We were also invited to visit Cork and meet with students there, which we did. The 5 areas we selected had previously been visited, and we asked the tutor organiser to convene a meeting for us, open to students in the surrounding area who had had some experience of student publishing.

The meeting had two aims. The first was to explore the experience of a sample of students who had published their writing. We emphasised the broad definition of 'publishing' that findings were already revealing in practice. Our second aim was to elicit students' reaction to some of the views on the effect and value of student publishing that were emerging from tutors through the questionnaires and research visits.

We asked that a maximum of 18 students attend, that the host organisation provided two scribes and that students brought with them an example of work which they had published in some form. The sessions were of variable length, from 2 - 5 hours, but took participants through the same series of structured events. Attendance varied from 9 to 17.

The format was as follows:

1. Welcome / introduction: then divide into 3 or 4
    groups, with a scribe. Each group then stayed
    together until the final session, which was a
    plenary.
2. You and your writing 1: talking about the piece of
    writing that had been published.
3. You and your writing 2: thoughts on paper.
4. 'People say ... ': discussion generated by 9
    opinion cards.

The statements on the cards were taken from frequently
made comments from tutors either during the visits or
from the questionnaires.[1]

The statements were:

1. People say publishing student writing is one of the
    best ways to boost students' confidence.

2. People say making magazines is okay but it's not
    really what students come to classes for.

3. People say that students like to read about people
    who have had the same difficulties as they have
    had.

4. People say that one of the most useful things about
    student publishing is that you learn to work as a
    team.

5. People say the trouble with student publishing is
    that it looks too scruffy.

6. People say that once you've been in print yourself
    you are less put off by other books.

7. People say publishing is really good for the writer
    but not really interesting to anybody else.

8. People say student writing is important because it
    tells everybody that you're not stupid just because
    you find reading and writing hard.

9. People say publishing writing by students helps
    students to write more clearly.

At the end of the event participants were given a comment
sheet and reply paid envelope. Two or three students from
each area returned these.

The comments made in these meetings influenced the
writing of all the sections that follow. The specific
reactions to the 'People say ..' comments which students
voiced at the meetings are reported in Section 4.

Questionnaire

The project made contact with far more schemes than we could hope to visit. A postal survey was therefore seen as an opportunity to involve these people and also provide quantitative data to contextualise and support the largely qualitative findings of the research project.

The questionnaire, which was discussed and refined with the advisory group, asked 20 questions. The majority of these were open-ended. The questionnaire was designed to elicit information about the following areas:

1. What **experience** of student publishing individual tutors had.

2. What **uses** were being made of existing student published material.

3. What the **perceived benefits** of student publishing were.

4. What the **perceived disadvantages** of student publishing were.

5. What **training** was available to tutors.

We distributed the questionnaire in early November with a return date of December 12th. We mailed multiple copies to all those who had responded to our initial publicity. There were 190 returns, including 5 completed by students as a class exercise which were outside the scope of the survey.

This gave 185 questionnaires to be analysed. The 185 returns came from 142 of the 149 centres initially mailed, representing a return of over 95%.

The questionnaire appears as an appendix in Section 5; the detailed analysis of the replies is offered in the three sections that follow.

Consultative Conference

All the schemes and individuals who had participated in the research were invited to a conference in London on July 9th 1992. There were two aims for the day:
a) to discuss and make amendments to the draft report, which had been circulated in advance.
b) to provide an opportunity for those interested in student publishing to meet and make connections.

Of the 60 affirmative replies, just over 40 people attended. The spread was good: there were 4 or 5 people from Ireland; a number of people from the rural areas of Cornwall, Devon, Forest of Dean and Dorset; there were people with years of experience behind them and those tentatively making a start; people from voluntary projects and people from Open Learning centres.

We built a lot of 'free association' into the day and AVANTI provided a display and bookshop. The morning and afternoon workshop focussed discussion onto the areas we most wanted feedback on: **Reading and Models of Student Publishing.**

We asked participants to read these sections of the draft report in advance and then provided a few questions to help the facilitator structure discussion. Underlying both workshops was the question: Does this reflect your experience ? and we invited people to offer amendments or changes to the text of the draft report.

Later in the report the resu.t of their work can be seen in the section Models of Student Publishing. There was a lot of debate and sharing of varied experience during these sessions. In the Reading discussion nobody disagreed with the findings, indeed they provided further evidence confirming our original findings that reading is a problematic area for ABE work at present. There was a useful exchange coming out of our request that people focus on what actually is read, formally and informally, in their classrooms; and what strategies could be used to develop reading further.

The plenary session was a much needed chance for us to get an overall reaction to the report. It was also a practical affirmation of one of the most important research findings: that student publishing has been transformed since the heady days of the early 1980's, but it has not faded away.

Reviewing Student Publications

The original project proposal had included a plan to
compile a national list of student publications in print
during the project year. This, like the idea of the
student events, was revised after closer discussion at
advisory and project meetings of my finding that very few
of the schemes publishing student writing sought a
national market (see: The extent of student publishing)
Those that did relied on AVANTI, which since 1981 has
been providing a national mail order and conference
bookstall service distributing resources for adult basic
education. For this reason, I used the 'literature
search' time of the project to do two things:
- compile a list of 'Useful Reading' (see: Appendices)
and
- carry out a survey of the reviewing of student writing
in the national newsletter of the Adult Literacy and
Basic Skills Unit over a twelve year period.

I set out here my reflections on what I read. My reading
of these reviews gives an interesting insight into the
changing fortunes of student writing. The publications
reviewed include not only the genre usually assumed as
'student writing' - namely autobiographical pieces, but
also plays, poetry, fiction, and prose collections on
themes. The reviewers in the early 1980's were often
student groups; this, by the early 1990's, was much less
common, with most reviews written by tutors. I started
this survey in 1980, the year in which ALBSU was
established (replacing the Adult Literacy Unit) and in
which the Education Secretary, Mark Carlisle, underlined
its orientation towards employment related skills in his
opening address.

In 1980, and throughout most of that decade, it was
common for student writing to be reviewed in the
newsletter. Of perhaps eight or ten reviews, there would
be two or three of student publications and they were
often listed in the Also Received column. It was usual,
too, for groups of students to write them, as in this
review of In Those Days by Nan Cashel reviewed by Mary,
Phillip, Silvester, Leon and Tony of Prep Studies,
Bournville College:

> " We enjoyed reading it and we think that books
> like this are excellent because they encourage us
> to think that maybe we could write something like
> this too. "

(ALBSU Newsletter 1 1980:8)

At that time, Macmillan had just brought out its series
of 8 Brighton books, which led many people to believe
that student publishing had broken through into
mainstream publishing. In the event this initiative was

not repeated by Macmillan or taken up by other publishers
until the ALBSU publishing initiative of the late 1980's.

Evidence that student publishing could be considered
established at this time is found in a review of Start
Writing from Birmingham by Sue Gardener. In it she put a
question that, from this research project twelve years
later, I still find to be pertinent:

> " Students' writing ... can't be greeted with the
> simple enthusiasm of the early years. For me the
> debate in this case is not, Why do the booklet ?
> It's obviously something to be proud of as the
> product of your work over a long time. Rather the
> question is, Why offer it for national sale ? It
> isn't a coherent collection, it has no theme. The
> writers say little about themselves or about the
> circumstances in which the work was done. "
>
> (ALBSU Newsletter 2 1980:4)

Many of the works reviewed are reminiscence or
autobiographical works and these get mixed reactions to
the content:

> " ` Personally I found it depressing. '
> ` Makes you think about friendship. '
> ` Brilliant '
> ` Throw it in the bin ' "
>
> (ALBSU Newsletter 28 1988:   )

Despite the negative reactions, the reviews of the period
also consistently recognise the effort that has gone in
to the work and its power to inspire others.

The debate about design and presentation began early and
continues. There are many issues here: the quality of the
print used - too faint, blurred or uneven; its size; a
random use of line breaks; inappropriate illustrations;
blurred photos. In 1989, there is evidence that the
design stakes have been upped again. In a favourable
review of My First Job from Islington Group Writes the
following comment was made:

> " Although the production is of a good quality,
> it does not have the gloss of a professional
> publication. "
>
> (ALBSU Newsletter 35 1989:14)

By 1982 there was some concern being voiced about whether
student publishing had any appeal beyond ABE. (This is an
issue I discuss further in Section 3: `The relationship
to literary culture'.)

Reviews of student publishing that originates with
students whose first language is not English begin to
appear in 1983 and it is interesting that it attracts a
much greater weight of obligation than other forms of

student publishing. Perhaps because there is so little of it, as demonstrated in this review of The Stories of Yonis Tuk and Egal Shidad as told by Shamas Dirir and Khadra Farah.

> " Neither of the central characters are particularly nice people and thus are not good representatives of Somali Culture. "
>
> (ALBSU Newsletter 11 1983:12)

1982 also saw the publication of Peckham Publishing Project's How To Make A Book which was only superseded when new technology made it redundant. Its value was noted in Marrilynne Snowdon's review:

> " All the errors that I and my colleagues have made over the years, and have learnt through trial and error, are covered in this 24 page A5 book. "
>
> (ALBSU Newsletter 12 1983: 11)

In 1983 a reviewer comments that a set of plays have an unfortunate educational tone perhaps because they were written for teenagers not adults. She wonders will the community publishers like Gatehouse and Centerprise publish plays; and I found it indeed interesting to note the publication of the following student written plays during that period.

In 1984 the Lee Centre published Cowboys, an improvised play that developed out of a student group's experience of working in the building trade, and in 1985 a women's group at Hackney Reading Centre performed and published The Baby Batterer. In 1986 the ALBSU Newsletter had an insert 'What About A Play ? ' by Rosey Eggar of Cambridge House. It provides an account of a workshop to develop plays using improvisation and different methods of transcribing. 2 years later, in 1988, Cambridge House published a collection of plays, The Disappearing Horse. In 1989 a group in Leicester took things one stage further. Not only did they write and read through the play, but they staged it too.

In a very positive review of a book dealing with the effects of literacy problems, Where Do We Go From Here (1983) the reviewer sets out her criteria for a good student publication. This would have been useful to others thinking about developing good practice and can be summarised as:

1. The courage to confront the task of assessing the impact of literacy problems on their lives.
2. A mix of written/spoken transcriptions.
3. Giving the writers' background.
4. Allowing the publication to arise naturally from the writing.

1 ó

In an article about the Write First Time Writing
Development Project, Sue Gardener acknowledges that
student publishing still has a distance to travel but she
sets out an argument for it that seems undeniable.
Commenting on an edition of WFT produced in Blackburn
that had such an overflow of material that three
magazines were produced locally, she wrote:

> " If this wealth is there, in the medium that
> students want to learn to perform in, how can we
> not let it come out and be shared ? "
> (ALBSU Newsletter 14 1983/4: 7)

In 1985 the ALBSU Advisory Group on Materials identified
fictional material, especially for beginner readers, as a
gap and argued that it highlighted the need to develop
student writing through regional workshops. This report
clearly contributed both to the publishing initiative
with Newmat and Peckham and the writing developments
projects of the late 1980's in Bolton, Essex and Wales.

Just Lately I Realise was reviewed in 1986 as the first
nationally offered book of student writing to speak out
about the way that racism affected Caribbean students.
Opening Time, a student writing pack, was also favourably
reviewed that year by Phillip Beadle:

> " It critically examines the writing process
> itself, asking such questions as what needs to be
> said, how should it be said and who is to
> determine either ? "
> (ALBSU Newsletter 23 1986:12)

Over the next couple of years a number of themed
collections were published and reviewed: either from
trips away or about the experience of a particular group,
such as women. Liz Moore, reviewing The Dinner Lady and
other Women, takes the opportunity to reflect on the
genre of themed group writing as a whole and offers
pointers towards good practice in writing for
publication.

> " A strong impression of the 'process' of writing
> which the women had been through together,
> talking, writing, re-drafting, reading out and
> sharing, and editing, until finally a finished
> piece was produced.
>
> It sometimes seems as if writers write 'on' these
> topics rather than taking account of personal
> experience, thinking about how to craft it into a
> piece of work with which they are satisfied and
> which also reaches out and says something to
> other people. "
> (ALBSU Newsletter 26: 1987: 11)

It may be relevant, though, that this publication developed in a community based writers' workshop not an adult basic education group.

There was also in 1987 an observation that most student authored material was urban and a call for more rural materials. Another group who fared badly in student publishing terms were students in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), who were less likely to have their own writing published and more likely to have books written for them by tutors. It isn't clear which category the Foot Family Readers fall into, although the views of this reviewer are unequivocal:

> " There is nothing to show that these books were intended to interest adult speakers of other languages, nor to link with or value their cultural experience, or way of life."
> (ALBSU Newsletter 30 1988:14)

There was also evidence that more non-fictional writing was being published, especially by the BEN books from Coventry which in 1988 published books about cooking and metrication.

By 1989 the problematic status of autobiographical student writing is clear from what was in fact a very positive review by Maggie Fordham of Memories of Distant Days by Carrie Stocks.

> " My resistance to yet another set of memories vanished as soon as I started to read. ... There is so much detail in the stories, much of it really absorbing. "
> (ALBSU Newsletter 35 1989:14)

A scathing review of a reading scheme developed using the phonic principles advocated by the Dyslexia Association indicates the extent to which principles developed through the practice of publishing student writing had been absorbed into good literacy practice. Linda Lever is reviewing the Pat and Tom Reading Scheme from the Pickup Unit at Barnsley Technical College.

> " No regard seems to have been given in these books to the importance of context, to normal patterns of adult speech or to developments in ABE practitioners' ideas about the sort of materials and methods which are suitable for adults. ... I have not ordered them for our resource base because my colleagues and I no longer consider this type of material to be helpful to adults learning to read. "
> (ALBSU Newsletter 37 1990: 16)

Keeping in Touch, a collection compiled for International Literacy Year by various students in Cumbria, is reviewed

by Kay Rhodes and her students. She finds it dull in
content and presentation:
" Ranging over a fairly predictable medley of
topics. "
Whereas her students enjoyed the collection:
" Because of its emphasis on familiar situations
and themes. "
(ALBSU Newsletter 41 1991: 16)

Our final review is less than a year old and contains a
valuable lesson: students and tutors have different
attitudes to student publishing. This should be borne in
mind, as should students' dependence on their tutors for
access to books like these.

^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^

Notes and References

[1] This is a common teaching method that adapts well to   research, especially with groups.
Its value lies in that it gives those participating access to the key research ideas while at
the same time enabling the researcher to check out the extent to which those ideas are held or
modified by that particular group. It helps to guard against the problem of people offering what
they think the researcher wants to hear.

Section 2   Extent, Range and Patterns

This section introduces the complexity of work that we found goes on in the name of 'student publishing' (<u>Particular not general</u>) and the range of experience which tutors told us they had had in this work (<u>Extent of student publishing</u>).

<u>What is this thing called Student Publishing ?</u> heads a discussion on different definitions that people offered us. Among the variety of practice an important strand has been the use of student publishing in numeracy work, which in discussed in <u>This is maths you're talking about</u>.

The research aim had included charting what changes there may have been in the work from the late 1970's until now; and in <u>Changes</u> there is some account of the declines and growths which we found; followed by some changes in practice and approach. From definitions and changes this section goes on to summarise some of the different <u>Models of student publishing</u> that we found during the fieldwork. We include a section on <u>fund-raising</u>.

Particular not General

The versions and varieties of publishing are best understood as a continuum, as are the student's needs and aspirations in regard to writing itself. In the early flush of excitement about student publishing perhaps the emphasis was on promoting student's entitlement to write and their ownership of that writing, sometimes at the expense of critical engagement. Reviews throughout the early 1980's almost always end with an exhortation similar to Gordon Hart's, a student from Cheltenham reviewing **My Grandfather's Shop** by John, a student from Essex:

> " So, all you students out there, 'Get writing' "
> (ALBSU Newsletter 6 July 1981:10)

By contrast with this missionary zeal, critics of student publishing have accused it of being:

> " The 'Valium' of basic education – an excuse for lack of planning and rigour and a poverty of expectation. "
> (ALBSU Newsletter No 42 Summer 1991)

Student publishing, as an educational activity, has been the victim of generalisations, from its supporters as much as its detractors. Many ABE tutors, with all sorts of experiences, gave us the impression that they saw student publishing as a single entity. I hope a major achievement of this study will be a recognition of student publishing's complexity which will challenge the way it is seen as a monolith.

There are many ways to publish student writing, and many forms of that writing. Everyone – student writers, readers and tutors – loses out if they have to work with a model of student publishing that prescribes too rigidly or narrowly what can be done and the value it is given.

During visits some tutors remembered, self-critically, their enthusiasm for putting any piece of writing a student produced between covers.

> " The scheme had a phase of publish or be damned – when the need to publish was not about the students' development or wishes but more a need for the scheme to justify and promote itself, raise its profile and be seen to be a place which did exciting and enabling things for its students."
> (Tutor, Walsall)

Re – evaluating the claims made on behalf of student publishing is not the same as rubbishing those claims; nor are we just saying that out of the plethora of ways and means to develop and display student writing everyone

will find something to suit them. It is possible, indeed
necessary, to differentiate between different ways of
working. Some of the most astute critics I spoke with
were writers, editors, students, tutors - practitioners
of publishing - reflecting on their practice.

In this report, we are inviting you to look at versions
and variety; but we are also arguing that there are
important conditions to be met if student publishing is
to fulfil its potential for good learning and teaching
within the ABE curriculum.

The Extent of Student Publishing

The questionnaire and visits revealed that for the majority of students and tutors student publishing is valued primarily as an activity for writers. Many tutors were reluctant to adapt student publishing for use as learning materials. For some, this stemmed from a strong belief that publishing should be fun, done for its own sake and pleasure. For others, it had a more ideological or political basis. Some tutors felt that adapting student writing interfered with, and undermined, it. It is interesting that many of the pieces in **Take Away Times**, the student numeracy paper, were written by students expressly as learning materials and some were transformed into learning materials during editing. **Going Home to St Lucia** (1991) was written as learning materials by the students involved.

For many, though, there was a sense that publishing was separate from their main teaching and some were excited or relieved to realise they could incorporate it into their day to day practice. Most commonly, student publications were simply available to students as readers or part of library stock. The absence in most students of an orientation towards reading suggests that this option will rarely be taken up.

Question 1 in the questionnaire [Q] asked how much experience of publishing student writing the respondent had. No guidelines were offered as to how much activity warranted choosing one category over another. It was a subjective self assessment.

Slightly more opted for 'A little' than for 'some', and the least frequently chosen was to have done a lot.

A Little: 73   Some: 71   None: 25   A lot: 19

A sample cross referencing those choosing 'A little' and 'Some' with questions 2 and 3, about the type and frequency of publishing, gave the following result:

'A little' usually meant that the respondent was new to publishing, having begun to do it within a range of 1- 2 years or 1- 2 months whereas 'Some' indicated involvement spanning up to 10 years.

The range of publication was also significant. A class magazine, even if produced for 6 or 7 years, was considered 'A little', whereas stories, magazines and single author publications, even if done within the last 2 years, became 'Some'.

The question of distribution was also relevant. National or area distribution tended to go into the 'Some'

category, whereas class or centre based publications counted as 'A little'.

The question asking whether this was a satisfactory balance showed that it was for only 2 respondents. The majority, 111, wanted to do more student publishing and nobody wanted to do less.

Question 2 asked about the frequency of publishing. The greatest number, 89, produced work occasionally:

Monthly:	1	Termly:	34
Annually:	44	Occasionally:	89

Other responses, all under 10, indicated that some projects were just starting to publish, a slightly larger number now no longer published due to re-organisation and others publish in response to groups' interest.

Question 3 established the types of publication worked on and the extent of their distribution. It was commonest for respondents to have worked on 2 or 3 different types, eg magazine, life story, group writing on a theme.

National distribution was rare, less than 60 responses, and of these it was predominantly for group and individual life stories. The commonest distribution was to the class and centre, over 300 responses for each.

The local picture gives a very different view of the content of student publishing than that of the national. Although life stories are still popular, magazines occur twice as often. Poetry and group writing on a theme also occur frequently.

The lower occurrences were for publications such as: numeracy, recipes, information sheets, plays, quizzes and cartoons.

The concentration of local distribution has implications for developing the scope and range of student publishing. Many tutors testified that they had learnt to publish or were motivated to start by imitation. Similarly, many students identified other student publications as the germ of their own desire to write. The fact that only a limited range of the publishing that does go on gets a wider circulation is bound to influence what it is that people model. Similarly, there is very limited opportunity for the diversity within a form, say the magazine, to percolate and inform practise nationally. The opportunity to let others see what is being done, and the permission to comment freely upon it, would do much to improve the quality and range of student publishing.

Q respondents were asked about which types of publishing they would and wouldn't have liked to do. The answers were testimony to the diversity of impulse and opinion nationally, with as many wanting to do some types as not.

Some patterns di⁴. however, emerge. More people wanted to do work that they were unable to do than not. Group life stories was the most popular activity not being done, closely followed by poetry and writing on a theme. Responses here were in the 40 - 30 range. The least popular activities were area magazines, poetry and class magazine in the 20 - 15 range.

The reasons given why an activity was not happening were sometimes generally applicable, eg lack of time or money, but were sometimes very specific, eg lack of confidence with poetry, not wanting to pry into past traumas as a restriction on writing life stories.

The overwhelming response: time, needs a little more probing. All teaching activities are restricted and shaped by time pressures. Unpacking what it means can involve picking up on a shift in attitude, what may really be meant by time is that working on a student publication accrues less value than some other activity. It is also an issue of entitlement or encouragement.

Time, too, is not just time in the workplace but the workplace in relation to the rest of life. One of the features of the past decade and its political shifts is the huge gap between people in and out of work. One group has too much time, the other too little, as their jobs accrete new procedures of record keeping, reporting and assessment and the infrastructure pushes from the outside, with pressures from transport, civil disorder, strikes and the shifting of communal and social responsibilities back to the family and individual.

At times during the research we heard criticisms of the pioneers of student publishing along the lines that they had been motivated by their own career interests. This took the form of accusations that individual students had been exploited in order to further tutors' careers or raise the profile of a centre's work. This criticism was made by a minority of people I spoke to, including a black tutor discussing white tutors working with black students and a white tutor discussing middle class white tutors working with white working class studer's. A term used by two tutors I talked with was career capital, one used it descriptively, the other as a condemnation. Both recognised that tutors had gained from their involvement in student publishing. During visits I asked a question: 'What are the good things about student publishing ?' A couple of tutors added to their list of student' gains, comments such as: 'It is good public relations for us'; 'It looks good on my c.v.'; 'I'm sure it helped me get this job', which suggested awareness of the value to tutors of getting involved in student publishing.

These rewards are not available to the same extent or in the same way for new tutors coming through. Jobs themselves are disappearing, let alone opportunities for advancement within them. Also, as the emphasis within ABE

shifts from empowerment and personal development to progression towards employment and further education, the kudos of publishing skills and interests lessens. Publishing projects add to a sense of energy and creativity and a feeling that things are happening in a centre; but for publishing to happen, some of that creative energy already needs to exist. This creative energy is less likely to flourish when tutors, who almost always initiate such projects, are struggling for professional survival and self-respect.

The kinds of reasons given for activities that didn't appeal were more disparate. Time did figure here too, but in 5 responses as against 66 in the previous category. The commoner reasons clustered around: lack of relevance, too limited, conflicting with the group's main purpose. While all of these reasons may have been valid in the circumstances they referred to, the clustering in this way also suggests that the actual values of student publishing are not clear to tutors.

Questions about whether student publications were popular or commonly used in projects, and the ways in which they were used, revealed how unstructured their uses often were.

Question 8 of the Q asked which publications were most frequently used and during visits, tutors were asked which were their personal favourites. The answers were virtually identical, with the exception that in the Q by far the most popular response, 47, was for schemes own publications, whereas on visits only 1 respondent named a publication she had been involved with.

The list of favourites showed a significant bias towards commercially produced titles. Gatehouse was often tutor's first response to this question and received 29 responses in the Q. Centerprise and Peckham Publishing Projects followed closely.

Shelf Life

It was significant that old and new titles had an equal currency. People often commented that self-produced material was only popular when it was new, a comment sometimes made apologetically. It seems an appropriate response to ephemeral publishing, which all magazine publications are. Anthologies, poetry, life stories, beginner readers and so on have a longer life. Tutors are often more sensitive to their datedness than students, although the impact of technology has had a major impact here.

Design

When colour printing and Desk Top Publishing [DTP] became more widely available towards the end of the 1980's the better design put older publications into the shade. The

timing of the ALBSU initiative (1985) to develop new
kinds of books for students, plus their relatively
generous budgets, meant they could take full advantage of
this and were the first to produce full colour
publications. Gatehouse, the most established publisher
of student writing produced its first colour publication,
Monsters of The Mind, over 5 years later. Gloss,
however, does not always appeal. Certainly when students
discussed a criticism often heard about student
publications, that they are scruffy, there were a range
of opinions expressed, including one that the home-made
look is part of what makes the publication user friendly.

National or Local

Many respondents, in the Q and during visits, spoke of
how valuable a national publication for student writing
would be. This is borne out when you see that STAG, the
Nottinghamshire newspaper largely written for students is
as popular with tutors as Write First Time, the national
newspaper written by students, which ceased publication
in 1984. Take Away Times, the London based numeracy
broadsheet which ceased publication in 1990 is still used
and newly discovered by tutors and students.

Uses

The uses of student publications provide challenging data
in the context of the criticism that advocates of student
publishing tend to rely exclusively on them. Respondents
to the Q were asked to tick a range of learning
activities or materials that student publications were
used for within a range of Always, Often, Sometimes and
Rarely. The **majority of responses for all activities was
in the Sometimes range.**

Student publishing was always used for **library stock** in
37 responses. Other Always responses were predominantly
1's, the next largest categories - with 4 responses -
were for **group reading** and **language awareness.**

Student publishing was rarely used for the more
traditional learning activities, such as punctuation and
spelling or for numeracy activities, which respondents
throughout the research saw as an unusual partner for
student publishing.

The commonest use of student publishing was individual
reading, (60 responses in Often, 76 in Sometimes). In
light of the findings about reading, there is an issue
about whether this indicates actual reading or making the
books available. The next most common responses: (75, 72,
67 in the Sometimes range) were for discussion,
comprehension and writing stimulus respectively. (These
were also the most popular in the Often category: 53, 35
and 61 responses respectively.) Group reading also
attracted high responses.

24

Writing Stimulus

The question of writing stimulus is an ambiguous one. Many tutors testify that student writing is the most powerful and effective way to encourage new or reluctant writers. It both models and encourages writing.

However, there is an area of concern if writing is only used to stimulate other writers and not engaged with in its own right. Not only are opportunities to develop critical thinking and response lost with the current students, but the writing act is not completed for the students it originated with if they receive no feedback. On a number of occasions, during visits, it was clear that student writing appeared on the table in front of students only as a means of enabling them to make decisions about style and format for their own publication. There were few opportunities for the students to do more than just look at how the writing was presented.

Training Resource

A small, but significant, instance of student publications always being used is in <u>tutor or volunteer training</u>. The publications were seen as the most effective way of communicating the variety of experience and expectation that students bring into the literacy classroom with them and to break up the stereotype of who and what a literacy student is.

Conclusion

As with other aspects of the research, part of what is needed in order to extend and raise the standard of practice nationally is example: the modelling of various forms of good practice. Many tutors still need permission to use student publications in the variety of ways they use other learning materials, or need reminding that there are varieties of ways to use any material. Some of the assumptions, especially about developing reading skills beyond the basic and language awareness, need challenging and revising.

What Is This Thing Called Student Publishing ?

" The creation of meaning and the attempt to engage someone else in a dialogue about that meaning. "

(Right to Learn Centre, Walsall)

" Strangers read it. "

(Blackfriars Education Centre)

" Writer and editor locked in discussion for a long time. Or discussions spreading outwards from a piece of writing. It's a delicate business because the writing must remain with the writer, but you must make them aware of what you know about the process of being published. ... If it's properly done, the writer has a stronger sense of their own voice at the end of the process. "

(Gatehouse)

" Limp looking things at the back of the bookshelf that you shouldn't throw away but want to. "

" It's something that makes people feel good - but it's only for them, their friends. "

(Leeds ABE Organisers)

" Things to show "

(Swansea Open Learning Centre)

It is clear from the fieldwork visits that a diverse set of definitions describe student publishing. It was a methodological principle to offer the broadest definition ourselves. This partly reflects our belief that such a broad definition does best describe the activity, but it also gave space to respondents to react and develop their own definitions.

What emerged was a sense of contradiction and tension in those definitions which it would be valuable to explore and define more tightly. At the moment, there are advantages in such looseness but if, as it often seemed, it remains difficult to draw a line between publishing and any other activity in the literacy classroom then there is a problem. Namely that the argument of whether or not to involve students in a publishing project becomes as easy to make for as against.

Outcomes and Input

A further difficulty with definitions lies in the question of value to the student. Adult education is under enormous pressure at the moment to provide evidence of outcomes. Measuring outcomes is notoriously difficult, leaving aside the ideological debates about whether such

monitoring is appropriate. But, to be pragmatic, let us assume that we will have to provide such evidence if we are to continue our work.

In order to begin to get close to outcomes, we have to be clear what the input is, what activities or sets of activities we are working with. In order to make the case for student publishing's value to learning we need to be clear what we mean when we use the term. If, as the research suggests, questions of value are closely tied in to making explicit the process of publishing, then that process must be articulated.

Linked to the question of what we mean when we say publishing is that of what we mean when we say writing. Student publishing is often perceived as creative writing, and creative writing is often understood to mean personal or autobiographical writing. There are enormous elisions going on here, which work to the detriment of everyone who has a concern with teaching writing beyond the functional.

A close look at the kind of writing produced by students in the last 15 years doesn't support the view that student writing is exclusively personal, in the sense of being about private and individual experience, although such writing often expresses views and arguments in ways which retain a personal voice.

The publication 'Making News' was produced by tutors and students in London for approximately 10 years from the mid 1970's. Each issue focussed on one topic: including Development, Ireland, The NHS, Racism, Nuclear Power, South Africa and combined writing taken from a range of publications with students' and tutors' own views and experiences. These in turn led to other students' written responses which may well have found their way into centre collections or magazines.

The magazine 'Take Away Times', produced in London between 1988 and 1990, contained writing about maths anxiety with writing about strategies and information about different ways of doing maths. It also used student writing to provide maths problems and exercises. There was extensive writing about learning published through the National Federation of Voluntary Education (formerly Literacy) Schemes. This organisation was active from the mid 1970's through to 1990 and published a regular newsletter, Wallpaper; organised writing weekends and published occasional booklets. The theme of learning was picked up by various projects throughout the country in books such as Where Do I Go From Here ? (1983) and Listening Ears (1980). Such writing was undoubtedly personal, but its reach was into a shared set of concerns with learning and personal development that linked students and tutors, scheme to scheme, place to place.

Where writing was expressly personal, as in the Eden Grove publications **Left In The Dark** (1982) or Hackney Reading Centre's **Every Birth It Comes Different** (1980), it is important to recognise the deliberate choice to theme the writing and the editorial and writing choices that entails. Personal writing rarely just happens, in a direct and unmediated way. Often students deliberately approach difficult personal themes through a form which is also challenging and new to them. Celia de Freine and Phyl Herbert's work with drama in Mountjoy prison, described in **Literacy, Language, Role Play** (1990), demonstrates this, as does Hackney Reading Centre's play `**The Baby Batterer**' (1985).

Finally, student publishing has been innovative in non-fiction writing, namely Black history and Culture. The Peckham Black Makers of History series: **Four Women** (1987), **The Real McCoy** (1988), **Not Just Singin'** and **Dancin'**(1989) broke new ground and became source books in a much wider context than adult literacy.

The identification of student publishing with personal writing surfaces most frequently in detractors, but it also informs a shift in emphasis from supporters of student publishing. The research made contact with a second wave of advocates of student publishing, `post-pioneers', who were critical of what they saw as characteristics of early student publishing.

For some, this meant moving away from reminiscence based personal writing to imaginative and speculative work. For others, the move away from expressive writing took the form of introducing students to writing markets, with an emphasis on writing for publication by external agencies, usually magazines. The value of this lies in expanding even further the type of writing students have access to.

This is maths you're talking about.

Although literacy is the most obvious aspect of ABE to find an interest in publishing, there is no reason why other areas of work should be excluded. Numeracy is still struggling to take its equal place alongside literacy[1] in ABE so it was not a surprise that only a small number of numeracy tutors responded to the research project. I knew of the London maths newspaper, **Take Away Times**, and wanted to see if there were other maths publications. What was surprising was that there was no other maths publishing. Edinburgh's Number Shop produce student newsletters but the copy I saw had no writing about maths or maths problems in it.

I was able to spark off some debate and interest in the subject. I asked questions about numeracy on the Q and found a small number of people who used student writing as part of numeracy teaching. During visits I took copies of **Take Away Times** (TAT) and asked for responses to them.

In some cases there was the excitement of making connections for the first time:

> B: " I like them like that - it doesn't look so scary as a lot of numbers. "

> D: " Some people don't like the words - they can't read them - they like the numbers. ... We often talk about the hard things about writing - but we never talk about maths and how frightening that is. "
>
> (Students & Tutor, Cathedral Centre, Bradford)

Tutors were often amused by the question. 'This is maths you're talking about' was a common response.

> I: *Is there a role for student writing and publishing in the teaching of maths and numeracy:*

> T: " Now there's a question ! Maths teaching has changed a lot and there's more project work now so I suppose it could be done, but it would be limited. If learning about maths is the purpose of the work then it's important to keep to the point."
>
> (Maths Volunteer, Swansea O.L. Centre)

One positive counter to a largely negative reaction to accreditation and student publishing was in the context of Numberpower. It, like the new GCSE, brings in more writing skills than conventional maths did.

> " A lot of them come up with their own ideas, which can be projects, worksheets - especially with Numberpower. And jokes - what's volume, the

knob on the telly. ... They're writing numerically every time they fill out their record sheets. Once you've gone through the stages Wordpower and Numberpower are very cross-related: lots of report writing. "

<div align="right">(Tutor, North Norfolk)</div>

Take Away Times ceased publication in 1990 but I discussed its role and value with two tutors who had worked on it:

J: " People reacted as if it was worksheets, which wasn't the point. The idea was to have interesting things to read about maths, to have dialogues and just enjoy maths. I don't think people knew how to cope with it. "

N: " There were debates over the format. Two basic proposals. One, a central maths newspaper. Two, a publication which would rotate from class to class, not just publishing student writing but letting people have the opportunity to learn how to edit and publish.
Format 1 was adopted but format 2 might have spread the knowledge and skills more. What happened was that the expertise became concentrated in a few people and this made the publication very dependant upon them. "

J: " It also made a difference that the project had support from the numeracy co-ordinator at the Language and Literacy Unit, who also distributed and funded it. When that post went, there was no support from L.L.U. There was also very little support from Hackney AEI who employed most of the people contributing to it. "

I: What would boost the profile of student publishing in numeracy ?

J: " Training events on developing student writing in numeracy. It's just not part of what people thought of as numeracy teaching.

<div align="right">(Tutors, WIN, London)</div>

One tutor, an enthusiast for student publishing, articulated what may be a continuing view of the problem facing the development of writing and publishing in numeracy within ABE:

R: " It's harder to build up a rapport with the student in maths as the material is very dry. In reading and writing the conversation comes easier -sometimes too much - but in maths, the conversation has to stop and the work starts. "

(Tutor, KLEAR, Dublin)

Changes

All research begins with questions, designed to check out whether hunches are right or wrong, to ascertain under what circumstances, and in what ways, they might be right or wrong. Exciting research, as this has been, usually ends up by turning some of those starting points around and throwing up issues and problems that could not have been anticipated at the outset.

The first hunch to concern us was a sense that student publishing could be charted as a rise from scattered beginnings in the early / mid 1970's, followed through its ascendancy into the early 1980's and then charted into the present as a decline. This was a hunch that proved to be true and untrue in about equal parts.

The Decline in Student Publishing

It was true that student publishing was declining in these respects:

1. London, (a significant centre for student publishing throughout the 1970's and 1980's) now sustains very little publishing. Projects such as Peckham, Hackney Reading Centre/Centerprise, Beauchamp Lodge, NINE P, CAVE, Cambridge House, Lee Centre all played an important role in publicising student writing, distributing it nationally, providing a network which exchanged skills and stimulus and training for tutors and students.

In 1992, those projects have either been forced to close, as is the case for the Lee Centre and Beauchamp Lodge or are no longer able to publish student writing on anything but the most occasional basis.

The break up of ILEA in 1990 contributed massively to the disarray and low morale which now characterises the London adult education scene. It also made material changes in that resources became harder to get access to. Hammersmith, to take just one example, lost access to a media resources centre which had enabled them to publish cheap, well produced booklets in the past. A steady stream of experienced practitioners left the service. This had consequences for passing on the skills and motivation as most training in student publishing is by example. Finally, student publishing is characteristically a celebratory and voluntary activity. In a situation of low morale, the impetus towards both will necessarily be lessened; even as the need for it increases.

2.   There is less of the single authored, externally printed, large print run book with a spine. These books tended to be autobiographical, something which in itself continues to cause controversy.

31

3.   There are fewer specific writing activities, such as writing weekends or days; and consequently, less published accounts of these events. Such accounts often divided people, fuelling the argument that publishing student writing benefits the writer more than the reader. Sadly, their demise reflects less a recognition of the readers' needs and more that nobody now has the money to run such writing events.[2]

4.   Specific units or projects set up to publish student writing have been closed down. The Publications Resource Unit in Leeds and Leicestershire's ABE Publishing Unit both closed during the year of the project.

5.   The need for student publishing was perceived as having been met. People who had supported student publishing as a means to provide appropriate learning materials now felt that there was a sufficiently wide choice. The ALBSU 1985 initiative, and its spin off in respect of Newmat and Hodder continuing to publish, were important here, being seen in some quarters as student publishing coming of age. Positive as the ALBSU initiative was, it does signal a major difficulty: the extent to which the concern is with *publishing by* or *publishing for students in ABE*.

Evidence of other kinds, however, reveals that student publishing in the 1990's continues, but in different ways:

1.   As the larger and more established projects cease to publish, publishing has become more the property of the class and/or the smaller centres. In this respect student publishing has become ordinary, rather than extraordinary. Centres such as Right to Learn in Walsall now no longer aim to publish work for national distribution, but concentrate on smaller scale local publishing.

2.   There is a greater diversification into small scale, individual publishing away from the large, inclusive project. This diversity in form is also there in content, as students move away from personal writing towards one, or both, of the two poles of factual and imaginative writing.

3.   There is consensus that publishing is part of the literacy offer, and that a broad definition of publishing pertains. This offer is most often delivered through the class or centre magazine.

Models of Student Publishing

As the section on definitions has suggested, there is often a lack of clarity about what is actually meant by student publishing. During the research project we had the opportunity to hear about and discuss many different ways of working on writing and bringing it to an audience. It must be borne in mind though, that as publishing is a long term process we were never able to follow a publishing project through from inception to completion. We were always dependant on either what the end product revealed about the process or what participants had to say after the event.

Nevertheless, we believe it is helpful to begin to group some of these ways of working because it helps to break up the monolith of student publishing and the attendant polarisation that deems it a good or a bad thing. Starting to clarify that a variety of purposes or motives for publishing operate, perhaps at different times or for different people at different times, makes it easier to see that methods can and do change, as does the value which accrues from the endeavour.

The Publishing Process

Time and again, people commented that the value and learning from student publishing lay in the process as much as in the product. Equally common, was the experience of learning as you go along, discovering all the things that go into making a book as you make it. For some, this latter caused a great deal of friction and led to projects remaining unfinished as time, costs and energy had been underestimated. It is, therefore, helpful to consider what elements are needed to successfully complete the circuit. This is what Nigel Legood and Jean Milloy, two experienced tutors, came up with.

> ## The Publishing Process
>
> Making choices and decisions
> Social skills
> Learning
>
> Writing and re-writing
> Analysis of the topic you're writing about - don't let people just say what they want to say - challenge and develop what they're saying.
> Continuity within a book - attention to style, eg not to be unintentionally episodic.
> Decisions about language
>
> Pre-editing and editing at various stages
> Proof reading
> Correcting
>
> Design and layout

Preparing the finished product in respect of page numbers, index, title pages.
Choice of cover
Illustrations: selecting and/or making them.
Pricing
Marketing
Celebrating
Receiving praise

Negotiating publishing work in relation to other educational work.
Prioritising within and around the process - and recognition of different priorities within a group or between students and tutors, especially around the issue of student involvement.
The author's contribution being acknowledged by payment
or some other form.

Time
Energy
Exposing yourself
Responsibility
Pain, hardship suffering, agony

" If you are involved in all of that you're involved in publishing, which isn't to say that only all of it is valuable. Negotiation, for example, might involve students choosing not to get involved in some aspects of the work; but there is a big difference between knowing what is involved and choosing not to do it and never quite knowing what the stages were that your work has gone through. "

J: " It's very rare for it to be that formal, to sit down and say 'These are the jobs to be done.' It happens informally - should it happen more ?

N: " It depends on how much publishing is the focus: if you're teaching about publishing, then yes; if writing is the priority, then no. "

(Tutors, Walk In Numeracy)

Models

There is a danger that this description of the different models of student publishing we observed could be taken prescriptively: This is how to do student publishing. That isn't our intention at all. What we want to do is increase awareness that tutors often have a model of student publishing in mind when they begin work, although this is rarely fully articulated. By making the decision to publish more conscious, we believe that there will be more scope for different sorts of publications and

clearer expectations of their value to student writers and other readers.

In drawing up our models we adapted a checklist developed by Queenspark Books, a community publishing group in Brighton. Bexhill Creative Writers reported it had been helpful to them when they started to think about a publication. It was striking that very few projects had gone into publishing with more than a general sense of it being a good idea. The idea of writing for a purpose is now well established within ABE but there is often vagueness about why publishing is being undertaken. If publishing for a purpose was talked and thought about more it might lend a sharpness to the work and would undoubtedly help make assessment and achievement easier.

The checklist which Queenspark asks people to consider is as follows:

What is the mood of this book ?
What message are we trying to get across ?
What choices are there about layout ?

To this we added:
Who are your readers ?

We found that all the varieties of publishing we had heard about or seen during the research project could be described under one of the following 6 models. The models are not ranked in any special order. They were presented to the consultative conference on July 9th 1992, whose amendments and comments we have incorporated, in italics, into these descriptions.

1. Publishing as Writer's Achievement

Readers: Usually class or centre, plus friends
or relatives.

Form: Booklet A4 or A5, single sheet, stapled
sheets; plus possibly reading evening
or reading aloud in groups; displays on
wall.

Message: We can do it,

Choices: Student plus tutor originating the
piece

make choices of topic, form, 'quality';
central editor simply acts as producer
and distributor.

For: *Respects individuals right to express themselves and
encourages writing as a medium for that.
Encourages proof reading for a reason.
Cheap.
Manageable for tutors and students, especially if
within one class when it is less threatening too.
Immediate feedback and affirmation.
Easy for students to be involved in a complete
process.
Boost in confidence for student as unlikely to have
done this before.*

Against: *More focus on the writer than the reader.
Narrowness of audience.
Could make students aware of a writing hierarchy
or undervalue their skills through comparison.
A lot of work and effort on some students' part
and then so quickly forgotten.*

Comments: *Often a starting point for further writing and
publication.
Very easily adapted for Wordpower.
Makes the point that everyone is a writer but
may have the disadvantage that decisions about
'good' and 'bad' writing are very hard to make
in a broad celebratory unfocussed enterprise.
Students may expect every piece of writing to
be celebrated in the same way.
Are real decisions made ? Writing may be
contrived.
Do people seeing a display realise what its
purpose is ?*

2. Publishing as Group Project or Community Development Enterprise.

Readers: Beyond centre, local or national.

Form: A4 magazine, DTP'd or printed book, newspaper, plus publishing event and/or active effort to get local press coverage.

Message: You are not alone, This is work which
is
worth others reading.

Choices: Effort at democracy and equal opportunity; students take different roles in the whole production varying from author through to illustrator and sales rep.

For: *Uses a variety of skills, eg technical, marketing and graphic as well as writing.*
Have to think more about the reader.
Can strengthen group enormously if it does work.
Students and tutors learn different skills together and make decisions together.
Usually a good end product.
Prestige and profile-raising, a real sense of achievement.

Against: *Needs a lot of time and energy to organise and keep it going, plus travel costs.*
Product can become more important than the process.
Because of the high profile some students in rural areas may not want to be included.

Comments: *Can be hard to maintain democratic choices and prevent a few individuals from dominating.*
Needs a high level of student commitment.
Need time, money and access to technology also, some one with skills in publishing otherwise it becomes too much effort and too frustrating.
Students may gain experience of self-advocacy or 'campaigning' thinking - the concept of effecting some kind of change yourselves.
The opportunity to see the whole project through may help to de-mystify print.

3. Publishing as Souvenir

Readers: Participants in the event, others in the centre.

Form: Duplicated or photocopied, instant.

Message: This is what we did; We had a good time.

Choices: Everybody in, graphic and design choices, and production, may form part of the event itself.

For: *Speed of results.*
Recording the event validates it.
Useful in fund-raising.
Support and camaraderie without too much hype.
Helps build group solidarity through tangible memory.
Cheap.
Shows the range of thought which can come from one event or activity; stimulates a variety of styles of writing.
A model for other people's events in the future.
Stimulates quantities of writing, often less threatening as a starting point for writing.

Against: *Not much chance to redraft.*
Difficult to capture the feel of an event in print.
Non-participants may feel excluded.

Comments: *An example for students of how diaries work.*
Use of other media: video, cameras etc give chance to learn new skills, often from other students who may be very skilled.
Can it be everybody *in ?*
It may not interest a group beyond those who took part.
The mood will often be pleasant, but may also have a more negative, angry or bitter mood as part of the catharsis of writing out shared experience.

4. Publishing as Promotion for the Organisation

Readers: Other users of a centre, local funders, local residents.

Form: Annual report, magazine, leaflet.

Message: Entitlement to education, this centre does useful work.

Choices: Topics largely concern activity/learning of the centre; every student gets at least one piece in.

For: *Makes people feel more involved in and committed to the organisation.*
Can provide a focus and motivation to work.
Raises profile of provision.
Students think about the purposes of the organisation and whether its aims really are being achieved.
Students gain a better understanding of the organisational context/networks in which they are learning - and maybe more knowledge of progression routes as a spin-off.

Against: *Exposing student writing to critical readers outside ABE.*
Are students being used ?
Can only ever "preach to the converted".

Comments: *Needs to be "good quality" and have high production values.*
Needs editorial independence from institution which leads to a possible conflict of interest.

5. Publishing as Internal Circular

Readers: All students and tutors in the project.

Form: Magazine, newsletter, likely to be regular.

Message: You're part of this, Look what we've done.

Choices: Everything goes in, variety encouraged - puzzles, recipes, poems. Tutor may do all typing; could mark transition from 1:1 to group work.

For: *If known to be regular, people can think about making a contribution rather than be put on the spot.*
All can join in.
Participants have a lot of choice about what to contribute.
It takes less effort than more 'elegant' productions so it can be repeated at intervals with new work which can encourage people to write more.

Against: *Difficult to get the students involved, especially now we are part of a college.*
Regularity can lead to a lack of spontaneity or to the product becoming more important than the process.

Comments: *Tutors prefer it if there are worksheets to go with the writing.*
The standard of production needs to be good to give a positive image of the group.
It needs a group to make decisions and discuss ideas. This is very hard in an Open Learning context.
Who chooses ? The message might be: 'Look what's been done to me'.
The value to the students whose work is included may be well beyond ephemeral.
Is it encouraging self-criticism ?

6. Publishing as Literary Production

Readers: Inside and outside ABE

Form: Durable, high quality.

Message: Read this as a piece of writing, a
           statement about the world not as a
piece
           of writing by someone who finds writing
           hard.

Choices: Substantial editing; total package;
           readers' needs.

For: *Allows tutor to lionise successful writer.*
     Develops an awareness in others outside ABE.
     A lot of learning in the process of getting to a
     finished (glossy !) product.

Against: *Limited by costs and length of time student and*
         staff stay, also time available to work on a
         project.
         Can it ever be seen as anything other than a
         piece of writing by some one who finds writing
         hard ?

Comments: *Being realistic, is this possible ? Is the work*
          good enough ? Do outside readers actually read
          them ? Is it just a question of the right
          marketing ?
          Who decides 'literary' value ? All writing, by
          virtue of its production, is literary, if only
          to the writer; arbiters of 'literary' value
          are: i) Self-appointed
          ii) Middle class
          iii) Exclusive and generally reactionary.
          I quite agree, but does that mean you don't
          encourage publishing of something you feel is
          'good' ?

These models will often overlap; but they are a useful
way of starting to delineate the how, what and why of
publishing and makes it easier to identify the key points
of students' learning. The models need to be set
alongside the motives to publish in the first place. The
six models are based on common situations which the
research showed to be the circumstances in which tutors
and students in adult basic education chose to publish
student writing. Each of them make different demands of
students and tutors (however the work is divided between
tutors, students or secretaries) and provide
opportunities for different skills to be developed and
enhanced.

Such situations include:

* Publishing by stealth, where the tutor has it in mind
  a long time before the student realises.

* Publishing as a response to interesting writing.

* A decision to work towards a publication before any
  writing has been done.

* A decision to make a class or centre magazine.

* Publications to mark or linked with special events,
  such as a reading evening or writing weekend.

An objection to student publishing we heard from time to
time was that it was elitist. This meant one of two
things. Sometimes it referred to single authored writing
and the ways in which this can put barriers between that
student and the rest of the group. At other times it
reflected a view that only the more able student could
benefit from and get involved with publishing. We saw
many examples which would disprove the later, including
this account of work with students with special needs, at
Little Plumstead Hospital, Norfolk.

> The group is putting together a publication about
> adult education in the hospital. The group
> decided what sort of book to write and took the
> photographs that will be used on each page.
>
> They were starting to decide how it would be
> presented - whether to have it all in large upper
> case type or not, for example, as some people
> find that easier to read. They are being joined
> by three members of the computer class who will
> help them produce the book.
>
> I: *Who is the book for ?*
>
> J: " People in the hospital what don't know about
> it. So they know what we do 'n that. "
>
> R: " For people in Norwich. "
>
> There was some discussion about whether to keep
> the book for people in the hospital or not.
>
> T: " Want my mum to see it. "
>
> They had begun work in September 90. The students
> themselves have done the writing and this has
> been used to develop writing skills. J wants to
> do a video and a cassette to go with it.
>
> The tutors said that they:

" Think it through, go through the stages. It
grows in stages, it grows naturally. How is
everyone in the group going to contribute ? We
needed to use scribes, we had to deal with a lot
of disruption.

Everything has to be carefully charted. People
only have a small amount of time when they can
concentrate, we have to change what we're doing,
break it up to keep them involved. "

It was impressive to watch the tutors as they
presented decisions for the students to make. It
would need to be recorded on video to capture the
subtlety with which the tutors held the group but
continually gave them back the decisions. There
was no doing for or reaching a decision on behalf
of anyone and this was all over and above the
work of keeping everyone alert and involved and
attending to the matter in hand.

Some of the substantial autobiographies published during
the 1980's did absorb a lot of project, tutor and student
time. Publishing student writing undoubtedly is a time
consuming activity. This does pose problems in the
context of heavy cuts in resourcing. In some places we
found that the decision to work towards publication
involved a scaling down from a book to a smaller, but
complete, piece of work perhaps a page or two in length.
This released time and energy to use for presentation and
editorial work on a book.

M: "If it looks good people will want to show it
around."
She showed me an illustrated A4 sheet of writing
about hunting, which had been displayed in the
writer's local pub.
M: " It can be as simple as that ... The word
publishing puts people off, it seems to be for
experts."

The process of producing the hunt piece was:

1st session: written in rough, the student had
suggested the topic, felt very strongly and
wanted to write about it. It was "poorly written
.. from the heart."
2nd session: corrections, tutor and student
together.
3rd session: word processed, with some mistakes;
checking and correcting, which the student did
herself for the most part. She also learnt more
about the computer by using it to edit.
4th session: layout, deciding about
illustrations, size of pictures to words etc and
the colour of paper to print it on.

" The feedback needs to be quick - otherwise everyone gets daunted. "

<div align="right">(Tutor, Swansea)</div>

I found that tutors were often unsure how their students would react to doing the work of publishing, whether it would seem a distraction from their real purposes or whether they would see it as a chance to gain new skills or insights into their learning. The following extracts record discussions of these issues. The first illustrates how a student group just starting to work on publishing felt. In the second a tutor discusses her project's latest book.

Group A

I: Go back and think exactly how you felt when the suggestion was first made

" A good idea, because it lets other people know 'You're not alone.'"
" When people keep telling you you can't do something you tend to start believing them - this helps you prove what you can do."
" An aim - something to work towards - otherwise you're just unstable, going all over the place."
"Even if we don't get to a book we could have a newsletter - you've still made something."

I: What was the next step ?

" We discussed all the aspects of what we want - illustrations, types of books, typefaces - still hedging our bets. "

Various students were saying that it would help them with their spelling, or help them to improve their writing. I commented on this and asked if they could say exactly how it would help, what the difference would be between working on a book and just doing their class work.

" Makes you think more. "
" Builds your confidence in your self. "
" Encourage one another - its easier to see what we're doing and to help each other out if we're all working together."

<div align="right">(Students, Leytonstone)</div>

Group B

R: "People don't realise the work that goes into producing a book. It cost £1,100 to produce, £150 for computing and £900 for printing.

We begged, borrowed and stole to make it a good production. I got into a friend's workplace at night to use the laser printer there. "

I: What was the hardest part ?

R: " Negotiating with people. Getting people to do what we wanted, when we wanted ... knowing what we wanted. Quality. A lot of attention had been paid to quality and readability, size and depth of colour in the print. Computers were a problem at times, as was finding a printer willing to take on such a small job."

It took 2 terms to produce. People took on different tasks and met once a week to see how it was going. Everyone knew someone who could help.

M: Would you do it again ?

R: " It wouldn't be me that makes the final decision ... but I'd think of something more modest .. send out the cover and get it bound professionally but photocopy from a laser printer.

J: What about students doing it completely ?

R: " It was about 50/50 - hard to get students involved and then to stay involved, as it took a long time. "

(Tutor, Dublin)

To sum up: different situations, and goals, for publishing lead to different methods of working. There has been debate about whether all versions are equal. The following discussion, between Jean Milloy and Nigel Legood, indicates some of the areas of conflict and debate; and seems an appropriate conclusion to this account of the complexity of the work:

J: " You always get a situation where knowledge of and control over the publishing process gets into some people's hands and stays there and has to be wrested from them. X was supposed to be communal, all I can remember is rows between the tutors. ... Publishing isn't an easy thing to do, but it's not as hard as it's been made out. With XX we were just left to get on with it, no support or co-operation. I think that begs the question of how much real student involvement there is. "

I: What do you think are the reasons for this possessiveness about publishing ?

J: " Insecurity - its like when people are possessive about worksheets, they're frightened of criticism. It's the same when people are learning to publish, there are no real experts and it is a big responsibility. If you're into perfectionism then anybody else getting involved is a danger.

People who learn together do then possess that knowledge and it is hard to pass on except by doing it. It is the difference between saying at some point: 'We'll do a magazine' rather than: 'Let's work towards a magazine.' And then there are issues about personalities, clashes and so on.

N: " Students like to do their work and get a book back - that's unhealthy and an inaccurate value of the book. The value of the book is often in the process of publishing."

(Tutors, Walk In Numeracy)

Fund Raising

One of the more powerful, and not always positive,
determinants on the model of student publishing adopted
is money. Publishing doesn't have to be very expensive,
but it often is. During the research we encountered many
ways to reduce costs. These included: using money or
materials allocated to learning resources; networking
contacts for free use of computers, photocopying etc;
short print runs; smaller scale ventures; selling the
publication at more than cost price to fund other
ventures. However, some projects will need special
funding and while fund-raising is an excellent practical
use to put newly acquired literacy skills to, it can also
be daunting.

Manchester's Gatehouse project recently appointed Andi
Downs to be a worker with responsibility for marketing
and fund raising. Although this is unlikely to be an
option for many projects, his ideas could be adapted.

> A: " We fund-raise for individual publications
> and for the project as a whole. I try to go for
> local Arts board project funding, which gives a
> percentage of the total costs, and then a mixture
> of one shot funding for expensive projects. Its
> much easier to have one big funder - gives them
> more kudos- and easier to co-ordinate than 10
> small ones.
>
> I: Is it easy to fund raise ?
>
> A: " It's very difficult. There's no way anyone
> can tell you it's easy. You've got to think of it
> as marketing, not start from you needing the
> money. A tiny number give because they're
> altruistic, they want the warm glow. But really
> you've got to think: what can I do for them, for
> their image, their P.R. profile.
>
> You have to present a professional case - include
> an annual report, and in its presentation strike
> a balance between professionalism and appearing
> frivolous with money. To state your case don't
> say I need but We offer you the opportunity to.
> It's a question of trying to appeal to people's
> better natures without presenting a kind of
> Victorian Charitable appeal - aren't they
> wonderful ?
>
> Talk about educational value and social need -
> don't grovel, don't abandon your principles.
> People want to fund things that are worthwhile
> and need a sense that you believe in them. "

(Worker, Gatehouse)

Footnotes & references

[1] A recent article makes this point eloquently. See: Coben, D. (1992) 'What do we need to know ? Issues in numeracy research' **Adults Learning** (forthcoming)

[2] Bradford's Cathedral centre is an exception, however. It still has the resources to run writing weekends and recognises both the need to record that experience for participants and how stale the magazine format can become. In 1991 they used a photostory display linked by rhyming couplets which everyone contributed to throughout the weekend. It captured wonderfully the hysterical pleasure generated by events such as the long wet walk to the pub.

> " And God said, 'Let there be light '
> But not in Malham on a Saturday night. "

Personal writing of any kind rarely comes easily. The first part of this section (<u>Getting Personal</u>) challenges both the idea that it does, and the notion that student writing begins and ends with a single kind of 'personal'.

An important question next explored is: <u>Who reads student writing ?</u> which we found raised questions as to how students are encouraged (or not) to develop a general reading habit. Student writing, it is argued, does not mean easy reading.

How do ideas of functional literacy relate to ideas of 'creative' writing ? In <u>creative writing issues</u> we pick out some of the comments that tutors and students made about this - which in turn leads to what ideas tutors and students hold about literature (<u>the relationship to literary culture</u>); and how literacy publishing of student writing coincides with the changes in arts policy towards literature.

For many students, the <u>challenge</u> of having their writing published is 'attractive but scary'. Ensuring that the process is not intimidating also means there is a need for <u>training for tutors</u>. All students want to write, but not all want to be writers. Is this a reason not to

engage in student publishing ? The last part of this
section - <u>Everyone's a writer</u> - offers a number of roles
that students can take in the process of publication, and
quotes views from both students and tutors as to how the
activity can give new encouragement to student writing
development.

Getting Personal

R: " Student's writing can be depressing, because they off-load very negative baggage, which is a vital part of personal development in coming to grips with literacy.

N: " But students are so thrilled. ... I was mortified the day I stepped into KLEAR - people do have to say that ... it's so important. You never forget the first day. "

I: *Do other students enjoy reading about it too ?*

N: "Oh yes ! 'I could swear you were talking about me' - that's what people were coming up to me and saying after my play about not being able to read and write. "

R: " You can see the relief in people's faces .. it's a kind of healing. That's when a sad story's good. When people see they're not isolated. "

<div align="right">(Student and tutors, Dublin)</div>

A: " Tremendous excitement with the first - by the tenth perhaps its different. It's important not to lose sight that for the student it will always be the first time. "

<div align="right">(Tutors, Dublin)</div>

(R. referred to the Natural Childbirth Trust and her writing about the birth experience.)

R: " It was the first time I wrote something to get rid of it. I thought, I do this all the time with students and I've never done it myself. "

<div align="right">(Tutors, Oldham)</div>

" Tutors are often hesitant because of their own insecurities about creative writing. "

(P. and R. mentioned some training they had run)

" People were very resistant to working creatively - using drama - 'I don't feel comfortable' they'd say and assume that if they feel this then their students will feel it more so. Tutors make decisions for students before finding out what they really think. "

<div align="right">(Tutors, Islington)</div>

M: " During the writing development project autobiographical writing was not the commonest or most popular form used. I think this might have been because some people had very unhappy childhood memories that they didn't want to think about again, let alone share. For others with unhappy memories there was a cathartic use of autobiographical writing which then freed people up to write about other things. "

<div align="right">(Tutor, Swansea)</div>

The close identification of student publishing with personal writing raises a number of very complex issues. Detractors of student publishing are often most uncomfortable with this aspect of the publishing and display a disproportionate irritation with it. Ann Risman's review of Jane Mace's Working With Words (1979), a book which inspired many tutors to risk encouraging a more personal approach in their students' writing, is revealingly dismissive.

" There is no denying that there is some angry polemic of the class/status/stigma/casualty ward type. "

<div align="right">(ALU Newsletter 8 Feb/Mar 1980:7)</div>

An article which contrasts Gawain and the Loathly Damsel with George and the Bus as texts for learning to read, rejects the latter:

" We can't expect people to learn to read on texts written by nobody for anybody. "

<div align="right">(Graham 1984: 87/88)</div>

There are a number of observations to make about this attitude. The first concerns the class conflict signalled here. Students are predominantly working classs just as their tutors are predominantly middle class and this class relation is further inflected by the power relating to the ability to manipulate written English.

The lack of confidence which ABE students identify is not just a personal issue but, as with race, disability, gender and sexuality, an internalised oppression received from a society which perceives working class people as 'stupid' and 'lazy'.[1] It is perhaps no coincidence that 'confidence' is what students identify as the most important gain from publishing their writing; nor that their writing often re-works the personal ground of failure. During the consultative conference held in July 1992 there were many comments to the effect that we had not given enough weight to the cathartic and therapeutic effects of student's writing and publishing. Jill Kibble spoke for many when she wrote:

" Writing as therapy plays a huge part in the
life of our Centre. We find students overcome a
rage of emotional barriers to learning through
therapeutic wwriting and also that sharing of
this writing, if possible, allows others to come
to terms with, express and recognise their own
problems and needs. Such writing can be very
harrowing, but also diagnostically revealing for
tutors planning and negotiating appropriate
learning strategies."

(Kibble 1992)

People who are uncomfortable with personal writing
sometimes project a very powerful image of students'
personal lives gushing out at out the slightest
opportunity. Our previous experience as tutors and our
current research found students frequently very reluctant
to reveal their personal lives, writing about them with
great difficulty and often shame.

Undoubtedly for some students personal writing is
cathartic and that catharsis clears the ground for all
sorts of development and change, including developing
their literacy skills. It does not, however, come easily
and to suggests that it does indicates contempt for
people's inner lives. As the comments from tutors in
Oldham and Islington quoted above indicate, tutors also
find it hard.

Contempt is a psychological indicator of insecurity and
lack of self esteem. Perhaps the real complaint of the
person complaining about other people's lives is that
they have not been listened to. It strikes an attitude
both very British and very middle-class: repress your own
feelings and demand that others do the same. The question
of personal writing emerged differently in Ireland where
tutors were aware that much of student's writing, early
writing in particular, was hard luck stories and that
this could be boring after a while. They however, were
more tolerant than some in Britain of the student's need
to express this and talked about wanting to develop a
broader view of students' lives that placed their misery
in a context of richer experience.

The question of personal writing connects to the question
of empowerment. The issue of empowerment is a complex one
and not served simply by sitting people down with a tape
recorder, a scribe or sheets of paper. Nevertheless, the
pioneers of student publishing, who worked to establish
Write First Time, Centerprise, Gatehouse, Peckham
Publishing Projects and in many other ways, used student
writing and publishing very effectively to shift the
emphasis away from what students' needed to what students
already knew and could contribute, especially in a group
context. This was transformative for many individuals.[2]

53

It was also very effective in changing the nature of
adult literacy provision in this country, as Alan Wells
pointed out in correspondence with me:

> " Student writing and publishing turned literacy
> programmes away from a deficit model of literacy as
> well as from seeing literacy as a largely passive,
> reactive process rather than an active, empowering
> process. It has been one of the few developments
> which has influenced schools and the education of
> children and allowed literacy programmes to move
> away from an essentially remedial model. "

(Wells 1992)

Central to this transformation are questions of power,
the power that demands illiteracy or fails to prevent it
amongst certain sectors of society and the power of
certain forms of language itself. Attention is paid to
the disempowered: often women, often working class, often
immigrants, often with special needs; and the nature of
their subordination. Where this happens, students in ABE
stand to gain more than simple functional language
skills. Writing and publishing is often the means through
which that attention is channelled, symbolised and
materially realised. If publishing has become too complex
or too expensive to pursue that is one thing, but if it
is the attention that has become too disturbing, then
that is quite another.

Who Reads Student Publications

D: " I'm not convinced other students read it. "

I: Are they ever encouraged to ?

D: " No, I don't suppose they are. "

<div align="right">(Tutor, Watford)</div>

" The problem with books generally is that they are either unread and unborrowed or stolen. "

<div align="right">(Organisers, Leeds.)</div>

J: " At the moment, if we concentrate on poems, say, they see discussing what it means as getting side tracked. Reading longer pieces is just a task to them."

<div align="right">(Tutor, Hammersmith)</div>

N: " Last year I read 5 or 6 books and I'm so delighted. I feel I missed out so much not reading. You can say: 'Did you read this ?' instead of ' My baby was crying all night.' "

<div align="right">(Student, Dublin)</div>

S: " I used to read a lot of the newsletter - I thought they were all basically the same thing - the same story. They weren't interesting. "

I: " What is the same story ? "

S: " Schooldays, being unemployed, improving my reading and writing. "

Si: " I find it very hard to find a book I would interesting. "

Sii: " I don't think its boring. Someone else is in the same boat as me.

S: " But there are different books for different readers. Something must interest you. If you are a confident reader you can decide you don't like a book, if you're not confident, you think it's you."

Si: " You can't write it simple, because we're adults. We don't want it simple."

<div align="right">(Students, Dublin)</div>

T: " The language level would is the first thing you think of, not whether it was written by a student."

(Tutor, Bedford)

T: " I've used student publications a little bit - things produced by writers' groups - as a different kind of reading material. It's nice to be able to say 'This is about his life, he's just a guy like you, it's no big deal.' The Beaumont Writers Group - that was picked up by one of the students. He said, 'Let's have a go at this.' "

I: Do they want to read about prison experience ?

" That really varies a lot. There was some writing from Lewes prison, that was passed around and around, it was really popular but there'll be others who say 'God, I'm in prison I don't want to read about it !'

(Tutor, HMP Garth)

T: " A lot of students feel if it isn't a proper book it's not proper reading. "

(Tutor: Sunderland)

T: " I say: 'This gives you a voice ' We know it gets read because we always get complaints from the Probation hierarchy about it. "

(Tutors and student, Liverpool)

The issue of reading was the surprise in this research project. One of the arguments I frequently heard against student publishing was that other students did not want to read it. In talking to tutors about their doubts and worries, the commonest anxiety was whether student publications were read or enjoyed.

Initially, I took this at face value, finding evidence in the publications to support the view that work was often published without enough attention to the reader. However, once I started to talk to students, trying to establish what it was about student publications that made them less attractive to read than other books, I found myself dealing with much larger issues.

During the student events, the meeting we held in Manchester, organised by Gatehouse and largely attended by people who had been involved with the project, produced the most positive responses to the statement suggesting that having your own writing published made books less off-putting. This confirms a view held by tutors that publishing student writing demystifies the

whole world of print and helps make books accessible to
students. Gatehouse's editorial method emphasises reading
and re-reading manuscripts to a degree that we didn't
find evidence of elsewhere so it is perhaps significant
that we had this response here. Elsewhere we heard less
confident agreements that led us to suspect that students
were telling us what they thought we wanted to hear. This
was re-inforced by the visits where a very different
picture had emerged.

The visits showed that very few students had a reading
habit. Even when students identified themselves as not
having problems with reading, they still complained that
they couldn't get into a book. Discussion revealed that
for most, their reading was the extracts provided in
class and the occasional newspaper or magazine. This
suggested that the reported lack of reader appeal for
student publications masked a bigger problem to do with
reading and the basic education student. Student
publications were losing out by being unfairly labelled
boring, dull and unappealing to read.

Having begun to suspect early on that there was a cluster
of issues about how much reading of any kind, not just of
student publications, was happening in ABE, I had begun
to ask about it during visits. Although the research was
not addressing wider issues of teaching and learning
directly, we had to engage with them in order to clarify
what role student publishing played in them. When the
issue of reading was discussed with tutors and students
it sometimes revealed frustration on both sides, as well
as misunderstandings about who was responsible for
developing reading. Resources for example, were often
poorly displayed and rarely promoted in any way. Tutors
and organisers were often disappointed about this but
felt it was up to the students whether they took the
books off the shelves or not.

It seemed that unless students were in a study skills or
GCSE class, reading was only the focus of learning for
non-readers or beginner readers. Reading aloud or reading
in class was often pared down: a means to get to writing
or discussion. Reading was rarely addressed for reading's
sake, with discussion and learning about different styles
of reading or the pleasure and value of a reading habit.
Whereas tutors worked hard to develop writing and
discussion skills, very little work on reading,
especially whole book reading, appeared to be taking
place.

The visits to Ireland really pointed up the contrast. In
Ireland, attention to reading seemed to be much more
widespread. Students, without any prompting, spoke of
reading as a goal or an achievement. Talking to people in
both countries about the difference between Britain and
Ireland in this respect, both tutors and students felt it
could be accounted for in three ways. Firstly, reading

seems to be a popular pastime, especially in the rural areas. This seemed to hold true for rural areas in Britain as well as Ireland. During my visits, I saw two classes who spent part of each session working from a class novel. One was in Dublin, the other in Norfolk. Secondly, there is a great deal of social value put on learning and scholarship in Irish culture and people identify being able to read as a major goal. Thirdly, tutors assume students will want to learn to read and become regular readers and this informs their teaching.

Clearly, there are issues to do with the readability of student publications and the role of editing in developing in the writer an awareness of audience. However, the notion that student publishing is a self-indulgent, exclusively writer-beneficial activity needs to be radically revised. When a student said they "wouldn't read" or "couldn't get into" a student publication, I found it important to go behind that and ask what, if anything, they could or did read.

Reading and student publishing are complicated because the origin of student publishing is closely bound up with the question of appropriate reading and/or learning materials for ABE students, especially the beginner reader. However, there were only 3 Q responses that cited developing a reading habit as something students gained from reading student publications.

Nobody would argue with adult learners' entitlement to learning materials and reading matter that assume an adult stand-point while using simplified language. There is also a great deal of mileage in the argument that such material is more likely to reflect the interests and concerns of its subject group - be they adult learners, women, disabled, homosexual or members of ethnic groups - if that same subject group have had a part in producing such material. However, the situation is more complex than this neat fit sometimes suggests.

In **Opening Time** (1985), Peter Goode firmly established that 'A Beginner Reader is not a Beginner Thinker' in the article of that name. This made a huge contribution to increasing the degree of respect due literacy learners. However, a more complex overlay of those issues, drawn from a wide and random reading of student publications, suggests that the idea that beginner readers and writers write simple and accessible prose is false. There is a kind of caricaturing at work, which appears like this:

Beginner Writer	*Beginner Reader*
I cannot write well.	*I cannot read well.*
I write in simple sentences.	*I read in simple sentences.*
I think in simple sentences.	*So do I.*

People new to writing, whether new to literacy or not, almost always need to learn the skills of communication:

of structuring their work, dealing with repetition,
learning how to take the reader into account, finding
their voice and style, clarifying what it is they want to
say. The value of learning this through writing, writing
with a purpose, is immense; but it doesn't automatically
make the best material for people learning to read. In
short there is a dangerous slippage when readability by
beginner readers becomes the main criterion by which
emergent writing is judged.

Some of the best writing for beginner readers has come
from other adult learners. (In my experience, **Every Birth
It Comes Different** (1980) from Centerprise/HRC, **The Real
McCoy** (1988) from Peckham Publishing Project and **Opening
Time** (1985) from Gatehouse are always popular.)
Confirmation of this came during the research as both
visits and questionnaires repeatedly cited beginner
readers as popular and essential student publications.

Where things become more tricky is if student publishing
is only allowed to be of interest when it is serving the
needs of the beginner reader. As student writers develop,
both in respect of imagination, ambition and language
skills, they need to be able to experiment with length
and complexity in ways that will not always accommodate
the needs of the beginner reader.

Creative Writing Issues

In order to improve or learn how to write, students must write. However, if the purpose of this writing is *only* to practice set piece skills, then the learning process can become frustrated. As ABE has developed in this country, writing development has tended towards writing that has real purpose, and therefore significance, for the writer and reflects their actual language usage and needs. This can involve writing that is, variously, referred to as: expressive, self-generated, creative.

There has been some confusion about the sort of purposeful writing expected and encouraged from students in ABE, especially where creative writing is concerned. For some people, the term itself is problematic. They don't want writing labelled because:
'All writing is created so all writing is creative.'
'Labels on writing - creative/functional are not particularly helpful as there is no clear division between them.'
'Creative writing has a range of connotations which may inhibit production of writing.'[3]

There are two extreme views of creative writing. One sees it as trivial work, which distracts from a real purpose seen in instrumental and functional writing skills. The other sees it as the means to produce highly imaginative, and often highly literary, writing and is sceptical of ABE students' ability to do this. The confusion variants of these views generate has been clarified through the involvement with ABE of the Arts Boards and the interaction of community based writing projects.

This involvement has a number of roots. Firstly, the developments of community based writing and publishing projects during the late 70's and early 80's either had direct links with ABE, as in Write First Time and Peckham and Centerprise Publishing Projects, or indirect links, as with Yorkshire Arts Circus and Bristol Broadsides. Many of these projects were members of the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers (FWWCP), an organisation which did much to promote the right to writing and publishing from groups of people previously excluded from it and took a leading role in arguing the case for a broader definition of literature with the Arts Council of Great Britain.

The relationship between ABE and the newly developing writers' workshop movement was not always smooth, as I was able to observe during my active participation in the organisation. The FWWCP was rooted in a class experience which during the early 1980's saw the growing claims of identity and equal opportunity politics as a threat to its integrity. It therefore seemed at times as if it was resisting those politics. The reasons for this are complex: equal opportunity campaigns never included the

working class as a group with a right to equality, for
example. There was, as in all sections of society,
racism, sexism, homophobia and the task of struggling to
see oneself as **both oppressed and oppressing** was as
difficult here as it was elsewhere in progressive groups
on the left and in the women's movement.

This led, within the FWWCP, to an inflexibility about the
claims of women, Black people or lesbians and gay men to
organise separately. There were Black people, just as
there were women, lesbians and gays, involved in the
organisation, but there was the added inflection that a
lot of the Black people involved had come into the
movement through ABE. This had a double negative effect
which unfortunately did not cancel itself out. It seemed
to me that Black writers were in danger of becoming
identified as people with problems reading and writing,
while at the same time people within the FWWCP were
objecting to the assumption from outside the organisation
that everyone within it had literacy problems.

Such struggles were not necessarily a bad thing. The new
cultural ground that was being formed during this time
couldn't arise already agreed and argument was healthy,
if at times painful. It is worth noting, however, that by
the early 1990's those early battles for equal
representation within the FWWCP of other oppressed groups
alongside the on-going recognition of class, were won at
a public level with the vote for an equal oportunities
policy and an Executive Committee committed to its
implementation. Of course individual issues still arise
and individuals and member groups will disagree about
their importance but there has been a marked shift in
emphasis. The broadening definitions of culture that
began to emerge - and to influence arts policy makers -
had to include the full spectrum of engagement with
writing, including those coming newly to it.

Within the FWWCP itself many of the groups that were
directly related with ABE work are either no longer in
existence, as with Write First Time, or no longer active
members, as with Peckham so there was a danger of ABE
issues becoming less explicit and central concerns.
However, the role of Gatehouse and Pecket Well College in
particular have helped to ensure this doesn't happen.
Training days organised by the FWWCP have workshops and
themed strands which address the relationship between
ABE, Writing Development and Publishing and there have
been campaigns within the organisation about issues such
as a minimum font size for all FWWCP publications and
guidelines for all facilitators of FWWCP events about the
need to be aware of - and act positively for - people
with degrees of difficulty regarding reading and writing.

Elsewhere, in other sectors of education and within arts
provision generally, the idea of participation has begun
to take hold. Literature Festivals have begun to be
renamed Writers and Readers festivals[4] and the

definitions of who counts as a writer, as a reader, are constantly widened and challenged.[5]

Arts Boards are keen to work with ABE providers and there have been exciting collaborations between writers in residence and ABE groups. Inevitably, the collaborators may have a different understanding of the what and why of their work. Alistair Thompson made this comment about his experience of working for South East Arts, the Arts Board that established the Writing Development in ABE project that included Bexhill Writers.

> " South East Arts (SEA) was much more keen on the idea of bringing professional writers into ABE classes than were ABE tutors and organisers (ABE students perhaps had a more mixed response). SEA seemed to be interested in product more than process - perhaps because products gave them obvious indicators of success to take back to their own committees, and to defend the use of scarce funds for this sort of work.
>
> (Thompson 1991)

At times, though, enthusiasm has not been backed up by knowledge of the difference it makes to work with a group unsure or perhaps hostile to the idea of writing. But even when things have not gone according to plan there have been gains.

> J: " We had money to pay for a poet to work with the group. It was unsuccessful in some ways - he was very unreliable, for one thing, and slightly unconventional but it got people going.
>
> R: " The arguments were wonderful - they involved everybody. People who had been very passive just left that role out - they weren't the passive students we knew. "
>
> (Tutors, Oldham)

Many tutors will use creative writing exercises or themes as part of their day-to-day teaching but an interesting development has been to run separate events, either during summer schools or as short courses. Some schemes have set up their own creative writing groups run by tutors who have an existing interest. This seems to be the best option and it was interesting to see how very differently schemes were interpreting the role of the creative writing tutor with ABE tutors. The following examples, which I have numbered, give some idea of the range:

P: " We've just set on a peripatetic creative writing tutor - J. The idea was to offer it for people who particularly wanted to write but weren't doing, or for people who wanted do more with the stuff they'd done already, or for people who wanted to work in more of a support group, however informal, of learners involved in writing themselves.

We asked if there was anybody who could benefit from J's expertise and they're working as a group now, that was their decision. He goes in for an extra hour at the end of their session. At Barnoldswick he comes half an hour before the end and stays half an hour; he takes people out of the group to work with him. I had to really plead for this with my head of department. It's unheard of. And we've had to cope with reactions of the established adult education creative writing class. They felt threatened and reacted badly. "

I: *How did the students react to you ?*

J: " Everyone comes in with big wodges - and thinks you'll wade all the way through them - utterly shocked when you don't want to read all their work.

I ask them to pick out a little piece and we work on it - after 2 weeks or so the big wodge disappears. One student wanted to throw it all away but I stopped them - there'll be work there that's salvageable. That's what it's all about, salvaging.

I: *Did anybody stay away after the first few sessions ?*

No, none have not come back. I deal with it using humour, keep it informal and avoid personal criticism. Another fault - they inject too much of their own self and they forget someone else is going to read this and they want pleasure - they don't want to know about your pains - or politics.

I: *Don't some people write precisely because they want to express themselves ?*

People come with the expectation of self-expression. It takes about two weeks to kick them into touch. Basically, there just isn't enough time to hear everybody's pain and woe. Feeling isn't marketable.

I: What do you think are the differences between basic English classes and creative writing ?

They don't stop at the same places. You push more.

I: A couple of times you both talked about recommending students with flair. How do you decide who has flair ?

P: " If they're already doing it. If they've got the ability to put something down that makes us as teachers feel that's good - what a pity no one else is going to see it."

(Tutors, Nelson)

2.

T: " I visualise↑ `Writing for Pleasure and Pounds', a 6 week taster course, as an opportunity to encourage interest and imagination regardless of limited literacy skills. I was trying to get away from - `how I've been struggling to cope with my literacy problem' - get them to enjoy writing and write imaginatively.

Members were encouraged to enjoy writing rather than worry about grammar, spelling etc., but the less literate seemed unable to allow their imaginations to flow onto paper and insisted on rewriting each paragraph in the belief that perfect English meant good writing.

This was a pity because the members with the most difficulty in writing were the ones with the most interesting and original ideas. Unfortunately they refused to use a tape recorder and most of the stories were lost in the writing. [Next time] I would encourage the use of tape recorders for all members from the beginning - after all reporters use them all the time these days.

I tried to combine some unusual writing stimulus with information about publishers. For example, the 5 little men of newspaper reporting: Who Why What Where When. I got them to invent headlines about bravery and/or cleverness. They then had to imagine they were the heroes/heroine of these pieces and interview each other, taking notes, and finally write an article.

I had copies of Writers' Monthly, discussed the letters market, greeting cards, Friendship book. Writing and the idea that anyone can write needs

to apply across the whole writing spectrum, not just writing novels.

A difficulty is sorting out - and helping the student sort out - who the writing is for ? When students write very personal stuff it may not be meant for publication at all. Students need to be able to consider the question of audience and be reassured that not everything written is written for publication.

You can't dodge making a judgement - you have to give proper criticism. But I always stress that it is a personal opinion that needs discussion. It can be a problem when students always ask for my opinion but don't really want it, don't respond to it. You must clarify at the start what sort of criticism people want and can take and they must use each other for responses too, not always rely on the teacher.

(Tutor, Swansea)

_____

Other schemes' tutors see their role as being to encourage students to move from a literacy class into an existing creative writing class. This transition seems always to be difficult at present, this may be partly because it is a relatively new thing and partly a reflection of the difficulty for any transition out of ABE and its low ratio and high commitment to student centred learning and teaching. For students who are interested in writing, a move into a creative writing class could perhaps ease that separation in a context free of the stress of assessment pressures. However, in practice, it is not that straightforward - as the next three exchanges suggest:

" I: How do people move from literacy into creative writing groups or classes ?

T: " Badly - it is cliquey, there are class issues, it is competitive. "

I: Would students who were not privileged in language skills fall off the end ?

Ti: " Not necessarily - in fact, they're often challenged in ways they wouldn't be in literacy classes and they rise to it. "
T: " In a lot of classes the writing is the bit that gets left to the end - it isn't always expected. When you present it the other way around - expect a lot of writing - then you get it. .... Tutors are often hesitant because of their own insecurities about creative writing."

(Tutors, Islington)

I: Do many people go on to the Creative Writing
group from the Reading and Writing groups ?

R: I'd say about 3 or 4 and it worked out okay
but more people go on to do Higher Certs and
Leaving Certs and a few work as tutors after
doing the training course.

(Tutors, Dublin)

___

N: " There are students who might want to join a
creative writing class but they just can't cope.
It isn't the language skills that are the issue
so much as adjusting to the way they do things:
for example, reading work and discussing it -
taking it apart, the low key praise. M., for
example, never developed the ability to be self-
critical about her work. She was really over-
praised, almost pandered to, and that inflated
her sense of her own ability. She doesn't
understand ways of developing writing - how to
comment and question it. The work is presented in
such a way that all the tutor is expected to do -
can do - is praise it.

(Tutor, London)

___

Prison education presents a very different picture in
this, as in other aspects of education. Motivation is
often very high in prison education, partly because there
is more time for work and less distractions. [6]

P: " There's more motivation inside than outside,
people do want to concentrate on their writing.
Outside, people come to the group empty handed
saying they didn't have the time. There's an
urgency here - people want immediate responses.
They hassle me to get their work back to them
almost as soon as they've given it me.

Outside, an awful lot of people in a creative
writing group are just coming to spend their time
sociably, it's a pleasant thing to do, especially
for retired professional people. There is some
social side to it in prison, but it isn't the
same somehow."

(Tutor, HMP Garth)

___

The next two extracts give students' views on the
differences they found, or imagine, between a creative
writing class and their literacy group.

D: " Good writing - the idea that you have to be able to spell - or come up to a certain standard is very much part of moving into creative writing. Creative writing groups don't often welcome people who have difficulties with reading and writing. "

S: " They'd say you're not here to improve yourself. "

D: " The problem is it seems like you have to go through one group before you can go on to the next. That's setting up hierarchies. "

(Tutor and student, Bradford)

___

R: " That move into the creative writing class, it doesn't seem to be working well for you. Do you know why that is ? "

F: " The tutor's too busy talking about what's in his head - he's feeding you all these ideas. "

L: " It's also difficult to be creative ad infinitum - the best projects are the ones with definite aims and then you move on. Also, writing isn't just about stimulating people but also providing quiet time for reflection. "

A: " Sometimes teachers think that's what they have to do - put ideas in, not draw them out. "

F: " Sometimes you walk into the class and you have no idea what you want to do or whether you want to do anything and then you relax and it happens. Talk helps, but not one-way talk. "

L then gave an example of a creative writing class run by a writer with a small amount of teaching experience. The format had been talk, then write, then read out.

" He didn't make people read out, but he expected it. Now, I think our ethos would be to let people opt out. "

(Student and Tutors, Leeds)

___

A few places had participated in special schemes to link creative writers with ABE provision, such as the one Judy Wallis co-ordinated in East Sussex. There a number of groups had worked with a variety of creative writing tutors, they had worked towards a publication and attended writing workshop days and conferences. The

project had been challenging to staff and students alike, but the majority of those I talked with felt they had substantial gains from their involvement.

The following is my record of discussing how to relate 'creative' to 'basic' purposes for writing with a group from that project:

> Bexhill Creative Writers have a strong sense of themselves as a creative writing group within ABE rather than an ABE group who are doing creative writing. They have a very strong group presence with the confidence to make demands of their tutor while working without relying or depending on her. Both the group and the tutor appear very comfortable with that.
>
> (I picked up the earlier point that had been made about learning to criticise. I asked what they did.)
>
> F: " Work in pairs – one the writer, one the editor, talk and write. "
>
> S: " Questions you could ask, to jog the memory: description, questions to ask about expressions of feeling, ways to bring things to life. "
>
> J: " I really liked writing my piece and having it, well, what ? Dissected, I suppose. "
>
> I: What do you mean when you use the term editing:
>
> J: What you want in and what you want out. Re – ordering. "
>
> (D illustrated this by talking about a memory that had been stirred up for him doing the writing course. He read some pieces out about his experiences as a foster parent.)
>
> L: " You don't write it down the same way you said it. The story was much more entertaining – you're sitting back confident, telling us about it – perhaps when you're writing you're worrying about what to write ? "
>
> (This led on to a discussion about scribing with students suggesting this as a method that would really help D. It was decided that they would spend their next meeting writing together with S, the tutor, acting as scribe for D.
>
> They had 5 questions, taken from Conversations with Strangers, to think about in the week. These were guides into discussing each others and their own work.

They were:
1. Does it make sense - Have they told us all we need to know ?
2. Are there any questions you'd like to ask ?
3. Has it come out in the right order ?
4. Is there anything which could be said in another way ?
5. Whose point of view is it written from - what would happen if someone else in the story was writing about these events ?)

In the car I commented that the group had remarkable self-possession and independence. S. agreed that this was the case and said it developed during the project and she felt as a direct result of it.

(Students and Tutor, Bexhill Creative Writers)

It is important to choose the right sort of tutor.
Margaret Morris had this advice from the Welsh Writing Development Project:

M: " It's important to choose carefully, use word of mouth, Approach and style is so important. The best are people who aren't possessive about their work, able to talk about how they go about it, about the processes involved. Not patronising .. something about tone, too. Approachable. I was also keen to include journalism in the range of writing represented. Students could see everybody had to work at their writing - their enthusiasm for their craft. "

(Tutor, Swansea)

The main argument I met against this kind of work, aside from cost and practicality, is that it deflects students from their main purpose, which is to increase their skills in order to succeed in the market place: the 'creative versus functional' debate. What we discovered during the research would lead us to argue that this polarity is a false one. There is no evidence that a functional end is best served by functional means; if anything, we found evidence to the contrary. The uses to which students will put their language skills and confidence are wide ranging and the broader base they have from which to practice and experiment, the better.[7]

T: " A lot of women share their experiences on an emotional level. That gives them the confidence to go for jobs they wouldn't otherwise. So it's vocational, too. "

Ti: " There's a serious issue about when writing is to be viewed as a leisure rather than vocational activity. "

Tii: " It is vocational because it's about human
development, learning social skills; intense
discussion between students about each other's
work; there can be disagreement. This means
students having to absorb other ideas to their
own, and even if they don't agree with the other
point of view, learning to be aware of views
different to their own, and take account of these
in their writing. "

(Tutors, Liverpool)

The other side of the coin, is that students often go
into the creative writing class with higher expectations,
not just about the quality of their writing but of the
tutor's role than can be met. Some tutors did talk about
this as a problem but it is also important to note that
it is not an inevitable problem. Students can and will
learn to adapt and change if they receive the right kind
of guidance and support from their tutors, as the last
two exchanges on this issue illustrate:

I: A lot of tutors make allowances when a person
is just starting out, how do you switch from that
to a different kind of reaction to their work ?

P: " I've just started with this one guy who came
in with basic literacy skills and a real desire
to write about things which he'd never felt
confident enough to try before. A year on, I'm
starting to say 'Well, that rhyme is forced' or
something like that, start to say what doesn't
work so well. He'll argue his case with me,
sometimes he wants it the way he wants it, he can
say why it's the way it is. He's come on a lot,
he can take the criticism now.

It depends on your relationship with the person
and also if the person is interested in writing.
If they want to develop as a writer. "

(Tutor, HMP Garth)

" I first started on classes about 18 months ago
and it is the best thing that ever happened to
me. I was most afraid of people having a good old
laugh at my expense. The fear that I had was
because in the past no matter how much I tried
people just put me down.

The only thing that surprised me was the way the
teachers were there to give you their support and
to push you on to your full capacity. The more
that you did the more they wanted from you which
is a good thing and the more they pushed the more
I wanted to do. "

(Letter from the student referred to above.)

The Relationship To Literary Culture

One of the main reasons tutors promote publishing with their students is that it validates their writing by giving it an audience. This is laudable, but complicated. Some tutors expressed guilt about encouraging an enthusiasm for publishing, which is often based on the students' appreciation of being read and understood, while knowing that in reality these publications are often unread. Students were sometimes wistful about not having had responses to their writing, wanting a direct and clear signal that their communication had been received. Those students who did receive responses clearly valued them highly.

The patchiness in response to students' writing has often been used to indicate the lack of inherent, or literary, value of student publishing. A judgement of this kind expects formal literary responses and conventional measures of literary value from people who are relating to books in quite distinct ways. Their relationship to literary culture is different, but not completely so. For example, tutors were often worried, or dismissive, about the way in which students enjoyed writing by people they knew more than that by people they didn't. This is not unlike the way any books are read. Imagine, for a moment, that all the books available to us existed in a vacuum where we knew nothing about them or their authors. Would they be read and enjoyed to the same extent ?

Tutors bring to their teaching a range of cultural experience and assumption which vary depending upon their own educational background, their race and class and their particular sense of literary culture. During the research there were times when I encountered tutors with no time for literature, either because it intimidated them, or they disliked it. This reaction was often in danger of being projected onto students and usually meant students were not given the option of working on literary texts to develop critical skills. I also met tutors who were enthusiastic about literary culture, but perhaps in its more traditional forms, who found it difficult if their students did not reciprocate that enthusiasm. In both cases, I suggest the tutor needs to stand back and consider whether the student has had sufficient exposure and guidance to make up their own mind. Forms of response, and the expression of response, have to be learnt, modelled and encouraged.

The pro- and anti- positions outlined above have their effect on student writing and publishing. It becomes either irrelevant, or inappropriate. Mainstream literary culture, until recently, has been obsessed with the act of judgement: with narrowly defined questions of value and discrimination.

" S: Anybody who wishes to write, the writing
should stand on its own - have intrinsic value.
If it's just run of the mill I feel it's very
patronising - that because its literacy 'Yes
that's lovely dear'. A lot of our students have
great problems putting a sentence together -
they're unlikely to be able to put the writing
across.
The same percentage of students as of the
population at large is motivated to write - so
why look to students to produce literature ?. "

(Co-ordinators, North Norfolk)

" We may be misleading our students about the
value of their work to others beyond themselves,
a kind of implicit acceptance that they are very
different and inferior, not in the real writing
world.

Every piece of writing has its own status, but it
also has a place in the hierarchy of publishing.
If we object to this state of affairs we must
make sure that we are clear what our objection is
and what - if anything - has changed as a result
of that objection. "

(Tutor, Walsall)

These literary concerns have had implications for ABE
students, often denying them the opportunity to
participate in literary concerns. However, literary
culture itself has, since the mid 1980's, been in the
midst of huge changes in policy and first principles.
Today, in education and arts policy, ideas of quality,
standards and the relationship between participation and
appreciation are being radically revised.[8] Literature is
giving way to Writing and there is a greater recognition
that different cultural experience, especially race,
class and gender, generates both different writing and
ways of valuing it. This idea of a range of standards, as
against the conventional notion of one standard, informs
our exploration of the different models of student
publishing in that section.

Discussions about literature and the literary usually
encode a set of assumptions about language, just as
literacy does. Just as the one question, 'Who owns
culture ?' is deeply entangled with the other: 'Who owns
the language ? ' Issues about appropriate language and
correct language are never far away and come into
particular focus when work is to be published. I come
back to these issues about language and power in the
discussion on editing in the next section.

Challenge

T: " Students learn how to handle disappointment,
eg a group will reject work for a number of
reasons - off the theme, not clear enough, space
etc; compromise, negotiation, how real publishing
works, how much work goes into things.
ABE is bad on challenging people - publishing
provides that; it is a check against protecting
people, eg when they get let down by other people
on the editorial group, or the writers, they have
to sort it out. "

(Tutor, Walsall)

The low self-esteem of students in ABE is well documented
and one of its consequences can be passivity. This
passivity was revealed on a number of occasions during
the research; for example when students spoke, evidently
for the first time, about ideas, feelings or experiences
connected with publishing their writing. That catalysing
effect of research should not be taken as a criticism of
anybody's teaching method. It simply underlines that
students are not always confident enough to either know
what they want from education, or to ask for it. This
does not mean that tutors should constantly anticipate
and do for their students, but rather that they need to
be sensitive to what isn't being said, as well as what
is, and to encourage students to explore and take risks.
('Research and Change' in the next section discovers
these issues further.)

'Challenge' was a word that came up frequently in the
discussions about student publishing. A significant
number of tutors felt that ABE lacks challenge, that
students are very protected and that this is often
detrimental to them. The following exchange is a good
example of this view:

T: " It makes me think: Are you picking student's
stories because you think they are good or
because it makes the student feel good ? "

I: What were you doing ?

" We didn't really take decisions. There wasn't a
lot of discussion. I think we were always hoping
to come across someone with a story to tell, who
could tell a story. "

I: What if you had an interesting story told in
an un-interesting way ?

T: " That's partly what I was saying. X was
written competently but wasn't written in an
interesting way and it would have been hard to do

something about that. All you could do is run a
proper creative writing class.

If you decide to join a course, people criticise
you. They'll say it's boring, it's not working.
You're not out to destroy people's self-
confidence but that shouldn't stop you being
worried about discussing whether the writing
should be lively, interest the reader.

I think people - tutors - are scared of
stretching students. It's as if they're terrified
of repeating the experience of failure, so they
go to the other extreme. We reassure, never give
people things they can't do; and then students
themselves get into it. They've got basic skills
and they can hardly believe it: they can't move
on."

(Tutor, Hackney)

Some tutors tend to favour publishing as much for the
challenge it provides as for its contribution to
students' writing development. Students too, often talked
about publishing as being 'a bit of a challenge'; finding
the idea attractive but also scary. Perhaps it is
precisely because publishing is a previously unknown
experience for them that makes succeeding in it such a
powerful experience for them. Group and team work is
essential to succesfully completing a publication. The
work towards it can develop or bring to the fore a range
of skills that, once publicly recognised - if only by the
other members of the group, can transfer over to other
areas of life. Perhaps, too, much of that elusive
'confidence' lies in succesfully completing a range of
tasks which sometimes seem bewildering in their scope and
complexity.

Training For Tutors

I found that where projects had experienced working with a creative writing tutor, or a writer in residence, they distinguished very clearly not just the roles of the creative writing tutor and themselves, but a difference in attitude. The creative writing tutor was seen as much more likely to push students, to adopt a more ruthless approach and to stir up debate and argument. As I indicated earlier, in 'Creative Writing Issues', there was an ambivalence about this. It is as if there is a kind of envy from some ABE tutors, that they might have liked to do this too, but temper it, knowing the importance of providing encouragement and support for emergent writers.

In the Q response, we found an absence of specific training for tutors in publishing student writing. Tutors, and students, learn by doing or by example. It became clear that tutors who were enthusiastic about publishing their students' writing were often predisposed to this by one or more prior or contemporaneous experiences. These included:

> An interest in creative writing, which may or may not have included publishing;
>
> an involvement in community publishing, such as newsletters, broadsheets and so on;
>
> work experience in commercial publishing;
>
> a background of art and design training; and
>
> previous experience of student publishing.

A large number of tutors expressed interest in the idea of a workbook that could give ideas about using student publications across a wider range of learning activities than is currently available and a selection of worked examples. Some tutors made their own worksheets but often commented that these tended to encourage the production of further writing, rather than reading of other student writing. If such a workbook were developed it could form the basis for training tutors to use a wider range of student originated material in a variety of ways.

The findings reported in 'Design and New Technology' in Section 4, suggest another group of training needs, in the areas of presentation and design. Training for tutors in these skills would enhance the overall production of learning materials as well as the specific instance of publishing students' writing. These needs are increased, rather than decreased, by the spread of computers into Adult Basic Education. Computers increase the potential for improved work, but it doesn't happen automatically.

Everyone's A Writer

One of the stumbling blocks that student publishing encounters over and over again is that all students in ABE want to write, but not all want to be writers. The argument that no greater proportion of students in ABE were likely to aspire to be writers than in the population at large was used as an argument against student publishing on a number of occasions. We believe that the observation is correct, but it does not necessarily follow that student publishing should be abandoned because of it. Rather, we would argue that precisely because the desire to be a writer might exist, we should ensure that all students in the process of acquiring or developing their literacy skills have the opportunity to explore their potential in the full range of literacy, including that of writing for others.

In support of this argument, we want people to consider two things. First, that ABE students, like the rest of the population, inhabit a writing continuum and secondly that the purposes of publishing student writing are best understood as a continuum too.

The continuum, as we see it, has two characteristics. People stand in a variety of relations to both writing and publishing; and they can move from one place to another. Students get involved with writing as individuals, members of a group, within and outside an ABE context and some, through writing, find satisfaction in the role of editors or illustrators.

> S: " It opened up a whole new thing. I felt really important, learning how to do everything. I'll go anywhere, talk to anyone. When I first moved out here I didn't want to know, I was under a lot of pressure. The confidence is the thing, before I could never finish what I was saying, for nerves and tensions. "

> I: *Some people say publishing student writing gives students an inflated sense of the importance of their own work. What do you think ?*

> T: "It's a tiny risk, a nothing risk - what's the harm ? It's still a mountain when they have to write something ... they know how hard it is. "

> (Student and tutor, Dublin)

> V: " It start from everything, the book. I just go right into writing. The group came right in time then, all the poetry and things coming up. I just needed a push, the book was that. "

> (Writer, Gatehouse)

76

S: " Getting the chance to think about something. To write it down and then think about it and send it out into the world. It's important to the sense of self. "

P: " Confounds public expectation. Student writing is changing the stereotype. "

(Workers, Gatehouse)

T: " The editorial work - understood as a series of questions to be asked of the work - about illustration, expansion, clarification - is the same as students are being asked to learn for their own writing. It is easier to see the need for re-working on someone else's piece and to learn from each other. This is especially relevant as the students work in isolation with no group activity. Publishing could provide a group focus and a space for learning those essential skills. "

(Tutor, Watford)

J: " The other thing they learn is to do with questioning what you are learning to write for. It makes people think back to their aims - especially people whose aims are changing. "

C: " People who just come to learn to spell get into the whole learning process. It brings down the barriers. I can't use a computer, people say, but then they just use it. "

(Tutors, Hammersmith)

T: " We had a student who'd been coming a number of years. He was incredibly passive. If you asked him what he thought of the work it was fine. Always fine. I worked with him for about 3 or 4 years, on a 1:1 basis. He started to write his life history and joined a group. He'd take work along each week to read to them. Through his writing he was able to see the injustices of his life. "

(Tutor: Mendip)

T: " Some writing goes in with no discrimination. What is that actually saying ? Anybody can write something and have it published. You can read into that what you want. "

I: What do you read into it ?

T: " I believe that anybody can write something that's good enough to be published - to be read

by other people - but not that anything that
anybody writes down is good enough to publish. "

I: *All collections show variations in talent and
in taste.*

T: " But there's the expectation of quality -
you're doing someone a disservice to say 'Oh !
you wrote that down ! That's wonderful ! ' Part
of the learning process is bringing in for
yourself how to distinguish what's good - for
yourself and for others."

(Tutors, Islington)

Tutors' Motives

The response to question 6 in the Q which asked <u>why
tutors started publishing</u> showed an enormous range of
factors.

"Encouragement and confidence boosting" was one of the
most frequently given reasons, which paralleled the
response to questions about the value of student
publishing. Another cluster of reasons, (41), cited
reasons to do with "improving group dynamics" and "inter-
group communications". There were an equal number of
responses, (14), indicating that publishing began as a
student request and tutors' interest. Visits indicated
that when students request publishing it is almost always
because they have experienced it elsewhere.

Sometimes publishing is less to do with the students and
more to do with the centre. There were a number of
responses, (19), that said publishing had begun as a way
to promote or publicise the centre or to raise issues,
such as racism and ethnic diversity that needed
discussion. At other times it provided learning
materials, especially for beginner readers.

In 20 cases, publishing started because tuto ; thought
writing was good enough to share widely. The ...e are
conventional, literary reasons for publishing. All the
other reasons, the majority, identify publishing as a
good, or the best, way to meet a range of educational and
social needs. This difference needs to be taken into
account when evaluating the effectiveness of student
publishing. Instrumental reasons for publishing,
ephemeral reasons in some cases, can be just as valid and
for learners often more important, as I discussed in the
section on Models of Student Publishing.

Students' Motives

Students' reasons for writing emerged during discussion
with them on visits and in correspondence arising from
those visits. Some students had clear and long standing

ambitions to write, which pre-dated their arrival at an
ABE class.

> F: " I thought about writing for a long time but
> I didn't know how. I joined a class in 1984 - not
> for writing, but just to be able to read
> something. "
>
> (Student, Leeds)

> L: " I've always liked the idea of writing. The
> fact that I couldn't do it at all didn't bother
> me. I like the words - the creative way of using
> the words, playing with words. "
>
> (Student, Ealing)

For other students, the ABE class introduced them to
writing. In some cases the writing developed into other
interests: perhaps local or family history or poetry and
performance.

> V: " I write and perform my own work. I'm also
> involved with another group, Elders, and we've
> done a book, Heads Together, that's poetry and
> prose and we're planning a book of recipes. I
> felt good [after the book was published] and
> that's what inspired me to go further. I was
> always interested as a child but I never got the
> opportunity. When you poor back home and have no
> one to push you - and your parents mostly look on
> boys... "
>
> (Writer, Gatehouse)

Two students, M & F, from the same scheme demonstrate the
very different roles publication can play. For F, putting
her experiences into books and setting it aside
symbolised setting a traumatic part of her life to one
side and this enabled her to move on to better things.
Writing marked the end, rather than the beginning:

> F: " One night, 1986, I decide I'm going to write
> this book. I put the tape in, about midnight,
> things rushing through my head. I just started
> talking, imagining I was talking to someone. Up
> to now I haven't read any of the books. It is a
> painful story to me, so I haven't related myself
> to the book. I haven't been able to think, you
> know, 'I'm The Writer'. Maybe because The
> Survivor is some kind of part of me that I want
> to let go of. "
>
> (Student, Leeds)

For M, on the other hand, publishing her book was the
start of all sorts of activities: talks, visits, more
writing and publishing:

> M: " Three years ago I couldn't write, couldn't
> spell. I thought to myself I'll go to classes.

Writing about childhood memories led to an interest in local history and through that I realised I loved to write. My tutor encouraged me - scribed to get you going - told me, like, write about your memories . "

(Student, Leeds)

For other writers, too, writing has acted as a gateway to some other place:

S: " I didn't go out to write a book. I wanted to learn to read and write and get my confidence back. The tutor realised something else was wrong - all I knew was I was frightened of something. I really wanted to talk to somebody about it, but I couldn't. I just kept crying. So I wrote it down. I had other English assignments to do but there were so many feelings to get out I couldn't see until I got past it. I couldn't speak about it because I was so ashamed. "

I: Had you ever thought about publishing the work as you were writing it ?

S: " No. "

I: How did you react to responses to the book ?

S: " It was nice when I did get the comments back, there's been no bad reviews. I felt very uncomfortable the day of the launch. I was okay until they did the readings. I've never picked it up and read it since that day. "

(A student in ABE)

Other students might have enjoyed writing at school but not continued with imaginative or expressive writing since. Unemployment took them back to classes to improve job prospects.

M: " In school I could write - stories from the top of my head. The writing started - there's nothing much to do - a good way of getting rid of the anger. Like this one Orphans of Technology, or this line here, 'against the grain'. It came to me in a wood-working class, the tutor saying never to go against the grain. It just connected with my sense of the whole way working class people are brought up being told never to go against the grain. "

(Student, Swansea)

Sometimes a student has been introduced to publishing at one scheme or by one tutor and then, when they moved to another centre or staff changed, the student encouraged a new publishing venture. Others got drawn into publishing

because they were interested in the work they heard snatches of in class and wanted a permanent record for themselves and others to enjoy.

There was also plenty of evidence of students who wanted to develop as writers but not publish their work, or publish it in the sense only of sharing it with a few people.

> PJ: " A lot of my stuff is very personal. Writing it is enough. "

> I: *Do you keep a journal ?*

> PJ: " Yes - paper everywhere. I might show things to one or two people, my brother, or my brother's friend. "

> T: " I don't mind other people seeing it. I write a lot, whenever I'm in the mood, you tend to write when you've got a problem. "

> " I would never write - never put pen to paper. "

> " I was always ashamed ... my mother loved the writing. ` Why don't you write more,' I never did. Now, I'm confident enough, I can sit down and write anything. "

> I: *Where has that change come from ?*

> " I'm recently separated - I have to. Messages for the children, everything. Ten years ago I said I must do something about it, but I never. "

> " The children. Give me a note ! I'd be trying to write it. In the end I had my 2 lines ready and if it was any different I was stuck. "

> (Students, Ennis)

> T: " A student with memory loss following a stroke wanted to recreate his family history as a book. His work is intended for himself and his family, not for wider publication. "
> (Tutor, Watford)

Students often demonstrated great insight into their ability and the place of writing and publishing in their lives.

> J: " Take V, she had more to offer, she's more enthusiastic. She loves language, writing. She loved the whole thing whereas I didn't. I was just trying to overcome it - my own problems with it."

> (Student, Watford)

This is explored fully by Victor Grenko, reflecting on the publication of his book, **Monsters of the Mind**:

> V: " You do the book for your own benefit, for the love of the work, rather than fame or money. You enjoy writing, drawing and using your skills. When you become a published writer, it's important to keep everything in proportion. Even if you have a book published, you're still who you are. Your friends might joke with you about being famous, but you understand the reality of the situation."

(Fitzpatrick & Grenko 1992)

^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^

Notes & references

[1] I am grateful to Julia Raffo for urging me to make this explicit rather than implicit.

[2] See accounts of the establishment of Pecket Well College and the work of Robert Merry and John Glyn.

[3] Letter to Rebecca O'Rourke from Jill Kibble, July 1991

[4] Birmingham was, to my knowledge, the first place to organise a Festival for Writers and Readers in the early 80's. Nowadays most festivals are either called Writing or Writers and Readers events, as in Cleveland or Cardfiff, or feature a number of participatory events for children and adults.

[5] See Violet Hughes' Report for the Arts Council of Great Britain, Literature Belongs to Everyone 1991

[6] This is not lost on potential students. In the foreword to Peter Goode's poetry collection, Moon on the Window (1989), it is recounted that he had been working on a plan to get into prison, believing it to be the only place he could get an education.

[7] This point is made very clearly and persuausively in the case of ESOL students by Jane McLoughlan.

[8] See The Arts and Media Stratgey (1992) document in which the Arts Council of Great Britain sets out its new directions and guiding principles.

Section 4   For and Against: Benefits and Problems

This section offers some of the different views on the
value of student publishing - for student learning of
many kinds. It begins with a number of comments gathered
in the research on accreditation and the issues of
balancing outcomes with process.

The questionnaire to tutors brought out a variety of
views on the value of student publishing which are
presented next.

From visits and questionnaires we had collected a number
of common statements made about student publishing. In
the meetings with students, we invited them to comment on
nine of these. Student Views summarises their reactions
to both positive and negative ideas about student
publishing.

Writing development of all kinds entails editing; writing
for publishing (in a magazine, book or this report)
involves further choices of order, emphasis and design.
The last part of this section discusses different
approaches we found to the editing stages of writing by
students, whether this be by student authors themselves,
by students working on others' writing, or tutors as
editors. Finally we consider the related issue of design
and the impact of new technologies.

In <u>making it work</u> we review some of the catalysing

effects of the research and conclude with a summary of

<u>good practice</u> observed during the study.

Accreditation

J: " We're trail blazing down a cul-de-sac. I
have a sense that student writing symbolises the
past and Open Learning the future, and that a
huge friction and conflict is being set up
between them. Partly this is fed by an all-
inclusiveness and protectiveness in working on
student writing, not wanting to reject anyone's
work. This really shows up how important is that
early stage editing.

However, this problem - which people identify
with student writing and is one of the sticks
used to beat it with - is actually compounded by
the systems of accreditation being promoted.
Reliance on a portfolio and the pressure to build
it up makes it harder to throw work out and
progress on to better pieces. Students have to
keep everything. This puts the emphasis onto task
completion and product, and the process can get
hidden, but writing is process as well as
product."

(Tutor, Weymouth)

I have argued that one of the important conditions to be
met if student publishing is to achieve its full
potential to enhance students' learning is that the
students must themselves perceive and evaluate their
learning. This complements the new area of accrediting
work in basic skills. The impact of accreditation on
student publishing, as on ABE generally, has been
complex. We often encountered confusion about student
publishing's role in the ABE curriculum, particularly in
relation to accreditation. A common misconception was
that student publishing claimed to be an alternative
curriculum. This has never been suggested, even by its
most avid supporters.

" There's a lot of work going on here that's very
valuable but we feel out on a limb. We're not an
Open Learning centre, we're old-fashioned. ALBSU
doesn't really support us, voluntary schemes and
student publishing are regarded as irrelevant. I
think there is more progress in publishing,
reading evenings - all that kind of thing - than
in the new accreditation schemes. "

(Tutors, Hammersmith)

In some places I found that forms of accreditation - Open
College (FAME), Wordpower, City & Guilds - were
superceding the achievement and focus that had previously
been supplied by publishing.

" People move on but they're not necessarily
progressing with literacy. It is the form of
progression but they haven't actually acquired
the skills - students often come back later when
they aren't able to cope with their City and
Guild course, for example. "

<p align="right">(Tutor, Islington)</p>

In others I found accreditation, particularly Wordpower,
working much more negatively to stop publishing. The
demands on tutors' time, the apparent lack of fit between
Wordpower's discrete elements and publishing's fluidity,
the emphasis on functional and employment led skills all
militated against initiating or completing publishing
projects.

" You can produce work for Wordpower that would
be just as suitable for publishing. So I would
say it is more the lack of time for organising it
than the actual work you'd be doing. Finding a
way to work it in would help but I think the
practicalities would militate against that. You'd
be asking a lot of tutors to take that on as
well.

<p align="right">(Tutor, Bedford)</p>

A: " Almost used student writing as a benchmark,
a way of saying you've achieved something. Now
with accreditation, different goals and progress
emerge earlier, and in dialogue. "

<p align="right">(Tutor, Norwich)</p>

" Wordpower is a real killer for this kind of
work. Its all tasks, tasks. tasks. The polarity
is really invidious, their aims are often better
met through our methods of writing development,
but writing development is too often seen as a
kind of optional extra."

<p align="right">(Tutor, Swansea)</p>

A polarity has started to develop between old and new
styles of delivering adult education, with Wordpower
identified with the new and student publishing identified
with the old. Whether this polarity is real or imagined,
it has the currency and effect of reality at present. The
experience of people working within the North West Open
College network, using FAME, demonstrated that it was not
accreditation per se that checked opportunities for
creative writing and student publishing. The flexibility
of the Open College system was much preferred by schemes
that operated both and they did feel that publishing
would be constrained if they had to work only with
Wordpower.

" My main worry would be Wordpower taking over,
but after our training session - saying that the
learning process doesn't have to be tied to their
examples - I feel better. We want to offer FAME,
Wordpower and City and Guilds. FAME runs
throughout the North West prisons and it fits
really nicely with the progression routes
available. We will register for Wordpower but we
won't necessarily promote it, although if someone
came in who'd stared Wordpower we'd continue it
with him. "

(Tutor, HMP Preston)

To explore whether Wordpower could accommodate student
publishing in ABE I invited tutors in the London region
to 3 meetings. In discussing the different ways that
student publishing had been accredited within Wordpower,
we found that the framework does not encourage such a use
but that it is possible.[1]

The research project overall found that students and
tutors identified learning beyond writing skills as an
important gain from publishing. The accreditation
experience supports this: organising a reading evening or
a magazine involves students using a range of
communication and negotiation skills. Tutors who had
struggled to create situations in which students could
demonstrate these abilities were excited at the prospect
of utilising them in the real situation of publishing.
This dimension of Wordpower also opens up possibilities
for greater participation from students as it is often
precisely these organising and administrative tasks that,
for expediency, a tutor or volunteer will do.

Writing skills are, of course, a valuable part of the
publishing process and can be accredited as such but
perhaps it is more helpful, especially in a publishing
context, to focus on the way that core skills are a means
to an end, not the end itself. The 'functional v
creative' argument looks very different considered from
this perspective. Publishing is an ideal means to
demonstrate a range of skills, including writing. It is a
useful addition to the repertoire of Wordpower, one more
strand which tutors and students can choose to work with.

The Value of Student Publishing

" The book helped me to come to terms. You feel
so guilty, so dirty and it's finding other
people. It's the letters that come back, that
gives you a big boost. Okay, nobody knows its me,
but I get the letters - if I didn't write I
wouldn't be here.

Because I've done it myself I know I can do
everything else myself, or ask for help.
Application forms, letters, pick up a book and
read it. "

(A student in ABE)

S: " Evidence - it's not just doing the piece
week after week and forgetting it. "

(Students, Dublin)

As I've sugested, advocates and detractors of student
publishing clash fiercely over the question of what
students gain from publishing their writing. The value of
student publishing is not universal and this needs to be
acknowledged. But the deadlock in the debate over value
has arisen because it has been centred in student
publishing's products: the magazines, books and
pamphlets, when its real value lies in the process.

This confusion has its roots in a failure to recognise
that the educational context of student publishing makes
a difference. It doesn't qualify questions of value or
make a case of special pleading for the work: what it
does is mean that evaluation must be an educational as
well as a literary exercise. Publishing the writing of
ABE students is primarily a contribution to their
learning, much as the extensive publishing within schools
is. It is wrong to judge it in terms of the overail
contribution it makes to literary culture. To argue this
doesn't preclude the possibility that some of the writing
will be of lasting and widespread interest and value. Nor
does it mean that it won't be of interest to a range of
people for a variety of reasons: just like any other
writing.

There was some evidence that tutors and students
perceived the value of student publishing in implicit
rather than explicit ways and that little work has been
done to make its value explicit. This is partly because
it is difficult to quantify or predict its value, but
this does not make it valueless. We also found that all
progress is difficult to articulate. Students were asked
what generally gave them a sense of making progress as
well as what they specifically gained from working on

student publications. Answers to both questions were given in very vague, puzzled or general terms.

The Q responses indicate the range of thinking tutors have about the value of student publishing, the kinds of things they think students learn. There were two kinds of gains, one to do with confidence, the other to do with purpose. This was reflected in responses to the statements at the end of the questionnaire. We asked respondents to tick those with which they most agreed. The two top scorers were as follows:

Publishing student writing does wonders for people's self-esteem and confidence.

(157)

Publishing student writing provides a meaningful context in which to develop writing and editing skills.

(151)

A number of general comments expand on these views:

" Joining a large and diverse group of readers and writers is a major way of getting students to care about writing, to take trouble over it, to see themselves as writers. "

Q 153

" It creates a realistic framework and extra motivation for improving certain literacy skills, eg editing, proof reading, grammar. Students like to have something tangible to show for their work and time in English classes. "

Q 131

" It separates composition from transcription and hence encourages students to think more about what they want to say, and the message they want to get across. "

Q 16

" Develops lots of almost incidental skills – discussion, negotiation, constructive criticism, taking and giving, and of course, computer and word-processing – just to get at the final product – a piece of writing. "

Q 4

" It establishes real reasons for writing, especially for those whose writing has not been taken seriously before. It helps people express themselves, it can be therapy. "

Q 88

" It dispels feelings of isolation and gives a voice to new communities of writers. "

Q 83

Question 18 asked <u>what tutors thought that students
learnt from publishing their own writing.</u> The most
frequent responses were as follows:

Validates student experience as writer   50
Skill and value of writing for an audience   50
Layout and publishing skills   41
Editing skills   38
Books and writing are demystified   34
They gain confidence   33

These are above all skills which concern learning how to
be writers, experiencing the rights and responsibilities
that literacy brings; but they are also, importantly,
about learning, or validating, a range of skills that do
not always depend upon literacy. These are often design
or publishing related, but might also be skills with
people, of negotiating or promoting, for example. The
majority of respondents emphasised that for students to
actually absorb, learn and benefit from publishing they
needed to be fully involved in the production process.

" Knowing they are writing for strangers often
helps students to clarify ideas on which
details/background are really needed in the
story. Students can't give up until the piece is
really ready - develops staying power. "

Q 151

" To be a self-critical reader, to learn the
influence writers wield, to learn the choices
writers can make. "

Q 171

"That people who read books can also write them."

Q 96

" They gain those things which encourage learning
and independence, without which real learning
cannot take place - it empowers them. Endless
worksheets can't do this. "

Q 88

" It gives them a new kind of voice. The writing
is an object distinct from the writer which can
communicate across space and time."

Q 109

" Students learn to use their other talents, eg
art and calligraphy. "

Q 141

" A better idea of the whole of the writing
process, particularly the composition process,
and a knowledge that their process is the same
for everyone, even professional writers. "

Q 101

Many said that students didn't learn anything from publishing, apart from specific publishing skills, that they couldn't learn in other ways but believed publishing was a better way to learn.

Question 19 asked <u>what tutors thought students learn by reading other students' writing.</u> The most frequent responses were as follows:

No answer	47
That they are not alone	43
Demystifies print and authorship	42
Progression modelled for them	32
Insight into other experiences	28
Value other student's writing	20
Writing skills	13

It is helpful to think of these as two themes.

(1) **Progression is modelled** for the student. They have a tangible goal, often in the form of living people, in their centre or class from whom they can draw inspiration or practical help.

(2) **Countering isolation.** Students learn that they are not alone.

Discussions with students provided ample evidence of how central countering isolation was to their learning; whereas tutors often expressed the view to us that there was 'too much' dwelling on the experience of illiteracy and that this was what, to them, marred much student writing. Again, this debate needs to be understood against the background of stigma which confronts people with reading and writing difficulties.

It is axiomatic that those with power often fail to understand the priorities and needs of those excluded from it. Issue about isolation recurred again and again and I kept being reminded of Coming Out stories: and the equal measure of frustration and inspiration they give me. Frustration that lesbians and gay men still have to document an experience that cannot be assumed to be known and common, inspiration at yet another person surviving and transforming our predominantly heterosexist society. The significance of the Coming Out story is that it affirms existence and identity: a reminder that you are on a journey, which others have taken, away from a place of danger, confusion and fear. The point is precisely the repetition of that experience.

Outsiders, perhaps, see the experience of homosexuality in undifferentiated terms but to insiders the nuances of individual experience ensures that each version of the story varies and is, therefore, of value and interest. [2]

Students rarely complained about the theme of breaking
the isolation being too repetitive. The student events
demonstrated that student publications are often valued
for expressing, and thus countering, this sense of
isolation. Tutors must listen to this and act accordingly
because unless they are the minority who were once
students in ABE themselves, they will never fully
understand their students' isolation. Tutors can be
helped to understand by the writings of students and the
students' isolation itself is helped by the presence in
print of the words of others like themselves.

During the research many tutors reported derogatory
remarks about student autobiography made by senior
members of ALBSU. Some, to be fair, agreed with the
sentiment (which they recalled as: "If I have to read
another student autobiography ...") but more felt the
remarks to be dismissive and insulting to students who
needed to write and to read these books. In reporting
this we do not wish to perpetuate any folk myths about
goodies or baddies.

The research found that a feeling is abroad that ALBSU
has validated a position opposing student publishing.
Correspondence with Alan Wells, the Unit's director,
clarified that this was not accurate and that ALBSU
recognised the enormous contribution that the development
of student writing and publishing has made to adult basic
education. He expressed a concern about consistency and
rigour, and of student writing and publishing standing in
for a more structured approach to curriculum planning.[3]
These seem no different from criticisms that could be
made about any part of the service. The suggestion, from
Alan Wells, that autobiographical writing is necessarily
of limited interest, is not borne out by the research
findings. (see Section 3: 'Getting Personal'). The
question of how interesting autobiographical writing is,
has to be a question of interest to whom and for what
reasons. If you stand within the libraries of literacy,
then of course you will be bored reading the same story
over and over; but if you stand outside that room then
you need to know both that you are not alone and that you
too can come in.

I was struck by how often I heard accounts of the shame
and isolation students experienced. Often students within
the same class didn't share their work, and were clear
why:

> T: "How would you feel about sharing your work in
>   class ? "
>
> Everyone: " Don't you dare ! "
>
> S: " If you have difficulty writing it down it's
> bad enough to show it to the tutor. "

                    (Students and tutor, Norfolk)

S: " Other students reading your work, signing yourself off [putting your own name to it], I'm telling other people I'm illiterate ... other people shouldn't know. "

B: " My son [20 years old] - his attitude was - aren't you ashamed to go there ?' "

M: " But that's his problem, surely ?"

<div align="right">(Students, Ennis)</div>

Perhaps the strongest example of this was the group I met who discussed, unprompted, their sense of shame at great length but then asked that none of it be included. Just in case someone, somewhere, read it and recognised them.

Students made reference time and again to the importance of knowing, through the writings of other students, that their experiences, fears and trials were shared. This is backed up by the answers to Question 10, asking what tutors thought students liked about student publications:

Being able to identify with the writing	96
Seeing their own work in print	32
Adult content but easy reading	30
Written in familiar language	22
Stimulates own writing	20

"It can do. It depends who reads it. People read
what you've written and can say things that help you.
It gives them something to work together with."

(2) "People say that making magazines is okay, but it is not
really what students come to classes for".

The main feeling in common, on this issue, was that it was
important for students to have a choice in the matter. For
the Swansea meeting, the flipchart note simply records (as a
summary of views):
     "They don't have to do it."
In Weymouth the view was:
     "It's a stage of learning, but it's not really
     necessary."
Even at this stage of summing up in the meeting, there was in
this group, as in others, a continuing ebb and flow of
experience. One woman student in this meeting recalled how
it had been 'stressful'waiting for the magazine that never
appeared, with a tutor repeatedly saying to students, 'This
will be good in a magazine'.

The Dublin meeting saw student publishing as something that
may not be what students 'come for', but that they could find
they do gain (and could then decide they wanted out of coming
to classes):
     "If you were doing it for the sake of doing it, you might
     not learn anything. It's not what you came for, but it's
     an added bonus."
Manchester people actively disagreed with the view thast it is
'not what people come for', but made a similar point to
Dublin's:
     "It extends what you're learning. You've got something
     to show for it."

Norwich students too felt it was 'another bonus'; but at
Norwich and at Cork there was considerable discussion about
the issue of timing in relation to students being invited to
share their writing in some published form. People in both
groups had a keen sense of the newcomer to the literacy class,
and those who as the Norwich meeting noted, 'would feel
threatened' by student publishing. As one woman at this
meeting put it:
     "If I'd been in a group only four weeks, I'd say no."
Similarly, at the Cork meeting a number of people felt:
     "It could be a bit of a challenge to you, but not a
     good thing to do when you are just beginning."
Others at the Cork meeting, however, from other experience of
publication, disagreed, arguing, 'It (student publishing)'s a
good place to start', and that it had been
     "exciting to learn how to do paste-up and realising
     that it was possible to make a magazine of writing by
     people who had problems with their writing. It's
     a good way to get you involved."

three months are very hard, you're all nerves, but if you
read about, or if somebody read it to you, the progress
someone else has made, it would be a help when at the end
of that first few months you're thinking to yourself,
'Am I getting anywhere?' It's inspiring. It helps you
decide to do something about it."

However, both at Norwich and Cork, we heard a couple of
cautionary notes:

"You don't want it rammed down your throat all
the time." (Norwich)
"It could get boring if it was all you read about."
(Cork)

(4) "People say one of the most useful things about student
publishing is that you learn to work as a team."

Discussion on this view depended, perhaps more than on any
other, on the models of publishing that had been experienced
in the group. In Manchester, most of those present had had
experience of the editorial groups and publication stages of
Gatehouse work. Their view, in reaction to this, was
unequivocal:

"Yes. To publish you need more than one effort,
more than one talent."

Cork, from recent experience, was also positive:

"Yes. You have to work as a team. Our project has
definitely pulled us together as a group."

The Swansea meeting, by contrast, had this to say:

"People don't work as a team. One person gets
lumbered. Creative work is done solo. Teamwork
is when you pull together."

In the Norwich group, where most people had not had exoerience
of working as a student group in making a magazine, reading
evening, or writing weekend, the discussion on this view was,
as with the first card, largely about how it could be.

Both the Weymouth and Dublin groups pointed out that 'working
as a team' can be a feature of other kinds of practice in some
literacy groups:

"But we all try and help each other in some way or other
anyway." (Weymouth).
"There are other ways to build that team spirit, like
writing weekends." (Dublin).

97

(6) "People say that once you've been in print yourself, you are less put off by other books."

Given the findings from other work in this research, the responses to this view are extremely interesting. At all six meetings, participants had positive things to say about the change in reading attitudes and habits which might follow from experience in reading and writing student publications. At Swansea, for example, the note read:

> "Yes. Don't necessarily read more, but read more critically and with more understanding. You read to improve your writing."

In Manchester, there was a series of interesting points made on the issue:

> "1. Yes. This is the third best question. Once you're in print you take up other books with more interest.
> 2. Once you've written a poem yourself you're more interested to read poetry."

Two students gave examples:

> "Most times you'd pass a book, whatsoever title it is you pass by; but once you're in print, you glimpse through the book to see what it is."

and:

> "I picked up a book by Claire Rayner. One of her early books. It was a lot of rubbish. Her books now are really sophisticated. Before going into print myself, I wouldn't have had the confidence to be so critical."

Norwich students referred the view to their experience of discussing reading generally in their class:

> "By doing this course, I'd look more at those kinds of things. Before, I wouldn't have chosen it in a bookshop. But now I'll have a look."

In the Norwich meeting, as in Weymouth, there was also a sense of fellow-feeling that student publishing can create between reader and writer:

> "It helps you realise how hard it was for the writer."
> (Norwich)
> "You think that the person who wrote it can't be that far away from you." (Weymouth)

In Dublin, there was no single group voice on whether student publishing helped student reading. Some said 'Yes'; others, 'Not really'; the flipchart note recorded:

> "It depends if you were put off in the first place."

One woman at this meeting, however, said a positive 'Yes', adding:

> "What's happening to me is I'm picking up books now and opening a book and seeing what I can read in it."

Finally, in Cork, the group agreed that

> "having our work in our own books gives us the courage to pick up other books."

The view on this card essentially asked people to discuss: do published writings by adult literacy learners function as 'evidence' of the authors as thinking people - a challenge to the widely experienced stereotyping of illiteracy - and a means to educate a wider public?

The Swansea meeting thought it did. So did the group in Norwich, who felt that published work
"proves they're bettering themselves."
In Weymouth, the meeting note discussed an alternative to the word 'stupid': they preferred 'inadequate' - becuase in their reading of the card, the 'people' were identified as being themselves:
"You feel less inadequate when you have written something."
In Dublin, the group saw the 'people', as the other groups seemed to do, as 'other people':
"It does show people that you have ideas."

The Cork meeting was the only one with people who strongly agreed with the view on the card, taking a broad view of the question of changing other people's attitudes:
"Not sure that publishing really changes people's attitudes about this. It is being able to do it yourself, to cope at work and in your life that proves to people you aren't stupid."

(9) "People say that publishing writing by students helps students to write more clearly."

This, like the view on (6), had a particular interest for us. Two questions, as has already been indicated, threaded through the project as a whole: to what extent have the claims for student publishing as a means for writing development had any basis? and, how far would published students agree with some of the findings we'd collected of tutors' views on this?

So it was interesting, in looking through the results recorded on the flipcharts of all the meetings, to find that the students in these groups appeared to agree that there were important benefits to them as writers in writing for publication.

First, the Swansea, Dublin, and Cork discussions agreed that the student publishing process helps student writers to have a clear sense of a reader to be taken account of:
"You try and put yourself in the reader's shoes." (Swansea).

"You know you are writing so that it can be understood by people who don't know you." (One student added:

Editing Issues

I: Any reservations ?

T: " Sometimes the standard of the writing - the grammar. You're giving the picture it's okay because it's in a book ... we exercise strict editorial control ... but for every two or three pieces that you think, oh, that's terrible, there's pieces that are really, really good. "

I: Whose the we ?

We - it's me and B. The tutor would do a bit of re-writing, we would have to do a bit of what we call hairdressing - tidy it up a bit. Spelling, grammar, drop the odd line. Anything anti-pope or bad language, we'd have to be a bit careful - but not too much.

I: Would you consult the students about it ?

We'd just do it. They're used to it, they know we do it. Now, with the word processor, I might do it, let them have a look at the original and as its going to be. Its easy to make a copy to show the student and make any changes. "

(Tutor, Dublin)

M: " The writing is very strong in content, sometimes it can be weak in presentation, but a lot of good work comes in. We correct work, we give it back to the chap and he sees it corrected and maybe that helps him, gives him an idea about what to do the next time. "

I: Do you ever ask for a re-write, say to extend or develop a piece ?

M: " No. No re-writes. We'd never do that. When a chap picks up the courage to send work in, if you sent it back, they'd never send it in again. We don't want to do that to anybody."

(Magazine Group, HMP Garth)

The issue of editing is central to student publishing's advocates and detractors. Critics often complain that published work hasn't been sufficiently edited. What is meant by this varies. It can mean:

(1) All work is being included, rather than that of a certain standard.

(2) Work is in its early stages, not fully developed and worked on.

standard and non-standard forms of English, including informed choice for students as to which they learn and use, the relationship between written and spoken English and who has the right to change a piece of work.

The Questionnaire returns showed that detractors of student publishing often focussed on language, complaining that it is often little more than a student's language experience. The issue here appears to be that while some people accept Language Experience as an initial learning method, they do so only as a means to acquire standard English. Learning about language, and giving students real choices between standard and non-standard English, is not a legitimate goal for this minority of tutors. It was interesting that students were sometimes more aware of the extent to which the argument about non-standard English applied than some tutors were, who often saw it as primarily an issue for Afro-Caribbean students.

> J: " It's important for whoever writes it that if it's to be published it's as it's written. ... If you read this story you know I'm Irish and that's important. "
>
> S: " We don't talk - what do they call it - the Queen's English. We should keep our accent, not be ashamed of it at all. It's sometimes useful to be able to talk right. I'm not being snobbish, but it can help, but it really gets to me when people put it on. "
>
> (Students, Bradford)

Tutors often expressed concern about new readers coping with books written in non-standard English.

> A: " It doesn't mean I don't use them, but sometimes there's a problem about using them. "
>
> H: " It's the general problem about language experience and colloquialism. It also isn't such a problem if you come from the same area as the writer. "
>
> T: " So when do you change it ? - Should you ? "
>
> Ai: " I relate it to an interview on the radio - they don't change that - people speak in their own voice. "
>
> B: " It's not speech we're talking about but writing. "
>
> (Organisers, Leeds)

Awareness of language issues is not, in itself, sufficient. Tutors and students need the time and

106

anxieties about how to deal with prejudiced or offensive writing, but they were in the minority:

> R: " The problem is challenging it without undermining the student - especially if they haven't ever really thought about those issues before. I withdrew a book once. There was a racist comment and we had a lot of debate about it because it was student written. It may well be realism, but do we condone it ? This was easy - all you had to do was rip up the book and throw it away - you can't do that with the student. "

> D: " I'd discuss it with the student - give my views - ask them to change it and if they didn't, it wouldn't go in. "
>
> (Tutors, Oldham)

Checks to Editing

Talking to tutors, they often seemed aware of the need for editing but reluctant or unable to do it. Their reasons varied. Sometimes it stemmed from a sense of protectiveness, or of too low expectations of what their students could achieve.

Time was often a factor. There is no denying that thorough and responsible editing is very labour intensive and this is a big issue, especially if there is actual or potential conflict with the other learning students have come for. But, as with other issues where time figures, it also signals a need for tutors to be both clear themselves and able to demonstrate to students how the publishing work develops and consolidates on-going work.

> D: " Part of the learning process, and my role, is to make suggestions and I'd carry that through in a piece that would be published just the same. The value is that the student is producing a piece of work that isn't just for them - producing a worthwhile piece of something creative. ... That's something they might not have many opportunities for doing. "
>
> I: Does this lead to a problem of expectations ?
>
> D: " It can. Greater confidence can lead to a false expectation of being able to move on - but that happens with other things: exams, progression, the expectation of work. "
>
> (Tutor, Oldham)

Often, too the awareness of the effort it has been to write makes tutors, or students in the role of editors, reluctant to push on into the writing process by asking students to re-write. Some students, too, resent being asked. ABE tutoring involves tutors in a complex balance

S to T: " You should have pushed me more ... if you'd picked something out of my folder ... "

I: What piece would you pick out of your folder ?

S: " I'd choose the one without commas or spelling mistakes as my piece ... it's boring to read, but it's my best piece. "

I: So what you chose as a writer is different from what you choose as editor ?

S: " Yes."

(Student and Tutor, Watford)

Although editing skills are seen most clearly where there is a publication in sight, the learning that happens through practising them is useful for all writing. This is clear from the talk that accompanied a student showing me his notebooks and files.

M: " I'll read them over, thinking 'That doesn't sound right.' I show them to my tutors and to friends and family. My mate's mother likes my poems. "

I: You've a lot of underlinings, crossings out and alternative words there.

M: " I do that after I've thought about them. I go through them like this before I'd show them to a tutor. "

I: What are you looking for when you ask your tutor to read your work ?

M: " Mistakes, if it doesn't seem right, something missing. Has it come across, you know, jumped off the page and grabbed you. A feeling comes via heart to the mind to the hand. A response to that feeling, but I'm also checking that feeling has come through clear and correct. "

(Student, Swansea)

Editing at Gatehouse

The Gatehouse project stands in a special relationship to student publishing in that they do not teach the students whose work they publish. They also work full-time as publishers and this brings with it the advantages of reflection on substantial experience, as well as technical expertise. This means that although Gatehouse has much to offer anyone working to publish student writers, their example will always be tempered by the different circumstances under which the majority, largely hard-pressed part-time tutors, will be working.[4] I

person's teacher as well as their publisher/editor ?

P: " Yes. Sometimes people get stuck in teaching and that's usually when they decide to send work to us. "

I: How does the process work with single authored texts ?

P: " That's more like the tutor role. "

I: Do you have an editorial group for a single author ?

S: " No. You'd send work out to various groups and the author and the worker would visit. The decision to publish comes from the worker and the management committee informed by successful piloting. "

P: " The group, worker and author would discuss and ask questions. Sometimes very basic: the 'I don't know who you're talking about now' kind; almost an information swop. "

S: " I'm wondering, though, how free they would feel to talk with the author there ? "

(Workers, Gatehouse)

questions: <u>student attitudes towards student
publications</u>, <u>the uses of student publications</u> and <u>the
bad things about student publishing</u>. Design was never in
the first range of responses, but was consistently in the
second band. The kind of statements made were as follows.

On the question of popularity:

> " ... not as popular as commercially produced
> readers which always seem more professional and
> often more adult."
>
> Q 93

> " ... often poorly produced due to lack of
> funding and therefore can contribute to the
> feeling that ABE students don't have access to
> professional, high quality, adult material."
>
> Q 163

> " Often cheaply printed so can be overlooked and
> not valued. "
>
> Q 174

On whether student publications were commonly used in
their scheme:

> " No, because of the production not the content,
> the poor quality. It doesn't seem to inspire
> students to read it. They'd rather read a
> 'proper' book. "
>
> Q 162

Although this was response was frequently met, it is
important to state that others felt the opposite:

> " We have a large stock of them and we try and
> buy everything that it is published commercially.
> Also tutors and myself find that students like to
> be reading a 'book' rather than photocopied 're-
> writes' which we produce on topics. "
>
> Q 46

> " They are usually well designed, ie look
> interesting from the cover; are small and slim
> (student feels confident in ability to finish the
> whole book) and writing is of a style they can
> cope with. Some peer influence comes into it:
> once one student in a group has read and
> 'approved' something, others are more likely to
> pick it up. "
>
> Q 131

Student Views

In the course of my visits, I found that students who
were unfamiliar with either reading or producing student
publications were sometimes initially critical. Students
commented that they looked dull, tatty, not very nice and
so on. Students who responded positively tended to make

Although some people did comment favourably on the way
new technology improved design and production, more
commented on problems with learning and using the
programmes.

> N: " New Technology adds yet another layer of
> what you've got to learn. There was a problem at
> Hackney Intermediate Technology, a social problem
> really, of people using complex equipment faster
> and better than the students from the publishing
> project. Also, the printers were in short supply
> so there was competition for them which made it
> hard for the students who were slower. Desk Top
> Publishing is very hard to learn; you have to
> hold so much in your head. "
>
> (Tutors, Walk In Numeracy)

> T: " Word Processing is very important here, but
> the style of production can influence the style
> of writing in ways that aren't always positive.
> The more formal the presentation becomes there's
> the danger that people start to feel the writing
> must also become more formal. "
>
> (Tutor, Weymouth.)

> " There was tension: was our focus on publishing
> or on computing ? How much should we have been
> teaching about the whole of Intermediate
> Technology ? "
>
> (Tutor, Hackney)

> T: " Using Desk Top Publishing technology hasn't
> necessarily made it easier. Pagemaker is very
> hard to learn and teach. Newspaper, which was
> designed for schools, is easier technology. "
>
> (Tutor, Watford)

Where people were definitely in agreement was that a
publishing focus was an excellent way of overcoming
students' reluctance and fear of using new technology.

> L: " Computers - when you're publishing something
> you're just using it as a tool. "
>
> (Tutors, Hammersmith)

The value of publishing student writing, in an expanded
sense of the term, in developing computer assisted
learning would appear to have great potential. Perhaps
some of the difficulties tutors reported in using new
technology with their students reflects the lack of
adequate training they themselves have received in it.

The format of the workshops was experimental. I
ran special training days for tutors and
volunteers to show them what could be done and
how it could be done and they then took those
skills and interests back to their projects and
groups. "

(Tutor, Swansea)

A number of projects reported the closure of Media
Resource Centres, which adversely affects the quality of
learning materials generally and student publications in
particular. (In Hammersmith, for example, groups of
students and their tutors worked with Media resource
workers to produce magazines, which gave them access both
to both sophisticated equipment and technical expertise.)

Standards

The question of standards for design and production needs
to be handled sensitively. As with other aspects of
student publishing, there will always be room for
improvement and it will always be valuable for students
and tutors to discuss how best to present their work.
However, the question of resources available, in terms of
money and time, do need to be weighed. Certain criteria
need to be observed but there is room for variety: it
will not always be appropriate to aim for perfect bound,
high quality print publications. Better a well-achieved
modest production than something which does not come off
because it is too ambitious.

Where student publishing has a commercial aspect then
design issues will come to the fore because those books
will be competing in a market place. However, the
question of design for publishers like Gatehouse, Newmat
and the ALBSU series are not just to do with making books
that look like 'real' books. It is also about developing
a style of presentation that is appropriate to the new
adult reader. When Gatehouse, by then a well established
publisher of student writing, decided in the late 1980's
to update their image and put more emphasis on style and
marketing, they had to confront some of the unspoken
assumptions about the nature and meaning of student
publishing.

" Developing a house style and format was more
difficult. There's a confusion between the
philosophy of 'This is students' writing' (power-
sharing, sensitivity, don't interfere) and
presenting books which are well designed,
professionally produced, well marketed. I don't
think it exists now, but there was a bit of fear
of becoming a company, becoming capitalist.

It made the work happen more slowly. We had to
reassure people that it was in no way in conflict
with their philosophy. If you're saying this

than line drawings. Where line drawings had been
used they had turned out to be inappropriate and
child-like. The issue was partly about a
different sense - and knowledge of - the audience
for the books, but also indicates that there is
no model for illustrating adult books. The only
model derives from children's books and there is
therefore a tendency to think that adults who
can't read are less than adult. There was also a
conflict in that Hodder also hoped to market the
books to schools for use with 14 - 15 year olds.

The timing of this work coincided with
technological changes that meant 4 or full colour
printing came within the reach of smaller
publishers. The ALBSU newsletter, for example,
went over to colour printing and colour was used
for virtually all the unit's publications.

This move evidently made the ALBSU readers very
attractive to students and tutors alike; but it also set
them well apart from community or scheme published books.

b   Use student publications in a different way ?

" Having more of them, and a better system to display them and bring them to everyone's attention, ie more determined effort by me."

                                                                135

" Be more inventive in my approach."

                                                        88

" Just the idea helps."

                                                    9

These reactions suggest that these tutors are not normally asked to reflect upon this particular aspect of their work. Ideas that evidently stimulated people were ·of a sort that quickly become unremarkable once implemented:

    Q 11.   Do students ever ask specifically to work from student publications ?

    No, but that may be my fault for not using them as a general resource only as a demonstration of the genre."
                                                            47

    Q 12.   Are student publications popular with students for their own reading ?

    " I've not given them the opportunity for this - perhaps I'll try it."
                                                            126

Again, this suggests a role in staff development for a network to stimulate and develop the uses of and approaches to student publishing.

The research events for students stipulated that they were for students who were experienced in publishing their work - albeit publishing in the broadest terms. In my visits, on the other hand, I met with some students who had had no experience of publishing, and others who were just beginning, with their tutors, to think about it.

Students just starting to work towards a publication often talked about their doubts and fears. In doing so they provided the tutors who were present with points to bear in mind when suggesting similar projects. Although these discussions may well have taken place anyway, they were very different with a stranger present. I could ask the question: 'How does this make you feel ?' knowing I would not have to continue working with whatever the group brought up. This seemed to make the conversations more open and honest than might otherwise be possible.

on a 1:1 basis with volunteer tutors. It occurred to her that rather than just have people waiting around to talk to me, they could take the opportunity to organise an event. In this way we were responsible for the first writing day to be held in Ennis, which attracted over 20 odd students from Limerick, Killaloe, Lisdoonvarna and Shannon, as well as Ennis itself.

A frequent response to the student events was a request to get together more often. Obviously, the fact that we had money for fares, food and creches made a big difference to how easy it was to organise the day. However, we felt strongly that unlike a large residential event, which it would be very hard for areas to offer their students, local gatherings were something positive that could continue after the research project had whetted appetites for them.

The consultative conference in July also provided an opportunity for people who might not normally meet to do so. Over 40 people from all sorts of projects across Britain and Ireland met and shared group discussions and informal time together. We made a 'Make Links' board, which asked people to indicate if they would like to keep in touch on any of these topics concerning student publishing:

Accreditation
Numeracy
Magazine Exchanges
Rural Areas
Poetry Writing
Reading Issues
Open Learning
The Move into Writers' Groups

After the event I mailed all participants with these lists and hope that the positive energy generated will sustain and develop this potential for a network in student publishing.

In the plenary session people spoke of the pleasure it had been to focus on their actual work rather than schedule classes and balance budgets. The following resolution was proposed by Gary Egan, from Galway, and immediately assented to by everyone in the room:

> It is the feeling of this meeting that publishing work by adult literacy students is a worthwhile endeavour and deserves more recognition and financial support than it receives at present.

As the event was not a delegate conference designed to mandate or lobby others, we had a moment of uncertainty. What should we do with this statement ? It was inappropriate to vote on it, there was no-one to whom the result could immediately be sent. We sensed a need for a

encouraged to probe the possibilities that student
publishing might hold for them, whereas those more
sceptical of the enterprise have been encouraged to
reflect upon views that have been listened to rather than
defensively argued with.

At its most general, the conditions which the study found
needed to be met if student publishing is to work well
are as follows:

1.   The activity meets the needs and aims of
     the particular group.

2.   The tutors know what is entailed in the publishing
     process and are aware of the full range of choices
     and decisions to be made.

3.   The tutors explain the publishing process and
     its need for decisions and choices to the students
     in a way that enables genuine participation.

4.   Tutors are clear about the specific purposes of
     each particular publishing venture and ensure that
     students have some idea of the value to them of
     this process.

5.   However the writing is chosen, edited or
     illustrated, the writer knows the reason for any
     decisions taken about their writing.

6.   Both tutors and students recognise the effort it is
     to write and give positive appreciation to the
     writer.

7.   Both tutors and students recognise the writer's
     commitment to develop their writing and offer
     honest and specific criticism.

8.   Tutors and students are both clear whether
     publishing is to be done with or for the students.

9.   The writers and editors picture a reader for their
     work and explore and discuss what readers might
     need to understand and enjoy the published work.

10. Tutors and students embrace, rather than protect
     each other from, the challenge that publishing
     provides.

Making it work

If the good practice outlined above is to be achieved
nationally, then a more systemtic means of supporting
student publishing than currently exists will need to be
developed. From the work of this project I suggest six
main forms that this support could take:

(i)   Training across the spectrum of student

Section 5   Appendices

In this section we include a list of <u>useful reading</u>, books we have found useful and stimulating; a list of <u>participants</u> in the research; and a sample copy of the questionnaire.

Participants are identified by initials; as tutors or students; and by geographical area, unless we were requested not to do so. Some individual interviews use people's full names.

Useful Reading

This listing is not a comprehensive bibliography. Rather it is an account of work which has been useful to us both in doing this research and in our previous work as tutors in Adult Basic and Community Education, and working in community publishing. Some of the titles were written specifically for adult basic education, but more of them come out of the school system, higher education or cultural policy. Nevertheless they are useful and stimulating to read and often contain interesting and extensive bibliographies.

Accounts of Publishing Student Writing

Fitzpatrick, S. (1988) **Working Around Words.**
 Manchester: Gatehouse.
Fitzpatrick, S. and Grenko, V. (1992) 'Creating a
 Guide to the Monsters of the Mind' in Hamilton, M.,
 Barton, D. & Ivanic, R. (1992)
Schwab, I. and Stone, J. (1987) Language, Writing and
 Publishing: Working with Afro-Caribbean Students.
 London: Inner London Education Authority Learning
 Materials Service.

Arguments for Student Publishing

Barton, D. and Ivanic, R. (1991) Writing in the
 Community. London: Sage
Duffin, P. (1990) 'A place for personal history' in
 Adults Learning volume 2 no 1
Evans, D. (1980) 'Writers' Workshops and Working Class
 Culture' in Thompson, J. L. Adult Education for a
Change. London: Hutchinson
Gregory, G. (1984) Community Published Working Class
 Writing in Context in Meek, M. and Miller, J.
 eds Changing English: Essays for Harold Rosen London:
 Heinemann
Gregory, G. (1984) Using Community-Published Writing
 in the Classroom London: Routledge & Kegan Paul
Gregory, G. (1986) Working Class Writing, Publishing
 and education: An investigation of three 'moments.
 Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of London
Gregory, G. (1991) 'Community Publishing as Self-
 Education' in Barton and Ivanic (1991)
Ivanic, R. and Moss, W. (1991) 'Bringing Community
 Writing Practices into Education' in Barton and Ivanic
 (1991)
McLaughlin, J. (1985) 'Creative writing in second
 language work' in ALBSU Viewpoints no 3
Mace, J. (1979) 'Rewriting Literature: publishing out
 of adult literacy' in Oral History Journal vol 7 no 2
Mace, J. (1979) Working with Words. London: Writers &
 Readers
Shrapnel Gardener, S. (1979) 'Thoughts on to paper:
 publications from adult literacy centres, 1974 - 78' in

Adult Education Journal vol 52 no 2
Thompson, A. (1990) 'The Republic of Letters
    Revisited' in Adults Learning vol 2 no 1
Worpole, K. (1977) Local Publishing and Local Culture.
    London: Centerprise
Worpole, K. and Morley, D. (1982) The Republic of
    Letters. London: Co-Media

Writing Development

Britton, J. (1967) **Talking and Writing**. London:
    Methuen
Britton, J. (1970) **Language and Learning**.
    Harmondsworth: Penguin
Britton, J. et al (1975) **The Development of Writing
    Abilities 11 - 18**. London: Macmillan
Craven, J. and Jackson, F. (1987) **Versions**. Manchester:
    The Central Manchester Caribbean English Project.
Frost, G. and Hoy, C. (1985) **Opening Time**. Manchester:
    Gatehouse
Griffith, M. (1979) **Writing For The Inexperienced
    Writer: Fluency, Shape, Correctness**. California: Bay
    Area Writing Project.
Hamilton, M. Barton, D. & Ivanic, R. (1992) (eds) **Worlds
    of Literacy**. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
ILEA Afro-Caribbean language and literacy project (1990)
    Language and Power. London: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich
Mace, J. (1980) **Learning from Experience**. London: Adult
    Literacy Support Services Fund
The National Writing Project (1989) **Becoming A Writer**
    London: Nelson.
Pinner, J. Watkinson, V. and Bergin, S. (1988) 'Writing
    for Change' RaPAL Bulletin No 7
Shrapnel Gardener, S. (1985) **The development of written
    language within adult fresh start and return to
    learning programmes**. London: ILEA Language and Literacy
    Unit Occasional Paper No 2
Shrapnel Gardener, S. (1986) **Conversations with
    Strangers**. London: ALBSU
Shrapnel Gardener, S (1991) 'Learning to write as an
    adult' in Barton and Ivanic (1991)
Smith, F. (1982) **Writing and The Writer**. London:
    Heinemann

Numeracy

Colwell, D. (1988) **Publishing Student Writing in
    Adult Numeracy Work**. Unpublished special study. London:
    South Thames College Diploma in Learning Resources.
Take Away Times, an adult numeracy newspaper produced by
    students and tutors in London, between 1988 - 1990.
    (Information from Walk In Numeracy, 22 Exhibition
    Close, White City, London W12 7EE)

New Technology

Students from Mary Ward Centre and Hammersmith
    Neighbourhood Literacy Scheme (nd) **Technology and Us**
    London: Mary Ward Centre.

Creative Writing

Dynes, R. (1989) **Creative Writing in Group Work.**
  Bicester: Winslow Press
Goldberg, N. (1986) **Writing Down The Bones: Freeing
  The Writer Within.** Boston & London: Shambala.
Hughes, V. (1991) **Literature Belongs to Everyone.** London:
  Arts Council of Great Britain.
Sellers, S. ed (1991) **Taking Reality by Surprise:**
  Writing for pleasure and publication. London: The
  Women's Press

Reading

Graham, J. (1984) 'Reading literature with a slow
  learner' in Miller, J. (ed) **Eccentric Propositions.**
  London: Routledge & Kegan Paul
Kimberley, K. Meek, M. & Miller, J. (1992) **New Readings:**
  Contributions to an understanding of Literacy. London:
  A&C Black.
Smith, F. (1978) **Reading.** Cambridge: Cambridge
  University Press.

Practical Help

Merry, R. and Pateman, J. (1985) 'How To Organise
  Reading Evenings' ALBSU Newsletter 19 Spring 1985
How To Make A Book (1982) London: Peckham Publishing
  Project.

Bibliographies

ALBSU (1986) **Resources: a guide to materials in adult**
  literacy and basic skills. London: ALBSU
Barton, D. (1990) **New Views of Literacy.** Lancaster:
  The Research and Practice in Adult Literacy Group
Write First Time (1982) **A List of Books by Adults**
  Learning to Write. London: Write First Time

Useful Addresses

Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit, Kingsbourne House,
  229 - 231 High Holborn, London WC1V 7DA
AVANTI Books 8 Parsons Green, Bolton Rd, Stevenage,
  Hertfordshire SG1 4KG
Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers,
  c/o Tim Diggles, 23 Victoria Park Road, Tunstall,
  Stoke-on Trent, SST6 6DX
National Adult Literacy Agency, 76 Lower Gardiner St,
  Dublin 1 Eire
Write First Time Archive, c/o Librarian, Ruskin College,
  Walton St, Oxford OX1 2HE

Individuals and Projects Participating in the Research

Individuals

Merlyn Bell	Portstewart, Northern Ireland
Ian Benson	Home Office
Barbara Carter	Bedford, former WFT secretary
Diane Coben	Goldsmiths' College, DCCE
Sue Gardener	Westminster AEI
Jean Milloy	Walk In Numeracy, London
Sammy Palfrey	London
Jim Pateman	ALBSU, London
Rosamond Phillips	NALA, Ireland
Geraldine Mernagh	NALA, Ireland
Alan Wells	ALBSU, London

Individual Writers

A student in A.B.E.	
Florence Agbah	Leeds
Isobel Bowie	London
Mark Davies	Swansea
Victor Grenko	Manchester
Len Hollywood	London
Marion Iver	London
Paul Lee	HMP Garth
Tim McCarthy	London
Victoria McKenzie	Manchester
Betty Morton	Oldham
Nancy Mulvey	Dublin
May Walinett	Leeds

Classes

Dublin Literacy Scheme	Tuesday 7 - 9
	Thursday 10 - 12
Leytonstone	Monday 1 - 3
Liverpool ABE Unit	Wednesday 1 - 3
	Wednesday 7 - 9
Norwich ABE/ESOL	Tuesday 10 - 12
Norwich Second Step	Thursday 10 - 3
Little Plumstead Hospital Norfolk	Tuesday 1 - 3
Thorpe St Andrews, Norfolk	Tuesday 7 - 9
Weymouth	Monday 7 - 9
	Monday 7 - 9
	Tuesday 1 - 3
	Tuesday 1 - 3

Statutory Schemes

Special Adult Learning Programmes	Bedford
Community Education Team	Derby
Area Community Education Officers	Derby
AEI Publishing Project	Hackney
Adult Literacy and Basic Education Unit	Leeds
Adult Basic Education Unit	Liverpool
Adult Basic Education	Mendip
Adult Basic Education Unit	Norfolk
P.T. Organisers	North Norfolk
Crossroads, Adult Education Centre	Oldham
Department of Adult Basic Education	South Shields
Community Education Service	Sunderland
Right to Learn Centre	Walsall
West Dorset A.B.E.	Weymouth

Voluntary Schemes

Blackfriars Education Centre	London
Dublin Literacy Scheme	Dublin
Education & Rights Centre	Cork
Hammersmith Reading Centre	London
Kilbarrack Local Education for Adult Renewal	Dublin
Pecket Well College	Hebden Bridge
Walk In Numeracy	London

Prison Education

Education Department	H.M.P. Garth
Magazine Group	H.M.P. Garth
Education Department	H.M.P. Preston

Further Education Colleges

Reading Centre	Hackney
Access Unit	Nelson & Colne

Open Learning

Cathedral Centre	Bradford
Fleet Centre	Somerset
Frome Centre	Somerset
Open Learning Centre	Swansea
Callowland Centre	Watford

Special Projects

Bexhill Creative Writers	Bexhill
Ennis Writing Day	Ennis, Ireland
Gatehouse Publishing Project	Manchester
North Islington Neighbourhood Education Project	London
S.I.P.T.U. Basic English Scheme	Dublin
Wroughton Over 50's Return to Learn Group	Swindon

Student Publishing in Adult Literacy

By **student publishing** we mean anything written by students which is then reproduced for others to read. Please bear this in mind as you answer these questions. If your understanding of the term is different, please let us know what you think.

1. How much experience have you had of publishing student writing ?

a. None ☐
    A little ☐
    Some ☐
    A Lot ☐

b. Used to do more ☐
    Would like to do more ☐
    Would like to do less ☐

2. How often does your Centre or Group publish student writing ?

Monthly ☐
Termly ☐
Annually ☐
Occasionally ☐
Other: please give details

3. Which of the following, if any, have you as an individual ever helped to produce ?
and
How many copies did you make ?   Enough to distribute to your:

	class	centre	locally	nationally
Class magazine				
Centre magazine				
Area magazine				
Group poetry				
Individual poetry				
Group life stories				
Individual life story				
Group stories				
Individual story				
Group writing on a theme				
Other - please say what				

4. If there was anything in the list at Question 3 you haven't done, could you tell us a bit more ?

a.   What activities would you have liked to do ?

Class magazine	☐
Centre magazine	☐
Area magazine	☐
Group poetry	☐
Individual poetry	☐
Group life stories	☐
Individual life story	☐
Group stories	☐
Individual story	☐
Group writing on a theme	☐
Other - please say what	☐

b. What has stopped you ?

c. Which activities don't appeal to you ?

Class magazine	☐
Centre magazine	☐
Area magazine	☐
Group poetry	☐
Individual poetry	☐
Group life stories	☐
Individual life story	☐
Group stories	☐
Individual story	☐
Group writing on a theme	☐
Other - please say what	☐

d. Why is that ?

5. Have you eve: organised a reading evening for your group or centre ?

Please give details

6. Now, could you tell us about the publishing that you do ?

a. When did you start ?

b. Can you remember why ?

c. Do you do it now for the reasons that you did then ?

7. What are the good and bad things about student writing ?

A good thing because ...

and/or

A bad thing because ...

8. Which student publications do you use most frequently ?

9. How often do you use student publications for the following:

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely
Reading: Individual				
Group				
Spelling work				
Comprehension				
Discussion				
Writing stimulus				
Language awareness eg. standard/non-standard English				
Punctuation work				
Library stock				
Numeracy: Discussion				
Problem Solving				
Other: please explain				

10. What do you think students like about student publications ?

11. Do students ever ask specifically to work from student publications ?

12. Are student publications popular with students for their own reading ?

Can you give examples

13. Has your group, or anybody in your group, ever decided to work on their own publication as a result of reading other student's writing ?

Did the idea come from a student or a tutor ?

14. What would make it possible for you to:

a. Use a wider range of student publications ?

b. (Referring back to Question 9) Use student publications in a different way ?

15. Are student publications commonly used in your scheme ?

Why do you think this is so ?

16. Please give brief details of any training, formal or informal, that you have had in:

a. Helping students to develop writing for publication.

b. Design and production of student writing.

c. Working with published student writing.

17. Please comment on what does, and doesn't, make student writing useful.

18. Is there anything that students learn from publishing their own writing that they couldn't otherwise learn ?

19. Is there anything that students learn from reading other student's publications that they couldn't otherwise learn ?

20. Which of these statements about student publishing is closest to your own views ?

You can circle more than one.

a. Publishing student writing provides a meaningful context in which to develop writing and editing skills.

b. Publishing student writing gets in the way of work on basics.

c. Publishing student writing gives students an inflated sense of their writing's importance.

d. Publishing student writing has really positive effects on group dynamics.

e. Publishing student writing makes it harder to identify and respond to individual learning needs.

f. Publishing student writing is a luxury we can't afford any more.

g. Publishing student writing only benefits the group that has done the writing.

h. Publishing student writing speeds up the learning process.

i. Publishing student writing too often means the tutor tidies up the work by correcting spellings, grammar and punctuation errors.

j. Publishing student writing does wonders for people's self-esteem and confidence.

k. Publishing student writing is too broad a phenomenon to generalise about.

21. If you wish to make any other comments about the relationship between student publishing and the development of literacy, numeracy and communication skills, please do so.

22. About You

Name _____

Group or Project _____

Town _____

Are you:

a tutor - paid/unpaid

an organiser

I do/do not wish to be named in the final report

I do/do not want my answers attributed to me.

Please return to: Publishing/Literacy Project
Department of Continuing and Community Education
Goldsmiths' College
New Cross   London SE14 6NW
in the enclosed envelope by **12th December 1991**

The Authors

Jane Mace has worked for twenty years in adult literacy and community education. At Cambridge House Literacy Scheme, as tutor-organiser and then Director, she contributed to the shaping of policy in adult literacy programmes during the early years of the adult literacy campiagn in the UK. At the Lee Community Education Centre, Goldsmiths' College, she co-ordinated a programme of courses and workplace training. As Senior Lecturer in Community Education at Goldsmiths' College, her work now concerns research and development in the same areas and she has written regularly on adult literacy policy and practice since 1979.

Rebecca O'Rourke is a writer and adult education tutor. She has worked as a publishing project worker for Centerpriser Trust, East London and has taught creative writing in a number of settings, including prison education departments, Workers' Education Association, Second Chance and Fresh Start courses and Adult Basic Education. She has been involved with the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers since the late 1970's, serving for 5 years on its Executive Committee; and has written and researched widely on issues to do with creative writing and literary culture.

Further copies of this report can be obtained from:

Avanti Books
8 Parsons Green, Bolton Road, Stevenage, Hertfordshire
SG1   4KG

at a cost of £4.50 inc p&p