Cranfield Institute of Technology

Department of Social Policy

Ph D Thesis

1990

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The Place and Influence of Community Education in People's Lives

A Study of Open University Students in Glasgow's Areas of Multiple Deprivation

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October 1990

Abstract

This thesis begins by examining various philosophies and models applied to social problems and community education. Policy analysis is carried out on Strathclyde Regional Council's social strategy and the Open University Community Education programme, and on the use of OU courses as a component of the social strategy.

The research is concerned with students who took these courses in Glasgow's areas of multiple deprivation during the recent economic recession. It examines who participates and who benefits, and considers the place and influence of the courses in students' lives and in their communities. It recognises that students' personal characteristics and circumstances have been and are affected by local services and facilities and by wider socioeconomic events and changes, and explores what influence community education has in the context of such opportunities and constraints.

A life history approach is adopted which enables the activities and events in students' lives to be analysed into various careers - education, marital, childcare, employment, health, community and social; and to be represented as parallel lifelines. A longitudinal analysis shows that students' reactions to the courses are influenced by the stage they are at in each of these careers. This is followed by a systemic analysis focussing on the changes across all areas of their lives around the time of the courses and afterwards. These appear related to their social and economic instability (ie, marital breakdown or husbands' unemployment) and those with more instability have and make more changes and find the courses more helpful. The courses benefit those who are most disadvantaged in line with the objectives of the social strategy. A resource based model is proposed which attempts to explain why those with least resources have more changes in their lives and receive more help from the courses.

Acknowledgements

I wish to sincerely acknowledge the generous assistance from Denis Brady, Senior Community Education Worker in Glasgow, without whose help this study could not have been completed. His patience and persistence was essential in the complex process of contacting ex-students and arranging for them to be interviewed.

Various officers and members of Strathclyde Regional Council, in particular, Fred Edwards, Malcolm Green and Lorna Bridges enabled the study to get started and continued their interest and help. Special thanks are due to the team of interviewers who collected the life histories for the main study; with great tact and skill they were able to record the struggles and achievements of the students. Also I thank the group leaders and organisers in Glasgow who were responsible for the courses in the first place and then helped contact ex-students and make arrangements for the interviews. Everywhere I went in Glasgow staff and students were friendly and forthcoming, even though I must have appeared as an educational tourist from another country! This has left me with a love of the city and its people.

I would like to thank the Open University for the opportunity to take extended study leave to complete the field work, and particularly Mike Richardson for his help and support in this and during my time as Director of Community Education. Colleagues in the Institute of Educational Technology have provided support and inspiration, especially Alistair Morgan and Judith Calder whose own thesis was completed a year ago. Thanks also to colleagues in Community Education, including Simon Baines for trouble shooting computer problems, sometimes by phone late at night; and Mick Jones for advice on the typographic design of the thesis.

The guidance from the Department of Social Policy at Cranfield has been gratefully received. I have a special dept of gratitude to my

tutor, Silvana di Gregorio who introduced me to life histories, provided encouragement and support, and shared her experience with the interview document and interest in life course methodology.

Finally, and most importantly, I express my thanks and admiration to the Open University students in Glasgow, who were willing to let me into their lives and educate me about the hardships of the '80's, and their resourcefulness in managing their lives in difficult circumstances.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction and Background: Theoretical and Policy Issues

Introduction

During the '70's the Open University initiated a programme of community education courses aimed to help people make decisions affecting their everyday lives and to develop skills for implementing changes. This thesis is concerned with students who took these courses in Glasgow's areas of multiple deprivation during the recent economic recession. The OU courses are provided to students free of charge as a component of Strathclyde Regional Council's social strategy to combat deprivation through positive discrimination and community participation. During the '80's the number of students taking these courses increased as the social strategy developed and as wider socioeconomic changes were taking place. The thesis examines who participates in the courses and considers the place and influence of the courses in students' lives and in their communities. It recognises that students' personal characteristics and circumstances have been and are affected by local services and facilities and by wider socioeconomic events and changes, and explores what influence community education has in the context of such opportunities and constraints.

This chapter begins with a brief review of some theoretical and social policy issues surrounding the use of adult and community education as a component of social and development policies, and draws on experience from the Third World as well as the UK. Theoretical contributions from social theory concerning the processes of individual and social change are related to models of community education. The nature and objectives of OU Community Education and its policy background are described. An explanation is provided of the social and economic problems of Strathclyde which the Regional Council has attempted to tackle through its social strategy, and of the various policies and methods employed by the strategy. The extent that the policy to use OU Community

Education courses is integrated with other policies and interests is assessed and questions raised about who participates and benefits from the courses. Finally the research questions are drawn together and elaborated with reference to the chapters of the thesis.

Theoretical and policy issues

The role of education in personal and social change has concerned psychologists, sociologists, educationalists, economists, policy makers and others for a long time. More attention has been given to the processes and effects of schooling than adult education and this reflects the size of the budgets for the education of children compared to those for adults. While personal changes associated with adult and community education are everyday experiences for those involved, the ways in which these changes relate to the lives of students and to the wider socioeconomic context are more difficult to discern. Generally expenditure on adult education is small and uncoordinated and its influence is dispersed. Any effects are more likely to be observable when adult education is employed on a large scale and as part of a social policy intervention.

Adult education and social policy

Adult education is rarely used as a component of social policy in Britain, however in developing countries it frequently features as part of national development plans (Bown, 1983: 41; Fordham, 1979: 209). In Asia, Latin America and Africa large adult education projects have been incorporated into broader strategies to tackle literacy, improve health and to promote social and economic development (UNESCO, 1976; Fordham, 1980; Duke, 1985). The general conclusions from this experience is that the issue is no longer whether adult education can be beneficial but 'under what circumstances, at what times and by what means' it can successfully contribute (Duke 1985: 213). Circumstances relevant to the success of an adult education programme include the necessary political will and support from central and local government, the timing coinciding with general improvements and increasing opportunities, and the programme being part of a wider strategy

and linked to other development initiatives. Adult education is more likely to contribute to change if there is a vertical alignment of the interests of government, the implementing body and the students as well as horizontal linkages between educational and other development agencies[1].

In Britain only a few government programmes and policies have included an adult or community education component. Adult education had a role in the Educational Priority Areas (Halsey, 1972; Midwinter, 1972; Lovett, 1975) which were established in five locations in 1968 following the Plowden Report on primary education (Plowden, 1967). These projects were primarily concerned with school and preschool education although they also included community development and education. Around the same time the Community Development Projects were set up to tackle deprivation on an areas basis and community education was introduced alongside other community development activities, particularly in Liverpool (Topping and Smith, 1977). The national Adult Literacy Project was launched by the BBC in 1974 and later received government support with local authorities becoming involved in tutorial provision (Hargreaves, 1976; Jones and Charnley, 1982). Although this was a multi-agency campaign there were no direct links with other social policies. Health education campaigns have used broadcasting, publications and local groups and formed part of government health policy where other measures, for example screening, treatment, and regulation, have been provided in order to improve health (Sutherland, 1987). In the early '80's the Open University through its Community Education programme became involved in two large scale projects: one linked to the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) Community Programme aimed at employment creation and community benefits (Gray, 1987; Richards, 1989) and the other as part of Strathclyde Regional

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[1]Duke (1985: 218) refers to the need to coordinate 'cross-sectorally at a national level and vertically from national through regional to local levels, ideally replicating the cross-sectoral (interdisciplinary or inter-departmental) coordination at each level down to the sub-county and the village'.

Council's social strategy to combat deprivation (Jack, 1987; Lever, 1985). In these projects Open University courses played a part alongside other measures of central and local government aimed at meeting wider social objectives. There have been other notable projects often involving local authorities, adult education agencies and broadcasting (Paine, 1988; Bates, 1984) but these were primarily educational initiatives and not formally linked to other social or development programmes.

Levels and philosophies

The overall context in which large scale adult or community education programmes operate consists of various levels. These include 1) the students themselves and their immediate families and social networks; 2) the local institutions and services, some of which may be part of a development or social strategy; and 3) the wider societal and structural factors over which government may have an influence, one of the most important in anti-poverty strategies being the benefit system. Gibson (1986: 14) refers to these levels as personal and interpersonal, institutional, and structural. The linkages between these levels are complex: wider structural change affects intermediary institutions which affect individuals' options. For example, economic forces which lead to the closing of a workplace and the creation of unemployment reduce the living standards for individuals and families; and national policies and local services can provide help to mothers of young children. Also, the influence can operate in the other direction and individuals' decisions can affect local institutions and contribute to structural change. For example, structural changes can result from the decisions of individuals and families as they face changing opportunities, including decisions concerning the number of children to have, to separate and live as a single parent and to move to seek better job prospects (Thompson, 1981: 298). These personal decisions contribute to other changes, such as closing schools, new housing, and changes in the labour force. Adult and community education as a local service may have an influence at the level of student's lives, and operate in the context of other local institutions and services, and socioeconomic structures.

Also there may be similar or different interests at each level, ie. between central government, local government and local institutions, and ordinary people. Duke (1985) presents case studies which illustrate a range of possibilities from the Third World, for example in one large scale project the interests of central government and the people were aligned but at the intermediary level timidity prevented changes being achieved through adult education. Following a revolution in another country the alignment of interests at all levels led to a very successful literacy campaign. On the other hand, where central government wishes to maintain the status quo but local institutions attempt to bring about changes for the benefit of the people through education, any success will depend on the tolerance of central government and the degrees of freedom at local level (Duke, 1985: 214).

These different levels are also involved in explanations of poverty and social problems and in models underlying the practice of adult and community education. For example, explanations of social problems have been labelled: individual pathology, inadequate services and structural explanations, or in similar terms (Elsey, 1986: 28; Barr, 1982: 14; Holman, 1978: 48; Taylor-Gooby and Dale, 1981: 32; CDP, 1974: 23). These parallel various models or philosophies of community education, for example, conservative, reformist and radical (Barr, 1982: 13) and others (Martin, 1987: 24; O'Hagan, 1986: 81; Lovett, 1982: 1). Various explanations of social problems are based on particular views of society which are derived from ideological and political perspectives (George and Wilding, 1976: 2). Table 1.1 below summarises these views.

The conservative view has roots back to the libertarianism of the eighteenth century, promotes free enterprise and believes that there is basically a consensus in society. Social problems are seen as arising from individual pathology and from particular personal characteristics. Poverty is due to the failure of individuals to take up options which are believed to exist, or that they exercised options without taking sufficient account of the consequences, eg. having large numbers of children. The radical view is associated with

socialism and argues that class conflict is due to economic and social structures which limit people's resources and options and trap them in disadvantage. Somewhere between these two is the reformist view which supports a mixed economy and a welfare state in a pluralist society where different groups have competing interests. Social problems arise from inadequate or badly organised local services which prevent people taking up what is provided. Improvement and coordination would enable these services to reach people and alleviate their disadvantage.

	Conservative	Reformist	Radical
Philosophical origins	Libertarianism	Fabianism	Socialism
Political/social order	Free enterprise	Mixed economy/ welfare	Socialist state
Model of society/community	Consensus	Pluralism	Conflict
Cause of poverty	Individual pathology	Inadequate service delivery	Economic and social structure
Main level of concern	Individual and familial	Institutions/ community	Structural/ society
Prescriptions	Remove barriers to the free market and promote private investment	Assist causalities of industrial and social change, provide public investment and services	Take over commanding heights of economy, redistribution

Table 1.1 Views on the nature of society and social problems.

The prescriptions put forward by the conservatives are to remove barriers to the free market, such as local authority regulations and trade union power, which inhibit private investment and the creation of new jobs; while those of the radicals involve state intervention, public investment and redistribution, this is necessary because of failures of the market which lead to structural inequalities and unemployment (Lawless, 1981: chs. 7 & 8). The reformist perspective believes that public investment and services should be provided to assist those who suffer as a result of industrial and social change and are unable to compete in the market, eg.

those who are old, unemployed and disabled.

Not only do the conservative, reformist and radical philosophies tend to focus on different levels in their analysis of social problems, but individuals and groups at different levels in the social system may hold different philosophies themselves. For example, central government may take one philosophical view, while local government and particular institutions may hold the same or different views; also people will have a range of views about themselves and society. It is possible to consider the alignment of views in these terms, for example, we might have a conservative government (not necessarily conservative with a capital 'C'), and a radical educational institution or local authority, and a conservative community; or a radical central government, conservative local institutions and a radical community.

Models of community education

We can also analyse the views held by those responsible for adult and community education and examine the extent that these are shared in other institutions and services, whether they are shared by local and central government and with people in the community. Table 1.2 on the next page summarises these views in the form of models of community education which correspond to the above perspectives (Martin, 1987: 24).

Conservative approaches to community education are seen as focussing on individuals and changing their characteristics (eg. employability) through education and in this way alleviating social problems. Whereas radical community education challenges structural inequalities and emphasises understanding the processes by which power is exercised and the skills for collective and political action which will change the circumstances of disadvantaged groups. The reformist approach assumes that failure of services is a technical matter and students can become more confident and knowledgeable so that through participation and cooperation with local authorities any problems can be rectified. Martin (1987: 28) also includes a radical feminist model which

focuses on the oppression of women particularly in the family and in paid work, and on providing women with the knowledge and skills to gain control over their lives.

	Conservative*	Reformist	Radical
Premise	Homogeneity and basic harmony of interests	Heterogeneity and inter-group competition	Class structure, inequality and powerlessness
Strategy	Universal non-selective provision for all age/social groups	Selective intervention to assist disadvantaged people and deprived areas	Issue-based education, equal opportunities and social action
Initial focus	Secondary school/ community college	Primary school/ home/neighbourhood	Local working-class action groups
Key influences	Henry Morris	Eric Midwinter A H Halsey	Tom Lovett, Paulo Freire and deschoolers
Twentieth century origins	Cambridgeshire and Leicestershire village/community centres	Plowden Report (1967) and Educational Priority Areas	Community Development Projects, innovative adult education and community work
Dominant themes	Lifelong learning Integrated provision Openness and access Decompartmentalisation Rationalisation Co-ordination Voluntarism Neutrality Cooperation	Positive discrimination Decentralisation Participation Social relevance Home-school links Preschool/play Informal adult ed. Self-help Partnership	Redistribution/ equal opportunities Community action/ power Redefinition of priorities Local control Political action Learning networks Structural analysis Solidarity and collaboration

* Martin uses the term 'Universalist' rather than 'Conservative'.

Table 1.2 Models of Community Education (Martin, 1987: 24).

The particular views of the nature of poverty on which an anti-poverty strategy is based will also determine which model of adult and community education will be seen as relevant (Lee, 1981: 25; Thompson, 1980: 98). There has been much controversy as to which explanation is appropriate for tackling social problems (Fuller and Stevenson, 1983: 4; Looney, 1984: 29; Finch, 1984: 103) and which model should apply to the practice of adult and community

education (Brookfield, 1983: 174; Jackson, 1980: 13; Lovett, 1982: 1). Elsey (1986) provides an extensive and recent treatment of social theory perspectives on adult education.

The importance of structural constraints has been made clear by the rise in unemployment in the early '80's and is now widely recognised not only by the radicals who originally promoted this view but also by those with a conservative perspective (Nisbet and Watt, 1984: 62). The individual pathology view has been criticised to such an extent that there is a danger that a wholly deterministic view of people, particularly poor people, might prevail (Holman, 1978: 239). It is important to avoid the position that the overwhelming influence of structural factors has made many people into passive victims unable to exercise any control over their lives at all. However, others recognise that all levels are involved and interact in causing deprivation (Brown and Madge, 1982: 288; Gibson, 1986:15) and in community education aimed at social change (Barr, 1982: 16). It is not a question of individual *or* institutional *or* structural explanations but a matter of examining the processes involved, understanding how these levels interact and intervening at appropriate levels and in appropriate ways. In community education personal development can facilitate community action and social change and vice versa.

Social theory and change

Underlying this controversy is a dualism between agency and structure, subjective and objective, free will and determinism which has been a feature of thought for centuries. The conservative view focuses on the freedom of individuals and their responsibility for their own actions (ie. agency), whereas the radical view emphasises social structure and the social determinants of behaviour. Recently social theorists (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Abrams, 1982; Giddens, 1984) have attempted to transcend dualism which they regard as sterile and an inhibition to progress in understanding the social world. They argue that there is a *duality* or *dialectic* between individual action and social structure, where the behaviour of individuals takes place within social structures and social structures

are reproduced through the behaviour of individuals[2].

Structure is made up of sets of rules and resources and both constrains and enables individual action, and is produced and reproduced by the action of individuals. The day-to-day activities of individuals draw upon and reproduce structural features of the wider social system. Structure has no existence independent of the knowledge that individuals have about what they do in their day-to-day activities. Thus structure is not 'external' to individuals but is internalised, ie. in their heads as 'memory traces' (Giddens, 1984: 25). These personal characteristics (beliefs, values, attitudes, capabilities, skills etc) make up their character structure (Reich, 1933) which is both a resource for and a product of their actions. Their actions are taken in the knowledge of themselves, the resources available and the rules that operate. Inevitably some of the conditions under which they act are unknown and have unintended consequences. Individuals have their own theories and ideologies of social life which they apply and modify through their activities and by monitoring the consequences. They are always in the process of making history in circumstances which are not of their choosing, and are not (and cannot be) fully aware of what they are doing and making (Bernstein, 1989: 26; Abrams, 1982: xiv; Giddens, 1984: 27).

Fletcher (1980a) in his theory of community education explains that the community is the maker of its own culture. Culture, like structure, does not exist independently of its creators and its creation depends upon the problems people face and their celebration of their own causes (Fletcher, 1980a: 67). In his view educational resources should be dedicated to the articulation of needs and common causes, in other words, to the creation of culture. Making educational resources available to the community

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[2]Other theorists (Buss, 1979: 316; Gibson, 1986: 10; Leonard, 1984: 77) have drawn attention to the early writings of Marx where he stresses the dialectical relationship between the individual and society, in contrast to later writing where he took a more economic determinist view.

can change structure (in terms of rules and resources) and enable people to undertake different activities and improve their own circumstances together. He distinguishes between liberal and liberating applications of resources, in the first the person is assumed to be 'free' and should become freer, whilst liberating assumes bondage and the setting free of whole classes of persons (p. 69). However, individuals are only free to the extent that they can use rules and resources for alternative courses of action. By making a community resource available (or changing rules) then both single individuals and a class of persons could undertake activities they were previously excluded from. Community education aims to liberate whole classes of people by enabling individuals to become freer.

Over-emphasis on structuralism or structural explanations leads to a lack of historical perspective which fails to consider social processes operating through time and resulting from an interaction of biography, social structure and history (Wright Mills, 1959: 134). Time is, of course, relevant to personal, institutional and societal levels and this makes the task of analysis particularly complex, for not only are there interdependencies between these levels, but individuals, institutions and social structures are changing and being changed through time. There is 'a dialectic between the changing or developing individual and the changing and evolving society' (Buss, 1979: 314). Personal and social change interacts through time as an ongoing process of production and reproduction. Community education which aims to contribute to personal and social change does this within the context of changing lives, changing institutions and changing socioeconomic structure.

In addition to the dimension of time, social processes cannot be understood without recognising the importance of the spatial dimension (Giddens, 1984). Historical waves of investment determine the spatial distribution of employment and the location and composition of communities (Massey, 1984). The communities people live in have a major affect on their options, their housing, who their neighbours are and their social networks, what

employment and facilities are available locally, and how far and by what means they have to travel for services and work. Community education, by definition, will depend on the local context. In many cities of Britain the inner and peripheral areas have high concentrations of people dependent on state benefits, are unskilled and if working are in low paid jobs. These concentrations may be due to selective migration, the movement of capital and industrial restructuring, slum clearance, house building and allocation, and central government and local authority policies (Hall, 1981; Lawless, 1981; Donnison and Middleton, 1987). The practice and theory of community education has largely been developed in areas of this kind (Lovett, 1975; Fordham et al, 1979; Lovett et al, 1983).

Individuals vary considerably in the extent that they can change structures through their actions. The activities of ordinary people which might gradually contribute to change can be differentiated from those who are specially placed to make transformations to the rules and who control resources at what Bilton et al. (1987: 26) call the 'second level'. For example, politicians, legislators, finance ministers, executives and so on can change institutions, rules and resources more directly than those who participate through their day-to-day activities. Mouzelis (1989: 619) gives the example of husband and wife who draw on rules and resources concerning the institution of marriage generally and of their own marriage in particular and thereby, with millions of others who are doing likewise, reproduce and gradually change the institution of marriage. However, the actions of husbands and wives in their own marriage are of a different kind to those of campaigners and legislators who wish to change the rules on for example, divorce, abortion or inheritance. Thus, the reproduction and transformation of rules and resources can take place at the level of those who use them in their everyday life, and at a second level of institutions and possibly a third level of society by those who have the power to intervene at these levels. Setting up a new national institution which can operate through local organisations might be seen as intervention at the third (top) level, which is delivered through the second level in an attempt to bring about change in the regular

practices of individuals at the first (bottom) level.

The next section deals with specific rule and resource changes at an institutional and societal level and to the policy developments which led to the creation of a new institution which changed the rules regarding access to adult education and reflects resource priorities for adult education.

The Open University and disadvantage

This section considers the origins and distinctive characteristics of the Open University Community Education programme, in particular the features of the courses that made them appropriate for adoption in a strategy to combat deprivation. The nature of the OU Community Education programme was influenced by the early hopes and expectations which led to the setting up of the university and in particular the need to provide courses relevant to the lives of ordinary people. The section begins with a review of the educational policy background.

Policy background

During the 1960's education was seen as a main instrument for social change (Nisbet and Watts, 1984: 1; Jackson, 1980: 9; Halsey, 1972: 3). There was concern about the relationship between social class and educational success and it was thought that expansion of educational opportunity could provide the route out of a deprived background and to the abolition of disadvantage. In the early 1960's the Crowther (1959), Newsom (1963) and Robbins (1963) reports drew attention to the waste of talent in the educational system due not only to its selectivity but because participation and success in education was disproportionately affected by social class background. During the '60's and '70's these concerns were expressed in reports dealing with education at all stages of life from preschool, primary, secondary, further, higher, adult and community education (see Finch, 1984: 7-9 for a chronology).

At the preschool and primary stage the Plowden Committee began its work as the US Head Start programme for teaching preschoolers from poor areas of American cities got under way. The Committee's report (Plowden, 1967) recommended that educational priority areas should be defined where additional resources would be directed, parental involvement encouraged and improvements made to school related services, including a major expansion of nursery school places. Educational Priority Areas (EPA's) were areas where children were disadvantaged due to social, cultural and environmental factors and where positive discrimination should be applied in order to make the schools better than the average.

Plowden argued that the most significant influence in children's educational performance is their parents' attitude to education. This led to the emphasis in EPA's on parent involvement and, in particular, to parent education as the means to improving children's success at school, rather than the emphasis in Head Start which was on providing preschool education for the children themselves. The government accepted the Plowden Committee's recommendations and in 1969 a major research and development initiative was launched in five EPA's. Work began on preschool projects, parental involvement, and community development activities. The report of the work (Halsey, 1972) broadly supported Plowden's views on EPA's and the value of parent and community involvement in schools. Halsey's recommendations included the idea that - positive discrimination could be applied in EPAs; preschooling was an economical and effective way of applying positive discrimination and of raising the educational standards; community schools have powerful implications for community regeneration; action-research was an effective method of policy formulation and practical innovation; and that EPA's could be a part of comprehensive community development (Halsey, 1972: 180).

Regarding higher education there was an obvious gap in the provision for part-time higher education for adults, and there was an interest in rectifying the unfair influence of social class on participation in further and higher education. Harold Wilson

recognised these needs and the opportunities provided by broadcasting and other educational technologies, and put forward a bold proposal for a University of the Air which was presented in a speech given in Glasgow in 1963. He gave four main reasons for this proposal:

1) technological - to help British industry apply scientific research to national production.
2) economic- to make use of untapped talent which resulted from an inadequate educational system.
3) egalitarian - to provide an opportunity for those who had not been able to take advantage of higher education; and
4) political - to maintain British prestige abroad.

(Hall et al, 1975: 250)

To further the proposal an advisory committee chaired by Jennie Lee was set up in 1965 in which, according to Hall et al. (p. 255), there was disagreement about the educational level at which the new institution should operate. The issue was whether diplomas rather than degrees should be offered. However, Jennie Lee was adamant that the new institution should be of the highest academic status and provide degrees.

Following the publication of the White Paper, 'A University of the Air' (HMSO, 1966), a Planning Committee for the proposed university was established in 1967 and chaired by Sir Peter Venables, who for many years had had a commitment to widening educational opportunities (and went onto chair a special OU Committee on Continuing Education in 1975). The Planning Committee's report was published in 1969 after the Open University's first Vice-Chancellor, Walter Perry had been appointed and the report led to the granting of the Royal Charter in the same year. The Charter defined the 'Objects' of the University as: '... to provide education of University and professional standards for its students, and to promote the educational well-being of the community generally'. Perry (1976) writing later refers to the need outlined by the Planning Committee for post-experience courses. The assumption was that these courses would not all be at post-

graduate level and many might be para- or even pre-undergraduate in level. He also pointed out that the Charter gave almost unlimited authority to move into a wider role and 'to promote the educational well-being of the community generally' (Perry, 1976: 285).

The Planning Committee believed that adult students would be stimulated to take courses by 'change in social and economic circumstances and in personal outlook at a mature age', for example, married women whose families are growing up (Venables, 1969: 5). Neither Wilson nor the White Paper make any explicit reference to students from working class or disadvantaged backgrounds. However, the Planning Committee mention that the University's 'work would not cease if past deficiencies were adequately dealt with. Social inequalities will not suddenly vanish' (Venables, 1969: 3). They also directed attention to national statistics which showed that educational and occupational opportunities are denied to women and that 'the University will have unrivalled opportunity to rectify this long-continuing imbalance' (p. 5).

Nonetheless, at the time many bodies involved in adult education expressed disappointment at the lack of consideration given by the Planning Committee to educationally disadvantaged groups. Jackson wrote:

> 'I fear that we are in considerable danger of creating yet another university institution for the middle-class, and especially for that middle-class housewife seeking a liberal arts course ... The Open University has many splendid uses ... but if it is centrally to reconnect adult education with a major working-class audience ... then it must go and get them.'
> (Jackson, 1969, quoted by Hall et al. 1975: 272)

Jennie Lee was aware that there was an expectation that the University would attract working-class students and at a public meeting in 1971 she responded somewhat angrily by stating that 'It is *not* a working-class university. It was never *intended* to be a working-class university. It was planned as a *university*. It is an Open University' (Woodley, 1981: 22). In an interview celebrating the Open University's first 10 years she describes the problem of

attracting people with backgrounds like her own who lived in mining and agricultural villages and left school at 14 or 15. She asked 'How could you devise a scheme that would get through to *them* without excluding other people? The last thing in the world we wanted was a proletarian ghetto!' (Open University, 1979: 4).

The Open University was radical in that it did not require any entry qualifications and was open to all on a first come first served basis, in this way it provided opportunities for educationally disadvantaged students. However, Perry (1976: 143) recalled that in 1970 'the great preponderance of applications came from middle class people of whom school teachers made up a considerable part', and that this 'was contrasted with the objectives that were said to have been put forward in the early days by Harold Wilson and Jennie Lee'. However, he explains that:

> 'The original objectives in fact made no explicit mention of any special provision for the deprived adult. The opportunity was to be available to anyone who felt himself able to benefit from higher education, not restricted to deprived adults. That is not to say that my colleagues and I did not share in a desire to increase the proportion of working class applications and admissions and to do something for the deprived groups in the community; but most of us felt that we could not hope to achieve this in the early years of the University's life.'
> (Perry, 1976: 144)

There was very little in the early planning documents for the Open University that points to the creation of a sub-degree programme of community education courses suitable for educationally disadvantaged students. Only later, after the Russell and Alexander Committees had been set up to examine adult education, did the Open University give serious attention to its wider role beyond the provision of undergraduate degrees.

The Russell Committee on adult education reported in 1973, and gave special consideration to the needs of disadvantaged adults and noted developments in community education which was defined as:

> 'providing the background of knowledge and understanding upon which effective action for community purposes, including community development in the strict sense, can be founded.'
> (Russell, 1973: 19)

Of relevance to community education, Russell also mentioned: 'social and political education of very broad kinds, designed to enable the individual to understand and play his part as citizen, voluntary worker, consumer' and 'role education' which provides the background of knowledge for individual's roles in social change and education for social leadership (p. 19).

In 1975 the Alexander Committee published their report on adult education in Scotland and made recommendations for change. In reviewing the provision in 1972/73 the report says:

> 'It is clear that the proportion of adults affected by the existing provision of leisure-time courses is not more than 4 per cent of the total adult population. The range of subjects offered is wide but the great weight of interest is in hobbies, physical activities and domestic skills. The numbers in classes in science, social affairs and cultural subjects are much less. Little is offered in other areas of personal concern such as community and environmental problems, family budgeting, parenthood, consumer education and family health ... the case studies tended to confirm the widely held view that an unduly high proportion of those to whom adult education courses offer a satisfactory leisure-time activity are older, the better educated and the more affluent.'
> (Alexander, 1975: 14)

Included in their recommendations was that:

> 'There should be greater recognition than at present of the varied educational needs of young mothers and of the importance of ensuring that appropriate provision is made to meet them. This is an area which offers opportunities for imaginative and rewarding development' (p. 38).
>
> 'In the deployment of resources high priority should be given to the needs of areas of multiple deprivation' (p. xi and p. 44).
>
> 'Adult education should be regarded as an aspect of

> community education and should, with the youth and community service, be incorporated into a community education service' (p. 35).
> (Alexander, 1975)

Two social policy strands involving community education and disadvantage are exemplified by Plowden on the one hand and Russell and Alexander on the other. One comes from the need, particularly in deprived areas to educate parents so that they can contribute to their childs' educational progress before they start, as well as while they are at, school. The other is through adult or community education becoming more socially relevant and enabling people, especially those in disadvantaged areas, to become involved in community action and development.

Wider role of the Open University

Clarification of the wider role of the Open University was provided by a Committee on Continuing Education especially established by the Open University in 1975 and chaired by Sir Peter Venables. This committee had external membership and attracted over 300 submissions, many from outside the university. The report (Venables, 1976) reinforced the ideal expressed by Russell for an adult education system which is:

> 'firmly rooted in the active life of local communities; and it must be readily accessible to all who need it, whatever their means or circumstances. Only in such terms can we conceive of education "as a process continuing throughout life".'
> (Venables, 1976: 21)

Also the report stated that a major objective of continuing education is to promote 'people's ability to respond to and participate in meeting the changing needs of the whole community' (p. 23). The Committee unambiguously asserted that the Open University had a responsibility to be involved in creating courses below undergraduate level and recommended:

> 'that the University should, after discussions with interested parties, produce experimental packages of learning materials covering selected topics of adult concern which may be

> offered for use by other institutions.'
> (Venables, 1976: 8)

In referring to a continuum of levels of adult concern courses ranging from pre-'O' level to post OU Foundation levels, the Committee considered that 'it is the early part ... which should have the highest priority at present' (p. 49).

In addition they made a recommendation of particular relevance to Scotland:

> 'the University should develop still further its relationship with other branches of Scottish higher, further and community education, in order to have regard to the distinctiveness of Scottish circumstances and the Scottish dimension.'
> (Venables, 1976: 10)

Venables' recommendations were overwhelmingly supported by the University Senate. The Committee also recommended that substantial government funding be provided to enable the University to carry out its wider responsibilities for continuing education. In anticipation of the Committee's recommendations and following an earlier initiative (Farnes, McCormick and Calder, 1974) work began on short experimental courses in areas of adult concern. It was made clear that these courses were expected to be self-financing from external grants and student fees until such time as the government grant to the university included additional funds for this work. Preparation of the first two courses began in 1975 and the Vice Chancellor, Walter Perry, demonstrated his personal support for these new courses through acting as course team chairman for one of them.

Open University community education

The first courses in what became the Community Education programme were *The First Years of Life* and *The Preschool Child*, launched in 1977 and followed by *Health Choices*, *Childhood 5-10*, *Parents and Teenagers* and others (for further details see appendix A). While the courses shared some of the characteristics of the Open

University undergraduate courses, they also had a number of special features: they were non-credit and involved only 40 hours study time; the print materials were presented in a multi-column, full colour magazine format; they were topic based and dealt with practical concerns of everyday life; they used activity-based learning and drew on student's own experience; and included simple computer marked assignments which asked students to report on their observations and views; and completion of these assignments led to the award of a 'Letter of Course Completion' (Calder and Farnes, 1982: 95).

The objectives of the OU Community Education programme have been defined as:

To provide educational opportunities to meet the learning needs of adults in their parent, consumer, health, employment and community/citizen roles in the context of their family, community and workplaces at various stages in their lives and in relation to societal changes by:

a) Developing multi-media courses and packs, delivering these through appropriate means and providing support to learners.

b) Encouraging learners to value their own experience and the experience of others and to facilitate dialogue between learners and others.

c) Helping learners make personal and collective decisions based on their own experience, values, resources and information; and to implement changes.

d) Enabling learners to take action individually and collectively to improve the services and facilities in their own communities and workplaces.

e) Providing learning resources for disadvantaged people through sponsorship and other special schemes.

f) Collaborating with national and local organisations in defining needs, developing learning materials, sharing resources, publicising and promoting learning opportunities, organising support for learners and in evaluating the provision.

(Calder and Farnes, 1982: 87; Farnes, 1984)

These objectives place learning firmly in the context of people's

lives, and aim to develop skills which enable them to take action on their own and collectively. They start at the personal and interpersonal level, move to the level of improving services and recognise that societal changes create learning needs. Although it is not stated in the programme objectives, the courses are based on the assumption that individuals are able to bring about structural change, for example, by challenging discrimination or unfair rules exercised by an employer or public service, and that they can acquire the knowledge and skills for success. The inclusion in the objectives of collective action implies the use of power to bring about change, although there is no explicit acknowledgement of inequality, conflict or power structures.

Many of the courses are concerned with parent education and this can reinforce role-stereotypes and restrict women's aspirations to performing domestic jobs more efficiently or compel them to undertake full-time domestic duties when their interests may be better served by, for example, seeking paid employment. On the other hand, parent education 'can be seen as a means to social change, whereby individuals are given encouragement and increased self-confidence to take control over their lives, to break out of traditional roles, and to question the status quo' (Pugh and De'ath, 1984: 44). This latter approach and that described by Barr (1982) are adopted in the OU Community Education programme where:

> 'The community care style of experience gained in organising and running a playgroup may, for example, provide the confidence to move on to a community development style campaign for improved educational resources and facilities or even the resources to set up a free school which might be considered to fall into the community action model.'
> (Barr, 1982: 16)

Barr says it is important to be clear about what is the ultimate purpose of community education and not to delude ourselves that the courses reflect one model when in practice the learning experience of students is closer to another. There is no guarantee that the objectives and methods applied in producing and using the courses will be successful in enabling students to make changes in

their own lives and in their communities, this must be assessed by examining the role of community education in their lives.

Conclusion

The Open University was established as an act of political will by the government of the day with a priority to offer undergraduate courses to part-time adult students and without requiring entry qualifications. It was argued that it was necessary to give priority to the undergraduate programme in order to establish the university's academic credibility and its teaching system, only then could it begin to develop lower level courses (Perry 1976: 285). However, when the time came for the university to do this the government did not provide the necessary funding. The Labour government's acceptance of the Russell report and its sympathies for education related to the everyday lives of ordinary people of the type recommended by Russell, Alexander and Venables, never resulted in baseline funding being provided. Various factors may have been involved in this reluctance: in the mid '70's the government was faced with a changed and desperate financial situation compared to the early '70's, and during this time the costs of the undergraduate programme had escalated; also the self-financed community education and other continuing education courses appeared to be achieving some success. On the other hand, it may be that higher education which provides privileges and power for a few is able to command political and financial support (Thompson, 1980: 21; Perry, 1976: 56) whereas adult and community education for the masses suffers from being the 'poor cousin' (Newman, 1979) which prevents it from reaching large numbers of people. While subsequent governments have increased the block grant to the university for the undergraduate programme no baseline funding has been provided for the Community Education programme.

However, government agencies have provided funding on a project basis, in particular the Health Education Council (as was) and the Scottish Health Education Group. These agencies are specifically educational and do not have responsibility for other social policy measures. However, government policy affects their activities and

the emphasis that the Health Education Council gave to parent education and the funding for the first Community Education courses was connected with the concerns arising from Sir Keith Joseph's cycle of deprivation theory propounded when he was Secretary of State for Social Services from 1972-4 (Joseph, 1972). However, there were no direct policy links between the OU parent education courses and other non-educational measures which affect parents, for example, child health and family planning services, or family allowances (Pugh and De'ath, 1984). Also courses dealing with health and diet were not provided as a component of an integrated strategy, but were presented at the same time as other non-educational measures were being taken by government such as new regulations concerning the content, preparation and labelling of food (Sanderson and Winkler, 1983) and restrictions on the sale of cigarettes and alcohol (HMSO, 1976).

In addition to the financial support provided for course development, various agencies have provided financial and other help so that disadvantaged students can study the courses. Most notable has been Strathclyde Regional Council. The next section examines policy development related to the Council's social strategy and how this aims to change rules and resources for disadvantaged people.

Strathclyde's social strategy

This section examines the origins of Strathclyde Regional Council's social strategy; the problems the strategy is trying to tackle; the changes it is aiming to bring about and the components of the strategy. Also the role of community education in this is considered.

Origins and problems

Following local government reorganisation, Strathclyde Regional Council was established in 1975 and gave immediate attention to the problems of poverty, employment, housing and deprivation generally. These problems had been highlighted by two studies, one published by the National Children's Bureau (Wedge and Prosser,

1973) which showed that the incidence of poor housing, low wages or unemployment and family circumstances combined to prevent many children obtaining equal opportunities. Moreover, whilst only one in 14 children suffered from a combination of these factors in the UK, in Strathclyde one in six children were born to fail (Yates, 1984: 35). Another study carried out by the Department of the Environment and based on the 1971 Census showed conclusively that, whichever indicators of deprivation were selected, Clydeside topped the national league in the scale and intensity of deprivation (Holterman, 1975)[3]. These two studies focussed attention on Strathclyde and engendered a climate for establishing a strategy to combat deprivation (Yates, 1984: 35).

The Regional Council recognised that deprivation was due to economic inequalities and family circumstances which were augmented by maldistribution of local services. Their analysis of multiple deprivation identified three problem areas:

'1) Socio-economic situation which emerged in the West of Scotland since the 1950's, these include poverty, employment, and housing.

2) Service provision and delivery - health, education, social work, leisure and recreation, housing, social benefit services. The problems include inaccessibility, lack of coordination, inadequate resources, and insensitivity.

3) Communities - hopelessness, lack of knowledge and access to services, dependency, lack of control, lack of leadership, unemployment, alienation from education, limited horizons, anonymity and irresponsibility, ill health, stigmatisation, indifference to politicians.'

(SRC, 1976: 7-8)

These areas correspond to the levels at which explanations of social problems can focus: the wider socioeconomic factors; inadequate service delivery, and although referred to as 'communities' the factors mentioned are mainly at the interpersonal and personal

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[3]See also more recent studies (Begg and Eversley, 1986 and Begg et al, 1986), based on the 1981 Census.

levels. However, as far as 'blame' is concerned the chairman of the committee responsible for the social strategy says:

> 'We were appalled by the myths about money being poured into these areas [of multiple deprivation] and by the patronising attitudes of many people to the competence of the residents of the areas which seemed to place the blame for the poverty on the poor themselves ...'
>
> 'We had more sympathy with the view which pinned the blame on the government - with its responsibility for economic policies and social security. But as these areas always had unemployment running at two or three times the regional average, which in turn was twice the national average, we could not accept that central government action, if and when it came, would be sufficient to overcome the deep-rooted problems in these areas.'
>
> 'We were convinced that local authorities - particularly one as large as Strathclyde - *could* and *should* do more within its existing resources and skills to ameliorate conditions in these areas.'
>
> (Young, 1983a: 229)

As the key politician involved with the social strategy, Young draws on Barr's (1982) analysis of social problems and the models for tackling them. He clearly aligns the policy priorities to making improvements to service delivery and promoting structural change: 'Let no one be in any doubt that we are, or should be, engaged in a long-term attempt at social change - which involves changing attitudes, resources, structures and power' (Young, 1983b: 16). He sees one of the main problems being professional vested interests: 'We really do have to make up our mind about whose side we are on: the big battalions of non-accountable professionals or the public who elect us' (Young, 1983a: 247).

The Regional Council see their role as attempting to strengthen the vertical and horizontal links between policy levels (Keating, 1988: 149). Vertically by attempting to 'bring pressure on central government ... to deal with the problems of poverty' through to the 'reactivation of community spirit'; and horizontally by 'ensuring that the public services are relevant ... readily accessible, well coordinated and sensibly administered' (SRC, 1976: 10).

The main components of the social strategy are:

1) Positive discrimination

2) Improvement of services

3) Community participation

Positive discrimination

The area approach to tackling deprivation has been applied in the Educational Priority Areas and in the Community Development Projects and Holterman's analysis of the 1971 Census identified the most deprived areas in the UK (Holterman, 1975). The Regional Council conducted its own analysis of the 1971 Census which led to the identification of 114 areas of multiple deprivation, these were reduced to 45 through a further process of assessment and were designated as Areas for Priority Treatment (APTs). After the 1981 Census a review was carried out which led to the number of APTs being increased to 83 and in 1983 to 88. Approximately one fifth of the population of Strathclyde live in APTs and for Glasgow this is around 45%. The APTs in Glasgow include all the major peripheral housing schemes - Easterhouse, Drumchapel, Pollock/Nitshill, Castlemilk, and inner city areas - the East End, Govan, Possil and Springburn. The main APTs by population are shown in a map of Glasgow in appendix B, also provided are illustrative socioeconomic comparisons between two APTs, one a peripheral housing scheme (Drumchapel) and the other an inner city area (Inner East End), and a non-APT middle-class suburb (Bearsden).

A typical APT has a high proportion of single parents and families with unemployment which gives rise to wide scale poverty, is monolithic in terms of class and housing tenure, few people have educational qualifications, and the population has restricted transport options which particularly affect those in peripheral schemes. Also the inner areas have higher proportions of older people while the peripheral areas have larger numbers of young children.

Although deprivation is widespread in APTs the majority of

inhabitants are not deprived even though the numbers experiencing one or more forms of deprivation and poverty may approach 50% in some of the worst areas (Keating, 1988: 145). The number of people living in APTs in Strathclyde is around half a million and it has been estimated that for Strathclyde as a whole, 450,000 people were living in poverty in 1981, which increased to 650,000 by 1986 (SRC, 1988a: 8). As less than half the 500,000 living in APTs contribute to the total of 650,000 who are deprived, there are more people living in poverty outside APTs than within their boundaries. Nonetheless there is a collective deprivation in deprived areas which affects all residents, even though individually the majority may have satisfactory homes and jobs. It arises from a pervasive sense of decay and neglect which affects the whole area, through the decline in community spirit, poor facilities, crime and vandalism (HMSO, 1977a: 4).

The fact that there are more disadvantaged people living outside deprived areas is inevitable with area-based positive discrimination (Hall and Laurence, 1981: 56). This was recognised in Strathclyde and Yates, the Senior Executive Officer involved with the social strategy, points out that:

> 'An important part of the strategy has also been the thematic or client based approach ... Thus whilst there is a logic and administrative neatness about an area based policy, it is only a part of the total strategy and the Council has always sought to tackle deprivation wherever it exists through more sensitive service delivery.'
> (Yates, 1984: 37)

Policies and themes

The thematic or client based work is pursued through six key policy areas: pre-fives, youth, unemployed, single parent families, the elderly and adult education and covers five themes: poverty, health, housing, employment and community development (SRC, 1983a). The policy areas refer mainly to client groups and the themes can be conceptualised as different areas of people's lives for which various services have important roles. In this way adult education might be more appropriately regarded as a theme. Thus, poverty is

related to the economic area of people's lives and to the social security system; their health to the health services; housing to the housing department; employment to work and job opportunities; their community lives to their communities and facilities for participation, and adding adult education as an area of life which is related to educational provision.

The relationship between client groups and areas of life can be shown as a matrix:

	CLIENT GROUP				
AREA OF LIFE	Pre-fives	Youth	Unemployed	Single parents	Elderly
Education					
Economic					
Health					
Housing					
Employment					
Community					

Figure 1.1 Matrix showing client groups and areas of life.

This provides a framework for examining the social strategy. The services which contribute to each area of life can be considered by focusing on the intersections between these and the client groups. The question can be asked - what contribution are the services making to improving the lives of the various client groups, ie. what resources and facilities do they provide? In this way the linkages

between services and people's lives can be traced out and the horizontal linkages and coordination between the activities of the various agencies examined. For example, along the education line questions can be raised such as - how is the educational service meeting the needs of pre-fives, youth, unemployed, single parents and the elderly? Also for a particular client group eg. single parents, we can ask how the services in each area of life contribute to their well-being; and for each client group the contribution of say, education, can be examined in the context of other services provided in each area of life.

The policy on adult or 'post-compulsory' education component of the social strategy is to develop a 'coordinated and coherent' system 'based on the concept of continuing education' which will 'provide opportunities for the whole adult community at any stage in life' (SRC, 1983b: 3). In referring to 'adult education in community context' this document states that:

> 'this kind of non-formal 'outreach' activity has been associated with attempts to make contact with groups of people previously ignored by the education system and is founded on the twin objectives of increasing the level of participation in educational activity and involving people in planning and controlling their own [learning] and to make education relevant to every-day concerns and activities.'
> (SRC, 1983b: 7)

The document goes on to identify programmes which can be developed in this way and includes Open University Community Education courses and health, consumer, parent, social and life skill education. Of particular relevance is the objective 'to make education relevant to every-day concerns and activities', however there are no references to working with other agencies in achieving this objective. Area Curriculum Planning Groups were set up to identify the educational needs of the local population but do not have members from other services (SRC, 1985). The educational policy is formulated in educational rather than in social development terms and its links to the objectives of the social strategy are not made explicit (SRC, 1989a: 2).

However, policies put forward by member/officer groups and inquiries by various bodies concerned with other areas and themes, do make reference to the role of adult and community education. In particular the Under Fives report (Stewart, 1985) which proposed an integrated provision based on Education's nursery schools and Social Work's day care centres; and that there should be strong links between this and Health Boards, health services for mothers and young children and community education, including the continued use of OU courses. The report Unemployment - Implications for Regional Services (Young, 1985) examined what all the services, including education might do to meet the needs of the unemployed. A Review of Community Work (Edwards, 1984) points to the relationship between community development and education, the role of the Social Work and the Community Education Service and the need for interagency collaborative work. The benefits of community education being offered as part of Day Centre provision for people suffering from mental illness, was recognised in a report, entitled Mental Health (Long, 1986), prepared by a group set up by the Council. The need for cooperation between the work of Health Boards, Social Work and Community Education in Scotland was considered in a report from a Coordinating Committee on Health Education (Crofton, 1984). The inquiry into Glasgow's housing (Grieve, 1986) recognised the importance of community development and that there is great scope for improving the working relationships between Housing and Social Work and criticised the 'rather complacent attitude' of Health Boards regarding poor housing and health' (p. 47).

The range of relevant intersections in the matrix and these various reviews of the themes and policies show that the social strategy is elaborate and possibly unwieldy. The complexity and sheer volume of policies led to a recent review of the social strategy to pose the question of 'whether we have too many policies, too many good intentions' and that there was a need to 'be more precise about what we expect departments to do' and 'make sure that we have the right mechanisms to do all of this' (SRC, 1987: 10-12).

Regarding education, the reviews highlight the need for interagency collaboration and suggest tasks for community education. But the policy documents from the Region's Education Department relating to adult and community education have given less attention to the potential for working with other services. It appears that the policy links may be stronger in the direction towards community education than they are from community education to other agencies and services. However, one area where the Community Education Service have been particularly positive has been in their collaboration with the Open University.

The next section reviews the experience of using the Open University Community Education courses in Strathclyde and the policy development which led to formal collaboration. Questions are raised as to who participates and who benefits from the courses.

Open University courses and the social strategy

Soon after the social strategy was launched and the first Open University Community Education courses became available in 1977 small scale projects were set up by staff of the Regional Council's Education and Social Work Departments in which the courses were tried out. In 1978 the Scottish Health Education Group encouraged developments through providing Sponsored Places whereby students were given free places through the distribution of vouchers by health and community education staff. Several groups in different areas of Glasgow used the courses, including a group in Govan run jointly by staff from nursery schools, teachers and community education workers funded by Urban Aid, which formed part of a larger project to help families suffering from multiple deprivation (Best, 1984). Two other groups were set up on a joint initiative from the Social Work Department, the Open University Regional Staff and the preschool community organiser. Another group was led by the local adult education worker and supported by the Head Teacher of the nursery school in which it was based. From the beginning the courses were not regarded as educational in the traditional sense

but were seen as having a wider role in community development (Best, 1984: 113).

During 1979 the use of the courses expanded and by 1980 their use was spreading throughout the city, and 100 Sponsored Places were distributed and used to form groups in nursery schools. The use of the courses was reviewed (Munro, 1981) and a recommendation made that a Regional Council/Open University link person should be appointed to smooth administrative procedures and provide training for field workers. In 1981 a formal agreement to collaborate was entered into by Strathclyde Education and Social Work Departments and the Open University, an Advisory Group was set up and the appointment of a link person made, under the overall title of the Strathclyde Open Learning Experiment or SOLE. Membership of the Advisory Group included representatives of Education and Social Work Departments and Health Boards in the Strathclyde Region, the Scottish Health Education Group, Open University Regional Office in Scotland and Community Education.

The factors giving rise to the ready acceptance of the Open University Community Education courses in Strathclyde and which led to the establishment of the collaborative scheme include:

1) the overlap between the *objectives* of the courses and the social strategy;

2) the courses provided a *means* for tackling the community development objectives of the social strategy;

3) the availability of external *funding* for the courses from the Scottish Health Education Group;

4) other funding particularly for the *staff* involved in setting up and running the groups came from central government Urban Aid projects as did funding for *buildings* - nursery schools, parents rooms in schools, community centres;

5) Central government funding meant that there were *not large demands* made on mainline local authority budgets;

6) there was strong *support* from the Director of Social Work, who was himself an OU undergraduate and from the Chairman of the Regional Council's Education Committee who was also a member

of the OU Council;

7) OU Regional and central staff *support* for the use of the courses in Glasgow which, through the purchase of courses, brought in financial resources needed for what had to be a self-financing programme.

Policy integration

The extent of policy integration between the Open University, Strathclyde Regional Council, central government departments, the Health Education Council and the Scottish Health Education Group, can be examined by tracing the links between and across these agencies. Figure 1.2 below shows the policy links between the main agencies.

In terms of vertical integration central government general support came through the Scottish Office in the form of the Rate Support Grant (as was) and more specifically the Urban Aid programme for staff and premises for community development activities. As semi-autonomous government agencies the Health Education Council and Scottish Health Education Group provided funding for the development and purchase of courses. As part of the social strategy the Education and Social Work Departments were provided with extra staff for nursery and other schools; for community education and development; and social work; also project staff came in to these Departments through Urban Aid (Yates, 1984: 38). Many of these staff were involved in promoting and supporting the use of the courses. Outside the remit of the Regional Council, the Health Boards as part of their policy for preventative work provide staff, some of whom were involved in using the courses in the communities. The students take courses through facilities provided by nursery, primary, and secondary education and with the assistance of the Community Education Service.

As mentioned in the previous section central government's policies regarding the Open University did not include providing funding for the Community Education programme, which came mainly from the Health Education Council, itself funded by government but with some independence regarding policy (Sutherland, 1987). Also the

Open University policy concerning collaboration, particularly in Scotland, was reinforced by the Venables Committee. The Community Education courses are also available to the general public who are able to enrol directly with the university, pay fees and study at a distance.

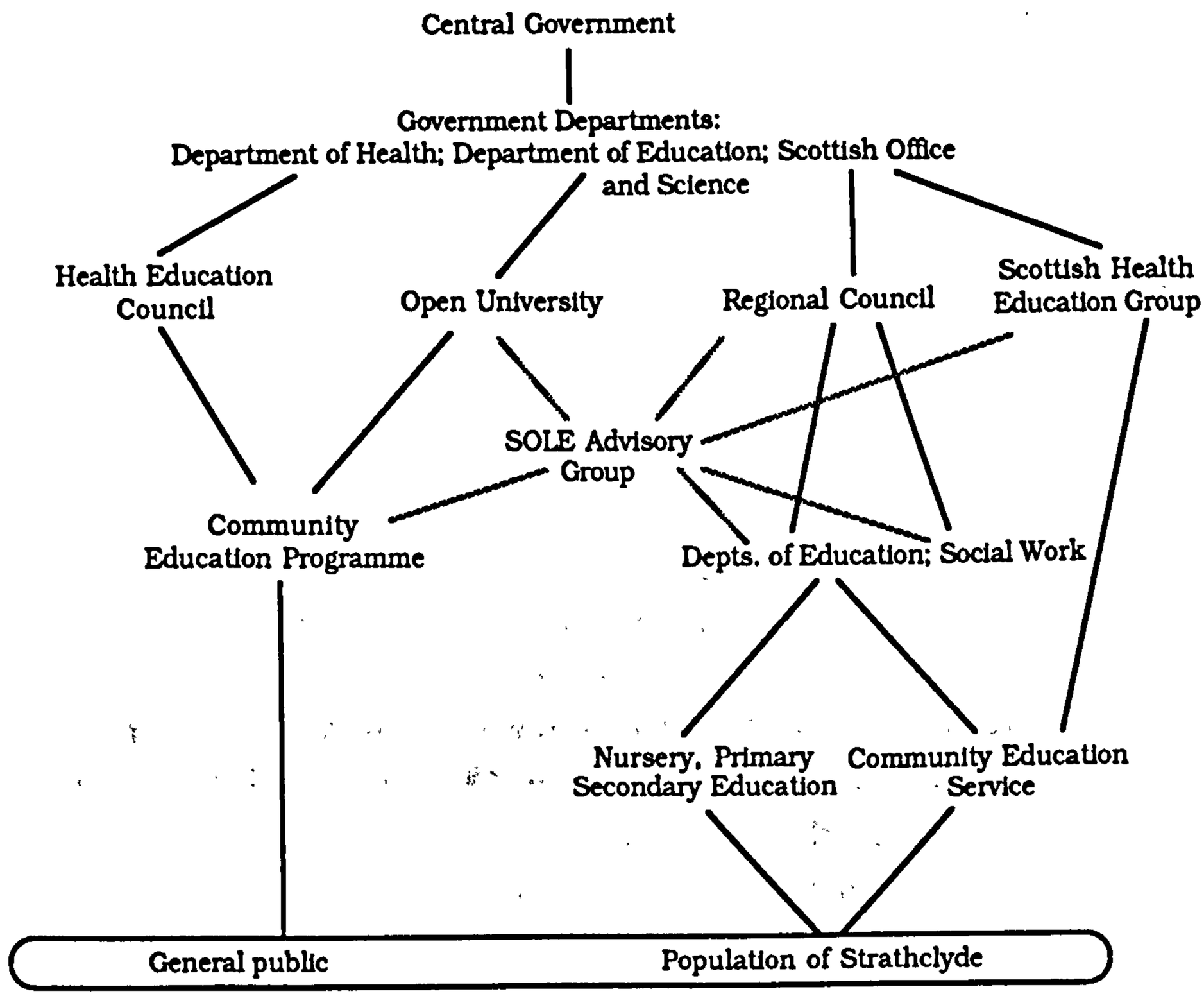

Figure 1.2 Policy links between the main agencies.

The horizontal coordination of policy between the Regional Council and the Open University was attempted by the SOLE Advisory Group but this was concerned with implementation and was not part of the policy making structure related to the social strategy. Coordination between agencies in Strathclyde - Education, Social Work and Health has been through the umbrella of the social strategy and in tackling deprivation and community development generally, but not at the level of specific programme for the cross-agency use of the courses. A further complication is that the Region is organised into

six geographical divisions, ranging from urban Glasgow to rural and sparsely populated divisions such as Argyll and Bute. The use of the courses by the Community Education Service has remained a relatively self contained programme in Glasgow where it is coordinated by a Senior Community Education worker; and across the other divisions by another worker. While working links between the use of the courses and other community education, further education, nursery education and schools, pre-fives, social work, community development, health and so on - certainly exist, detailed and coherent policies and practices in which the courses serve a particular role within education and the work of other services are lacking.

Whether more use could be made of the OU courses and greater benefits for students and their communities could be achieved if there was more interagency coordination remains a key question. The Advisory Group has not met for a number of years and is now defunct, and may not have been the way to achieve the necessary coordination. In a recent report (SRC, 1989a) the existing structure of Area Curriculum Planning groups is not seen as an appropriate basis for future educational development. The report suggested that community forums could be concerned with education 'from cradle to the grave'; involve parents and community representatives; and move towards an emphasis on community education development (SRC, 1989a: 14). A member/officer group has been set up to review the Community Education Service and this may lead to a closer integration between agencies and more focussed work promoting the Council's social and economic objectives.

Participation

The empirical work of this study assesses the role of the OU courses as a component of the social strategy by examining the characteristics and circumstances of the students who participate and the influence of the courses on their lives and on their communities. As people's characteristics and circumstances change, there may be particular times in their lives when they participate and are able to benefit from the courses. At a wider socioeconomic

level trends may be in one direction while there are some individuals and institutions and some regions moving in other directions. For example, in Strathclyde which has had rising unemployment and increases in the numbers of single parents, many individuals nonetheless get jobs and form relationships. In an area where employment is increasing, there will be people who become unemployed. Furthermore, resources and opportunities may be severely restricted for individuals at particular points in their lives while at other times they may be adequate. It is also possible for options to decline in one area of an individual's life while increasing in others. The problem in areas of multiple deprivation is that suffering one form of deprivation is often associated with others as well. Losing a job reduces income and while this increases the time available for other activities, the use of time usually requires resources. If these are not forthcoming then there is a real danger of being trapped into inactivity and multiple deprivation.

Participation in community education could take place against a background of increasing poverty or increasing prosperity. Where employment opportunities are declining in a community, then in as far as it helps students to get jobs, this could be in competition with non-students, and while benefiting the students it may not add to the welfare of the community. However, employment is only one area of life in which opportunities may increase or decrease, other areas include community activities, social life, education, health, childcare and so on. Community education may help students and whether or not this is at the expense of others depends on the context of increasing or declining opportunities (ie. opportunity structure). If opportunities are increasing or can be made to increase then students can take these up without preventing other people from doing so. Also there are ways in which individuals can take up activities, which increase options for others, such as starting up a playgroup or a business, or campaigning for community resources and facilities to be provided.

The issue is whether community education only attracts those who have resources and for whom opportunities exist, that is, people not

at the bottom of the opportunity structure. Duke (1987: 327), with reference to the Third World, says that it may be necessary to concentrate on those situations 'where there is room for change' and presumably on those individuals who are in a position to make changes or take advantage of change. Resources are needed to participate in education - not least time and attention - and those for whom the business of survival demands all these, are unlikely to be involved or if they do participate they may not have the resources to take advantage of opportunities arising from education. The implications of this would mean leaving out the poorest of the poor who are more likely to need relief and material support rather than education. So, in a developed country where community education is a component of a social strategy to combat poverty and is targeted at areas of multiple deprivation, who is likely to participate and who might benefit? Will it be those who are relatively well-off and have the resources to become involved; and will involvement only be helpful for those with the wherewithal to benefit? Or do the welfare state and local services provide a sufficient base for even the most disadvantaged to participate and to take up the limited opportunities available? Can community education help people to take action which increases the options for others and contributes to community development?

In summary the community, those participating and who benefit can be represented by figure 1.3 below.

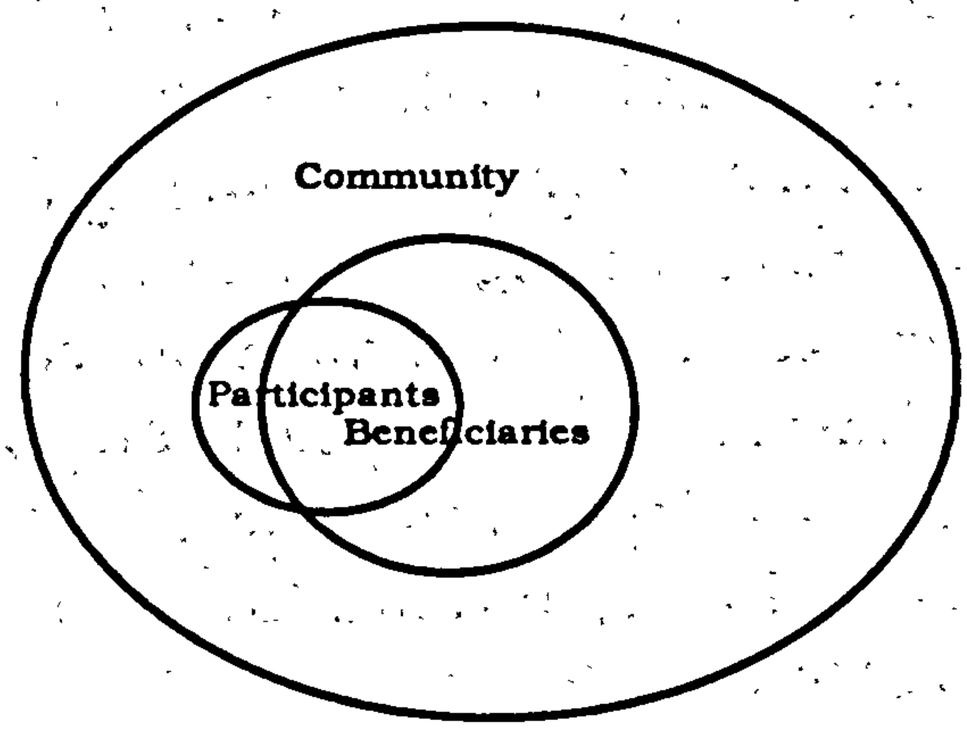

Figure 1.3 Hypothetical overlap between participants and beneficiaries of community education.

The questions regard the characteristics of those who participate and who benefit and whether what students do as a result of participation increases (or reduces) opportunities for others.

Conclusions

There is evidence from the Third World that adult education is more likely to contribute to change if central and local government, the implementing body and students share the same interests and if there are horizontal linkages between educational and other development agencies. It has been argued that the explanations of social problems which give emphasis to different levels in society are associated with particular models of community education. However, theoretical developments and evidence from research programmes suggest that all levels are involved in the explanation of deprivation, and to use community education for social change involves applying models which promote individual, institutional and structural change. This has to be done within the context of changing lives, changing institutions and changing socioeconomic structures.

Official belief in the importance of education for social change and in the need to provide educational opportunities for those who were educationally disadvantaged led to the establishment of the OU with massive funding going to its undergraduate programme. The experience of the EPAs, the recommendations of Russell, Alexander and of the OU itself have not led to baseline funding for the Community Education programme. This has created difficulties in developing a programme which is relevant to the lives of ordinary people and is able to reach them in large numbers. The range of courses and the scale on which they can be offered is limited in spite of project based funding, sponsorship and financial and staff resources from Strathclyde.

There are shared objectives between the courses and Strathclyde Regional Council's social strategy and the linkage between the

courses and the interests of those who participate as students are the subject of this study. Horizontally the links to other educational activities and other agencies and services are not particularly clear or strong, in spite of the joint initiative for the expanded use of the courses from the Director of Social Work and the Chairman of the Education Committee. Also there is the issue of how integrated the policies are with practice. Do the efforts of the various agencies and services actually integrate at the individual level where they are received? Does this happen for individuals at certain stages in their lives or in particular circumstances?

This chapter has examined two examples of social policies that were aimed at changing institutions, in the case of the OU the introduction of a community education programme and the government's reluctance to provide funding; in the case of Strathclyde there was a major attempt to change local authority and other services and to press the government for action for the benefit those who are suffering from deprivation. These have intersected through Strathclyde's use of the OU Community Education courses and the question is under these circumstances how do the OU courses fit into the social strategy and the lives of students?

In Strathclyde the courses are offered in areas of multiple deprivation where the recession, high unemployment as well as marital breakdown reduce people's economic options. There may be opportunities in these and other areas of people's lives which will enable them to participate and benefit from the courses. In multiply deprived areas there are more people who are not deprived and the question is - who actually participates and who benefits from the courses. Do the courses provide help with individual, community and social change and if so what help do individuals receive and what benefits are there for the community? The courses may enable students to improve what they are doing already; or increase their options for new activities or take up activities which increase the options for others. These issues are examined in this study.

Central government during the '80's has demonstrated an unusual combination of radical conservatism where structural change has been brought about through right wing policies promoting individual freedom and entrepreneurial activity. The changes have mainly benefited the better off and caused widespread unemployment and poverty which are justified in the belief that the increased wealth will eventually 'trickle down'. The government has continued to provide financial support to education and training programmes and reforms which contribute to employment and the economy, but has made it more difficult for local authorities to fund adult and community education aimed at social objectives.

The philosophy of the Open University's undergraduate programme is mainly conservative in that it admits a few more individuals into existing opportunity structures and operates an authoritarian and hierarchical system (Harris and Holmes, 1976: 84; Rumble, 1986: 27). It is individually focussed and aims to promote change in students rather than communities or society. However, the Community Education programme is more radical[4], its courses are community focussed, developed in collaboration with local communities and based on an analysis of situations faced by students. In Glasgow the courses are delivered to groups in the community who adapt the curriculum to their own needs; provide opportunities for participation and support, and promote change.

Strathclyde Regional Council is attempting to be radical and bring about changes for the benefit of those who are disadvantaged but is constrained by central government and wider socioeconomic factors, and has had difficulties in getting professionals in local institutions and services to embrace its philosophy and implement the policies. The local population support the politicians responsible

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[4]Fletcher (1980a: 82) points out with reference to extra-mural departments in conventional universities that community education could not be a model for their intra-mural activities without the transformation of the universities themselves. The same applies to the Open University even though its students, curriculum and pedagogy are less traditional than other universities.

for radical policies, but many people have conservative views due to their experience of years of poverty which has lowered their aspirations for themselves and for the possibilities of change.

We have a complex picture where central government, local government, a programme within a national educational institution, other agencies and those experiencing disadvantage - have different philosophies and interests. To the extent that these are shared there is the potential for collaboration and the possibility of using community education as a component of a social strategy, even if this is constrained by wider socioeconomic changes.

Finally, the main research questions deriving from the issues raised in this chapter are listed below with brief comments to introduce the chapters in which the questions are addressed:

1) What role does OU Community Education have in Strathclyde's social strategy?

This is raised in this chapter and in chapter ten where the conclusions from the study concerning the role of the courses are drawn together.

2) Who participates in OU courses - what is their background, what are their characteristics and circumstances, are they or have they been disadvantaged?

A dialectic view is taken of the relationship between individuals and society, also individuals' characteristics and circumstances change over individual and historical time. This approach is developed from a review of theoretical work concerned with the study of people's lives in chapter two. In chapters four to eight various areas of students' lives are considered and the main historical and institutional changes and trends occurring during the time covered by their lives are reviewed. Students' early background and adult experience is analysed in terms of the main events and activities occurring in a particular area of their lives. Their characteristics and

circumstances at the time of their participation in courses are drawn together in chapter nine.

3) When in their lives do they participate - at what stage and what else is going on in their lives around the time of the courses and afterwards?

Methods of life course analysis are developed to explore the various multidimensional careers that make up an individual's life course. The theoretical base for this approach is dealt with in chapter two and the methodological issues in chapter three. This methodology is applied in chapters four to eight where each of the areas of students' lives are represented as careers or lifelines which show when the main events and activities occurred in individual and historical time. The location of the OU courses is defined with reference to where students are in their particular careers and includes what is happening around the time of the courses and afterwards.

4) Which students are influenced by the courses - what are the characteristics and circumstances of the students who benefit, in what ways are they helped?

The helpfulness of the courses for students with particular career patterns and who are at specific stages in their careers is considered in chapters four to eight. Their circumstances and the changes that occurred across all areas of their lives around the time of the courses, the characteristics of those who are helped and the way the courses help are analysed in chapter nine.

5) Who else is affected - are there benefits to others in the community, and do the courses make a contribution to the objectives of the social strategy?

The influence of the courses on immediate members of students' families, their friends and the community are considered. The community activities and responsibilities students become involved

in and the help of the courses is examined in chapter eight and assessed in chapter ten.

In terms of the overall structure the first chapter is primarily concerned with the institutional level of analysis. The next chapter is a theoretical review which focuses down to the study of individuals' lives and learning in social and historical context. The issues concerning an appropriate methodology for this study are discussed and the methods and procedures adopted are described in chapter three. In chapters four to eight the results of the empirical work are presented and analysed, which involves focusing on different areas of students' lives and their relationships with institutions and the socioeconomic context through time. In chapter nine the pattern of changes across all areas of students' lives is related to the influence of the courses and to socioeconomic stability. Chapter ten draws the findings together and relates them to the theoretical and policy issues raised in earlier chapters, the significance of the findings is assessed and the limitations of the study identified, suggestions are made for further research and policy recommendations for the Open University and Strathclyde are put forward.

Chapter 2 - People's Lives and Learning in Social and Historical Context: A Theoretical Review

Introduction

This chapter reviews various theoretical contributions to the study of people's lives and learning in social and historical context which provide a basis for tackling the research questions and for developing a research methodology discussed in chapter three.

The study of people's lives and learning involves asking:

1) How can their background and the pattern of their lives be characterised?

2) Why are their lives shaped in the way they are and what is the role of learning?

3) What factors affect the course of their lives and why do people react differently to similar events?

4) How do social and historical changes affect people's lives and learning?

More specifically questions tackled in this study include - what are the backgrounds of people who participate in OU Community Education courses; what is the place and influence of the courses in their lives; why do people react to the courses in different ways; and how has the recession and other socioeconomic changes affected their lives and responses to the courses?

An interdisciplinary and multiple perspective approach is needed to consider these kinds of questions and theoretical insights must be drawn from a range of sources. This chapter will attempt to draw together ideas and approaches which help in understanding the dynamics of people's lives and learning in social and historical context, and in assessing the significance of events such as an OU course.

There are two main ways of looking at the dynamics of lives: 1) by analysing the factors and processes affecting behaviour at a particular time and 2) by examining processes which extend across time. Lewin (1936: 30) distinguishes between these approaches by asking two questions, first: 'why does a given situation (ie. a particular person *P* in a particular environment *E*) have the event *B* and no other as the result?' he answers with reference to his well-known 'general law' *B=f(PE)* which he says is valid for the dynamic structure of the situation in question. He then goes on to ask 'why does just such a situation come into being?' and points out that an answer to this question must deal with 'an analysis of the history of the individual and of his environment'. He calls these 'systematic and historical concepts of causation'.

Other authors make this distinction by using the terms 'macroscopic and microscopic':

> 'The macroscopic approach will be applied when we consider the course of life as a whole, and view primarily its major outlines and aspects. The microscopic approach will be used to examine in detail individual behaviour at specific moments at certain phases of development.'
> (Buhler and Masserik, 1968: 9)

Baltes and Nesselroade (1979: 35) define historical and concurrent explanations as follows: 'this is a heuristic distinction based on the length of the interval between the occurrence of a causal agent and its consequent outcome. . . Explanation is concurrent if the causal agent is *proximal* to the outcome. It is historical if it occurs in *distal* antecedence'. Another has used the terms *diachronic* and *synchronic* (Bertaux, 1982: 127) to distinguish between processes operating across time and structural relations operating at a point in time.

In this study and in the absence of agreement in the literature, the terms *longitudinal* and *systemic* are used to refer to these approaches and provide the basis for the organisation of this review. The main theoretical areas which take the first view include: human

development across the life-span, life course analysis, and theories of life-long learning. The second approach includes studies focusing on the influence of particular life events and circumstances for example on: adaptation, stress, depression, household economics and adult learning.

The chapter begins by considering longitudinal approaches: three life-span development theories are followed by life course analysis and theories of lifelong learning. The next part of the chapter deals with systemic approaches and reviews a number of models which attempt to explain how life events and circumstances influence the responses of individuals and their learning. The explanations provided by these models on how people react to life events and learn are drawn together. Consideration is given to how the social and historical context can be represented and the linkages to people's lives operate. Finally, the main ideas emerging which inform this study are drawn together and brief responses to the questions raised in the introduction are given.

Longitudinal approaches - Life-span development

Life-span theories and approaches to development attempt to describe and explain the pattern of changes throughout the life cycle. This work and is mainly located in psychology and has been reviewed by various authors (Sugarman, 1986; Kimbel, 1980; Baltes et al, 1980). The life-span view has a long history (see Reinert, 1979) but recent interest derives from psychology's traditional focus on child development, the emerging discipline of gerontology and concern about the neglect of adult life. The contribution of three theorists - Buhler, Riegel and Baltes - to this area of work are considered below:

Buhler's Theory

Buhler (1968a: 12) starts with the assumption 'that the individual's course of life has a definite basic structure and that this structure is evident in his biological life cycle as well as his psychophysical

development'. The biological dimensions of the life cycle are defined by Buhler by combining the pattern of growth with reproductive ability to produce five phases which are represented in the table below:

Phase	Age	Growth	Reproductive ability
1)	0-15	Progressive	No reproductive ability
2)	15-25	Progressive	Onset of reproductive ability
3)	25-45	Stationary	Reproductive ability
4)	45-65	Beginning of decline	Loss of ability in female
5)	65-End	Further decline	Loss of ability in one or both sexes

Table 2.1 Buhler's phases of the life cycle.

She adopts two approaches to the psychosocial area of development. In one she points out that the nature of the goals individuals set and the extent that goals are achieved progresses through the five phases.

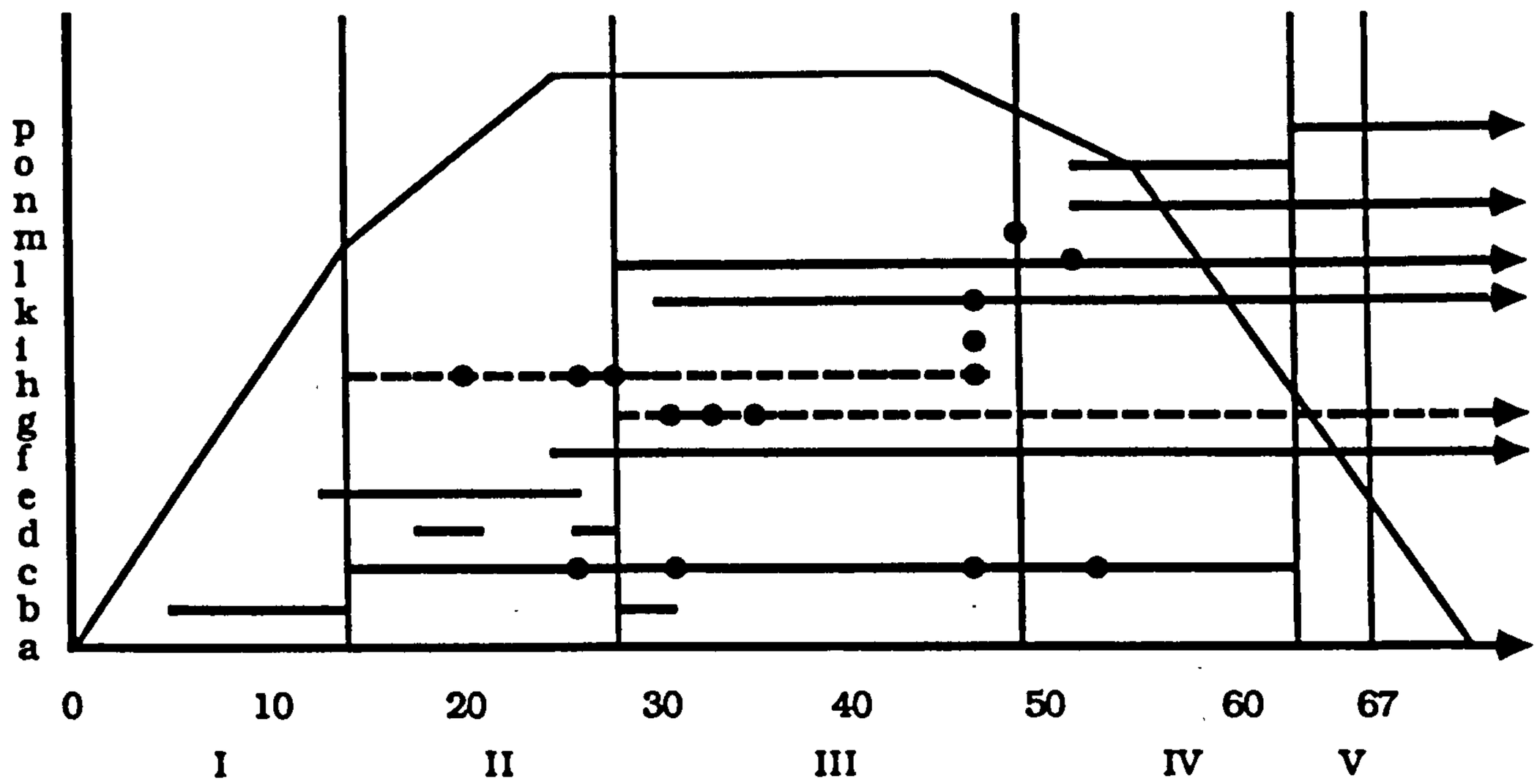
Phase	Age	Goal Setting	Activity
1)	0-15	Prior to self-determination	Increasing
2)	15-25	Experimental or preparatory self-determination	Increasing
3)	25-45	Definite and specific self-determination toward goals and fulfilments	Plateau
4)	45-65	Self-assessment of obtained results	Beginning of decline
5)	65-End	Experience of fulfilment or failure, with the continuance of previous activities or a return to the need-satisfying orientation of childhood	Decline

Table 2.2 Phases of goal setting and activity through the life cycle (after Horner, 1968: 65).

In early life there is growth without reproductive ability, the number of activities are relatively limited and there is no self-determination of goals. Later with the onset of reproductive ability, more activities

are taken up and preparatory goal setting is carried out. During adulthood the range of activities plateau and goals are achieved, followed according to Buhler, by a decline in activities and reflection on success and failure (see also Buhler, 1953: 408).

The other approach involves charting individuals' activities through their life. The activities are mainly described in terms of the roles an individual occupies which show that the range of activities increases in the early phases, reaches a plateau then declines, paralleling biological development. A technique was developed which permits 'the structural aspects of life histories to be seen more distinctly' (Buhler and Goldenberg, 1968: 57). An example is given below:



KEY

a	Time dimension	k	Home ownership
b	Education	l	Church and organisational memberships
c	Career	m	Illnesses
d	Service in army	n	Children on their own
e	Dating	o	Departure from job and beginning own business
f	Marriage	p	Retirement
g	Children	I-V	Five phases of life
h	Changes in domiciles	____	Biological life cycle
i	Extended trip		

Figure 2.1 Schematic presentation of Bill Roberts' life history (after Buhler and Goldenberg, 1968: 60).

Line (a) refers to age up to the interview, which took place when the Bill Roberts was 67 years old. Lines (b) to (p) refer to the main events and activity areas in his life. The line above the data represents the schematic growth and decline curve. The vertical lines show the divisions between each of Buhler's five phases.

This example does not clearly demonstrate the parallel between the progression of ascent through to descent and biological phases. In as far as the lines represent activities there are actually the same number at 67 than there are at 35. However, it might be argued that representing 'children on their own' and 'home ownership' as activities is inappropriate and the point might be more clearly made if the various 'organisational memberships' and other activities were individually displayed.

Although this theory involves five phases or 'predetermined categories' as a central component, the view of the processes of development are not as static as this might imply. Buhler outlines a number of 'properties reflecting the dynamics of the life cycle' which emphasise that 'life is a continuous process, and the individual is continually active' and recognise the complexity of the process and the influence of changing circumstances. In arguing against a view of development based on equilibrium or homeostasis, Buhler says that: 'human beings go through life changing and creating change, satisfying needs, adapting themselves to given circumstances, and upholding internal order' (1968: 17).

In summary, the important features of this theory are: the definition of stages which incorporates two ways of describing biological growth with reference to physical and reproductive changes; the drawing of parallels between these stages and psychosocial development, mainly in terms of the number of activities and goal setting through the life cycle; the technique of making life histories visible by graphically representing activities through the life cycle; and the dynamic view of development recognising that life is a continuous process and the individual is continually active - adapting to and creating change, satisfying needs, and maintaining internal

(psychological) order.

Limitations of the theory are that much of the work was based on old people living in Vienna in the '30's and people from earlier centuries, later work was in America in the '50's, but the timing of the stages do not match early marriage and child bearing and other features of modern working class life. Buhler's view of activities and goals over the life cycle tends to emphasise the areas of life and careers of men, and not the more fluid and fragmented lives of women and their multiple and interdependent careers. The paralleling of biological stages and the number of activities is weak especially in the latter stages of the life cycle. Although there is more differentiation of life paths in early adulthood (Elder, 1978: 26), many individuals do not show a decline in activities in the later stages unless or until they suffer ill health (Allman, 1983: 107). Insufficient emphasis is given to social and economic factors and the changing historical context which influence the life cycle. Although, as Sugarman points out, Buhler does incorporate this into her analysis of individual life histories (Sugarman, 1986: 83).

Riegel's dialectical theory

The main theme in dialectical psychology, according to Riegel, is to see the 'human being as a changing individual in a changing world'. (Riegel, 1976: 696). Therefore he rejects 'the preference for stable traits, abilities, or competencies' and 'equilibrium, balance or stability'. Stability should appear as 'a transitory condition in the stream of ceaseless change'. The theory focuses on the simultaneous movements along at least four 'dimensions' (1976: 693) or 'planes' (1975: 102) of progression:

1) inner-biological
2) individual-psychological
3) cultural-sociological
4) outer-physical

Human development involves progression along all four dimensions

and it is in the nature of the process that they get out of step and adjustments have to be made constantly. On occasions the gap between two or more dimensions becomes so great that it is experienced as a crisis. However, Riegel insists that the object is not to achieve stability, this is impossible as movement is continuous and that it is inevitable that gaps or even crisis occur and these should not be looked at negatively, but seen as an integral part of development. Sometimes major reorganisations are required and these may represent a new stage or period of development. He summarises this as follows:

> The resulting dialectical interpretation is concerned with changes along several dimensions of progression. Specifically, development is brought about by contradictions in these progressions which create discordances and conflicts. Through the actions of individuals, synchrony will be reestablished and thereby progress achieved. But as synchrony is attained, new discrepancies emerge producing a continuous flux of contradictions and changes.'
> (Riegel, 1976: 689)

In addition to these four dimensions, Riegel (1975: 107) also defines adult 'levels': level 1 (20-25 years), level 2 (25-30), level 3 (30-35), level 4 (35-50), level 5 (50-65), level 6 (65+). Figure 2.3 below shows the relationship between 'biophysical' (inner-biological) and 'psychosocial' (individual-psychological and cultural-sociological) dimensions and distinguishes between gradual and sudden changes which may occur at various 'levels' (phases) of the lives of men and women. 'These events, some of which might have a crisis character, are codetermined by inner-biological and outer-physical conditions' (p. 105).

Regarding the mechanism by which the interaction between two dimensions takes place, Riegel believes the prototypical example of interaction is a dialogue between two people. This can be taken to represent the interaction between two different dimensions of one individual, or between the same dimension of two individuals, or between the individual and society. He points out that dialogue requires the synchronisation of two time sequences and that each

successive statement has to reflect at least the one immediately proceeding it and at most all the earlier statements. However, it is reasonably easy to apply the dialogue model to two individuals synchronising their lives together but it is more difficult to visualise how, for example, the individuals inner-biological and cultural-sociological dimensions interact as a dialogue. It is simply a metaphor and the mechanics of how these dimensions interact though the developing individual is not clear.

LEVELS AND EVENTS IN ADULT LIFE

		Gradual Changes				
		MALES		FEMALES		
Level	(Years)	Psychosocial	Biophysical	Psychosocial	Biophysical	Sudden Changes
1	(20-25)	College/first job		First job/college		
		Marriage		Marriage		
		First child			First child	
2	(25-30)	Second job		Loss of job		
		Other children			Other children	
		Children in preschool		Children in preschool		
3	(30-35)	Move		Move		
		Promotion		Without job		
		Children in school		Children in school		
4	(35-50)	Second home		Second home		
		Promotion		Second career		
		Departure of children		Departure of children		
5	(50-65)	Unemployment		Unemployment		Loss of job
		Isolation			Menopause	Loss of parents
		Grandfather		Grandmother		Loss of friends
		Head of kin		Head of kin		Illness
			Incapacitation			
6	(65+)	Deprivation			Widowhood	Retirement
			Sensory-motor deficiencies		Incapacitation	Loss of partner
						Death

Table 2.3 Levels and events in adult life (from Riegel, 1975: 107).

Riegel's four dimensions are abstract and the examples given of interactions between them are vague. For example, marriage for a mature individual under the right conditions is the synchrony between inner-biological, individual-psychological and cultural-sociological dimensions and if housing is a consideration, presumably outer-physical as well. And although 'the topic of synchronisation of two time sequences is also the most central issue in dialectical theory', the matrix that appears in Riegel (1976: 693) shows the crises generated by asynchronies between all possible pairs of dimensions and these are also abstract and general. For

example, crisis due to asynchronies between the individual-psychological and cultural-sociological dimensions are dissidence/organisation or exploitation/acculturation.

While Riegel rejects the preference for the concept of stability, his theory requires the synchrony between the dimensions to be kept within limits and if things go outside these limits adjustment is necessary. This is a form of dynamic stability (Ashby, 1952), the point that change is continuous does not mean that the concept of stability is inappropriate (Sterns and Alexander, 1977: 106). Riegel says that 'we should study development as a horizontal flow of interwoven event sequences rather than as a series of vertical time slices' but when and where asynchronies also occur they need analysing vertically in order to assess what is happening and the actions individuals can take.

Riegel's approach recognises the importance of historical time and he shows how the timing and duration events in the life of males and females (marriage, birth of children, children leaving home, and death) varies in different historical periods (Riegel, 1975: 109). This illustrates the interactions between inner-biological, outer-physical conditions and cultural-sociological changes. He also provides an analysis of the general careers of psychologists in relation to their developmental levels (ie. individual time, as defined in the table above) and to historical time (Riegel, 1975: 110). But when he comes to apply this methodology to the careers of 'exceptional individuals' he only deals with their intellectual careers and does not attempt to relate progress in this area to what happened in other areas of their lives.

Useful features of this theory are: the dialectical relationship between individual development and social change which involves the interaction between biological, psychological, sociological, and environmental dimensions. Also important is the emphasis of continuous change on all these dimensions and on synchronisation of changes, and that changes in one dimension will affect others. He points out that asynchrony can require adjustment, lead to a crisis

or signal a new stage of development. Also two individuals' dimensions can interact and that there is an interaction between the individual and society. Finally, historical time in which the cultural-sociological and outer-physical dimensions are located interacts with personal time along which development on the other dimensions proceeds.

There are problems with Riegel's view that stability does not include dynamic equilibrium and it is unclear how the model of a dialogue applies between an individual and society. The abstract and all encompassing nature of the dimensions of development and the vague definitions of crises makes this theory difficult to apply to the analysis of life histories. The examples of life histories do not include details of the dimensions or levels of development or illustrations of crises. The status of Riegel's 'levels' specified in age ranges is unclear given his views on the lack of stability and continuous change. These levels may be simply descriptive and not have any special role in the theory.

Baltes approach to life-span development

Baltes and his associates (Baltes and Nesselroade, 1979; Baltes, Reese and Lipsitt, 1980) have developed a multicausal and dialectic model of life-span development. Baltes et al. (1980: 75) point out that 'this model is not a theory, but a methodological paradigm potentially useful in the search for causal relationships and determinants that yield the complexity of life-span development'. The model is illustrated in figure 2.2 which represents the operation of three major influence systems on life-span development, these are mediated through the developing individual and interact to produce life-span development. The way these influence systems interact and their relative influence differs depending on the individual, the behaviour and the time.

The three influence systems are: (1) normative age-graded, (2) normative history-graded, and (3) non normative life events.

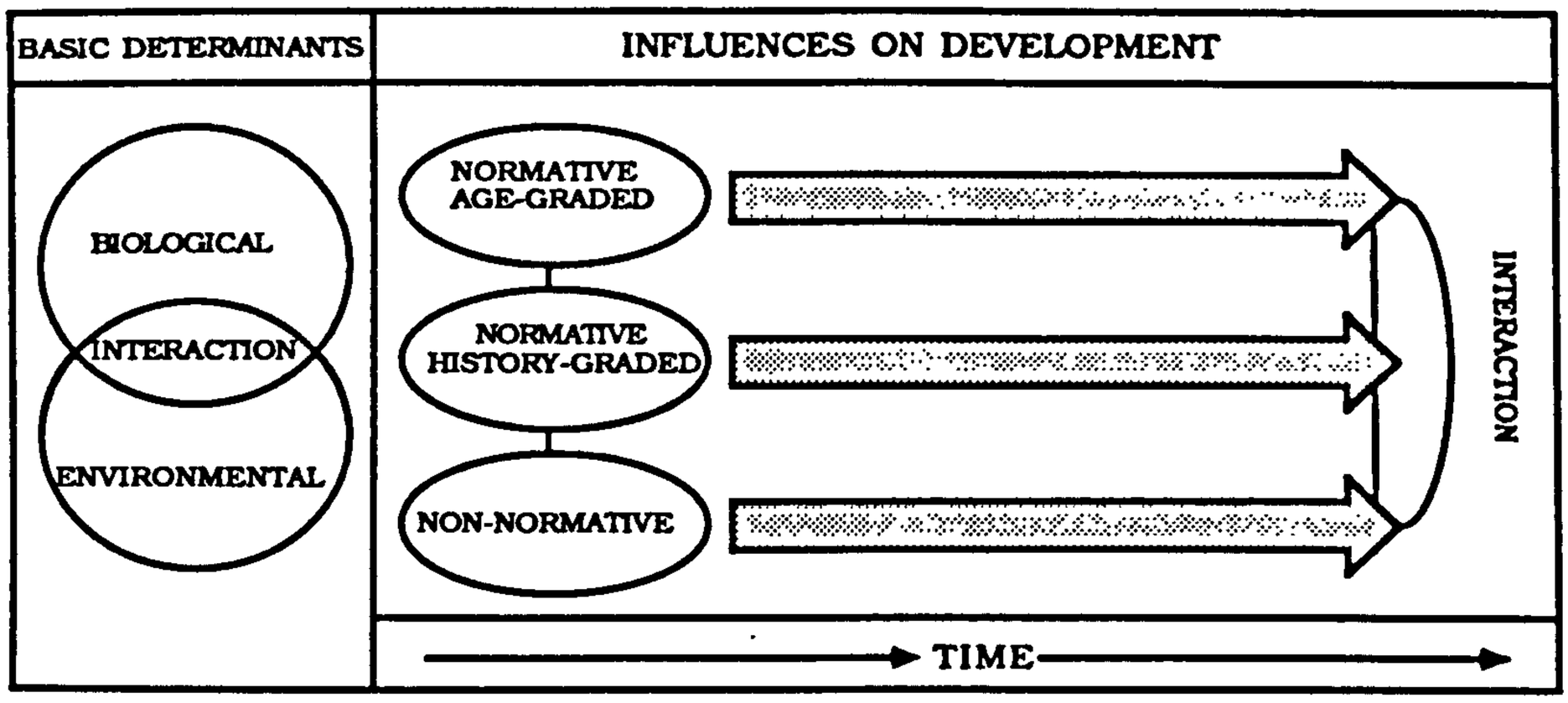


Figure 2.2 Basic determinants and three influence systems on development (from Baltes et al, 1980: 75).

1) Normative age-graded influences - These include biological maturation and age-graded socialisation events, for example, many aspects of the family life cycle, education, and occupation. Age-graded events are normative if they tend to occur in highly similar ways (in timing, duration) for all individuals in a given culture or subculture.

2) Normative history-graded influences - These are determinants associated with historical time, for example: economic depressions, wars, major epidemics, changes in the demographic and occupational structure. They are normative if they occur to most members of a given cohort in similar ways, although the events may differ for different age-cohorts living at the same time.

3) Non-normative life events - These do not occur in any normative age-graded or history-graded manner for most individuals. Examples include career changes, relocation, hospitalisation, accidents, unemployment, divorce, death of a significant other. The impact on development may depend on specific conditions of timing, patterning and duration.

Over the life-span age graded influences tend to be most important in childhood and to some extent in old age; history graded in adolescence and early adulthood when educational, employment and

marriage opportunities are important and affected by the current socioeconomic context; and non-normative influences may gradually increase over the life-span.

Baltes et al. (1980: 72) point out that the growth and maturation view defines behavioural change as 'development' if it is qualitative, sequential, irreversible, end-state oriented, and universal. This is the strong or biological growth model of development. A weak definition of development would involve fewer defining properties and, with the extension of the concept of development to the whole life-span, is considered to be more appropriate. Life-span development does not necessarily consist of unidirectional and cumulative change extending from birth to death.

To show how particular types of behaviours (eg. attachment behaviour, achievement behaviour) can be acquired, maintained, transformed and extinguished at different times in the life-span, Baltes et al. (1980: 73) plot hypothetical developmental change processes against the life-span or developmental time. They link these change processes to developmental tasks, and 'some of these tasks are age-graded and continue throughout life. Others are unique to restricted age segments or developmental settings, and others emerge as salient tasks at later points in life with little reference to earlier events' (p. 74). They say that life-long development can be seen as the mastery of successive tasks in a series of contexts. The dialectical conception suggests that tasks and contexts derive from interplay between age-graded, history-graded, and non-normative influences and events. This view also encompasses both within individual and between individual development trajectories. For example, the interaction between the family and occupational careers particularly for women, and co-developing individuals might include other family members and friends (p. 81).

Useful features of Baltes' approach include the model of the influences on development that is dialectical, contextual and interactive. Also the categorisation of the influences on development with regard to whether they are age or history graded or non-

normative instead of biological, psychological and social categories, and that recognises the differences between individual and historical time. He draws attention to the strong and weak definitions of development, and the appropriateness of the weak definition which includes particular types of behaviours that can be acquired, maintained, transformed and extinguished throughout the life-span. The link is made between the influences on development and developmental tasks and this may go some way to operationalise the process of development.

The problems with this approach are that there are few pointers to the practical application of the model in analysing lives. Also the model is concerned with development and is not concerned with explaining behaviour itself. For example, if a woman leaves a part-time job and returns to another a few months later, does this exemplify development or is it simply behaviour change in the light of changing circumstances? Other changes are clearly developmental for example, becoming a mother. Whether or not changes are included in a weak definition of development, the types of influences represented in the model can apply to any changes in roles and activities in the light of changing circumstances. Finally, no mechanism is proposed to explain how the interaction between the influences occurs nor are the linkages between the influences and changes in behaviour spelt out.

Contribution of life span approaches

In general the contribution of life span development approaches to the study of lives is in recognising that development occurs over the entire course of life. Also that there are multiple determinants - including biological, psychological, social and environmental factors - involved in development and that as far as social and environmental influences are concerned they can be categorised as age and history graded and as non-normative. Dynamic and dialectical processes are emphasised which reflect that individuals are continually changing in a changing world.

Buhler adopts a strong definition of development to define her

stages and gives little emphasis to environmental and historical influences. Riegel's levels are defined in a looser way and he recognises wider influences on the timing and duration of events. Baltes does not define stages other than proposing that different kinds of influence are more prominent at different times in the life-span. The life-span approach is preoccupied with development and under the weak definition it is unclear whether all significant behaviours are included or not. Buhler, in her charting technique includes activities such as organisational membership and Riegel in his analysis of exceptional individuals illustrates their development by the publication of certain books. While Baltes' work is mainly concerned with cognitive development his model could apply to roles and activities.

Finally, a criticism from the life course perspective, Elder (1978: 20) says that: 'In practice, however, most life-span studies have neglected tasks that are basic to life-course analysis; they are insensitive to the diverse career lines of individuals and their psychological effects, and have generally failed to explicate the process of developmental change'. We now turn to life course analysis.

Longitudinal approaches - Life course analysis

The life course approach is concerned with the relationships between individual, social and historical change. While it is derived mainly from sociology, there is a recent convergence of interest from a number of areas which include: oral history; life history and biography; family development; the sociology of age stratification; and social demography; as well as having links with life-span psychology (Featherman, 1983: 8; and Elder, 1981: 78; Thompson, 1981: 289). The approach can be traced back to previous centuries, and in this century the work of Thomas and Znaniecki (1918/74) and the Chicago School in the 1920's and 30's, and the contribution of Dollard (1935) but was eclipsed with the rise of positivism and survey methodology after the war. It was only during the 1970's that

interest in the sociology of the life course revived. There is a strong consensus regarding the main tenets of this approach amongst the leading workers in the field (eg. Elder, 1981; Hareven, 1982a; and Bertaux, 1981), which can be linked to Dollard's criteria for the life history (Dollard, 1935).

Hareven (1982a) explains the life course approach and contrasts it with traditional studies of human development:

> 'The life course approach provides a way of examining individual as well as collective development under changing historical conditions. It shifts the focus of study of human development from stages and ages to transitions and the timing of events. Rather than focusing on stages in the life cycle, a life course approach is concerned with how individuals and families made their transitions into those different stages. Rather than viewing any one stage of life, such as childhood, youth, and old age, or any age group in isolation, it is concerned with an understanding of the place of that stage in an entire life continuum.'
> (Hareven, 1982a: xiii)

She goes on to explain that events in people's lives must be seen in the context of their whole lives and in the social and historical context:

> 'A life course approach is concerned with the timing of life events in relation to the social structures and historical changes affecting them. It thus takes into account the synchronisation of individual life transitions with collective family configurations under changing social conditions.'
> (Hareven, 1982a: xiv)

Social and historical contexts do not simply act on the individual, the process is interactive, 'individuals are both producers and products of their history' (Elder, 1981: 78). Thompson (1981: 303) recognises that 'the constraints exercised by the economic system, technology and resources on how men and women live their lives are fundamental', but also points to the 'myriad of decisions [by individuals] which cumulatively, not only give shape to each life story, but also can constitute the direction and scale of major social change' (p. 299).

Elder (1981: 85) believes that what is 'much needed in this problem area is a multidimensional concept of the life course (work, consumption, parenthood, marriage) that represents the interdependent careers of husband, wife, and children'. That is, we need to not only represent the individual's life course in a way which deals with various roles but we should also include the interdependent roles of other family members.

Thus, the life course approach focuses on the importance of individual and family decisions, and the interplay between the various roles of the individual and others in the family over time and the interaction between individuals lives and the social and historical context. However, the theoretical basis of the life course approach is not well developed. Elder (1981: 78) refers to a 'theoretical orientation to the study of lives' which takes as its central theme 'a perspective on life-course development in historical context'. But Clausen writing in 1972 says 'perhaps it is unrealistic to think of a theory of the life course. Perhaps we can only look forward to more limited theories relevant to aspects of the life course - for example, more adequate theories bearing on types of role transition in different kinds of social settings' (Clausen, 1972: 512).

Tenets of the life course approach

In the absence of an explicit theory and because of the importance of this approach in this study, the main tenets of the life course approach, drawn primarily from Elder (1978 and 1981) are presented below as nine statements. The life course approach deals with individuals, families and society and the interaction between these through time. The first statements (1 and 2) concern the individual, then the individual and society (3-5), followed by the family (6 and 7) and the family and society (8 and 9).

The life course of an individual is traditionally viewed as a single life path or career - such as working life or marriage. In contrast, the first tenet of the life course approach might be that:

1) An individual's life course consists of multiple and inter-dependent career lines.

Each career consists of a sequence of roles and activities. A career line is equivalent to an individual's life history in each role domain, such as marriage and parenthood, education, employment, residence and community involvement. Movement through an individual's life course entails the concurrent assumption of multiple roles. With multiple career lines, the scheduling of roles and activities is a basic problem of the management of resources and demands, as well as coping with problems of role overload and transition. Thus a second tenet:

2) Within and across career lines the timing, spacing, and arrangement of roles, activities and events, involves scheduling and resource management.

Individuals are exposed to a slice of historical experience in the process of moving through the sequence of activities, roles and events which make up their career lines. This historical experience is reflected in their changing personal characteristics and circumstances:

3) Individuals' career lines are a product of their changing personal characteristics and circumstances within a social and historical context.

4) Individuals affect their own life course by taking action which alters their circumstances which may contribute to personal and social change.

Combining (3) and (4) defines a dialectical relationship between personal and social change in which there is an interaction between the changing individual and the changing society, and individuals are both products and producers of history. Not only is the life course of an individual shaped by history, the actions that individuals take contribute to the shape of history itself (Bertaux, 1982: 142).

Different cohorts encounter the same historical event (eg. recession) at different points in their life course and different events at similar points (eg. at marriage):

5) Individuals experience the same historical event at different times in their life course and different circumstances at similar points in their life course.

Not only do an individual's career lines interact with each other but with the career lines of significant others, especially in families. For example, the formation of a marital relationship is viewed as the joining of life histories:

6) An individual's multiple career lines intersect and interact with those of significant others (eg. family members).

Differences in the timing, duration, and arrangement of activities and events between the career lines of different individuals generate asynchronies. Within families strategies are needed for dealing with demand-supply imbalances which involve resource utilisation and development, as well as time, income, and energy allocation:

7) Strategies involving resource utilisation are needed to deal with asynchronies between the career lines of family members.

These strategies involve the timing of births, the spacing of children, the acquisition of goods and services according to need and income, the husband's employment and job changes, the wife's entry and reentry into the labour force, and decisions regarding residential change, including migration. These coping responses and strategies change in response to changing circumstances and socioeconomic context:

8) The changing social and economic context affects families strategies of resource management and their life courses.

The decisions made by families can contribute to social and historical change, in particular concerning marriage and divorce, the number of children, employment, finance and consumption, and residence and migration. Economic development and demographic change are as much the cumulative result of the decisions of families as the acts of politicians and industrialists (Thompson, 1981: 299):

9) The decisions and strategies of families change their circumstances and may contribute to personal and social change.

In summary, the approach is concerned with the interdependencies between the career lines of individuals and members of families; their changing resources and circumstances, and historical time. It recognises the importance of longitudinal influences and interacting career lines. Events and actions are seen in the context of past life and sociohistorical context. It recognises that the same event (eg. a recession or an OU course) has different impact depending on where people are in their life course and that similar events (eg. marriage) have different implications for different cohorts. It is multidimensional, dynamic, dialectical, interactive and contextual. The approach also provides a focus for interdisciplinary work.

The weaknesses of the approach are that there is no theory of the life course and although it shares many of the ideas current in social theory (eg. Giddens, 1984) its links with mainstream sociology are unclear. Also it lacks operational procedures for collecting, representing and analysing data, particularly in longitudinal studies of individuals and for documenting socioeconomic contexts. These are particularly needed where everything is continually changing - individuals, their circumstances and the sociohistorical context, and to do justice to a multidimensional concept of the life course and interdependent careers. The approach has not been applied to adult learning and has not articulated the role of learning in the life course. However, the next section looks at approaches to lifelong learning.

Longitudinal approaches - Lifelong learning

The various longitudinal approaches to the study of lives considered above give little attention to the role of learning across the life course. This is the province of adult learning theories which attempt to provide theoretical underpinning to the concept of lifelong learning and continuing education. There are some recent reviews of adult learning theories (Cross, 1981; Brookfield, 1986; and Merriam, 1987) and one of these authors categorises the theories as 1) those based on adult learner characteristics; 2) those emphasising the adult's life situation; and 3) those focusing upon changes in consciousness (Merriam, 1987: 189). Cross not only reviews existing theories but derives two of her own, one she calls 'Characteristics of Adults as Learners' (CAL) and the other 'Chain of Response (COR) Model' (Cross, 1981: p. 235 and 124 respectively). Houle (1984: xi) draws the distinction between the longitudinal aspect, the breadth and depth of adult learning. These distinctions reflect the two approaches to the study of lives introduced at the beginning of this chapter - longitudinal and systemic; those dealing with processes or influences across time, eg. learner's characteristics and background and those concerned with processes or responses in particular circumstances, eg. explaining why adults enrol for a course at a particular time in their lives. This section considers three adult learning theories which are mainly concerned with the characteristics of adult learners and a longitudinal approach.

Knowles theory of andragogy (1970/80) is widely known and much criticised particularly regarding the claim that it is a theory (Hartree, 1984: 206; Cross, 1981: 225; Brookfield, 1986: 98). It is based on four principles which were originally proposed by Knowles as distinguishing adult learning (andragogy) from children's learning (pedagogy). These have been redrafted by Merriam to remove the original sexist bias and are:

'1) As a person matures his or her self-concept moves from being one of a dependent personality toward one of a self-

directing human being;

2) An adult accumulates a growing reservoir of experience, a rich resource of learning;

3) The readiness of an adult to learn is closely related to the developmental tasks of his or her social role;

4) There is a change in time perspective as individuals mature, from one of future application of knowledge to immediacy of application; thus an adult is more problem-centred than subject-centred in learning.'

(Merriam, 1987: 190)

Since these principles were put forward Knowles has conceded that many of them can also apply to the learning of children and has suggested that the andragogy-pedagogy distinction be better seen as a continuum which applies in differing degrees to certain learning tasks and particular individuals at any age (Knowles, 1979: 53).

The principles which are most related to the role of learning across the life course are: that past experience is a rich resource for learning; learning can be closely related to developmental tasks and social roles; and the importance of immediate application of what is learnt. The main contribution of this view is to point out the link between adult learning and adult development, and to claim that adult education is different from most school based teaching. The link between developmental tasks and adult learning is considered in more detail below.

A theory which links adult learning to developmental tasks across the life course has been proposed by Havighurst (1948/72). Developmental tasks are the physiological, psychological, and social demands a person must deal with at certain periods in their life. Successful achievement contributes to happiness and success in later tasks; failure contributes to social disapproval, or later difficulties. The tasks arise from internal and external forces - internal forces are primarily biological and the external forces are due to social roles and from pressures and opportunities in the social environment. Figure 2.3 on the next page identifies the main tasks and relates these to particular adult life course stages.

16-23 Late Adolescence and Youth	23-35 Early Adulthood	35-45 Midlife Transition	45-57 Middle Adulthood	57-65 Late Adult Transition	65+ Late Adulthood
Achieving emotional independence Preparing for marriage and family life Choosing and preparing for a career Developing an ethical system					
	Deciding on a partner Starting a family Managing a home Starting an occupation Assuming civic responsibilities				
		Adapting to a changing time perspective Revising career plans Redefining family relationships			
			Maintaining a career or developing a new one Restabilizing family relationships Making mature civic contributions Adjusting to biological age		
				Preparting for retirement	
					Adjusting to retirement Adjusting to declining health and strength Becoming affiliated with late-age groups Establishing satisfactory living arrangements Adjusting to the death of a spouse Maintaining integrity

Figure 2.3 Developmental tasks of the adult years (Chickering and Havighurst, 1981: 26)

This provides a bridge between the various schemes considered above describing adult life (eg. Riegel, table 2.3) and the role of learning across the life course (see also Cross, 1981: 174 and Evans, 1985: 45). It is helpful in considering possible learning needs of adults at particular stages in their lives and in suggesting things to look for when assessing the influence of a particular course. It gives educational planners ideas about what kinds of courses to provide and whom to aim them at and was used in devising an academic plan for Community Education at the Open University (Farnes, 1984). Limitations arise from the intuitive derivation of tasks and stages, and the difficulties in operationalising the tasks and specifying learning needs. While some tasks such as 'starting a family' are reasonably specific and relate to role transitions, others are rather vague - for example, 'adapting to a changing time perspective' which is more concerned with imprecise psychological changes.

Cross' model of the Characteristics of Adult Learners (1981: 235) identifies personal characteristics which represent where individuals are in their lives on three developmental dimensions:

1) Physiological/Aging

2) Sociocultural/Life Phases

3) Psychological/Developmental Stages

Physiological/aging is similar to Riegel's inner-biological dimension although Cross gives special attention to the changes in physiological characteristics relevant to participation in adult education. For the second and third dimensions, Cross (p. 169) distinguishes between *phases* of the life cycle and *stages* of psychological development. Physiological aging and life phases are both related to chronological age but developmental stages are not necessarily related to age, although progression is from a particular stage to the next higher one and so on. Thus, the position of an individual on the physiological and life-phase dimension is likely to be related to age but age does not tell us which developmental stage

the individual has reached.

The model also includes situational variables which refer to the nature of the learning being undertaken and include the extent that participation is part-time and voluntary, which she says differentiates the learning situation of the adult from that of children. These situational variables do not refer to the socioeconomic context of adult life as this aspect is represented by the sociocultural dimension which includes the phases and tasks of the life cycle.

Cross believes that the assumptions of andragogy can be incorporated into these dimensions. Readiness, for example, is largely a function of the sociocultural dimension and the tasks of the life cycle, and is related to age. Self-concept and self direction are related to the developmental stage dimension and are less well developed in children. The problem-centred orientation enters the framework through the situational variables of voluntary learning.

She claims the model incorporates 'the major existing theories of adult learning (andragogy and developmental-stage theory) into a common framework, and it does provide a mechanism for thinking about a growing, developing human being in the context of the special situations common to part-time volunteer learners' (p. 243). It enables the personal characteristics of an individual to be related to the situational variables of the learning opportunity.

While this model aims to be comprehensive it is so all-encompassing that it is difficult to operationalise (Merriam, 1987: 191). It provides two generalised dimensions representing individuals lives and one the wider sociocultural context which affects learning needs. It also includes and a limited characterisation of the adult learning situation. The model is not sensitive to individual differences particularly in differing backgrounds and gender and it is not clear how the model might be applied.

In general, longitudinal approaches to lifelong learning are not

particularly advanced. The nature of adult learning has been described and its links to adult development and developmental tasks have been made by the theorists. The various schemes listing the tasks correspond to those proposed by writers on life-span development. Learning helps adults tackle developmental tasks created by internal biological and external social forces requiring psychological changes which contribute to their characteristics. The demands of a particular developmental task and how learning helps individuals tackle these can be considered within the systemic approach.

Systemic approaches - Models of responses to life events

Longitudinal explanations are concerned with changes in circumstances and characteristics over the life course, whereas systemic models are concerned with more immediate changes in circumstances which call for changes in behaviour which may in turn lead to changes in circumstances and characteristics. While all the models discussed below are systemic they contain features which are largely determined by life course influences. The models represent the particular circumstances and characteristics of the individual and attempt to show how behaviour at a given point in time is a function of these factors.

Various systemic models which derive from the life-span development approach have been proposed (Hultsch and Plemons, 1979; Lieberman, 1975), and these attempt to show the mechanisms involved in responding to life events. The first stages of a role change model using a life course approach are put forward by Clausen (1972) and other theorists draw attention to the link between role changes, adult life crises and depression.

Hultsch and Plemons (1979) review the model proposed by Dohrenwend (1961) which represents:

1) *Life events* - positive, eg. marriage and negative, eg. divorce
2) *Mediating factors* - inner resources eg. intellectual

abilities, physical health and external resources eg. income, social support from others

3) *Social-psychological adaptation* - involving changes in:
   - affect eg. fear, anger,
   - orientation eg. beliefs, and
   - activity eg. increasing, decreasing, adding, subtracting activities

4) *Outcomes* - functional or dysfunctional.

(Hultsch and Plemons, 1979: 10)

They use this as the basis for their own model which provides a general framework within which a broad range of life events, mediating variables, and developmental outcomes can be viewed within a life stage and historical context (p. 15). Also they draw on the work of Baltes et al. (1979) in defining the major antecedent systems that influence behavioural development: age and history and non-normative influences and distinguish between individual and cultural events. In reviewing the various ways that life events have been defined they conclude that all they have in common is 'the fact that a life event involves a change in the individual's usual activities' (p. 17, see also Reese and Smyer, 1983). Their approach is to identify the dimensions and attributes of life events and propose two broad categories of 'individual' and 'cultural' events. Individual events are experienced as part of the usual life course, eg. marriage, birth of a child, illness, death of a loved one. They give shape to the life course and its transitions but are not age graded. Cultural events eg. wars, natural catastrophes, economic depression, are not experienced as part of the usual life course but can have immediate and continuing effect on individuals' lives.

These authors, like Baltes and Nesselroade (1979), also distinguish between proximal (concurrent) and distal (historical) events and they explain how events distal in time affect current development. Both individual and cultural events may operate as distal antecedents by altering characteristics of the individual at the time they occurred. This change then indirectly affects later development. A major cultural event may lead to historical change which in turn alters the social context of individuals' lives. A cultural

event may also continue to affect individual development if it is linked to the individual's interpersonal environment.

Mediating variables are introduced to explain why different individuals react differently to similar life events and why an event may be stressful for one person but challenging to another. 'The effects of both the individual and cultural events are contingent on a variety of mediating variables defined by various biological, psychological, and contextual resources and deficits' (Hultsch and Plemmons, 1979: 23). In elaborating what is meant by resources and deficits they say 'these variables may be considered as creating a balance of resources and deficits which determine the individual's current state of functioning.'

Variables which enter into the resource-deficit balance include:

1) *social and economic variables* - supportive frameworks and interpersonal relationships, socioeconomic status, and income level. 'High status and income tend to result in an individual having greater access to external resources and greater freedom in terms of manipulating his or her environment.'

2) *biological variables* - where a deficit may restrict adaptive capacity

3) *psychological variables* - cognitive abilities, accumulated knowledge, anticipatory socialisation, coping strategies, time perspective, attitudes, personality and motivational factors.

Once an event occurs, the balance of the individual's resources and deficits plays an important role in mediating the degree of threat. Although an event may require major changes this can be perceived as 'challenging' by an individual with a high balance of resources to deficits.

The selection of appropriate coping strategies depends on the resources available which includes past experience and the strategies already in the individual's current repertoire. If the individual only possesses inappropriate strategies this may lead to exploration, seeking new information, a reappraisal of current assumptions and life goals and new solutions. This can be a highly

unstable period accompanied by confusion, frustration and susceptibility to pathology. Presumably where the degree of instability is less it might provide the occasion of seeking out opportunities for education. They also point out that problems may arise because of the coincidence of the life events of individuals and of others with whom they live (or work).

This model is complex and further aspects are considered in a later section of this chapter which discusses how social and historical contexts affect individuals. Here the systemic aspects are relevant and the basic model together with the resource/deficit variables can be seen as being in a family of similar models.

Other studies (Pearlin, 1982; Lieberman, 1975; Elder, 1981, 1982) have led to the development of systemic models and explanatory frameworks which include these basic elements:

1) *life events* - involving loss or threat

2) *resources* - including personal, psychological, repertoire of coping skills etc.

3) *social support networks*

4) *response* - adaptation or stress

For example, Pearlin (1982) explains how in the face of forces that adversely affect them, people respond in at least three distinct, though not mutually exclusive, ways:

> 'by the selective use of their own coping activities and responses; by calling upon resources residing within personality, especially mastery and self-esteem; and by establishing and employing social support networks.'
> (Pearlin, 1982: 68)

Similarly Lieberman's model (1975) of adaptive processes includes situational demands, personal resources, social support and coping responses. He introduces his ideas as follows:

> 'The model begins with the notion that individuals differ in

> their psychological and biological resources and that when confronted with situations that require major adaptive effort, differences in success will depend upon the resources available to a person in the face of situational demands. The resources available to a person set limits on the processes the person can employ for coping.'
> (Lieberman, 1975: 143)

He adds that his 'predictive framework must also take into account the characteristics and qualities of the social supports around the person' (p. 147).

Elder (1982) draws on Lieberman's (1975) work in considering the factors which affect the responses of men and women to economic change:

> 'Three conditions that bear upon the long-term effects of economic deprivation: (1) the degree or severity of the loss, (2) adaptive resources brought this new situation (education, problem-solving skills etc.), and (3) responses (employment, social withdrawal, etc.) to the economic change. The first two conditions influence the third. Drastic change and minimal resources increase the likelihood of ineffective coping and adverse consequences for health.'
> (Elder, 1982: 81)

Elsewhere he highlights the 'social supports and adaptive resources which enable families and individuals to weather critical life situations' (Elder, 1981: 105).

Similar models can be applied to changes in role, which can be in response to a life event. Clausen (1972) describes processes involving role sequences in which changes in one role can have knock-on effects:

> 'A life is made up of several subcycles of interlinked roles: student roles, family roles, career roles, community roles. Within a subcycle, role sequences may be closely linked: between cycles - family and career, for example - the linkages are likely to be lesser. Nevertheless, a marked change in one sequence is likely to mean some change in the others and in their relative saliences.'
> (Clausen, 1972: 459)

Thus roles can be linked sequentially across time and concurrently in that when one major role ends then there are likely to be changes across those that remain. The sequential changes in role are role *transitions* where a role ends and another begins. The concurrent changes across roles refers to the *integration* of roles. The concepts of role transition and integration can be used in analysing the life course and in identifying the antecedents and consequences of changes. Clausen goes on to summarise the factors affecting the linkages between roles and the life course generally as follows:

> 'There appear to be four major components underlying the development of the life course and the individual's performance of the major social roles that make up so large a part of that course:
>
> 1) the *personal resources* that the individual can command - his intelligence, appearance, strength, health, temperament;
>
> 2) the *sources of support* and guidance that help to orient him to his world and assist him to cope with it;
>
> 3) the *opportunities* available to him or the obstacles he encounters as these are influenced by his social class, ethnic membership, age, sex, and personal contacts, as well as the effects of war, depression, and major social changes that impinge differentially upon particular birth cohorts; and
>
> 4) *investments of effort* that the individual makes in his own behalf (his commitments) and his mobilisation of effort toward these ends.'
>
> (Clausen, 1972: 463)

The first two can be categorised as: personal and social resources. The third, opportunities, might be thought of as largely arising from the particular social and historical conditions under which individuals of various ages, social class etc, live. Investment of effort is mainly concerned with motivation which is a particular type of personal resource which can be affected by the opportunities and social resources available to the individual.

Identification of role transitions and integration together with an individual's characteristics and circumstances are the basis of a model which might begin to explain differences in the life courses

of individuals in different social and economic circumstances. Elder (1978: 25) believes that 'developments in this area of investigation offer a promising base for the construction of general models that apply to the full range of role transitions in the life course.'

The relationship between roles and resources and adult life crisis is developed by Albrecht and Gift (1975) who elaborate on the traditional definition of role by pointing out that:

> 'The competent performance of a role assumes that an individual clearly perceives and defines role expectations and has the resources and experience necessary to accomplish his tasks ... If the expectations associated with an event are clear and the individual possesses sufficient resources to meet the expectation, there usually is no adult life crisis.'
> (Albrecht and Gift, 1975: 239)

The concept of role involves not only expectations but the resources necessary to carry out the role. According to Oatley and Bolton (1985), primary roles are those that are important in maintaining self esteem and if an individual is not able to carry out these roles then this is likely to lead to depression. For example, if a life event occurs which disrupts these roles an individual is vulnerable to depression if they lack:

> '(a) at least one secondary role relationship that gives a convincing sense of a worthwhile self, (b) strategies and circumstances conducive to generating new role relationships, and (c) the ability to take part in activities felt to be satisfying irrespective of the presence of a satisfactory role-other.'
> (Oatley and Bolton, 1985: 382)

These studies enable links to be made between life events and role changes and identify factors, including lack of resources, which may prevent the adoption of new roles and lead to depressive reactions. However, although these models are concerned with change and adaptation to life events, learning as such does not have a central place. For this we turn to systemic models related to adult learning.

Systemic approaches - Models involving learning

The systemic approaches considered so far have been concerned with responses to life events and may include adaptation, however, they are not specifically concerned with adult learning. In this section various models are examined which give more attention to learning or deal with this as their main focus. An area which provides models covering a wide range of household behaviour and can include learning is the 'new home economics' based on the work of Becker and others (Becker, 1965, 1976; Michael, 1975). An approach to adult learning uses a related concept of the 'margin' of resources over demands needed for participation in education (McCluskey, 1970); another approach is based on the learning required to make a transition (Aslanian and Brickell, 1980); and Cross (1981) has a model dealing with the process of participation in adult learning.

Many systemic models are based on psychology and sociology, however economics has also made major contributions to the study of human behaviour and how individuals and households use their personal, social and material resources in activities, including learning, to maximise their well-being. An economic approach can be helpful in the study of lives because the resources available to individuals, which include their knowledge and skills, are a function of their life course and past and present socioeconomic circumstances. The way that individuals use their resources and the opportunities available, including learning, will largely determine their pattern of activities and their life course.

The main concept underlying the new home economics can be stated as: households use their *resources* in various *activities* to produce *benefits* - which may include other resources and well-being. A 'household' is defined as a single economic unit or 'resource system' (Wallman, 1984: 21) and can vary from a single person to extended families. A simple model (Farnes, 1988: 37) can be used to show the relationship between resources, activities and benefits:

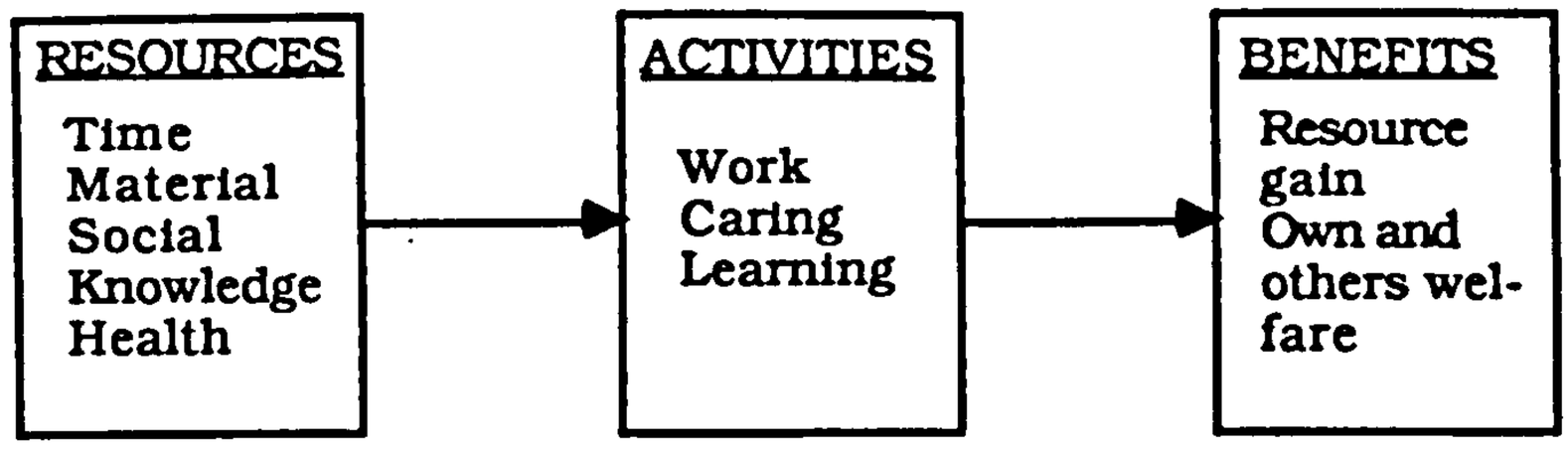


Figure 2.4 Model showing how resources are used in activities to produce benefits.

The household has to make decisions as to which activities to undertake and how much of each resource to use in each activity. This approach assumes that households do not spend time on an activity if they could gain more from doing something else. Obviously the time available is limited and decisions have to be made as to how much time to spend in paid employment, ie. which adult members should be employed full-time, part-time or not at all. Time spent in paid employment is not available for other activities but provides money to purchase goods and services which can be used in, for example, housework, leisure and learning. The goods have to be paid for but labour saving devices and services can save time for other activities. Decisions concerning the amount of time to allocate to child care and the number and ages of children have implications for household resources, earning and welfare (Leibowitz, 1974; Schultz, 1974). Within the limits of their knowledge households have to weigh the short and long term benefits of various activities. New knowledge and skill can alter the allocation of their other resources and lead to new activities being taken up and improvements in welfare (Michael, 1975; Juster, 1975: 2).

This approach draws attention to the resources that are needed for learning and that this activity has opportunity costs. Also the outcomes of learning can include an increase in personal and social resources, eg. strengthened social networks, and improved health and well-being. These in turn might be combined with other resources so that new activities can be undertaken, eg. work, community activities, which may also benefit others.

There are a number of implications of this model for members of

households. Because the 'cost' of time is determined by the labour market, differentials in the earning power between husband and wife mean that there is less opportunity cost if the lower earner takes on more household production ie. housework. Becker argues that households allocate their time accordingly (see a criticism of this view by Owen, 1987). It also assumes that all members of the household are working to maximise their overall well-being and that they will receive fair shares of the resources. Not recognised are other factors such as power, sex roles and unequal access to resources which can be significant factors in marriage (Brannen and Wilson, 1987: 3; Berk, 1980: 125).

While this model shows that various resource inputs are required for any activity, it does not deal with life events and changes in demands that are made on households. The main household activities concerning paid and unpaid work must operate within resource constraints but new demands arise and have to be met which require reallocation of resources and changes in activities. This model is mainly concerned with the supply side, that is the supply of labour by members of the household for paid and unpaid work and other activities. It does not represent the demand side or deal with questions about what are the demands in a particular household, what events lead to changes in demand and what external demands are made and so on.

For example, resource depletion or insufficient resources presumably motivate people to carry out activities in which resources are transformed into other resources that restore the resource deficit. The deficit might be because of over-drawing of resources for a variety of reasons and imposed changes might involve the withdrawal of external resource inputs, for example: withdrawal of job opportunities and unemployment, being evicted, close friend moves away, or the closure of a day care facility. A crisis may occur when excessive demands are made on limited time or when resources are dangerously depleted and prevent important activities from being carried out.

While the model can accommodate these kinds of changes it does not say much about the nature of changes. It is in this area that longitudinal and life event models are useful as they are primarily concerned with the nature of life events and the effect of these events on individuals' development and behaviour.

McClusky (1970a: 27) proposes the concept of the 'margin', which is the surplus of resources remaining after the demands being made on the individual have been met. The resources a person can command and the demands made by themselves or by society are defined as two sets of interacting variables (Main, 1979: 22):

Resources

1) *external* - resources such as social contacts, economic wealth.

2) *internal* - acquired skills and life experiences such as resiliency, coping skills.

Demands

1) *external* - the tasks involved in the usual requirements of living: family, work, civic responsibilities etc.

2) *internal* - the life expectancies set by the individual: self-tolerance, goals, ideals, values, etc.

Since margin is the relationship between resources and demands, it may be increased by reducing the demands or increasing resources. When demands continually match or exceed resources, the person becomes highly susceptible to breakdown. Margin is a necessary condition for learning and McClusky (1970b) provides an example of the difficulties that can arise for an individual:

> 'I have the image of Mrs. A, a mother and the only adult in a poorly furnished home with four children at school and two at home, barely holding the line against family breakdown. Fighting a continual battle for survival, she has *no margin* for the PTA, the night school sewing class, or the inner-city neighbourhood committee organised to cooperate with local programmes of urban renewal.'
> (McCluskey, 1970b: 28)

This model recognises factors in adults' lives which affect participation in adult education and that the relationship between these factors changes at different points in the life cycle. In particular how crises can occur when demands exceeds resources. While this model is based on the psychology of learning, McClusky (1970b: 153) points out that margin is related to the notion of capital in economics and net profit may be considered as a surplus for distribution or reinvestment for expansion, or increased productivity.

Aslanian and Brickell (1980) found from a representative sample of American adults that most decisions to participate in education are related to transitions in their lives - changes affecting their careers, family situations, health, religion, or leisure opportunities. These transitions are influenced by social and economic change - and, to some extent, precipitate still more social and economic change. They put forward the general proposition that: 'Moving from one status in life to another (eg. becoming a mother, being promoted) requires the learning of new knowledge, new skills, and/or new attitudes or values'. If the learning is not accomplished, the individual cannot make a transition into the new status. They point out that their definition of a transition allows for life changes smaller and less significant than those often discussed in the literature. However, they believe that their proposition applies to all types of transitions. 'Transitions require learning: a little transition, a little learning; a large transition, a large amount of learning' (p. 35). Also learning can precede, accompany or follow a transition.

Their second general proposition is: 'Some identifiable event triggers an adult's decision to learn at a particular point in time'. By 'trigger' they mean a life event which may or may not be connected to the transition. Therefore, the topic of learning may not be related to the triggering event (p. 39). For example, getting divorced (triggering event) may precipitate the decision to return to work (transition) rather than learning about coping with loss, and the individual might start learning word processing. The model illustrating a trigger and transition is shown in figure 2.5 below:

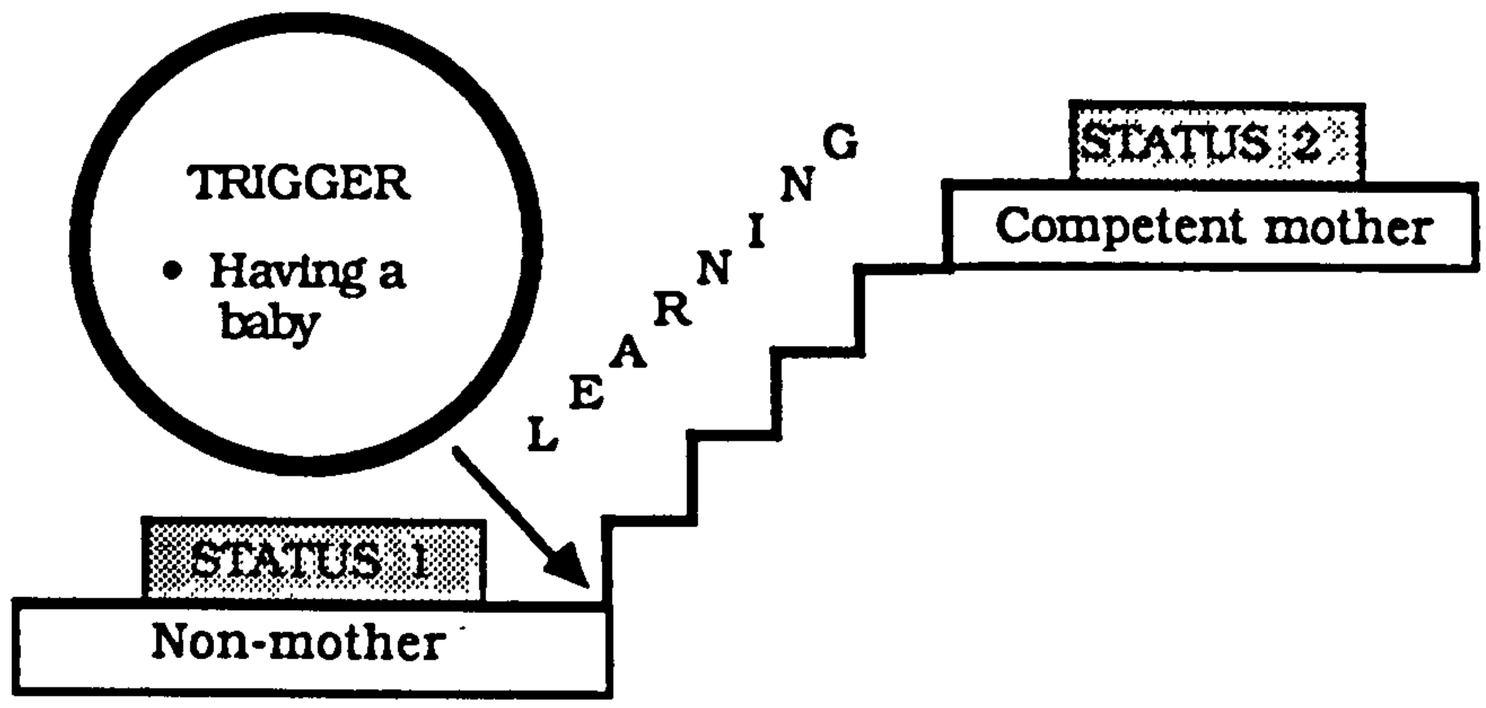


Figure 2.5 Example of a trigger and a transition (from Aslanian and Brickell 1980: 37).

In their survey they found that 83 percent of the adults interviewed said that they learnt in order to cope with a life change. For women the main transitions which involved learning occurred in career, 42%; and family, 21%; other areas included leisure, 16%; health, 7%; and citizenship, 2% (p. 145). Because the amount of time adults spent in each life area corresponded exactly with the number of transitions in each area, Aslanian and Brickell suggested that there is a cause and effect relationship between time spent and the frequency of changes that cause adults to learn (p. 62).

This model does not take into account students' resources but illustrates how a transition in one area of life (eg. employment) can be connected to the activity of learning which is in another area (ie. education). In other words, it is concerned with the interaction between two career lines. Where the trigger is in a third area (eg. health) the model represents events in three areas. The model and the claim that transitions are the main reason adults undertake both formal and informal learning is supported by empirical data. It provides an interesting contrast to the results collected by Tough (1968) who found that only one third of adult learning projects were linked to transitions.

In addition to her longitudinal model of the Characteristics of Adult Learners considered above, Cross (1981) also proposes a systemic

'Chain of Response' model. This model links the demands made by particular life transitions to current psychological characteristics of the individual and relates these to other factors affecting participation in adult education (see figure 2.6).

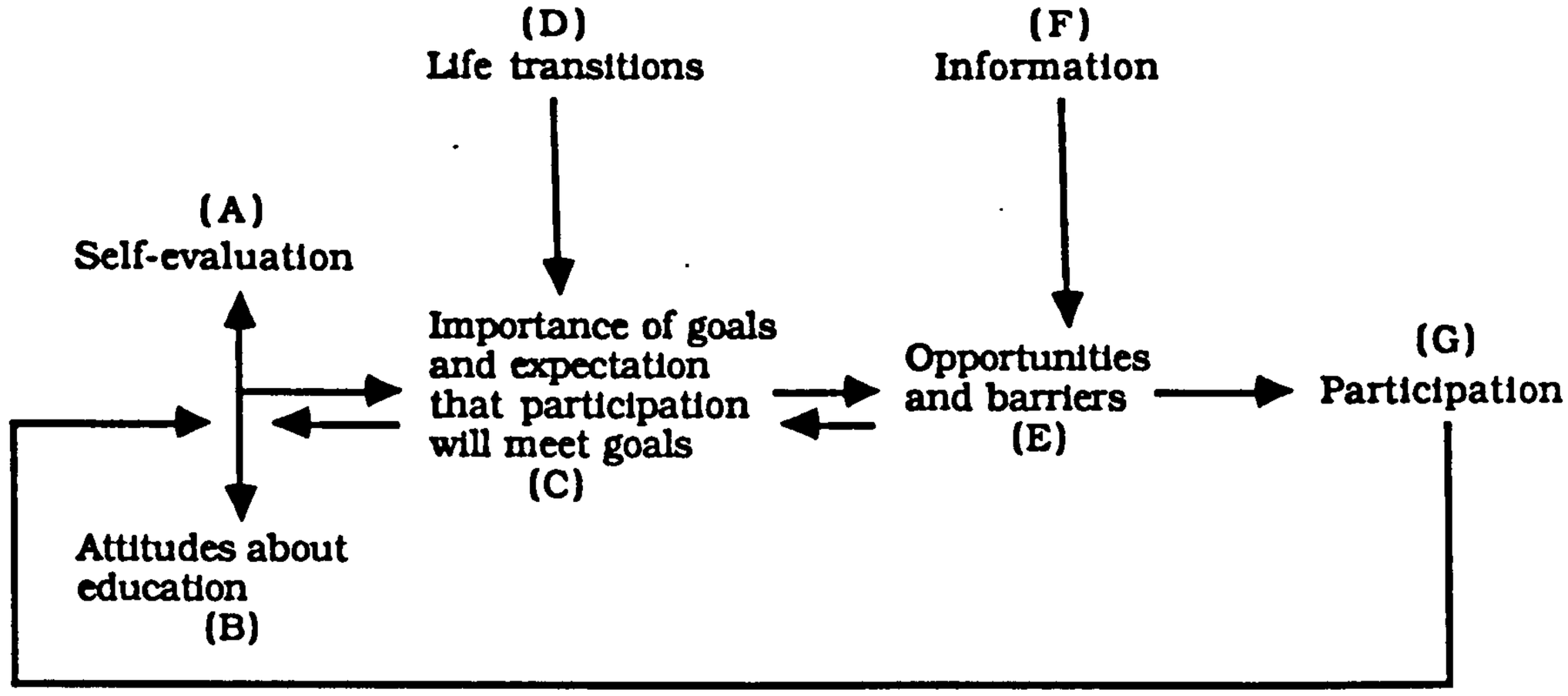


Figure 2.6 Chain of Response model for understanding participation in adult learning activities (from Cross, 1981: 124).

The first factor in her model is self-evaluation (A above) which is important for participation because those who lack confidence in their own abilities avoid putting themselves to the test and education may present a threat to their self-esteem. The next factor is attitudes to education (B) which may arise directly from the learner's own experience and indirectly from the experiences of friends and significant others.

The next stage in her model is the importance of goals and the expectation that goals will be met (C). If a particular goal is a high priority then an individual is likely to seek out ways of achieving it. This requires knowledge of the ways that are appropriate for reaching a goal. Without this knowledge there can be no expectation that a particular course of action will lead to the desired end. Individuals may not be aware that education can help them meet their goals. Expectancy is also related to self-esteem in that more confident individuals expect to be successful in achieving their goals whereas those with low self-esteem may have doubt about their

probable success.

Life transitions (D) are, according to Cross, periods of change calling for adjustment to new phases of the life cycle. She explains their relevance for adult education:

> 'Related to the gradual transitions of life are more sudden dramatic changes, such as divorce or loss of a job, which may "trigger" a latent desire for education into action. The identification of the transitions of life as positive forces for learning is related to much of the current interest in adult phases of development and to Havighurst's (1972) identification of "the teachable moment".'
> (Cross, 1981: 127)

Presumably transitions generate needs or goals that the individual must tackle. These interact with the expectation that participation in adult education can contribute to meeting these goals to determine the strength of motivation.

The next stage of the model involves barriers and opportunities (E) which must be surmounted and taken up. If motivation is not sufficient to overcome the barriers then the individual will not participate (G). There may be other barriers due to distance, cost, childcare needs and so on. Finally successful participation feeds back and reinforces positive attitudes towards education and self evaluation and raises the expectation that education will assist in meeting goals in future.

Cross gives the following example to illustrate the application of the model with reference to positive and negative influences of the various factors:

> 'Let us assume that Sally becomes divorced, a life transition (+D) that removes the negative force of her husband's opposition to further education (+B) at the same time that it adds a strong force for gaining the qualifications for a job that is self-supporting (+C). The force for participation at this point is quite strong, and she may take the initiative in ferreting out information about her options (+F). Her awareness then that a good opportunity exists (+E) adds to the

positive forces of participation. Now let us assume that the course Sally wants to take meets from 2:00 to 4:00 on Wednesdays, leaving her with a babysitting problem for her 4 year old child (-E). If these external barriers are extremely strong and cannot be overcome, this may terminate the force for participation. If, however, Sally finds a solution to her child care problem or finds a home study course for credit or a morning class that meets when her child is in nursery school, the cumulative total of the force is sufficient to cross the threshold to participation.'

(Cross, 1981: 128)

However, the model does not predict under what conditions the loss of self esteem which is often associated with divorce might prevent Sally participating. In spite of the removal of Sally's husband and his negative attitude, her friends' and in particular her mother, may also have negative attitudes to education which lower her motivation. Nonetheless this model represents 'the rough beginnings of a conceptual framework designed to identify the relevant variables and hypothesise their relationships' (Cross, 1981: 124).

Systemic approaches - summary

Returning to the general question of why people respond differently to similar events, these systemic models provide a number of mediating variables and processes to explain different reactions. The variables include personal and social resources - repertoire of coping skills, past experience, health, income, social support networks, and so on - which represent the current stock of resources accumulated through an individual's life course. The socioeconomic and historical context that people live through affects their opportunities to accumulate all kinds of resources.

Role change models focus on change and integration of roles and the factors, including personal and social resources, which affect how individuals perform their roles and can restrict their ability to adopt and fulfil new roles in response to life events and lead to depression. The social and economic context provides opportunities and makes demands which affect individuals differently. McClusky emphasises the relationship between demands and resources and

explains that a margin is needed to take up new activities and learning and excessive demands can lead to breakdown. The new home economics explains how household activities and well-being are constrained by the available resources and that the pattern of activities must achieve a balance between the creation and utilisation of resources. Changes in access to resources and activities will require adjustment and a 'trigger' event may create demands which require learning in order to make a transition. The various characteristics of adult learners affect their participation and success in learning in response to life transitions, their attitudes, goals, knowledge of opportunities and barriers to participation.

People respond differently to similar events because their personal characteristics and socioeconomic circumstances are different. This is because during their life course they accumulated different personal and social resources, which they use in various roles and to undertake a range of activities. Their scope for change and learning depends on the balance between their resources and demands and their access to new roles and opportunities.

Social and historical context

In this chapter the importance of locating both longitudinal and systemic views of people's lives in the social and historical context has been emphasised. The socioeconomic context itself can be viewed systemically (ie. structurally) and longitudinally (ie. historically). In chapter one mention was made of Gibson's (1986: 14) point concerning three levels of social analysis, these were - the personal and interpersonal; the institutional; and the structural. Brofenbrenner's (1977) model of the systems influencing individuals includes the immediate circumstances surrounding the individual; relations between different settings in which the individual operates, and also the larger social contexts, both formal and informal in which the settings are embedded (Sugarman, 1986: 9). Brofenbrenner distinguishes between four levels: microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, and macrosystems:

1) *A microsystem* is the immediate settings and interpersonal relationships in which a person carries out their daily lives. It can be characterised by place, (eg. home, community centre, workplace), time, activities, participants and roles, and the social network of an individual.

2) *A mesosystem* is a system of microsystems; that is 'the interrelations among major settings containing the developing person at a particular point in his or her life' (Brofenbrenner, 1977: 515). This includes interactions between work and home life, social life and leisure.

3) *An exosystem* includes the major institutions of society as they operate at a concrete level eg. labour market, health and educational systems, social services.

4) *Macrosystems* - are the 'overarching institutional patterns of the culture or subculture' (Brofenbrenner, 1977: 515). They include the principles of a society's economic, social, educational, legal and political systems. Such manifestations of a society's culture are transmitted as norms and values through exo-, meso- and microsystems to individuals, thereby influencing their thoughts, behaviours and opportunities.

This view is systemic and represents a cross section of the nesting subsystems which influence (and are influenced by) individuals. Nonetheless this structure changes and the subsystems interact through time and there are longitudinal processes whereby the systems and the individuals within them change.

The mechanisms by which the wider context influences the life course of individuals needs identifying and the links between social and individual change require tracing out. We can return to Hultsch and Plemmons (1979) who summarise both systemic and longitudinal mechanisms and links. They explain that a major event may alter the local socioeconomic context of individuals' lives which affects their behaviour and their development. Also the actions of

individuals, particularly concerning fertility, not only affect the context of their own lives but also contribute to cohort size and flow which has implications for future social change. A major event can affect the following:

1) *Social and community context* - by altering the availability of social and community resources.
2) *Occupational and career context* - by increasing or decreasing available jobs and career life options.
3) *Cohort size and composition* - by changes in fertility rate, mortality rate, migration and sex ratios. This affects:
   a) *family structure* eg. size, age at marriage, spacing of children, family stability and divorce rates, joint career patterns.
   b) *friendship networks* eg. identity, number, and type of friends.
   c) *cohort flow* - ie. the fit between the cohort and the existing role system, eg. too many people and too few jobs or vice versa. In turn, this can directly affect:
      - the social and community context - eg. through altered balance of health and educational resources.
      - the career and employment context - through affecting job opportunities and options.
      - the timing and sequencing of individual life events - eg. leaving the family home, achieving economic. independence, marriage, bearing children, retirement.

(from Hultsch and Plemmons, 1979: 20)

While an event may lead to changes in what an individual does at the time, it may also give rise to changes in their personal characteristics which continue to influence their future behaviour and development. In this way an event can have a longitudinal influence on the life course. An obvious example, would be someone who was disabled in a disaster, less obviously changes in attitude associated with an event (eg. being made redundant, failing the 11+ examination) might endure and influence later decisions and personal development. Thus events can, through changing local contexts, have a direct influence on individuals; and through changing their characteristics, can continue to influence their lives; and the actions of individuals can affect the next generation and

future social change.

Hareven (1982b) explains the impact of historical processes on the timing of individual or family transitions. She points out that demographic, social, economic and cultural factors influence the timing of life course transitions. Getting married, starting a family, and the spacing of children are determined by personal decisions that are often governed by social and cultural values and prescriptions. Cultural changes in norms of timing and economic changes in the opportunity structure affect entry into the labour force, job availability, unemployment and retirement. Institutional and legislative changes such as compulsory school attendance, employment practices and retirement arrangements, affect transitions of different age groups in and out of the labour force (Hareven, 1982b: 8).

Historical change is usually defined with reference to major events such as the Great Depression, World War two, and the '80's recession. However, changes and trends over time often have a more direct impact on the life course. For example, migration and changing employment opportunities within a community can affect changes in the timing of life transitions more directly than great events. However, as Maynard Keynes observed, great events of history are often due to slow changes in demography, hardly noticed at the time (Economist, 1990).

Kendrick (1983: 41) illustrates the complex interweaving of industrial, occupational and demographic change by considering the increase in the number of married women in employment since the war. He says that industrial change led to the increase in jobs in the service sector; and the fall in the age of marriage plus the extension of full-time education meant that the pool of single women was greatly reduced. This created a demand for married women whose household circumstances meant that the jobs were part-time and low paid. Nevertheless, this expansion of opportunities was one of the main determinants of the massive fall in the birth rate.

He goes on to argue that changes in the industrial and occupational are due to structural and market forces over which individuals have little control but which define the opportunities (and non-opportunities) available. Trends in marriage (including divorce) and fertility reflect the responses of individuals to changes in these opportunity structures. People attempt to exercise control over their lives in the spheres in which they can have some chance of shaping their destinies - the family - in the form of decisions about marriage and having children (Kendrick, 1983: 63; Newby et al, 1985: 97). In other words, aggregate trends reflect people's exercise of agency in response to social and historical forces.

While it is obvious that trends reflect changes in the behaviour of large numbers of people, they can also influence the behaviour of individuals. Clarke (1987) points out that:

> 'It is a truism to note that sociodemographic data is at one level merely an aggregate of individual life experiences. The relationship is better conceived therefore as a dialectical one. For there is a sense in which the well-known trends in patterns of marriage and divorce, which frequently achieve popular attention in the media, also feed back into norms and values of the culture, shaping as well as reflecting individual action.'
> (Clarke, 1987: 112)

There is a dialectical relationship between trends and norms which influence behaviour and vice versa.

In summary, the affects of wider socioeconomic change are mediated through local institutions to individuals, and individuals' actions and responses are undertaken through these institutions (including the family) and can contribute to social change. These are reflected in social trends and changing values and norms. The influence of a major event on behaviour can be immediate through changes in local circumstances, and on development and future behaviour through changing personal characteristics; and certain actions can affect current and future cohorts and social change. Socioeconomic changes can alter the pattern and timing of

transitions in the life course. The change process can be complex and interconnected and people exercise control in their family lives in response to social and economic changes.

Conclusions

The theoretical approaches reviewed in this chapter take different perspectives and emphasise different factors and processes in the study of lives. Buhler's phases have a biological basis and she links these to psychological stages and changes in the range of activities. Riegel includes physiological, psychological and social dimensions and emphasises their interactions and the processes by which asynchronies lead to developmental changes. Whereas Baltes is more concerned with pattern and type of events which influence development through the life-span. Each theorist takes a longitudinal perspective and different insights can be drawn from each one - Baltes provides a way of looking at *life events*; Riegel emphasises the *processes* of development and Buhler presents a way of examining *activities* (ie. behaviour) across the life-span. This might be simplified by saying that there is an interaction between the pattern of life events; the processes of development; and behaviour. And this links back to Lewin's general law in that life events are related to the environment, developmental processes take place within and are a function of the person and behaviour is what a person does, ie. their activities.

The life course approach gives less attention to the person and their development and more to roles and activities through time and how these interact with the social and historical context. Resource management is important and involves balancing resources and scheduling the activities of the individual and their family. This approach, like Riegel, sees the interaction between individual and social change as dialectical.

The theorists concerned with lifelong learning point to developmental tasks through the life span and the need for learning

to take place so that these tasks to be successfully accomplished. Riegel and Havighurst point out that the changes or tasks are due physiological, psychological and social demands that individuals face. The changes are developmental because they involve changes in individuals' characteristics, in a way that affects a whole range of their behaviour.

The concept of resources is a central to a systemic view of the determinants of behaviour. There is a lack of consensus on what the main resource types are. It might be helpful to use the terms: personal characteristics and circumstances, as major categories for grouping resource types. An individual's characteristics can be considered as personal resources which are drawn upon in adapting to life events and carrying out various activities. Personal resources include - knowledge, skill, experience, abilities, aptitudes and so on; another kind of personal resource is health and morale. The individual's circumstances are dependent on two main kinds of resources - material and social. Material resources include - income, savings, household appliances, their home, car and so on; one special kind of material or physical resource is time; and social resources consist of social networks made up of members of their family, friends and relatives that can be called upon to help out, share activities and problems with and so on.

Changes in individuals' characteristics or their personal resources tend to be relatively slow and enduring and affect a wide range of behaviour. These changes are what are referred to as 'development' or as developmental changes. Whereas events or changes in the environment, that is in individuals' circumstances might be sudden and require rapid changes in behaviour. Behaviour change due to changes in circumstances is therefore of a different kind to that due to changes in individuals' characteristics. This distinction also corresponds to longitudinal and systemic explanations. Longitudinal explanations of behaviour are concerned with changes in individuals' characteristics, whereas systemic explanations look at behaviour changes in response to changed circumstances.

The new home economics describes how resources are drawn upon in carrying out activities which contribute to individual's well-being and that of others, and involves the transformation of resources. When circumstances or characteristics change this involves changes in resources and will lead to changes in behaviour (activities). The rate that these kinds of resources can change varies - losing a job might be sudden, and having a row with a friend might close off childcare resources; whereas changes in personal resources are more gradual - increases in experience, forgetting an unused skill, becoming less strong, or developing an interest. Under certain circumstances personal characteristics might be changed rapidly, eg. becoming physically or mentally ill or having an accident. Being involved in learning can lead to more rapid changes in knowledge and skill as well as to making new friends and improved morale, and these changes include an increase in resources which can be drawn upon in other activities. While forgetting and acquiring knowledge through experience is usually quite slow, education aims to accelerate learning.

People's characteristics and personal resources are a product of their genetic endowment and experience. As they act in particular circumstances (some of which are unacknowledged by them) they draw on their current resources (eg. knowledge) and produce outcomes (some unintentional) which reinforce their characteristics and circumstances and may lead to changes in these.

Personal characteristics and circumstances represent the structure within which an individual acts and this structure is both a resource and a constraint on what they can do and is reproduced and changed through their action and the actions of others. The rate and extent that individuals can change various kinds of resources varies, some individuals are able to change their own as well as others circumstances. Everyone is able to learn (ie. increase their knowledge and skill resources) but some have more opportunity than others to do this. Being able to use what you learn and to transform this into material resources depends on circumstances (eg. job opportunities). Over a lifetime people's characteristics and

circumstances change which collectively contribute to social and historical change, which in turn affects the characteristics and circumstances of individuals. This relationship between individual change and the wider social and historical context and the role of learning in this is the subject of this study.

Returning to the questions raised at the beginning of the chapter, this review suggests that:

1) People's backgrounds and the pattern of their lives can be described in terms of their characteristics and circumstances and their personal, material and social resources which underlie the pattern of their activities.

2) Their lives are shaped the way they are because of the interaction between their characteristics and circumstances within the social and historical context and includes developmental changes and responses to life events. Learning contributes to individuals' characteristics and the outcomes of learning can be used as resources for changing circumstances.

3) The factors affecting the course of their lives relate to their resources and those of the people around them; as well as the opportunities available and their exposure to events and these are affected by the wider social and historical context.

4) People react to life events in different ways because they have different personal, material and social resources and opportunities.

5) Social and historical changes affect people's lives through the institutions with which they are involved by changing their circumstances and opportunities. However, this process is dialectical in that what individuals do also contributes to a greater or lesser extent to social and historical change.

At this stage the answers are comparatively abstract because they are based on this review of theoretical approaches. The purpose of this study is to provide more specific answers to these questions concerning the role of OU Community Education courses in the lives of students in Glasgow during the recent recession.

Chapter 3 - Students' Lives and Reactions to the Courses: Methodology

Introduction

Drawing on the theoretical contributions in the previous chapter, this chapter focuses on *how* to address the main research questions identified at the end of chapter one. These concern the role of the OU courses, who participates, when they participate, and who benefits from the courses. Tackling these questions involves - various levels of analysis; longitudinal and systemic approaches; descriptive and evaluative data; theoretical and statistical sampling; and life history, questionnaire and documentary research methods. In this way the study adopts a form of methodological 'triangulation' (see Bulmer, 1984: 28; Bertaux, 1981: 10).

The chapter begins by discussing life history methods and issues of validity and reliability and of sampling; then evaluation methods and documentary research are briefly considered. The research questions and considerations regarding appropriate methodologies are then related to each other. The development and nature of the interview document used in the pilot and main studies is described, and the sampling design outlined. Next, the fieldwork stages are described followed by and explanation of the methods used for the analysis and presentation of the data.

The empirical work for this study was organised into three stages: exploratory, pilot, and main studies (see timetable for the study as a whole in appendix C). There is a progression from being relatively unrepresentative and unstructured to being more representative and structured; in the later stages there is greater concern with sampling and consistency in data collection. The table below shows how the emphasis changed and the number and description of the subjects at each stage.

Stage	Representative	Structured	N	Subjects
Exploratory	No	No	32	8 Organisers, 18 group leaders, 6 students
Pilot	No	Yes	12	Students in one area of the city
Main	Yes	Yes	60	Students across the city

Table 3.1 Change of emphasis of the stages of the study.

The purpose of the exploratory stage was to collect examples of how students fitted the courses into their lives and the kinds of changes the courses were associated with. It involved individual and group discussions with students, group leaders and organisers. This assisted in the adaptation of the interview document used by Johnson et al. (1981) to collect life histories and in particular in designing a section focussing on the influence of the courses. A version of the document was piloted in individual interviews with 12 students. Revisions to the document and the development of a sampling frame enabled the main study to be conducted in which 60 students were interviewed. The following sections describe and justify the methods adopted at each stage.

Life history methods

Life history can be defined as 'a deliberate attempt to define the growth of a person in a cultural milieu and to make theoretical sense of it' (Dollard, 1935: 3). Plummer (1983: 108) provides a typology of the various types of life history documents. In essence this consists of two dimensions:

1) The number of people studied - concentration on a single individual or a number of individuals.

2) The scope of the lives covered - the extent that the history is comprehensive or focuses on a particular topic.

This framework defines the options for collecting life histories which are shown by the four points in figure 3.1 below:

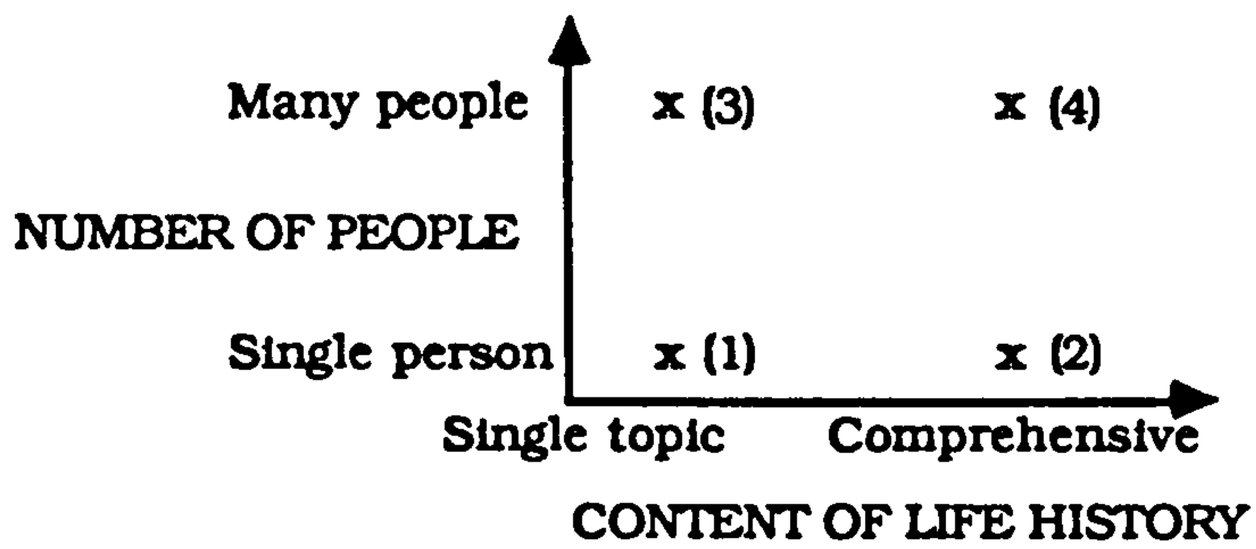


Figure 3.1 Life history options based on Plummer's (1983: 108) typology.

In this study it would be possible to concentrate on one student and collect a comprehensive life history (ie. 2 above). Alternatively more limited life histories could be collected from a number of students (ie. 3). Option 4 would require a lot of time to collect and analyse and option 1 would yield little data. Much of Plummer's discussion on methodology (Plummer, 1983: ch. 5) refers to in-depth, open-ended interviews conducted over a number of sessions in which a single informant provides details of their past and current life (ie. 2 above).

Rosenmayr (1982) summarises the arguments for combining biographical and questionnaire methods particularly when using a number of interviewers:

> 'Combined methods of biographical techniques and enlarged questionnaires are recommended. Difficulties with biographies reappear in oral history research. Even with personnel who are scientifically trained in the documentation of life history, theoretical preconceptions will develop an enormous self-momentum, resulting in a heterogeneity of results. To illustrate, some interviewers emphasise everyday occurrences, others stimulate statements about value problems. Furthermore, the life history method using biographical and autobiographical materials for a considerable number of people shows a surprising paucity of statements. Thus, in a review of a Canadian research project at the Institute of Human Sciences of the University of Laval, Louis Morin (1974) remarked on the paucity of information and the repetitiveness of personal narratives. We are reminded of the reasons that led Paul Lazarsfield, for example, to return to the questionnaire in Vienna in the 1920's, although he had been a disciple of Charlotte Buhler and Siegfried Bernfeld who emphasised biographic and unobtrusive methods. Similarly, Samuel A

> Stouffer switched from qualitative biographical methods to quantitative research on the basis of his familiarity with the shortcomings of results obtained by Thomas and Znaniecki in their studies of the Polish peasant.'
> (Rosenmayr, 1982: 45)

His points about the limitations of open-ended biographical methods are:

1) Lack of reliability due to interviewers giving different emphasis between everyday occurrences and value statements (ie. descriptive versus evaluative, see below).

2) Paucity of statements obtained (ie. lack of descriptive data).

3) Repetitiveness of personal narrative.

4) Other researchers have moved from open ended methods to include the use of questionnaires.

Further justification for the combination of open ended and more closed questions is provided by Cornwell (1984: 16) in her study of women's lives, she argues that different types of questions give rise to public or private accounts - 'public accounts are sets of meanings in common social currency that reproduce and legitimate the assumptions people take for granted about the nature of social reality' (p. 15). A private account is the way in which a person 'would respond if thinking only what he and the people he knows directly would think and do' (she quotes Douglas, 1971: 242). 'Private accounts spring directly from the personal experience and from the thoughts and feelings accompanying it' (p. 16). She explains the link between question types and public and private accounts in the following way:

> 'It was noticeable ... that the accounts people gave varied according to whether they had been asked a direct question - when they responded with public accounts - or invited to tell a story - in which case they might give private accounts. I would argue that the explanation for this variation is that a subtle shift of power takes place in the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee according to whether the interviewer is asking questions or encouraging the other person to tell stories. In the first instance the relationship between the two is controlled by the interviewer; in the

> second it is more controlled by the story-teller. In the course of a single interview, the person being asked questions and answering them seemed reminded of the unnaturalness of what they were doing, talking about themselves to a stranger who was making a study of them. But when they were telling stories, their attention was focussed on the story and the events it contained rather than the audience, and they shifted into a different and less self-conscious way of talking about the thoughts and feelings associated with their experience.'
> (Cornwell, 1984: 16)

While there are difficulties in devising and applying criteria to assess whether a particular account is public or private, her point about how open and closed questions affect interviewee control is important.

Elder (1978: 21) recommends Dailey's Assessment of Lives (1971) as 'the most thorough current source' which provides an overview of methods for using life histories in the study of lives. Dailey gives details of his technique for collecting a life history and points out that given the usual readiness to talk about one's life, most informants will give an acceptable account within an hour and a searching account within half a day. The life history is assumed to consist of a large but finite number of episodes and he suggests sampling all significant environments where people spend most of their time: work, home, school, and leisure as well as social institutions. He echoes the points made by Rosenmayr above in saying that 'when a person tells his history ... he produces a long string of material in which actual events, confusing circumstances, evaluative judgments, and objective facts are intermingled'. What is needed is an 'interrogation outline or written document to help order the string of information so that the data begin to flow in a more coherent manner' (pp. 48-54).

Although Dailey mentions that in special circumstances it may be possible to instruct groups of people to prepare their life histories, he gives particular attention to the development of a life history for one individual (ie. one-to-one). He assumes that a four hour period is sufficient time to collect enough material for assessment, prediction

and to provide insights and therapeutic benefits. A series of questions are used which begin by probing the person's present view of their situation and work back to a more complete picture of their life history. The first question is 'Tell me about your life?' which is elaborated upon in several ways. Later questions focus on key episodes in each year of life. This is followed by probing for periods and areas of life and about people which may have been left out. Finally he asks questions about the person's view of their future.

This procedure has many useful aspects, however, the life history is collected in a counselling setting for the specific purpose of assessment and prediction. This is different from research applications which aim to understand people's lives and the significance of particular events. The focus is on episodes rather than on progression through interdependent careers in various areas of life (Elder, 1978: 22). Much of the questioning and probing depends on the interviewers understanding and on-the-spot analysis of what has and has not been said. Also he recommends verbatim recording of narrative, but points out that this may eventually be between 5,000 and 20,000 words. The task for the interviewer following this method is therefore extremely demanding.

A more manageable research technique was developed by Johnson et al. (1981) who used an Interview Document to collect and record life history data from elderly people and to evaluate a particular intervention - a meals-on-wheels service. The Interview Document includes open-ended 'starter' questions and more closed and factual 'topic' lists and combines biographical and questionnaire methods. Di Gregorio (1986: 140) explains that the Interview Document combines qualitative and quantitative elements in starter questions and topic lists for each of eight sections or themes which roughly correspond to the chronology of an individual's life. Each section begins with two to five starter questions:

> 'These are simple questions designed to encourage the respondents to tell their life story in their own words. Blank pages follow these starter questions so the respondent's story could be recorded verbatim. Additional blank pages were

> provided in case the respondent's story required it. After the starter questions are topic lists. These were used as a check list *after* the unstructured account was given. Many of these items were likely to be included in the unstructured account but the topic lists provided a method to ensure that certain information was systematically collected for all the respondents.'
> (di Gregorio, 1986: 140)

A special feature of this methodology, which is shared by Dailey, is that in the open ended parts of the Interview Document the interviewer writes down what the interviewee says. In comparison to tape recording this reduces the amount of data collected and focuses the interview onto important details. Using this method a reasonably detailed life history can be collected in an hour and a half.

Validity and reliability

Life histories involve a longitudinal approach and they are usually based on biographical reconstruction where individuals recall their past experience. This can be problematic depending on the purposes for which the data is being collected. Drawing on the work of Johnson (1976) on the needs of older people, Rosenmayr (1982) makes the point that it is important

> 'to identify the paths of their life histories through biographical reconstruction. In this way, their present problems and concerns generated by their life histories can be discovered. Even priorities in needs cannot be recognised except through life history.'
> (Rosenmayr, 1982: 33)

A similar point might be made about using biographical reconstruction to identify the paths in student's life histories and their problems and concerns (and changes) around the time of the OU courses and afterwards. However, this purpose is different from attempting to identify linkages between people's recollections of their early experience and current circumstances. In this connection Clausen in the introduction to Elder's (1974) book, points out the limitations of retrospective data:

> 'If there is an attempt to check on specific linkages between early experience and later personality characteristics or career lines, it usually entails starting from known outcomes and working backwards, using retrospective reports. But since the past is almost inevitably revised in retrospective reconstructions to accord with present perspectives, the cloak of evidence is of insubstantial fabric.'
> (Clausen, 1974: xviii)

However, Clausen may be too sweeping in not distinguishing between *evaluative* reports where individuals recall their past attitudes and opinions and *descriptive* reports where they recall past events and activities. Bertaux (1982) differentiates between opinions, attitudes and values on the one hand and actions and practices on the other. He describes his initial purpose and strategy for collecting life histories of bakery workers:

> 'We initially focused these interviews not upon opinions, attitudes, and values, but upon actions (which we rather call *des pratiques*); not upon the subjective meanings of the actions for the actors, but upon the *pratiques* themselves, their sequences and timing. As a result, our first interviews lacked human content. But we got what we wanted - practices, and by comparing the practical life courses of several bakery workers (and later, of bakers), we were able to get at the structural relationships that conditioned these practices. This part of the research was thus wholly oriented toward what Hareven calls the "behavioristic" side of life courses.'
> (Bertaux, 1982: 147)

Kohli (1981) contributes to the debate about biographical reconstruction by commenting on the issue of 'truth' in biographies[1] and points out that on the one hand his analysis

> 'has stressed the reconstructive character of autobiographic narratives, ie. its being tied to the contingencies of the present situation; on the other hand, we are inclined to think that there is some specifiable relation between the narrative

---

[1]Stimson (1976: 5) distinguishes between three 'methodological positions' regarding the problem of the relationship of current accounts to the past. One is to treat accounts as revealing the truth about the past; the second is to recognise that there are sources of bias in both the teller and the listener; and third that accounts are only true in terms of the present.

> reconstruction and the events to which it refers.'
> (Kohli, 1981: 69)

He considers three aspects of the issue - sincerity, subjective truth and historical truth. Regarding the first he remarks on the apparent 'sincerity' of many autobiographies, and that this is partly because nobody knows their own history better than anyone else. However, this does not mean that individuals will be prepared to reveal derogatory events about their past to a listener or even to themselves, and although people may be sincere, this cannot prevent past events being reconstructed in the light of present circumstances. Nonetheless, the structural properties of the accounts themselves can be examined for conspicuous omissions, perhaps where a stage or aspect of life has been skipped over. Furthermore this might be done during the interview and probes made and elaborations asked for (see also Dailey, 1971: 69 and Thompson,1981: 294).

Kohli says that the second aspect involves the concept of 'subjective truth' which he says has been claimed as the goal of the biographical method by Thomas and Znaniecki (1918). This method can inform us about how an individual 'thematizes and constructs his own biography (in a given situation) and, by doing this, reaffirms (or even constitutes) his identity, and plans his actions' (Kohli, 1981: 70). However, he points out that if this was all that the method could do then most of its applications would be invalid. The information cannot be viewed as informing us only about the present. He refers to the distinction drawn from linguistic theory where narrative has been analysed in terms of two functions: *referential* (ie. descriptive) and *evaluative*:

> 'The referential function consists in the description of past events in their temporal order. The evaluative function consists in referring these events to the present, ie. in making clear what they mean to the participants in the situation in which the narrative occurs.'
> (Kohli, 1981: 67)

Kohli adds that we expect from biographies 'not only evaluation, but

also reference; not only 'situational', but also 'historical' truth (p. 71). The question of *'historical truth'* of biographies can be approached pragmatically as it is in oral history. Here the accounts are treated as only one source of data and efforts are made to cross-check wherever possible. In other words the attempt should be made to arrive at valid findings through triangulation.

The retrospective recall of earlier opinions and attitudes are also likely to be unreliable as well as questionable validity. However, recalled behavioural data can be also be unreliable. Individuals can fail to recount relatively objective events which happened in the past, such as hospitalisation. Also there are differences between what individuals recall as their father's occupation in the past and what is recorded in census records (Blau and Duncan, 1968, cited by Bulmer, 1984: 31). Triangulation with other data sources can also improve reliability.

In the extract from Rosenmayr (1982: 45) he recommends the use of questionnaire methods in order to improve reliability between interviewers. Also recruiting interviewers from similar backgrounds as the students should reduce misunderstanding, and training could improve the consistency between interviewers. Calder (1989: 85) interviewed each student in her study on two separate occasions so that data from the first interview could be checked with the interviewee. The interview should be confidential and carried out in a neutral setting.

Retrospective methods, then, should not be used in the attempt to establish linkages with recalled early opinions, attitudes or values, instead the focus should be on making explicit the descriptive and behavioural aspects of the life course and obtaining views related to current circumstances. When used with students the purpose should be to identify what happened in their lives and their circumstances, and their views and opinions should only be sought about their recent experience and the OU courses. Where necessary probes can be used during the interview and cross checks, including a second interview, carried out if possible. Trained

interviewers, from similar backgrounds to the students and using questionnaire methods will give greater reliability.

Sampling

The framework (figure 3.1) derived from Plummer defining the options regarding the sample size and the comprehensiveness of the life history summarises the traditional social research problem of balancing sample size against the depth to which each individual can be studied (Bilton et al, 1987: 534). The problem is to arrive at sample size large enough to be statistically representative of the population being studied and to keep data collection manageable. However, a number of researchers have adopted a more dynamic concept of sampling involving 'saturation' (Bertaux, 1982: 134) or theoretical sampling (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 45).

Bertaux (1982: 134) claims that what he calls *saturation* 'is the answer to the famous riddle of the validity of "qualitative data"'. As much of the data from life histories is qualitative the question of the validity of qualitative data overlaps with that concerning the validity of retrospective accounts. He criticises the traditional role for qualitative data which is limited to hypothesis formation and that quantitative data must be used to verify hypotheses. He poses a 'key question to the life course field':

> 'How is it possible, from a study of a small number of cases, to draw a theory that is not merely a set of hypotheses to be verified by another (quantitative) method, a theory that already has its own validity with respect to the processes studied?'
> (Bertaux, 1982: 132)

He answers the question with reference to the concept of 'saturation' which occurs:

> 'When the interviews bring again and again the same elements of a recognisable pattern, when subsequent interviews with new persons confirm its presence in *every* life, then the pattern may be considered not merely fantasy of the researcher (in social-scientific language - mere hypothesis) but a structuring feature of the actual process.'
> (Bertaux, 1982: 134)

He believes that to achieve saturation the sample interviewed does not need to be *statistically* but should be *sociologically* (or theoretically) representative. These different types of representativeness answer different questions. If you want to know how a given population will vote in the next election, then a statistically representative sample is essential. But, if you want to understand the practice of voting and what influences people's choice of candidates, then sociological analysis should be carried out until saturation has been reached (see Bertaux 1981: 38).

Bertaux's distinction between statistical and sociological sampling parallels that of enumerative and analytic induction (Znaniecki, quoted by Bulmer, 1984: 249). Enumerative induction is where statistical generalisations are made from a sample of cases; analytical induction employs an exhaustive examination of one case before going onto others in order to arrive at universal, causal generalisations (see Plummer, 1983: 125). This later procedure is similar to grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) where the researcher moves from one case to another on the basis of 'theoretical sampling' in order to make 'constant comparisons' and the criteria for selection of cases are derived from the emerging theory. These methods for using qualitative data from case histories and case studies for theory building show how this kind of data can be validated with reference to its *theoretical* consistency.

Evaluation methods

Evaluation methods tend to be applied to recent events and avoid the 'insubstantial fabric' of evaluative data concerning distant events in people's lives. Evaluation methods tend to be systemic in that they are concerned with events at particular point in time. The question of whether participation in the OU courses can be tackled as a traditional evaluation study needs considering. Evaluation methodologies are relevant to this study but there are particular difficulties with the traditional approach. The OU courses in Glasgow are offered as part of a service provision and Smith and

Cantley (1985) summarise the traditional approach to the evaluation of a service as follows:

> 'Most often the description of an evaluative design runs like this: define service goals, specify outcomes as measures of goal achievement, define criteria of success, isolate the effects of the service from other possible causes, measure achievements, and adjudicate on the success (or otherwise) of the service.'
> (Smith and Cantley, 1985: 3)

Thus, the process of evaluation is seen as paralleling the policy process by which the service aims, methods and outcomes are defined. With educational provision this would also involve specifying learning objectives, pre and post tests, and measuring learning gains. But there are major problems with this approach. First, it is assumed that service provision is a rational processes, that there are clear goals, activities and agreed and measurable outputs; and secondly, that a consensus exists between all those involved (including the students) as to what these are. Thirdly, there is an assumption that it is possible to control out random influences which is often attempted by random allocation of individuals to control and experimental groups so that they can receive different treatments.

Smith and Cantley (1985: 5) point out that difficulties arise with this approach because most services have multiple and ambiguous goals, methods and outcomes and there is little consensus as to what these are. In chapter one it was noted that there was a lack of clear policy objectives for how community education and the OU courses related to Strathclyde's social strategy. Also, in practice it is rarely possible to randomly assign people to different groups and to ensure they receive different treatments. In addition to these difficulties there are particular problems in obtaining the precision demanded by the traditional approach with adult learning which occurs outside institutions or classrooms. Brookfield (1983) explains that:

> 'In the investigation of that learning which occurs primarily in a natural setting (in families, community groups, voluntary

societies etc.) rather than within academic institutions or classrooms, such precision is hard to obtain. Students [ie. researchers] of adult learning in the community are entering largely uncharted research waters. They cannot enjoy the luxury of working with established research paradigms and, given the paucity of theoretical frameworks in this field, they are unlikely to be able to devote their energies to verifying or modifying any previously proposed hypotheses.'

(Brookfield, 1983: 6)

A number of suggestions have been made for a more appropriate evaluative methodology. Smith and Cantley summarise these as follows: to use *process, illuminative, subjectivist* and *pluralist* approaches. The *goal free* approach (Scriven, 1972) might also be added to this list.

Rather than focusing on outcomes as the conventional paradigm does, process evaluation relies on description and making inferences from what can be observed in order to build up a sensitive and composite picture of how the programme functions (Smith and Cantley, p. 7). This is similar to illuminative evaluation which arose in educational research. Parlett and Hamilton (1977) explain the aims of illuminative evaluation as follows:

> 'It aims to discover and document what it is like to be participating in the scheme, whether as a teacher or pupil, and, in addition, to discern and discuss the innovation's most significant features, returning concomitants and critical processes.'
>
> (Parlett and Hamilton, 1977: 19)

Illuminative and process approaches come under the general heading of what House (1980) calls subjective methodologies which he describes as follows:

> 'The subjectivists are less interested in arriving at a proposition that is 'true' (in the generalisable sense) than in relating the evaluation to the particular experience of the audience. They attempt to obtain valid insights within the frame of reference of the group for whom they are working ... The evaluation is intentionally context-bound, and findings are interpreted in context. Since the audience may well have a firmer grip of the context, based on greater experience, the

> audience's interpretation of an event may be superior to that of an evaluator ... Historical investigation and the following of events over time are also critical. The historical mode of investigation is more appropriate than the natural science mode. Emphasis is on the qualitative rather than the quantitative.'
> (House, 1980: 56)

The goal free approach is a direct reaction to the problems with the traditional model. Rather than basing the study on the programme's goals, the evaluator deliberately remains uniformed about what they are in order not to be biassed by them. Scriven argues that:

> 'The less the external evaluator hears about the goals of the project, the less tunnel-vision will develop, the more attention will be paid to *looking* for *actual* effects (rather than checking on *alleged* effects).'
> (Scriven, 1972: 2)

The evaluator must therefore search for all outcomes (House, 1980: 30). Given the difficulties in establishing what the goals 'really' are this seems a practical suggestion providing the diverse goals of the various interested parties, including the clients, are explored.

Finally, the pluralist approach recognises that various data sources, perceptions and interests exist in the service being evaluated and data should be collected from all the major interest groups. This approach is similar to that of 'triangulation' which uses multiple methodologies in order to counteract the bias introduced by particular methods to attempt to reach the 'truth'. However, the pluralist approach accepts that different versions of the 'truth' are valid and relevant to the evaluation.

Many of these issues are shared with the life course approach including questions about 'truth', the emphasis on context, historical methods, and qualitative data. Methods combining longitudinal and systemic perspectives can be used for the study of people's lives and their responses to a particular event. Life course methods can provide a longitudinal perspective while evaluation methodologies tend to be systemic, although there are useful

overlaps between life course methods and subjectivist evaluation. Exploring students' reactions to the courses might involve subjectivist evaluation which can be linked to the longitudinal perspective of their lives.

In summary:

1) Traditional evaluation methods are problematic, particularly when applied to naturalistic settings.

2) Subjectivist evaluation methods can be used to explore students' reactions to the courses.

3) Life course methods provide the longitudinal perspective for the study of students' lives.

4) A variety of methods and triangulation will give greater validity.

Documentary research

While life histories and questionnaires give individuals' perspectives of the features of the socioeconomic and historical context that affect them, to capitalise on the benefits of triangulation another perspective is helpful. A macro or 'top-down' perspective of socioeconomic events and changes that have occurred in Glasgow can intersect with the 'bottom-up' views of the students themselves. The top down perspective is provided by a range of documentary sources which include books, articles, official reports, policy documents, statistics, and the census. These sources give information on the socioeconomic history of Glasgow and can be used as the basis for analysis of the policies related to Strathclyde Regional Council and the Open University.

There are a large number of areas of life for which official records relating to an individual are kept. These include school - dates attended, grades and personal reports; health - illnesses, prescriptions, pregnancy and childbirth; employment - jobs held, promotions; housing - rent payments, repairs, changes in residence; social work - problems and difficulties; police - charges, punishments; community education - courses taken, when and

where studied, certificates gained. Aggregate data from these sources are often published and can contribute to the documentary material reviewed to gain a top-down perspective on people's lives. Data of this kind can be used to check information given in retrospective accounts by individuals. But in practice access to such diverse sources is difficult and restrictions due to confidentiality may make this impossible. Often only data held by the agency responsible for the service which is being studied is available to the researcher. In this study this included the records held by the Community Education Service in Glasgow and by the Open University.

Research questions and methods

The five main research questions of the study can be related to various levels of analysis; longitudinal and systemic approaches; descriptive and evaluative data; statistical and theoretical sampling and to the three research methods available. Table 3.2 below summarises the options under particular categories:

Questions:	1-5 see below
Level of analysis:	Individual's lives and families; institutions; socioeconomic context
Approach:	Longitudinal, systemic, historical
Data type:	Descriptive, evaluative
Sampling:	Theoretical, statistical
Research method:	Life history, questionnaire, documentary research

Table 3.2 The research options under particular categories.

These options can be related to each research question:

1) What role does OU Community Education have in Strathclyde's

social strategy? - this is mainly at the institutional level of analysis and involves longitudinal and systemic approaches using documentary research. The data and sampling categories are less relevant to this research method.

2) Who participates in the courses - what is their background, what are their characteristics and circumstances? - this concerns students' backgrounds at the individual and family level, and requires a systemic approach, descriptive data, and statistical sampling using questionnaire methods. Students' backgrounds need to be seen in socioeconomic context which involves documentary research.

3) When in their lives do students participate in the courses - at what stage and what else is going on around the time of the courses? - involves focussing on the individual and family level and examining the socioeconomic context, the use of longitudinal and systemic approaches, descriptive data, statistical sampling and life history methods. Trends and changes in the socioeconomic context can be identified through documentary research.

4) Which students are influenced and how - what proportions of students with certain characteristics and who respond in particular ways? - this is at the individual level but results will be aggregated, involves systemic approach, descriptive and evaluative data, statistical sampling and questionnaire methods. Examination of how students are influenced is likely to require theoretical sampling.

5) Who else is affected? - mainly concerns identification of influences at the level of community institutions, involving a systemic approach, evaluative data, theoretical sampling and questionnaire methods.

The Interview Document

The Interview Document developed for this study was based on the

one used by Johnson et al. (1981) which was modified on the basis of the exploratory and pilot studies but retained a similar structure. The main differences between these studies and the Interview Documents used are summarised in table 3.3 below:

	Johnson et al.	Farnes
Interviewees		
Age:	70-90 years	20-50 years
Sex:	Male and Female	Female only
Major event:	WW2 and WW1	'80's recession
Intervention:	Meals on Wheels	Community Education
Interview document		
Themes:	1. Childhood	1. Childhood & Education
	2. Personal & Family	2. Personal & Family
	3. Employment	3. Employment
	4. War	[War not included]
	5. Leisure	4. Community & Social
	6. Later Life	[Later life not included]
	7. Needs/Help	5. Services
	8. Looking Ahead	6. Changes (ie. associated with the courses)
		7. Looking Ahead - included in pilot version)

Table 3.3 Differences between the two studies and Interview Documents.

The open ended starter questions covered the main areas of students' life histories and the topic list items were expressed as questions designed to provide further information on the main events and details of the student's life. The section in Johnson et al's study dealing with intervention Needs/Help, covered the respondents situation and views on Meals on Wheels and other services. In this study the section on Changes focussed on students' involvement in and reactions to the OU courses. In common with the other sections this began with open ended starter questions to encourage students to say what the courses meant to them. This was followed by more systematic probing using questions developed from the profile of changes (see p. 120) to explore whether the courses had helped in particular areas of their lives.

On the basis of the results from the pilot study modifications were

made to the Interview Document which included:

- incorporating the Looking Ahead section into the Changes section
- moving questions on informal help from Services to Community and Social
- adding questions on housework and childcare when young and husband's contribution
- redesigning the questions on social networks
- making topic questions more explicit and including a 'yes/no' category as well as opportunities for elaboration
- clarifying routing instructions

A copy of the revised version of the Interview Document used in the main study is provided in appendix D.

The sequence in which the interview proceeded in the main study was to begin with starter questions on students' Childhood and Education, then to move to starter questions in the next section and so on until all sections had been completed. Following this topic questions dealing with the courses in the Changes section were used to fill in and expand on what had been said in response to the starter questions. When these topic questions had been covered the interviewer returned to the earlier sections and checked that information relating to the topic questions had been obtained and if not asked specific questions. The main aim was for students to tell their life story and to talk about the courses in their own words rather than to give short answers to formal questioning.

Sampling design for the main study

Each year the Glasgow Division of the Community Education Service draws up lists of students for the award of Course Certificates. In deciding which cohort of ex-students to study a judgment had to be made to allow sufficient time to elapse during which they could have gone onto other things after the courses finished but avoiding too

long a period over which their memories of the courses might fade and the difficulties in restoring contact would increase. The list for the presentations in September 1986 was selected and this consisted of students who had successfully completed at least one OU course between August 1985 and August 1986. The sample for the main study was drawn from this list. Interviewing began in October 1987 and was completed by April 1988 (see timetable for the study in appendix C) which meant that for this cohort there was a minimum of 15 months and a maximum of 26 months between completing the 1985/6 courses and interviewing, see figure 3.2 below.

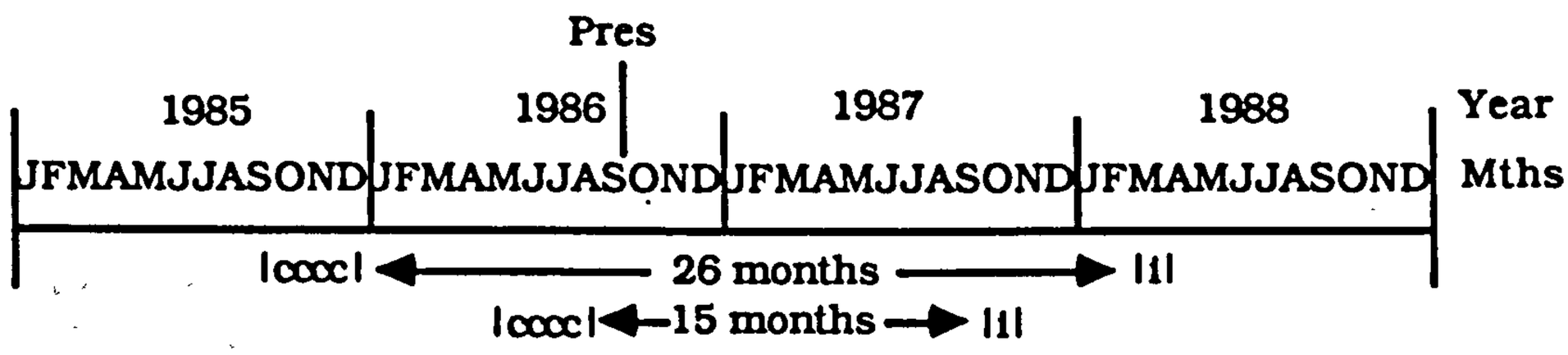


Figure 3.2 Maximum and minimum interval between the end of the course (c) and the interview (i).

As students were arranged on the list in the centres and groups in which they studied each course, it was necessary to remove the duplication due to those who took more than one course during the year. The final list consisted of 515 individuals who had all completed at least one OU course during 1985/6.

Because of the small proportion of male students (5% of those receiving Certificates in 1986) and the difficulties of obtaining a representative and a large enough sample to make meaningful comparisons between the place of the courses in men's and women's lives, the decision was made to concentrate on female students only. The structure of men's lives is significantly different from women's lives and a separate study is needed to explore men's involvement in OU Community Education courses.

A sample of 60 was considered large enough to explore trends and

to identify subgroups and small enough to be manageable for fieldwork and analysis. The names were selected on an interval basis ie. every eight or ninth student (depending on rounding up or down of the running interval) from the list. As no addresses are kept by the Community Education Service as a matter of policy, each student was contacted through group leaders and organisers who explained the purpose of the study and asked for their agreement to be interviewed (see letter to group leaders/organisers in appendix E). If students could not be contacted because they had moved away or they did not wish to be interviewed the procedure was for the very next student on the list to be approached. When a group leader/organiser was no longer in the area it was necessary to skip to the first student in next group on the list.

The difficulty of locating adult students who may not remain in contact with the centre after the course ends and for whom there are no addresses should not be underestimated. The combined efforts of the staff of the Community Education Service and other agencies were successful in contacting over 60% of the students originally selected for the sample and 31 of these were interviewed with six declining. The rest of those interviewed were selected through the substitution procedure. This gives rise to the possibility of bias being introduced through this process. For example, students who were still attending the centre would be easier to contact than those who left, and if they were still attending it was more likely that they had taken further courses. Therefore it might be expected that the substitutes will have taken more OU courses than those they replace in the original sample. Careful analysis of the lists going back to 1982 enables all the Course Certificates awarded to be traced for those in the original sample, including those who were not interviewed and their substitutes. It is therefore possible to compare which courses were taken, the average numbers of courses and the years in which Certificates were awarded for the original sample and the substitutes. There are no significant differences between the original sample and their substitutes in the particular courses they had taken. But the substitutes had taken slightly more OU courses (2, on average, compared to 1.6 for all the original

members of the sample) but this is not significant statistically ($p>0.1$). However, 10 out of the 29 substitutes also took courses in 1986/7 compared to only 3 of the originals who were not interviewed and this difference is significant at the 0.05 level (there were 4 out of the 31 in the original sample who were interviewed who took courses in 1986/7). This suggests that the substitutes were typical in terms of the total number of courses but more likely to have taken a course recently.

A summary of the OU Course Certificates awarded in each year for the interviewed students is given in table 3.4 below (population statistics are given in appendix F):

Course title	Year of Award of Course Certificate 1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	Total
The First Years of Life	0	1	0	1	0	5	1	8
The PreSchool Child	1	0	0	4	5	19	2	31
Childhood 5-10	0	0	0	2	3	21	2	28
Parents and Teenagers	0	0	0	0	2	6	1	9
Health Choices	0	1	0	0	5	12	7	25
Healthy Eating	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
Caring for Older People	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	3
Look After Yourself	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
No. of courses	1	2	0	7	16	67	17	110
No. of students	1	2	0	7	15	60	13	60

Table 3.4 Courses and number of students 1981-87.

That is, out of the 60 students interviewed one was awarded a Course Certificate in 1981, two in 1982, none in 1983, seven in 1984, fifteen students gained a total of 16 Course Certificates in 1985, all students at least one in 1985/6, and thirteen of were given 17 Certificates in 1986/7.

The map on the next page shows the area in which each student in the sample (represented by their student numbers from 101-160) attended their most recent course and was interviewed. The shaded areas are Areas for Priority Treatment. All except four students had taken their courses in Areas of Priority Treatment. The main

concentrations of students are in Govan (11), East End (13), Easterhouse (9), Springburn (9) and Drumchapel (6).

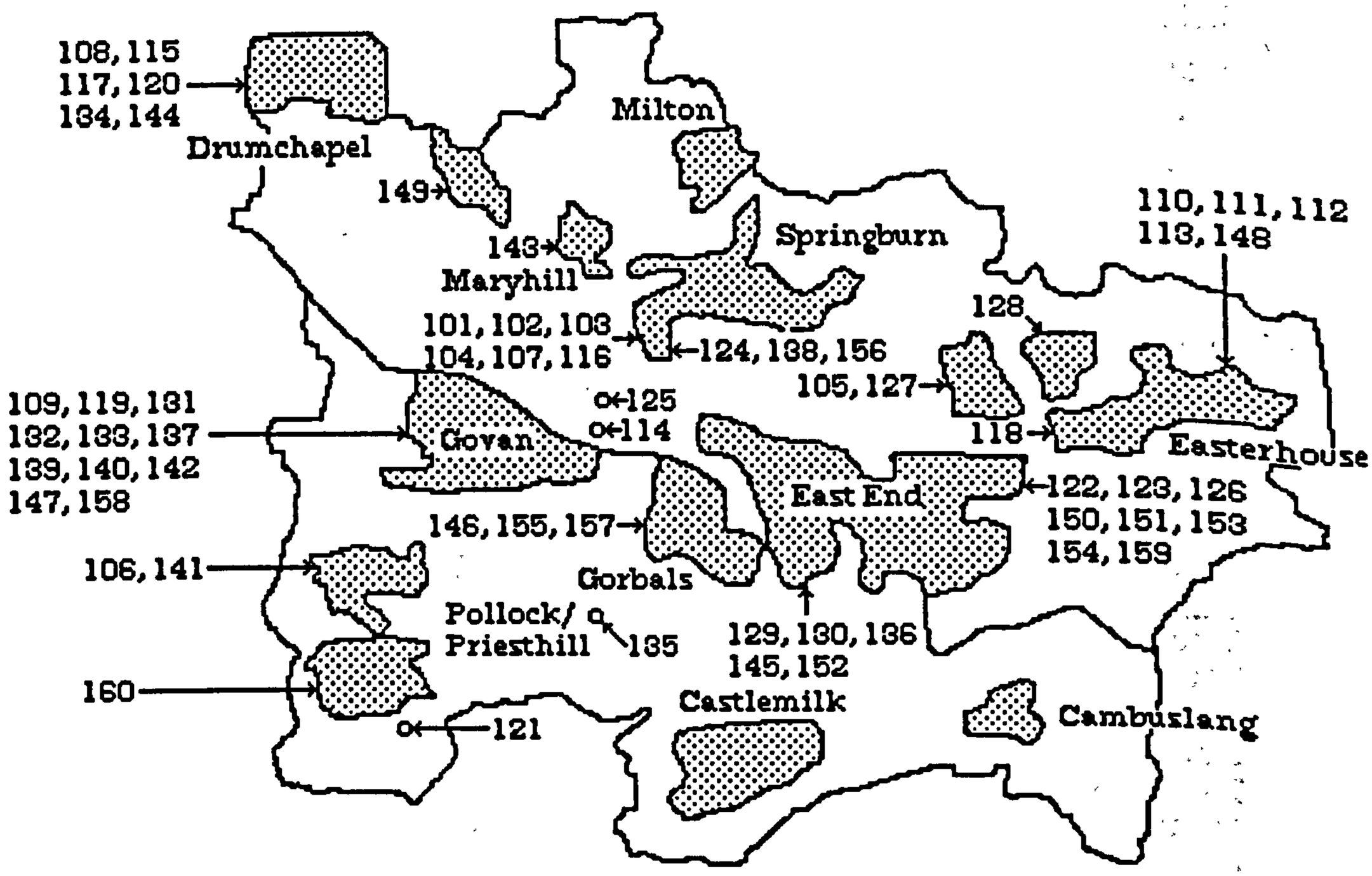


Figure 3.3 Map of Glasgow showing the area in which each student took their last course.

To assess whether the students are representative of those living in APTs their details which are the subject of analysis in later chapters, can be compared with the data for two APTs given in appendix B. All the students in the sample are females aged between 18 and 46 at the time of their first OU course and obviously represent a particular sub-set of the general population. The students are similar in social class to the population of the APTs; a slightly higher percentage of them are single parents; and a few more have four or more children. Around 30% of students had husbands who experienced unemployment which is a slightly lower than for males in the APTs. Ten percent of students have professional or vocational qualifications (mainly nursing) which is considerably higher than adults over 18 in the APTs. Furthermore nearly 30% of the students are buying their house compared to less than 3%; and a third have cars which is around double the average for households in the APTs.

There are reservations about these comparisons, the figures given in appendix B are taken at particular points in time and the definition of being a single parent and husbands with unemployment in this study covers different time periods. Also there may be distortions due to the limited age range of the students (ie. older people are under represented) compared to those on whom the percentages in the table are based. Furthermore there is the assumption that the students in the sample are representative of the population taking OU courses.

With caution we can suggest that compared to the households in APTs, OU students have on average more professional qualifications and are better off in terms of housing and car ownership, nonetheless they include around the expected proportion who have unemployed husbands, or are single parents; and a higher percentage with large families.

Fieldwork

The fieldwork for this study was organised into three stages: exploratory, pilot, and main studies.

Exploratory Stage

The aims for the exploratory stage were:

1) To collect examples of the kinds of changes associated with the courses.

2) To collect examples of how students fitted the courses into their lives.

3) To use this experience to adapt Johnson et al's Interview Document for collecting life histories.

4) To design a section in the Interview Document to obtain students' views of the courses.

The experience of large numbers of students who have taken OU courses over the years can be tapped indirectly through discussions with long serving group leaders/organisers. For example, an

experienced group leader who has worked with three groups with an average of eight students in each group each year for the last three years, would have had close contact with 72 students. A discussion involving eight such group leaders could provide indirect access to the experience of over 500 students. While this is a substantial number it is nonetheless one stage removed from the students' experience, but at the exploratory stage it is an efficient way to collect examples of a large number of changes.

Group and individual discussions were held with over 30 experienced group leaders and organisers mainly in Glasgow. These were all tape recorded and the subsequent analysis led to the development of a simple profile of the main areas of change associated with participation in the courses.

Data on discussions with group leaders - Profile of changes

Changes in the household:

- modify diet and take exercise, improve one's appearance
- selective shopping for food
- more confidence, independence, communication, assertiveness with partner
- develop child's health and learning, take child's view, use less violent discipline
- change time spent in housework and childcare
- manage money

Changes in community activities:

- make new friends, gain access to community, nursery education and health staff
- become leader for an OU group
- enrol for further education/training, more OU courses, O and H Grades, adult education; training for youth leader, social work, play leader, nursery nurse, community care worker
- involvement in PTA, attend school functions
- take on responsibility as officer, organiser, leader in voluntary organisation or scheme, childcare schemes, playschemes, playgroups, nurseries
- become a community representative, school governor, involved in social work liaison, interagency committee, health campaign
- participate in community action, press for PTA, set up new group, carry out survey
- make more effective use of services, doctor, social worker, housing department, leisure services

Changes concerning work:

- seek employment
- take paid work (full or part-time) in public services, play leader, child care, youth work, care assistant, group leader, warden, Community Programme job
- take paid work in service industry, retail, catering, clerical
- take paid work in manufacturing industry, factory work
- take on more responsibility, apply for promotion
- use new methods, deal with problems, be more sensitive to children's differences, client needs
- take inservice training, make change-over from nursery to family centre

Also open ended interviews and discussions were held with six experienced OU community education students in Glasgow and focussed on how the courses fitted into their lives and their reactions to the courses. The general points that emerged from what these students said were:

1) They had been involved with a number of OU courses over a period of years.

2) They were very committed to the courses (some had taken on the role of voluntary group leader) and participation in the courses had had a significant influence in a number of areas of their lives.

3) Their lives were complicated, with childcare responsibilities dominating but they were involved with a number of community activities as well as part-time work.

4) The pattern of their activities appeared fragmented and subject to frequent changes.

5) The areas of their lives seemed to be interdependent in that what happened in one area was likely to affect other areas.

6) Their lives reflected the opportunities and constraints of living in Glasgow particularly in recent times.

Extracts from the interviews with three students illustrate these points (their identification numbers are shown on the left):

003 *'I was a cashier in a cinema, three days a week. By April I was pregnant and I started The First Years of Life, this was my third child. I found that when I was doing The First Years of Life that although I had already had two children there was a lot in the book I felt I understood better. They brought me back to work just one day a week just to do the wages. And soon afterwards it was "Can you help out on Friday?" and then it was Sunday, sometimes Sunday with overtime with a late show I was earning as much wages as the full-time workers. I was pretty well involved with the playgroup and the family centre and I did the playgroup in the morning and the family centre in the afternoon. My sister had my daughter on Wednesday and Friday and my husband had her at the weekends.'*

005 *'At the moment I work Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons [4 hrs]. Tuesday is my day off, I spend Tuesday getting organised and prepared for my Bluebells [childrens' club] at 5 o'clock. On Wednesday evening the girls all come to my house that are doing the Parents and Teenagers course. On Thursday morning I am in the nursery tutoring The Preschool Child course. On Saturday morning my sister has a dancing school, I help her run the dancing school. In between all this I make all the costumes for the dancing school displays and I'm also trying to organise the handmade goods for fund raising for the Bluebell Club. I never really seem to have very much time on my hands to do anything.'*

006 *'I stopped [helping out] at the nursery because I had started working and I just didn't have the time really. That was during the 5-10 course, I started working door-to-door sales because at the time it was all I could get to fit in with school hours, and it was basically working at night.'*

The overall impression was that they were active and busy women who fitted into their childcare responsibilities a changing range of other activities, including the OU and other courses, community activities and responsibilities, and part-time work. They were serious about their OU studies and felt that they had benefited in various ways including gains in confidence and self-esteem; knowledge and ideas about caring for children, heath and diet; and that through the courses they had made friends, taken on community responsibilities, taken up further education and been helped to get jobs or in their work.

However, from the transcripts of the interviews it is difficult to identify patterns in the diverse and varied activities and relate them chronologically. Also there was a lack of information about students' backgrounds and what had happened in their lives prior to the courses. Details of the timing of the birth of children, marital changes, employment careers, community activities and so on, are needed in order to show how these relate to each other and to the courses. Other basic data such as parental background, schooling, qualifications, work on leaving school, age at marriage, needed to be collected. The experience gained from the interviews and discussions was used to adapt the Interview Document used by Johnson et al. and to add a new section. This was used in the pilot study.

Pilot Study

The aims of the pilot study were:

1) To test the procedures for conducting the interviews, and for recording students' comments.

2) To test the design of the Interview Document and collect information for how it should be revised for the main study.

3) To devise methods for analysing and presenting students' life courses.

4) To devise a training programme and briefing notes for the interviewers.

It was decided on the basis of local advice from the Community Education Service that it would be more appropriate to carry out the interviews in premises that were familiar to students, ie. where they had taken their courses, rather than at their homes. In areas of multiple deprivation, overcrowding, poor housing and unemployment together with a distrust of officials visiting homes and asking questions, meant that students would be more relaxed and less distracted by other members of their families on neutral ground and in private.

For this pilot study no attempt was made to obtain a random or

representative sample. The interviews were to be held in the Easterhouse/Queenslie area of Glasgow where there was a high density of students. The selection of students for interview was left to the organisers and nursery heads given the specifications as follows:

> 'I would like to interview 12 people who received Certificates last year. I do not mind if they have also taken courses before then and have taken others since, in fact a mix would be helpful. As you know I am looking for a range of experience following taking the courses including involvement in community activities, part-time work, other education etc. Each interview will probably last for a maximum of an hour and a half. I appreciate your help in arranging for people to come. Please emphasise that my intention is simply to chat to people about their lives and the courses and *not* to ask difficult or embarrassing questions or to test what they can remember and that everything will be *strictly confidential* and not released to anyone or reported back to the Open University in a way that identifies individuals. I want their views and experience as OU students as this will help the Open University develop its work in Community Education.'
> (Letter from N Farnes, dated 14/4/87)

This sample was intentionally over-represented with students with multiple course careers. For example, a random sample from the students who received Certificates in 1986 would on average include 7 students who had only taken one course, 3 who had by now taken two and the remaining 2 who would have taken more than two courses. The sample has no students who have only taken one course, 3 who have taken two courses, and 9 who have take more than two.

The revisions to the Interview Document are discussed above and the version used in the main study is provided as appendix D. The procedure for conducting the interviews was reviewed and written up into Notes for Interviewers (appendix G) and used in their training. The methods developed for processing the completed Interview Documents and presenting students' lives were applied in the main study and are described below.

Main Study

The aims for the main study were:

1) To train a team of interviewers and to supervise their work.

2) To collect life histories from a representative sample of students, including their backgrounds, careers, life events and activities, and circumstances.

3) To collect students' reactions to the courses and the helpfulness of the courses in each area of their lives.

4) To analyse the data to identify the place of the courses in students' lives.

5) To assess the influence of the courses in their lives and the lives of others.

In the pilot study the interviewer was the author who is male, middle-class, middle-aged, and English in contrast to the students who were female, working-class, mainly young and Scottish. Researchers (eg. Finch, Cornwell, Oakley) have pointed to the dangers of interviewer bias due to differences in the background of the interviewer and that of the interviewee, and particularly concerning gender. Finch (1984: 76) makes the point that 'however effective a male interviewer might be at getting women interviewees to talk, there is still necessarily an additional dimension when the interviewer is also a woman, because both parties share a subordinate structural position by virtue of their gender. This creates the possibility that a particular kind of identification will develop'. Cornwell (1984: 16) points out that 'it seems likely that differences of class and education [between interviewee and interviewer] will always be associated in some degree with the 'best face' phenomenon and therefore with the production of public accounts.' She says that private accounts tend to be given only when the interviewee is sure that what she is saying will be understood and accepted (Cornwell, 1984: 106). Oakely (1981: 48) argues that the concept of sisterhood is relevant to the inequalities between interviewer and interviewee.

The inequalities between interviewer and students that existed in

the pilot study were reduced in the main study by using female interviewers who had been students themselves and who were trained to use the Interview Document. A total of eight interviewers were recruited from the number of women who are familiar with more than one OU course as students and often as volunteer group leaders. They were trained during two one day sessions with a practice interview intervening. As the interviews would be arranged in advance, the interviewers did not have the responsibility of persuading the students to take part or for making the arrangements. The training therefore focused on the Interview Document and the methods for conducting the interview.

Arrangements for a suitable time and place for both student and interviewer to meet were made through group leaders/organisers and coordinated by the Senior Community Education Worker. Interviewers worked in areas adjacent to the one they lived in and not with students they knew (following the interview a signed copy of the letter in appendix H was given to each student). The interviews were conducted from October 1987 to April 1988. The completed Interview Documents were returned by the interviewers and transcribed into a computer file, during which they were carefully checked. Any points mentioned by the interviewers or ambiguities were raised with them directly or through and the Senior Community Education Worker; and feedback on the interviewers' work and encouragement was provided with the return of each batch of Interview Documents. When half the interviews had been completed a call-back meeting was held where progress reviewed and their commitment to the project reinforced.

Analysis

A schematic representation of the procedure adopted for recording, transcribing, analysing, processing and displaying the results is shown in figure 3.4 below.

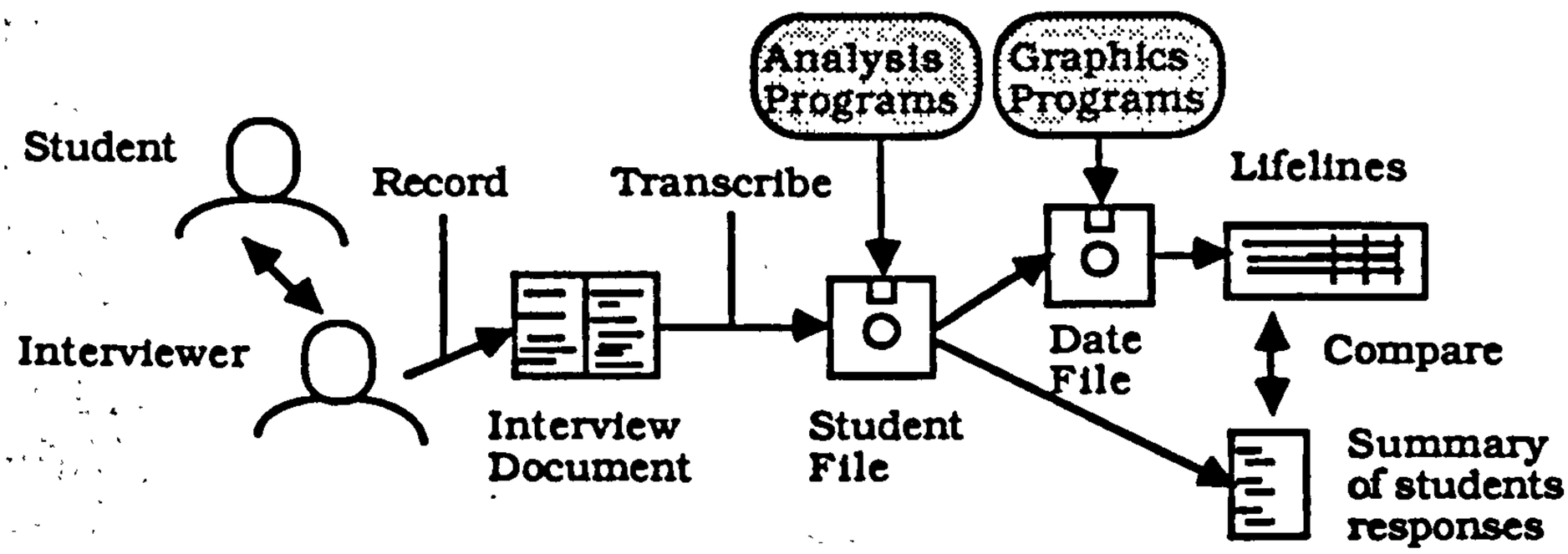


Figure 3.4 Procedure for recording, transcribing, analysing and presenting the data.

The student told her life history and gave her comments on the courses to the interviewer who recorded the student's words in the Interview Document. These were transcribed into a computer file (see example in appendix I) and then analysed to identify the key dates in each student's life which were placed in a 'datefile' (example in appendix J). The data could be presented graphically as lifelines or as summaries of students' responses.

Procedure

Each student was given an three digit (for data formatting reasons) identification number[2] from 101-160 in the order that the completed Interview Documents were received. The datefile for each student included dates for: marriage and separation, leaving school, starting full-time and part-time employment, leaving jobs, begin next job etc, birth of children, when OU and other courses were studied, start and end of community activities and responsibilities, health problems, periods of husbands' unemployment, etc. All dates were rounded to the beginning of a month. Thus events were taken as occurring at the beginning of the month in which they occurred and durations were taken from the

[2]Throughout the thesis students are referred to by their identification number. This procedure ensures their anonymity but has the disadvantage of objectifying and depersonalising them. The alternative of giving pseudonyms was rejected as this involves a false familiarity and gives rise to the danger of misleading impressions arising due to a lack of sensitivity by the author to regional or religious differences in first names.

beginning of the month of the start date of an activity to the beginning of the month the activity ended.

Many of the dates were collected and recorded in the interview, but dates often had to be inferred, this was partly due to the design of the Interview Document and the topic questions where ages were asked for when this was likely to be easier for the student, but also due to students' difficulties in remembering accurate dates, for example of job changes, moving house, husbands' unemployment and so on. When completing the topic questions Interviewers had to make judgments on the spot as to whether it was worth probing for a more accurate date, or whether this would be counterproductive for their rapport with the student.

In the analysis it is sometimes relatively simple to infer dates, for example, to convert the age a student got married into a date. Sometimes it was necessary to make inferences from more than one item of recorded information in order to arrive at a reasonably accurate date. For example, the date of marriage can often be pinpointed to a month from what the student said in combination with house moving and children's birth dates even though the age of marriage was only recorded in years in the Interview Document. Similarly, where the age of leaving school was recorded as 15, the most likely time of year for leaving would be the end of the summer term and less often at Christmas, but if the date of starting work was given earlier and the student had said she started work as soon as she left school, then the actual leaving date was assumed to be in the month before she started work.

The estimation of dates is more difficult with community activities, particularly when a student may have been involved with a group first as member and later as an officer. Because the information is displayed separately, decisions also had to be made as to which activities should be included under membership and which warrant inclusion as community responsibilities. For example, this difficulty occurs for church attendance which in itself would not included as membership of a local group, but if the student was involved in fund

raising, attending social activities with the church it would be. Also if the student was an officer of the church social committee this would count as a community responsibility. Being involved in any local organisation as a secretary, treasurer or chairperson of a committee would be considered as a community responsibility. In categorising involvement in mother and toddler and playgroups, being a member would be included as community activity, and being on the committee as an officer would be a community responsibility. However, those who are contracted and paid on a sessional basis as playleaders are categorised as having part-time employment.

Presentation of lifelines

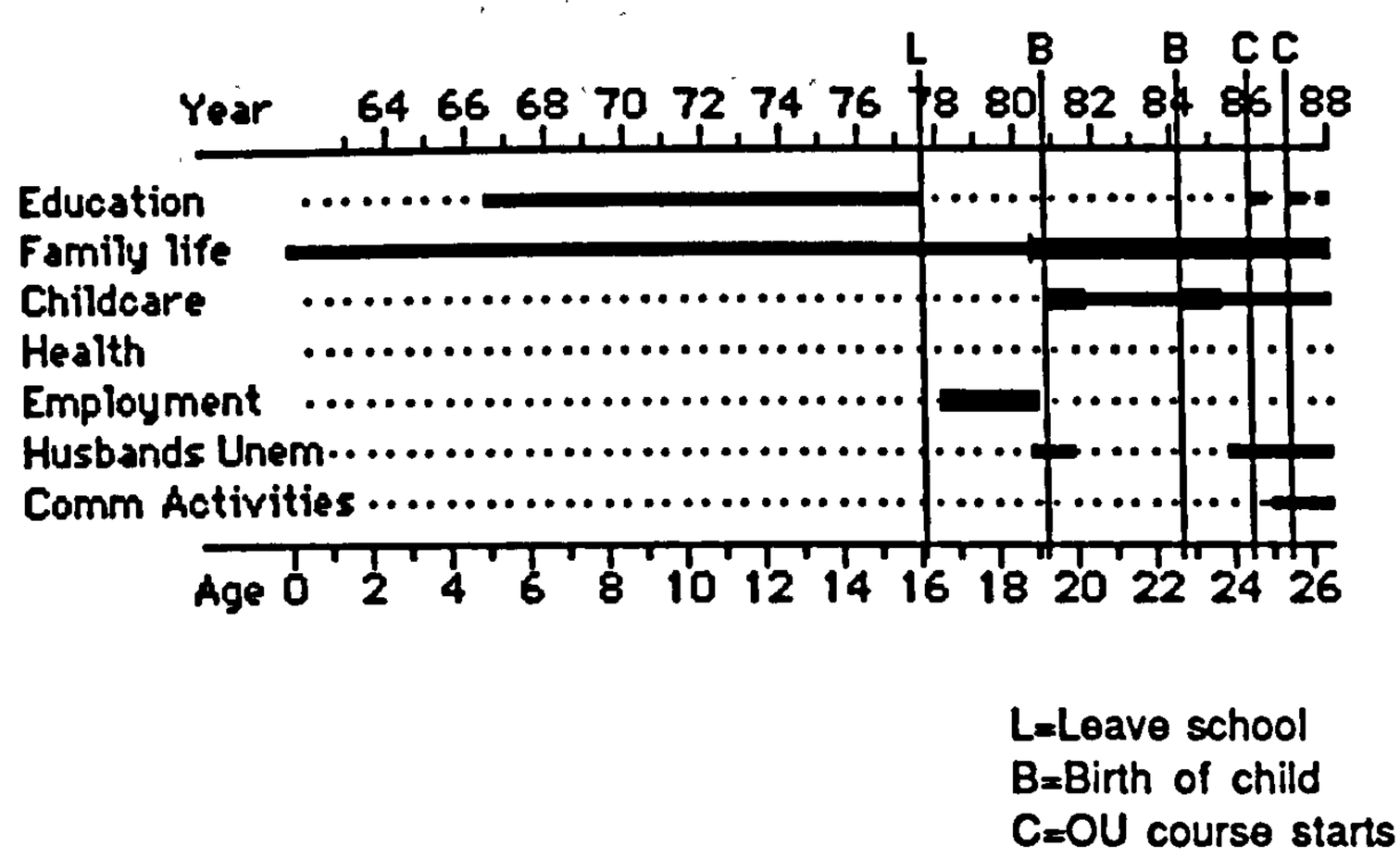
The data was organised into the main areas of students' lives. These areas have also been termed: 'role domains' (Elder 1978: 23), 'life roles' (Super, 1980: 289), 'life areas' (Aslanian and Brickell, 1980: 53), life event 'contexts' (Reese and Smyer, 1983: 8). Also there is some correspondence with the areas used and those in the matrix describing Strathclyde's thematic policies (see figure 1.1). It was recognised that 'when presenting a person's life schematically, one has to make a somewhat arbitrary decision about which data to include and which to omit' (Buhler and Goldenberg, 1968: 59). The areas of life used here are:

1) education
2) family/marital life
3) childcare
4) health
5) employment
6) husband's unemployment
7) community activities
8) social life

To display the data on students' lives the graphic presentation technique described by Buhler and Goldenberg (1968: 60; and see

figure 2.1) to show the structure of life histories, and the computer graphic display used by Dex (1984: 8) to present women's work histories, were adapted. Also drawn upon was Super's (1980: 291) diagram which shows progress through various roles in life. Thus a set of lifelines for each student shows when they left school and their participation in OU and other courses, when they left their parent's home and their marriage began and if it ended when; when their children were born; their health in terms of the times and approximate durations of illnesses and depression; their periods of part and full-time employment; the periods when their husband (if they had one) was unemployed; their involvement in community activities as members of local groups and organisations and as having a position of responsibility in these. Not shown as a separate line are changes in the students' social networks. An example of one student's set of lifelines is shown as chart 3.1 below.

Chart 3.1 Example of a set of lifelines.



The top scale, 'Year' marks the beginning of each year from the students year of birth up to the end of 1988[3]. The bottom scale

[3]All lifelines were originally drawn up to the date of the interview, however in order to facilitate comparisons all students lifelines are referred to the same time base and to the same end point which is defined as the end of 1988. This means that for the purpose of presenting lifelines the activities of students interviewed before this date are extended and those after this date cut off early. However, in the analysis of their activities any relevant changes in this period are included.

'Age' shows each birthday up to the end of 1988 in this case at 26 years of age. The vertical line headed by 'L' shows when the student left school, 'B' shows when each child was born and 'C' marks the beginning of each OU course. In this case the student left school at 16 and had her first child just after her 19th birthday and the second when she was 22. She started her first OU course when she was 24 and another a year later.

Each lifeline or career is represented for each area of a student's life. The first lifeline is 'Education' and this begins with a line at age five when the student started school and ends when she left school, if she took any courses before the OU courses then these would be shown by a line. The beginning of OU courses are marked with a vertical line and the duration is shown by a line which ends when the course ends. Non-OU courses are also drawn on this line but do not have the vertical line, and this student began a non-OU course towards the end of 1987. When a non-OU course occurs at the same time or overlaps with an OU course its line may not be visible but for closer analysis other conventions are used. The next lifeline is 'Family Life' which begins when the student was born and in this case shows that she grew up with both parents, left home to get married at 18 and continues in her first marriage up to the date of the interview. If a student and her husband separated then the line would end and begin again if and when she remarried. The third area is 'Childcare' and begins with the birth of the first child when she was 19. A thick line is drawn for the first year when the childcare load is greatest and reduces in width provided for the next three years up to age four, after this age the line again reduces in width if the birth of another child does not obscure this, in which case the thicker line begins again and so on.

The next lifeline is 'Health' and periods of illness, hospitalisation, depression, miscarriages and so on are shown as lines representing the duration of the health problem. This student had none. Her employment career is shown next with full-time employment shown by a thick line and part-time by a thinner line. The student began a full-time job on leaving school and stopped just before the birth of

her first child, she has not returned to work full or part-time paid work. Periods of husbands' unemployment are shown on the next line. The start of involvement in community activities is shown by a line indicating when this student became involved with Keep Fit and a Sewing Group, a little later she became chairperson of a Parents' Committee and community responsibilities are shown by a thicker line. Where a student has more than one community activity at the same time only one line can be seen although they can be separately displayed if necessary.

The lifelines for a particular area of life from a selection of students can be sorted, collated, separated and expanded and presented together for comparison. Also a particular students responses to selected questions can be summarised, or the responses of all or groups of students can be collated and compared.

Events and causality

With most changes in adult life it is difficult to say exactly when a change actually began. The date on which an event is said to have occurred, such as a separation, or even getting a job is rather an arbitrary marker in a complex process. The actual parting is likely to be proceeded by problems in the relationship possibly extending over years and the idea of separation may have arisen some time earlier. Furthermore the process of adjusting to the change after the event may take months or even years. Therefore support provided in a learning group either before or after the actual separation could be important in helping an individual cope with the change. Similarly in getting a job, help from a course taken before or after the event might be useful for the individual in approaching and adjusting to the change. A strictly chronological approach which assumes that a course can only provide help for changes that occurred prior or during participation would be misleading, courses can help with events in the recent past. In assessing the role of the courses events occurring around the time of the courses and afterwards need to be considered in order to give a full picture of what is going on in students' lives and of the possible influence of the courses.

Therefore causality which depends on a strict chronology is inappropriate when considering complex changes. If someone takes a course and then gets a job it is unrealistic to say that taking the course 'caused' the individual to get the job even though it was prior to the event. Because people's lives are on the move and change is a continuous process, their ideas about returning to work and about taking courses may well be related and intertwined. But if the opportunity for a course comes up first and they take this, which may develop their ideas further, build confidence and so on. They continue to keep an eye open for job opportunities and in due course something comes up, which they take. Chronologically and mechanistically one might be tempted to say the course led to the individual getting the job. Indeed it may have done, in that the employer might have been impressed that the person was taking a course which may have swayed things in their favour. But their progress along the road of this change has been running for sometime and may have arisen from factors unrelated from the course. Various writers have referred to the complex intertwining of cause and effect as: for example, reciprocal action (Overton and Reese, 1973: 78), reciprocal causation (Buss, 1974: 671) and a dialectical process (Riegel, 1976: 690).

For these reasons the role of the courses is explored in conjunction with other events in students' lives without regard to the strict chronology of events. Thus, events occurring before the courses are included as well as events happening afterwards and the help the course might provide is seen in the context of changes before and after. Obviously there is a limit to how long before is considered reasonable and up to one year before the start of the first OU course will be the longest time for most events. However, serious events like separation happening longer ago will be included if they appear to play a part in the students' lives when they take the courses.

Longitudinal and systemic analysis

The general structure in chapters 4-8 is to consider one or more areas of life and to begin by summarising the relevant changes and trends in the socioeconomic context. This is followed by an

examination of the place of the OU courses in these areas of life with reference to the students' lifelines. The different patterns are related to their involvement in and reactions to the courses. Chapter four focuses on students educational careers, and chapters 5-8 on other areas but each time with reference to education. For example, chapter five considers their family life and how this area interacts with education, chapter six examines health and again how this relates to education, and so on. It would be possible to consider many other permutations of lifelines but in this study the focus is always linked education. Thus chapters 5-8 take a longitudinal perspective on single and pairs of lifelines as well as examining what happens around the time of the courses, whereas chapter nine moves to a systemic perspective across all lifelines around this time.

A recurring feature of chapters 4-9 are continuing case studies where the same four students are followed across successive chapters. Towards the end of each chapter lifelines and other longitudinal data on these students' lives is provided together with their responses to the courses relevant to the areas considered in the chapter. This information can be added to that dealt with in preceding chapters so that by chapter nine a full picture of all areas of their lives is built up and a systemic perspective taken on recent changes and their reactions to the courses.

A note on the statistical tests used

Two by two Chi Square tests and for small numbers the Fisher Exact Probability test are used for assessing the extent that shared characteristics are statistically significant, eg. those who return to work and who take up further education. Although differences between sub-groups are often discussed in terms of the percentages the Chi Square and Fisher tests are always applied to the actual numbers. With ages and certain quantities such as the numbers of children, the number of areas of life in which events occur etc. 't' tests are used. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient is used to assess the relationships between numbers of events and areas in which the courses are helpful. Results are not mentioned unless significance levels have a probability of less than 0.05 unless stated otherwise. If the significance level is less than 0.01 this is stated otherwise the level is less than 0.05.

Chapter 4 - Students' Educational Careers

Introduction

This chapter considers the changes in the educational system in Glasgow and how these have influenced students' schooling and other opportunities. It examines students' educational backgrounds and focuses on their educational careers in order to identify patterns of participation and linkages between and within stages of their education. Questions are considered which include - What are the educational backgrounds of those who participate in OU courses? What is the place of the OU courses in their educational careers and do they help with further developments in their careers? What is the educational background of those who are helped by the OU courses and what kinds of courses do they go onto afterwards? The important issue of the non-educational benefits for students and others are taken up in subsequent chapters where areas of life in which students apply what they learn are considered.

The educational system in Scotland and more specifically Glasgow has undergone frequent modifications since the war which were often linked to developments occurring outside education, in particular demographic and employment changes. Involvement in the educational system is regulated by legislation and examinations, and constrained by the available facilities and opportunities, and alterations to these affect individuals' options and experiences. Factors outside the system and changes in these also affect individuals' participation and success. However, changes in the educational system have a differential impact on individuals, some are untouched while others may be significantly affected. The extent that changes in the educational system have an impact depends on what stage individuals are at in their educational careers which may include preschool, primary, secondary, further, higher, adult and community education.

Much of education is designed on the basis of linkages between the different types and levels of courses. The stages of schooling are usually age-graded and education generally is graded by level as well. For example, the transfer from primary to secondary school is age-graded and occurs at a specified age (12 in Scotland); and grading by level means that an adult who wished to take 'A' levels in a particular subject would usually be expected to have an 'O' level first (this is not exactly the case with 'O' and 'H' grades, which were originally intended to be alternative routes, Gray et al, 1983: 54). These linkages between stages and levels can be end-on, for example, where primary schooling immediately proceeds secondary. Or there can be intervals over which the linkages operate, for example, completing 'O' levels at school and returning to study for 'A' levels 20 years later. Also the linkages can be very common - everyone has the start of their secondary education linked to the end of their primary. Whereas only a few adults return later to continue their education where their schooling left off. The interval between linked events and the frequency of occurrence of the linkage will usually be inversely related, ie. the link will occur less often with longer intervals. Linkages may constrain the next type or level of course in an individual's educational career but not when (if ever) this will be taken up.

Within a particular stage or level of education there are critical links between what happens during a course and the outcome at the end. For some students there is a link between a course and the award of a certificate, but for others this link does not occur for one reason or another. Failing various hurdles along the way or at a final examination can prevent the desired connection between a course and an award being made. Thus, there are two kinds of educational linkages: 1) *between* stages or courses and 2) *within* courses between the experience of learning and certification. In examining individuals' educational careers attention can be given to relationship between the various stages or courses and to the relationship between the nature of a particular course experience and the outcome.

An example of history-graded changes is provided by the raising of the school leaving age in 1973 which means that for children born from the end of 1957 onwards there is a huge increase in the proportion who had 11 years of schooling. Other changes associated with the extra year led to many more children taking and passing exams, and as a result of this younger adults generally have more qualifications than those who are older. In contrast, much of adult and community education is non-normative and may occur at different times in an individual's life. However, provision is particularly dependent on historical time in which the opportunities may expand or contract. For example, there were no opportunities before 1977 to take OU Community Education courses anywhere and in Glasgow it was not until after 1981 that these became widespread.

An individual's participation in education, starting with schooling and including any further education and OU courses, can be represented as an educational career. The problem of developing analytical 'typologies' of adult students' careers has been considered by Woodley et al. (1987) in a major survey involving over 5500 mature students. They found that in reality the task is somewhat intractable 'mainly because of the wide variety of levels and types of course, modes of study and so on'. Instead they aimed simply to describe the variety of educational routes which have led students to a particular point in their lives (Woodley et al, 1987: 48).

The approach adopted here is to examine to what extent a particular event in an individual's educational career can be accounted for by antecedent variables internal to the career and the educational system. For example, if taking a course can be largely accounted for by one or more educational variables, then other areas of the individual's life will have had only limited influence in determining participation. On the other hand, if participation in education as an adult has no linkage with educational variables then other areas of life are likely to have had a major influence. For example, if going on to a further education course after an OU course was entirely accounted for by whether or not the student had

qualifications from school, then there would be no need to seek variables in other areas of life to explain why some took up this option. Similarly, no further variables would be needed to account for further participation after an OU course if this entirely depended on say, age, so that all older students went onto further courses but younger ones did not. Furthermore, the *type* of course may be accounted for by previous education but the *time* at which the student takes it up may depend on other factors in their life. It might be shown that students who left school with 'O' grades return to take 'H' grades as adults, but not when (if at all) in their lives they are likely to do this.

This approach will show the extent that educational careers are independent from other careers and indicate the amount of interaction between education and other areas of life. This chapter focuses on the linkages within educational careers while the interaction between students' educational and other careers is examined in later chapters. Before looking at students' educational careers, the main changes in the educational system over the period that they were involved are reviewed.

Education history

This section reviews educational changes and trends during the lives of the OU students and provides the wider educational context in which their educational careers progressed. Included are preschool, primary, secondary education, further and community education.

Preschool education

Preschool education is non-statutory, that is, attendance and provision it is not laid down by law which means that the extent of provision depends on the commitment and resources of local government. The percentage of children of the relevant age participating in nursery education in Scotland increased from 4% in 1969 (Hunter, 1972: 81) to 26% in 1982, and in Glasgow the figure

reached nearly 60% (Stewart, 1985: 12). Since the early 70's there has been a substantial expansion of preschool education in Glasgow resulting in a higher proportion of under fives attending than anywhere else in the UK (Stewart, 1985: 7). The expansion of nursery education came too late to benefit OU students when they were young but it is important to them as adults and for their children. Nursery provision is a central feature in the lives of many students because it releases time from childcare which can be used for other activities including adult education. Also, many nurseries provide facilities for adult and further education as well as opportunities for parental involvement, voluntary activities and employment.

Primary education

Compulsory attendance at Primary School begins at age five and in Scotland continues until 12. Up till 1966 tests and assessments given by the primary school mainly determined which type of secondary school a child transferred to. Consequently the final two years in primary school tended to be dominated by this procedure (Hunter, 1971: 94). After 1966 primary schools were able to move towards more relaxed and informal methods but the use of corporal punishment was not prohibited until 1982.

From the peak in 1975 there has been a reduction in the number of children in Scottish primary schools. In Glasgow the number fell to nearly half from 1975 to 1983. The most severe drops were in the inner city and was greater for Roman Catholic schools as Catholic families have become smaller. With the spare classrooms it became possible to open parents' rooms to encourage parental involvement and adult education classes. This has been made easier by a scheme introduced in 1977 for allocating extra teachers in disadvantaged areas.

Secondary education

The pattern of secondary education established after the school leaving age was raised to 15 in 1947 involved junior secondary and senior secondary schools. Around 35% of pupils went to senior

secondary schools and the junior secondary taught non-certificate courses up to the age of 15. The senior secondary school prepared pupils for the Scottish Leaving Certificate (not to be confused with the 3rd Year Leaving Certificate awarded at 15 years of age and after 3 years of secondary school) and Highers over 5 years with an optional additional year. If a pupil in a junior secondary school wanted to stay on beyond 15 and take examinations it would be necessary to transfer to a senior school. Only about one third of those in senior secondary schools took examinations which required staying on until 17 years and many left at 15. In 1962 the Scottish Leaving Certificate was replaced by 'O' grades and for the first time there were examinations that could be taken at 16, consequently the numbers taking examinations in senior secondary schools increased.

In 1966 Circular 614 recommended that allocation to certificate or non-certificate courses should carried out after a child entered secondary school; and in the same year comprehensive reorganisation began and increasingly children were admitted into non-selective secondary schools. With comprehensive reorganisation the option for taking 'O' grades opened up for those who would have been in junior secondary schools. However, this still required pupils to stay on for a year beyond the school leaving age.

In 1973 the school leaving age was raised to 16 and led to an increase in the numbers taking 'O' grades. At the same time the pass/fail distinction was removed and replaced by 5 grades so that virtually all those presenting were awarded either A, B or C which was equivalent to the old pass grades or were given a D or E. Thus from the early 1950's to the 1970's the proportions participating in examinations increased dramatically, from around 10% to 65%, and this was brought about mainly in the '60's by the introduction of 'O' grades, the removal of selection, and finally by raising the school leaving age. However, in the mid-70's onwards there were still 35% who left school without qualifications. Figure 4.1 below summarises the changes from 1950:

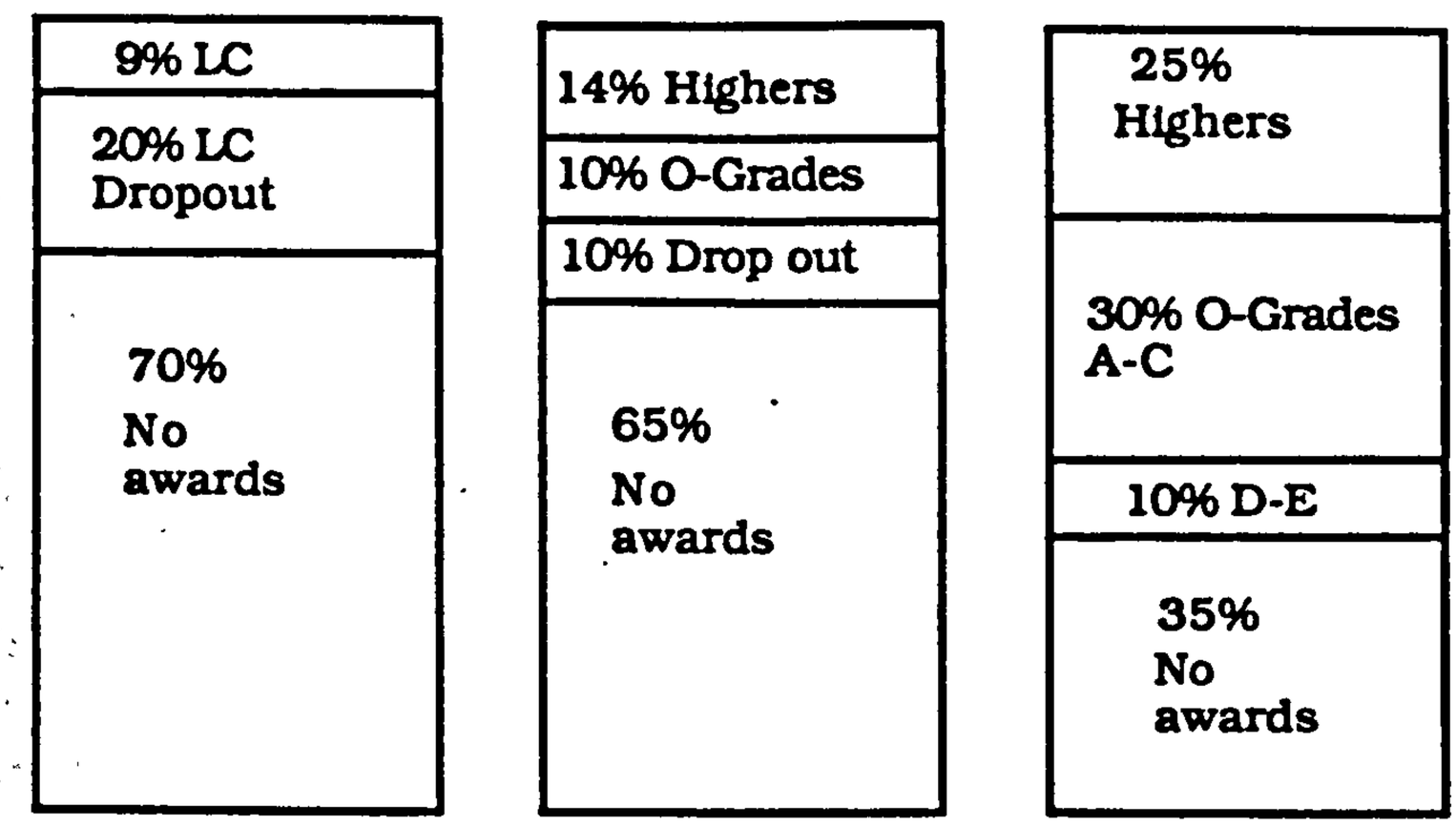


Figure 4.1 Post-war changes in the Scottish system of certification (After Gray et al. 1983: 62).

In 1950 only 9% actually gained qualifications which consisted of the Leaving Certificate, by the early '60's, 24% gained 'O' grades or above, and in the mid-'70's this increased to 65% with grade D or above. The next figure illustrates the impact of changes in certification for three cohorts born in 1935, 1947 and 1960 and shows the periods during which they were in their last five years of school and when some would have been preparing for examinations, these are indicated by the shaded bands - A, B and C. The lines begin at each cohorts year of birth and the period of their schooling shown by a thicker line.

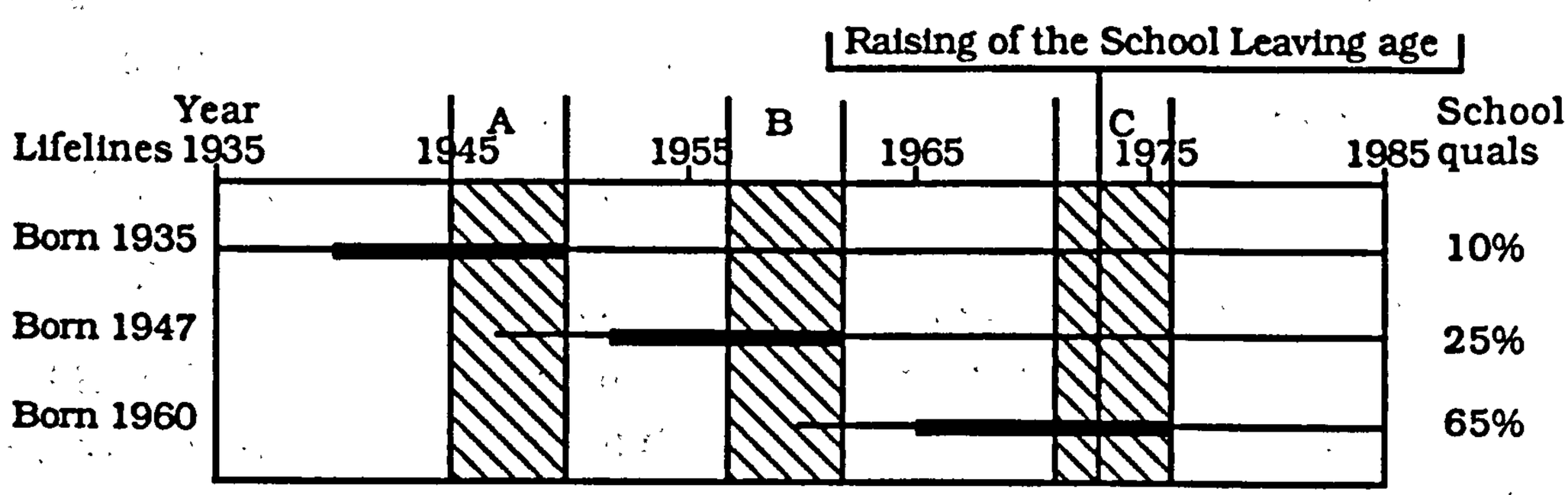


Figure 4.2 The impact of changes in certification for three cohorts.

After selective transfer at 12 was abolished and the school leaving age was raised to 16, schools were reluctant to exclude pupils from

examination preparation before the end of the second year:

> 'Most schools at the end of second year make up classes of 'non-certificate' pupils who never embark on work for the O-grade. Many third- and fourth-year pupils, however, have started on courses that could lead to O-grade presentation, but have thereafter discontinued serious work to this end and have not presented for examination ... Our picture, then, is of a process of selection which entirely rejects a minority of pupils from O-grade course work in third year and thereafter operates a continuous process of attrition upon the remainder through school examinations, 'prelims', mock SCEs' and the O-grade examination itself.'
>
> (Gray et al, 1983: 83)

Mortimore and Blackstone (1982: 75) also point to widespread experience of failure and state that 'a sizable proportion of the age range each year are likely to be considered, and consider themselves, as educational failures since the examinations are, in the majority of cases, the only record of assessment used'.

In 1983 the Government put forward an action plan for reforming education and training in Scotland for 16-18 year olds (HMSO, 1983). This included the new assessment system which involved replacing O-grade with the Standard S-grade which can be taught and awarded at three levels: Foundation, General and Credit; and the introduction of new vocationally oriented courses in a modular form of 40 hours duration. Most of these modular courses are offered in colleges of further education, however as part of integrated area based planning secondary schools have adopted some of these courses. The intention is to encourage those less interested in academic courses to stay on at school, and attract more people back into the educational system. The first 14 year olds entered the new courses and the new assessment system in 1984 and while this did not affect the schooling of students in this study it is relevant to the opportunities they have to take courses as adults.

Modularisation makes it possible for credit gained for a course taken in school to be built on with courses taken at college. It provides a range of entry and exit points and a greater freedom of choice for

young people and adults wishing to return to education:

> 'Throughout the whole of secondary education the aim is to meet the needs of every individual - pupil, student and adult - by offering a wide variety of courses of various types at various levels, leading on stage by stage towards continuing education of all kinds at school, college, university or in the community.'
> (SRC, 1986)

Further education

In the 1940's and 1950's there was considerable demand for day and evening technical courses which led to new colleges of further education being built. In the '60's nearly 30% of young men in the 15-17 year age groups had day or block release from work, whereas the figure for young women was only 6%. Commercial education also expanded and secretarial, office and business studies courses were offered at various levels. At the junior level entry was open to those with 3 years of secondary education and the courses were full- or part-time.

With rising unemployment of school leavers the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) was introduced in 1978 to provide integrated work experience and training for the least qualified young people. Nearly all entrants were 16 or 17 who had not had a job since leaving school and were paid an allowance to participate. The scheme grew rapidly, Raffe (1983) points out that in Scotland:

> 'The scale of the programme is indicated by comparing the planned number of entrants in 1982/3, a staggering 90,000, with the number of young people expected to enter the labour market from school, which is less than 75,000 ... this suggests that a majority of young people entering the labour market from school can expect to pass through the programme.'
> (Raffe, 1983: 201)

In 1983 YOP was replaced by the Youth Training Scheme (YTS), the main difference is that YTS is not restricted to the unemployed, it also applies to new entrants to employment. Many of those involved in these schemes attend college and take modules.

These changes have led to new thinking about the links between further education and YTS, schools, and community education:

> 'With the Youth Training Scheme and interaction with schools and community education, it was clear that the new provision would have to be less college based than before, and outreach classes in the community, and close contact with schools through regional consortia, were all envisaged.'
> (Dougherty, 1985: 254)

From the late '70's the spare capacity in primary schools could be used for further education classes for adults and in secondary schools adults could join classes and take subjects alongside pupils. This has widened the day time opportunities for adults and in 1986 around 3,000 were taking courses in Glasgow's secondary schools.

Community education

Up to the mid-70's adult education in Scotland consisted mainly of traditional academic and recreational courses. Education authorities often worked in association with the Worker's Educational Association and University Extra-Mural Departments to offer adult education in a variety of academic subjects. Recreational education was provided mainly by educational authorities and included courses in handicrafts, hobbies, country dancing and so on. It also included the work of the Youth Service.

As mentioned in chapter one, the Alexander Committee reported in 1975 on adult education in Scotland and made recommendations for change which included: greater recognition to the educational needs of young mothers, for more resources to go to areas of multiple deprivation, and for adult education to be regarded as part of community education and be incorporated in a community education service (Alexander, 1975). These recommendations were acted upon by the newly established Strathclyde Regional Council and incorporated into the strategy to combat deprivation. In Glasgow an elaborate community education infrastructure was developed and involves 17 Area Offices which provide community education in areas of priority treatment in nursery schools, primary

and secondary schools, colleges, community education centres, and Pre-5 Resource Centres. From 1975 onwards Community Education and other staff committed to working with the community increased participation and provided skilled support to adult learning groups. In addition, community education was promoted as part of the Glasgow Eastern Area Renewal (GEAR) Project (Thomson, 1985; Mark, 1987) which was launched in 1976 and was the largest urban renewal programme in Europe.

The use of OU Community Education courses in Strathclyde and Glasgow is reviewed in chapter one. This began in Glasgow and gradually expanded so that by 1981 OU courses were being offered in all divisions of Strathclyde. The Strathclyde Open Learning Experiment (SOLE) was established in 1986 a total of around 2,500 students living in Strathclyde's APTs joined 400 informal learning groups and successfully completed these courses. The student numbers and courses in Glasgow from 1982-87 are given in appendix F.

Summary

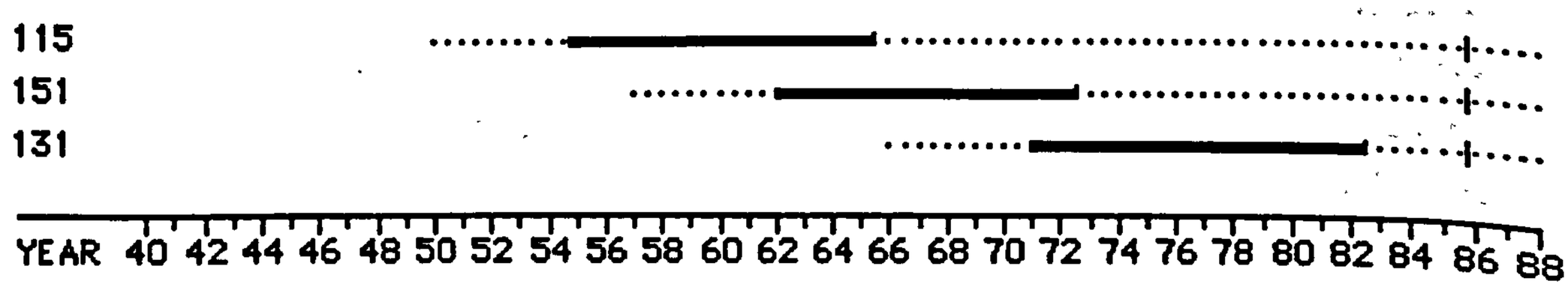
The rapid rise in nursery education means that this is now widely available in Glasgow, and often provides educational opportunities for parents as well as their children. The major changes to schooling have led to more pupils taking examinations and, for the less able, to more experience of failure, although the removal of selection at 12 has reduced pressures on primary schools and early failure. Recently there has been considerable expansion of further and community education opportunities (including those supported through MSC schemes). These wider changes have influenced the students' educational careers.

Patterns of educational careers

The students in this study participated at different times in the changing educational system reviewed above. Similar educational careers illustrate history-graded effects where schooling occurs

across different years. For example, the careers of three students are represented in chart 4.1 below. They all took an OU course at the same time but began school at quite different times and left around the minimum leaving age. They did not participate in any further education until they took their OU course, and none of these students have gone onto start further courses in the two years after their OU course began.

Chart 4.1 Educational careers of three students with schooling in different times.



The educational career or lifeline starts with a dotted line from the date of birth and at age 5 the line becomes continuous to show the period of schooling. The line ends when the student left school and would restart if they returned to education. To avoid overlap with any other courses taken around the same time the start of OU courses is drawn with a short vertical line. The first student (number 115) began school in 1954, left in 1965 and took an OU course 20 years later at the age of 35. The second student (number 151) began school in 1961, finished in 1972 and took an OU course 13 years later when she was 28 years old. The third student (number 131) attended school from 1970 until 1982 and took an OU course 3 years later when she was 19.

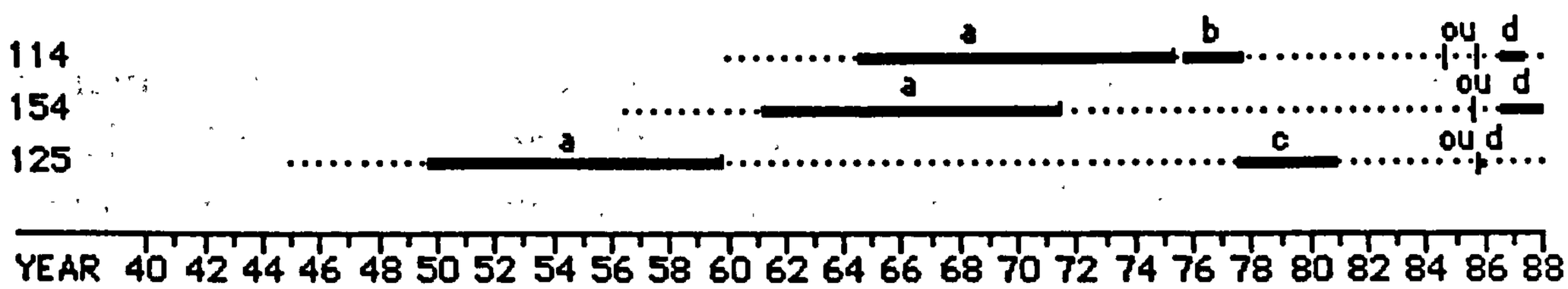
These students' educational careers have similar patterns, their OU course started at the same time but they were at different ages, and although they all started school at the same age they were at school at different times. Consequently their experience of school is likely to be different because schools and the social context generally changed over this time. For example, the first two students left at 15 before the school leaving age was raised while the youngest student left at 16. Also the increased scope for schools to enter pupils for examinations is reflected by the first two students who

left with no qualifications whereas the one who stayed until 16 gained two 'O' grades. The time between leaving school and returning to education varies from 3 to 20 years and their age when they took the OU course varies correspondingly from 19 to 35. Obviously, there are different amounts of time in which other things were happening in these students' lives.

For the students in the sample, schooling occurred at different historical times but it always started at approximately the same age (preschool education was rare until the early '70's), even though some stayed after the minimum leaving age. After leaving school some students took courses soon after, and others took them some time between leaving school and before their OU courses. For those who took courses during this period, these courses were not only located at different historical times but were taken when the students were at different ages. While all the students were involved in OU courses and some with further education around or after 1986, this occurred when they were at different ages.

These variations are shown in more complex educational careers in chart 4.2 which also give us the basis for defining the components and possible patterns of educational careers.

Chart 4.2 Educational lifelines of three students with complex careers.



The first (number 114) student's career has four components. Beginning with 11 years of schooling labelled (a) starting in 1964 and ending in 1975, this is almost immediately followed with further education and training, in this case nursing, shown by the line (b). She is involved in no other courses until the first OU course, the start of which is shown by the short vertical line, and is

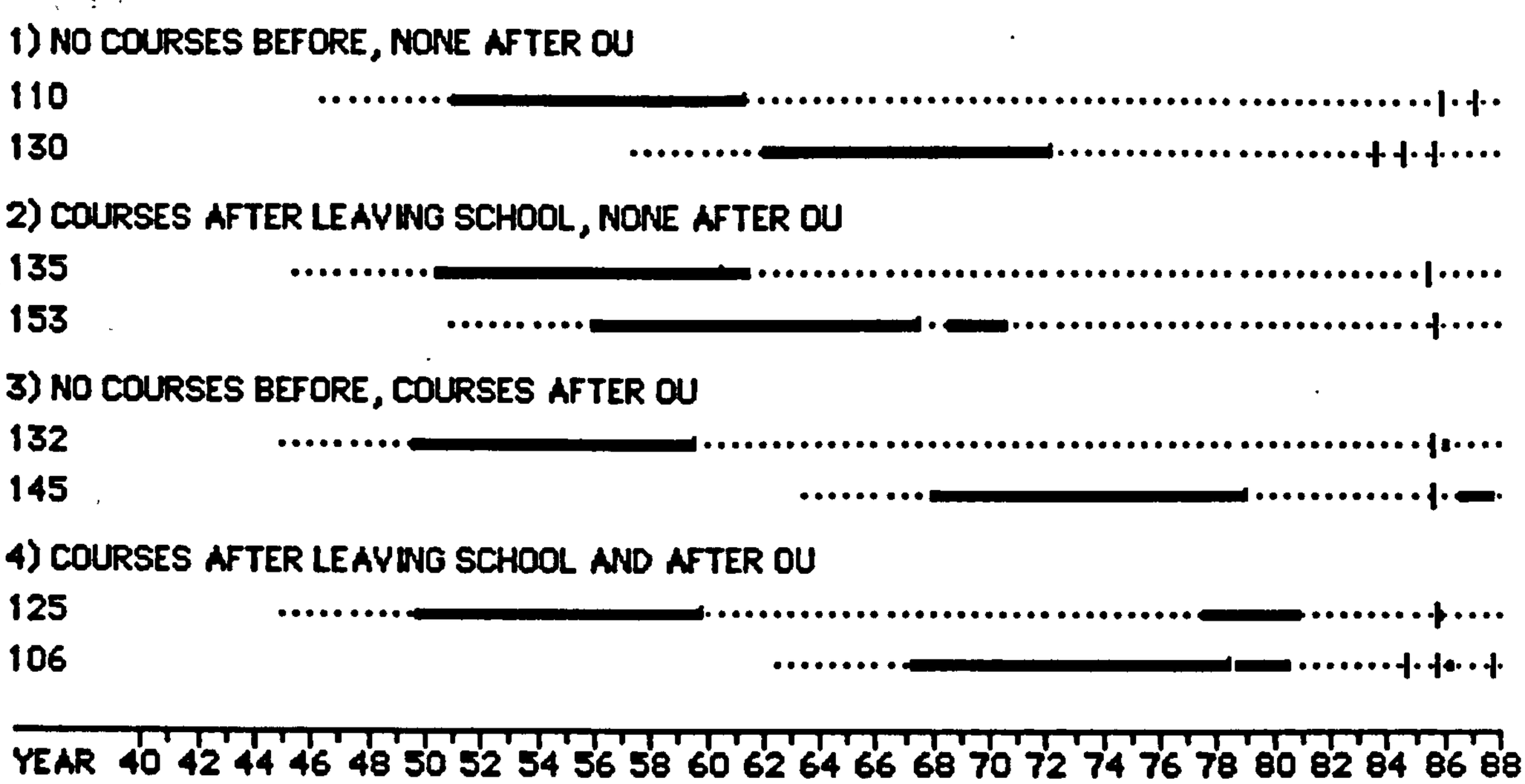
followed by a second OU course. After this course she goes onto an 'H' grade course shown by the line marked (d). Thus, the components in her educational career are: schooling (a) - immediate post-school education and training (b) - OU courses (ou) - and a further education course (d).

The next student (number 154) starts school in 1961 and after this takes no courses until an OU course which is followed by 'O' grade Art. The third student (number 125) began school in 1949 but does not go on to further education and training until 17 years after leaving school, this was also nursing training and is labelled (c). Sometime after this training she takes an OU course and a short first aid course. Two of these examples involve nursing training which overlap in time, however, one student was 16 and the other 33 when she started. There are other types of professional, academic and vocational courses which fit into these patterns.

Given that all students have taken at least one OU course, we have the following basic possibilities: whether other courses are taken before and after the OU course(s) and whether courses taken before the OU courses are immediately after school or after a delay. This gives four main types of educational career, and two of these could be subdivided depending on the delay between leaving school and taking other courses before the OU courses.

This method of categorising educational careers represents much of the diversity but it is based on individual time and ignores historical time. We saw how the three students with simple careers shown in figure 4.1 have the same career pattern but their experience is different. In examining the extent that students with the same pattern have similar educational experiences it is necessary to be alert to effects that may be due to historical differences as well as to the different kinds and duration of courses. In the educational careers represented in chart 4.3 below, two examples of each type have been selected to illustrate the historical period covered by similar careers. This grouping takes no account of whether students took courses immediately after leaving school or after a delay.

Chart 4.3 Examples of four types of educational careers.



The numbers of students with each type of career are:

Career Type	Total	Immediate	Delayed
1) No courses before, none after OU	16	-	-
2) Courses after leaving school, none after OU	10	6	2(+2 both)
3) No courses before, courses after OU	22	-	-
4) Courses after leaving school, and after OU	12	7	5*
Total	60		

* includes one student who took two courses delayed by different amounts after leaving school.

Table 4.1 Career types and numbers of students.

Before taking their first OU Community Education course a total of 22 students (career types 2 and 4) took other courses. These ranged from 3 year nursing courses, other nursing courses, occupational therapy, 'O' and 'H' grades, secretarial and clerical courses, catering, first aid and a childminding course. Most took vocational courses soon after leaving school, although some began training much later.

After the start of one or more OU Community Education courses 34 students (career types 3 and 4) went onto other courses. These again range from nursing, 'O' and 'H' grades; typing, word

processing and secretarial courses; welfare rights, first aid, tutoring, play and youth leading, community care; and other courses such as cookery, sewing, and decorative cake making.

Thus, after leaving school and before taking an OU course 22 students took one or more courses and 34 took courses afterwards. In other words, around one third of the students have taken steps to improve themselves educationally since leaving school and before taking an OU course. In most cases this was soon after school and a number of years passed before starting an OU course. While there are 34 students who have gone onto a further education course after taking an OU course there are only 5 who took a course sometime in the 5 years before their first OU course.

Components of educational careers

Students' experience within each component of their educational career may have an important influence on whether they go onto other courses and what other courses they participated in. Their experience of schooling, post-school courses, OU courses and post-OU courses is considered. Also there are 10 potential pairs of linkages between the components of educational careers. For example, there may be a link between schooling and courses taken immediately afterwards; or between schooling and courses taken after the OU courses. Of particular interest is the link between OU courses and the courses some students go onto afterwards. The main links are examined.

Because all students went to school and all took at least one OU course, additional variables are necessary to explore the link between school and OU courses. The variables are: 1) whether or not qualifications were gained at school and 2) whether students took more than one OU course. These details provide useful means of comparing students' schooling and involvement in OU courses with participation in courses after leaving school, and with whether they went onto other courses after the OU courses.

Schooling

Students' experience of schooling is likely to influence their subsequent participation in education and their educational careers. But, as has been noted above, schooling has undergone a number of changes since the war, which means that their experience depends partly on their age. As an increasing proportion of pupils became involved in preparation for exams, this paradoxically gave many more the experience of failure. This wide experience of failure, particularly for those in the lower ability range has taken its toll in 'truancy, indiscipline and demoralisation' and lost confidence (Gray et al, 1983: 172). These authors provide evidence for this based on a survey of Scottish school leavers in 1977 (around the time that some of the students in the sample also left school). The retrospective accounts of the experience of the students obtained in this study also illustrate negative attitudes, but out of 60 only 12 said they actually disliked school, and only two of these had strong feelings:

103 *'I hated it. I liked Arithmetic, Home Economics and swimming. I can't remember primary school. I had to go and that was it. No qualifications, I could not get out quickly enough.'*

124 *'I hated school, I left school at 15 or 16 and I had to leave because my dad was unemployed and I had to work. No qualifications, no successes.'*

This represents the same proportion as was found for students from 'low-participant' groups attending an adult education centre in an APT in Glasgow (Macpherson, 1989: 13). A larger proportion of his students used the term 'neutral' to describe their experience of school and only a third were 'positive' about their schooling. Of the OU students who said they disliked school, it is significant ($p<0.05$) that there was a smaller proportion who left before the raising of the leaving age compared to those who left after the age was raised to 16. Macpherson also found that the younger students gave more negative reactions. This could be due to the effects of memory, particularly as the older students are further away from the experience or because of more widespread feelings of failure due to increased proportions taking exams. More objectively, one third of

those who could have left at 15 stayed for a further year or more (nearly half of these stayed until they were 17) whereas only one in the group who had to stay until they were 16 stayed on for an additional year (this is a significant difference $p<0.05$).

Features of the school system that created problems for the OU students, even those who said they liked school, include selection at 12 years of age, lack of discipline, truanting, dislike of examinations, and lack of opportunities. These problems often contributed to their leaving at the earliest opportunity.

Selection at 12:

132 *'I went to primary and Senior Secondary. I didn't like school at all because I wasn't very bright. I liked domestic science and PT. I failed the qualifying exams [for Senior Secondary] first time but my father made me re-sit and I passed. I left at 15, if I had gone to the Comprehensive School I could have taken shorthand/typing and been prepared for a job at 15 but I didn't think of that till later.'*

Lack of discipline:

119 *'I liked school until we moved to Bellahouston Academy, then I hated it. No discipline, I was surprised as I came from a supposed 'rough' area. Left at 16, got 6 'O' levels - Maths, Arith, Home Economics, Commercial, Geography, English.'*

Truanting:

109 *'I was OK at numbers, spelling was not my good subject, also reading, I liked cooking. I got 2 'O' levels, Cookery and Arithmetic. I liked school, I enjoyed the first two years of secondary school, then I got in with the wrong crowd and started to play truant and got into trouble. I was 16 years when I left school.'*

Dislike of examinations:

142 *'It was OK, but I didn't want to do exams, so unofficially I left early. I didn't particularly like school, I hardly ever went.'*

Lack of opportunities:

127 *'I can't remember much about primary school but I loved secondary school ... Just my third year Leaving Certificate. You couldn't stay on at my secondary school - you had to go to another school, if I could have stayed on there I would have, but I just decided to leave because I didn't want to change school.'*

A number of educational factors had a bearing on the students experience of schooling, which for some led to low or no qualifications, leaving early and to negative attitudes about education and their ability. Their qualifications (or lack of them) and attitudes gained from school are likely to have influenced the rest of their educational careers. The table below shows the educational qualifications gained from school by the students:

Qualifications	No. of students
One or more Highers	6
5 or more 'O' grades	4
1 - 4 'O' grades	10
3rd Year Leaving Cert	9
No qualifications	31
Total	60

Table 4.2 Students' educational qualifications from school.

In order to show whether there is any change over time due to the raising of the school leaving age and the expansion of the proportion taking examinations, the following table gives the qualifications for three cohorts. For the first two groups the minimum leaving age was 15, while the third group could not leave before they were 16.

	Date of Birth			
Qualifications	1938-47	1948-57	1958-67	Total
'O' grade and above	1 (8%)	9 (31%)	10 (53%)	20 (33%)
3rd Yr Leaving Cert	4 (33%)	5 (17%)	0 (0%)	9 (15%)
No qualifications	7 (58%)	15 (52%)	9 (47%)	31 (52%)
Total	12 (100%)	29 (100%)	19 (100%)	60 (100%)

Table 4.3 Qualifications from school for three cohorts.

More of the younger students have 'O' grades and above but there is only slight differences in the proportions who leave without any qualifications. This is due to the fact that nine older students had 3rd Year Leaving Certificates (discontinued after 1972). The proportions in the oldest two groups who gain 'O' grades and above is around that of the Scottish average for those leaving school in the

early '60's given in figure 4.1 while the youngest group have fewer qualifications than the average from the mid-'70's onwards. This together with the difference in staying on suggests that *relative to their cohort the older students may have been around average whereas the younger left school with fewer qualifications than average.*

Schooling and post-school courses

The main outcome from schooling which affects links with subsequent education is the possession of qualifications. Movement into higher education is especially dependent on qualifications gained from school. Students options for professional and vocational education and training are also influenced by school qualifications. Because of the diverse range of courses taken after school (see table 4.4) there is no statistical relationship between school qualifications and whether or not a post-school course was taken. Nonetheless, when the courses are disaggregated some links are revealed.

None of the six students with 'H' grades went onto higher education, two of them used their qualifications for entry into professional training (RCN nursing, occupational therapy) and one went into further education and took more 'H' grades, the rest took no further courses until their OU course. For example:

156 *'I left school at 17, I got 5 'O' levels and I sat Higher English and I got it but failed my Biology Higher ... I went to Stobhill Hospital as a nurse, it was a three year course, RCN.'*

159 *'I sat Highers and 'O' grades, 7 'O' passes and one Higher ... [After leaving school] I went to Langside to do History and French Highers at night school.'*

Regarding those with 'O' grades, one of these used her qualifications to go to further education and take 'H' grades and one entered nursing, another a part-time vocational course which did not depend on having 'O' grades; and eleven took no courses until the OU course.

106 *'I did two Highers and a secretarial course at night*

classes.'

114 *'For admission to Nursing College I had to wait for six months. I had two years at Nursing College, I really enjoyed it. The only reason I left was I failed my exams.'*

126 *'No after school education except the Comptometer course, but I got 'O' levels at school.'*

Nine students left school with 3rd Year Leaving Certificates and, after leaving, five took part-time vocational courses. For example:

127 *'I used to go to night school just after leaving school for typing and book-keeping.'*

146 *'I trained in school for my last year as a clerkess/typist... [when I left school] I did a book-keeping course for about a year.'*

Finally, of the 31 who left without any qualifications, one gained entry to professional training (SEN nursing) and three took vocational courses:

160 *'I stayed on at school until I was 17 years old [left in 1955]. I went into nursing and did my training for two and a half years.'*

122 *'I left school when I was 16. I went straight on to a YTS scheme for catering. Then I went to College during the YTS scheme and then stayed at College full-time and left YTS. I had no qualifications from school and no qualifications from College because I left before the course was finished.'*

Thus, immediately after leaving school two of the six students with 'H' grades used these for entry into professional training; only two out of fourteen of those with 'O' grades used these to enter further education or professional training; and just over half of those with 3rd Year Leaving Certificates may have been helped to take vocational courses. In other words, there were positive links between school qualifications and further education and training for only nine out of 60 students. If courses taken after a gap are included then only an additional three of those with Leaving Certificates took up professional training later, making the total 12. Also one more without qualifications entered professional and another vocational training. Those with no qualifications had their

opportunities restricted and this represents a negative linkage.

To summarise: For only 40 per cent of those who with qualifications are there links between their qualifications and subsequent courses taken before their OU course. There were no links for the remaining 60 per cent with qualifications of whom two took courses which did not depend on their qualifications and 15 took no courses at all. There are no positive linkages for those without qualifications, three quarters of whom took no courses and one quarter who took courses for which they did not need qualifications. Finally, there is no relationship between age and whether courses were taken before the OU courses. That is, in spite of having more years, older students had not taken more courses than younger students before the OU courses.

Post-school courses

22 students took a variety of courses after leaving school and before their first OU course. The types of courses and whether they were taken immediately (less than a year) after leaving school or after a delay are shown in the table below:

Type of Course	Total	Immediate	Delayed
Nursing, OT etc.	8	4	4
'O' and 'H' grades	3	2	1
Secretarial, typing, word processing etc.	9	7	2
First aid, welfare rights, childminding, catering, play & youth leading, community care	4	3	1
Total courses	24*	16	8

* one student delayed before taking nursing and then did 'O' grades later, another took Highers and a secretarial course at the same time immediately after leaving school, these students are only counted once in the total.

Table 4.4 Types of post-school courses.

Most of these students took their courses soon after leaving school and only eight took courses after a gap and before their first OU course. Four students who took courses immediately after school did not finish them successfully either dropping out or failing the

examination. One student (number 122) quoted above, left school without qualifications and started a YTS catering course and left before this course finished. Also quoted above is another student (number 114) who failed nursing exams after two years training. The comments of two others are:

> 134 *'I have seven 'O' levels and three Highers. I liked Secondary School, I stayed on until I was 18, then I went to College. I went to Glasgow School of Occupational Therapy and left College about one year before the course finished. I was going to be an occupational therapist. I was 20 yrs old then.'*
>
> 127 *'I went to night school just after leaving school, typing and book-keeping, in 1961. I didn't finish.*

The remainder seemed to have completed their courses, some of which were non-certificated. The extent that non-completion may be due to events in other areas of the students' lives is examined in subsequent chapters.

Schooling and OU courses

The OU courses are open entry and no previous qualifications are required, therefore there is no required educational link between having qualifications and taking up OU courses. Nonetheless, as has been pointed out above, students' attitudes to participation in the OU courses and education generally may be affected by their school experience, suggestive comments are:

> 136 *'It [the OU course] helped my self esteem. When I was at school we had to sit a test and if you passed you were allowed to go on and sit 'O' levels but if you failed you were not. I failed the test and I felt so hurt and angry. In fact one of the teachers used to call us rejects. I thought that was the end of it, but after I left I found out that I could have talked it over with my guidance teacher and my parents and gone onto do 'O' levels but it was too late. I felt such a failure. It seemed so unfair. The [OU] courses really did boost my self esteem very much'.*
>
> 113 *'As I was never clever at school I was looking forward to trying the OU courses out.'*

There are no links between school qualifications and the number of

OU courses taken. Those with qualifications are not more likely to continue with these courses after their first.

Post-school and OU courses

There does not appear to be any general relationship between previous courses and OU courses although there are a few cases where a link may exist. For example, one student took a local authority Childminding course, then took The Preschool Child two years later.

There is a significant relationship ($p<0.01$) between students who took a course after leaving school and those who enroled for more than one OU course. That is, *those who had post school educational experience were more likely to continue with OU courses* after their first. This suggests a continuing orientation to education based on experience after leaving school rather than on qualifications gained at school.

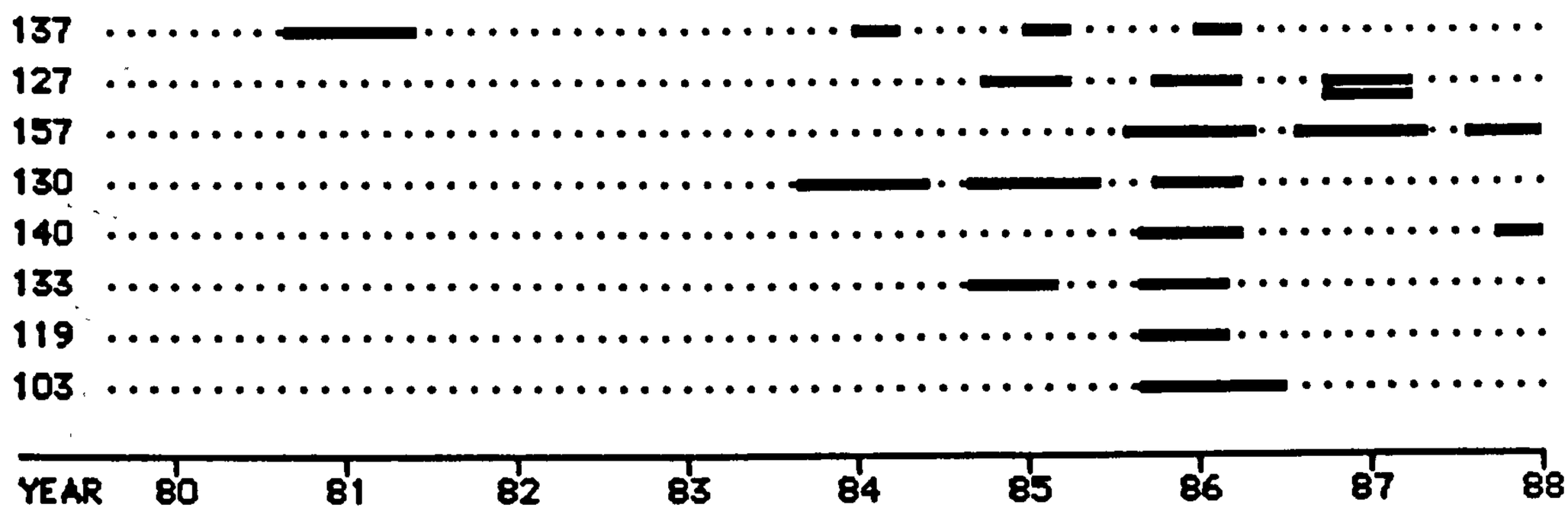
OU courses

Students vary in the patterns of their OU course careers: in terms of the number of courses and the particular courses they take. While all students took at least one course for which they gained a Certificate in 1986, some had also been awarded Certificates previously, and others gained more in the two following years, or they had not finished courses at the time of the interview. The student who took the earliest OU course started in 1980 and went on to take three more. The OU career patterns for this student and others are represented in chart 4.4 below with an expanded time scale and with the duration of OU courses shown in full.

The chart shows that second student (number 127) began one course in 1984, another in 1985 and took two together in 1986. Although both the next students (number 157 and 130) have taken three courses and both took a course for which they obtained a Certificate in 1986, the first student took her other two courses before this, while the other took two courses after. Also some students were taking courses around the time of the interview

whereas others took their last course up to two years previously.

Chart 4.4 Educational careers as OU students.



In the sample 22 students took one course; 16 - two courses; 14 - three; and 8 - four (including courses being taken at the time of the interview). Most students began with The Preschool Child or Childhood 5-10, with more younger students taking The Preschool Child and more older students taking Childhood 5-10. Of those who take The Preschool Child first, three quarters continue, most taking Childhood 5-10 or The First Years of Life. Only 50 per cent of those who started with Childhood 5-10 continue, mainly with Health Choices or Parents and Teenagers. The numbers taking other courses are small, including three who took Caring for Older People (for details see table 3.4).

The strongest linkages between first and second courses are from The Preschool Child to Childhood 5-10 (9 students) followed by The Preschool Child to The First Years of Life (5 students). The reasons students give for this are illustrated below:

The Preschool Child to Childhood 5-10:

107 *'Keen to go on and a natural progress to next course.'*

136 *'My daughter came under the pre-5 and my son came under the 5-10. He wanted his turn and also because I enjoyed the first one.'*

123 *'Enjoyed first one, found it easy to understand.'*

152 *'I liked and was successful with the first.'*

The Preschool Child to The First Years of Life:
148 *'I enjoyed doing the first one.'*
111 *'I found it interesting and it gave me information.'*
112 *'I found that I learned quite a lot with the first one.'*
128 *'They were enjoyable and interesting.'*

The linkage between The Preschool Child and Childhood 5-10 is due to a combination of extrinsic reasons connected with the age of children and intrinsic interest and enjoyment. Only intrinsic reasons are given for the link with The First Years of Life and, even though three of the five students had another baby after taking this course, they did not volunteer this as reason for taking it.

There may also be operational reasons why students go onto a particular course:

118 *'It [Health Choices] was all that was available at the time, but I would rather have done Childhood 5-10.'*

Most of the students had very positive educational experiences from studying the courses and in response to open ended questions frequently used key words such as: 'confidence' (19 students); 'interesting' (15); 'enjoy' (15); 'understand' (14); 'learn' (9); 'realise' (13). Seven students seemed a little indifferent and a further thirteen were mildly positive about doing the courses although some of these found them helpful in continuing their education or in other areas of their life. The remaining two thirds were strongly positive. For example:

117 *'Starts your brain working and starts getting you to do other things. Not so sure of yourself when you've stopped work to have children. During the course I felt you were having more opinions on things you don't really talk about when just meeting your friends. Topics in the books lead to discussion on other things.'*
119 *'When we started the course it was somewhere to go, now I really enjoy it, I see it as a challenge, I've surprised myself at what I'm capable of.'*
123 *'It made me use my brain, I was probably vegetating. The thought that I did something and got a Certificate at the end was uplifting.'*

It should be remembered that all the students in the sample had completed one or more courses successfully and those who may have been hostile or negative were unlikely to continue through to this stage. The details of what students said they learnt and applied to other areas of their life (eg. childcare and health) is considered in subsequent chapters.

Post OU-courses

In the limited time between the start of their first OU course and the date of the interview, 34 students went onto a range of 55 non-OU courses. Table 4.5 below summarises the types of courses.

Type of Course	Students	Courses
Nursing, OT etc.	1	1
'O' and 'H' grades	9	12
Other academic, modules etc.	6	7
Secretarial, typing, word processing etc.	7	9
Computer studies, programming etc.	5	5
Cooking, sewing, machine knitting	6	6
First aid, welfare rights, childminding, Catering, play & youth leading, Community care	12	15
Total	34*	55

* a number of students took more than one course of a particular type and courses of more than one type.

Table 4.5 Type of course taken after OU courses.

The most popular are academic courses either 'O' or 'H' grades or modules, other courses are concerned with secretarial work and computer use, and practical courses connected with helping or caring for others. There are no examples of students going on to higher education or the OU undergraduate programme.

Those that have completed certificated courses have gained awards. Others commented on their progress, for example:

141 *'I'm doing modules in Cardonald College on a Wednesday morning and I am going to go full-time when my job finishes in August. I am doing to do the full course on*

Community Service. Well, that's if I'm good enough. Its alright now, its easy enough going to College once a week but it will probably be a lot harder going 5 days a week, it will be like going back to school.'

158 *'I really enjoy my work just now, well College, its not really work but I will enjoy it even more when I qualify as a Nursery Nurse.'*

But six students did not complete their courses for educational and other reasons.

116 *'I started 'O' grade English and Computer Studies but they fell through due to the teachers' strike.'*

144 *'I started going back to school to do 'O' levels but hospital visits were interrupting classes so I gave it up, I would think about doing it again.'*

A longer interval is needed to assess the students' success on the certificated courses they are now taking.

OU and post-OU courses

There is no significant tendency for those who take more than one OU course to go on to non-OU courses. However, there are some links between the particular OU course(s) taken and subsequent non-OU courses, these include people who went onto playleading courses after The Preschool Child or Childhood 5-10 and caring courses after Caring for Older People:

132 *'The playgroup course was about the same age group [as the OU course].'*

143 *'It made me want to do more courses for the special needs of people.'*

Of the 34 students who went onto other non-OU courses, 23 specifically said that the OU course had helped them and around half of these went on to either academic or professional courses and most of them said they were helped by the OU courses. Typical comments are:

104 *'Yes, it gave me confidence to go ahead when I was approached about the youth leadership course.'*

111 *'It helped me with English ['O' grade] ... It made me think*

I was not so stupid.'
116 *'Yes, it gave me confidence and 'appetite' to learn more.'*
119 *'Starting the OU course made me push myself into going back to school, I go to school in the day time with the pupils.'*
145 *'Yes, I wouldn't have had the confidence to to do the English course otherwise.'*

The main benefit that the OU courses provide for those who go on to take other non-OU courses seems to be the increase in confidence. A further five students said they had been encouraged to think about taking up courses in the future and gained knowledge about opportunities:

113 *'Its made me think of going back to school.'*
156 *'It made me feel I was not disorientated about education. It made me feel more alert, it opened my ideas about further education, that my life could still go on learning more and more and not stopping because I was a wife and mother.'*
160 *'Its made me aware to the courses that are open to you.'*

There were eleven who went onto further education but did not feel the OU courses had helped them. Their courses were mainly practical or vocational, eg. cookery, sewing, welfare rights, first aid, typing and computer studies.

Schooling, post-school, OU and post-OU courses
The analysis has shown that there is only one significant relationship amongst all the possible pairs of components of educational careers, and this was between those who took post-school courses and those who took more than one OU course. This means that *going onto non-OU courses after taking OU courses is not dependent on previous qualifications, or previous participation in post-school education and training.*

However, suggestive linkages between qualifications and courses taken after OU courses can be observed. For example, *none of those who had Highers or professional qualifications before taking their OU courses took academic courses afterwards.* This may be another negative link, the reasons why they do not go on to higher education

are not given.

Also, as might be expected, none of the 31 without school qualifications did Highers after the OU courses, but 5 did go onto 'O' grades. The three students who went on to Highers after their OU courses had 'O' grades or 3rd Year Leaving Certificates before. This illustrates a linkage due educational grading by level. None of the unqualified five who went onto 'O' grades had taken any post-school courses before the OU courses.

Of those who went onto non-OU courses, over three quarters (18/22) of those who had not taken a post-school course were helped compared to less than half (5/12) of those who had continued their education before the OU courses. This is statistically significant and suggests that *the OU courses were more helpful in going onto further courses for those who had not previously continued their education.*

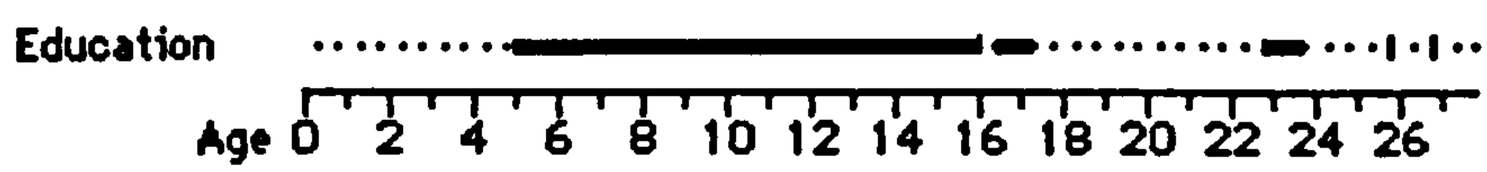
Continuing case studies

This analysis of the patterns, components and linkages which make up educational careers provides a framework for looking at individual students. Four case studies are presented which, in effect, put one area of students lives back together again and provide complete educational careers up to the date of the interview. These students will be followed through to chapter nine

Student number 136

The educational career (type 2) of the first student is represented below:

Chart 4.5 Educational career of student number 136.



She summarises her educational career as follows:

136 *'I liked my secondary but not my primary. I liked English and History. I left at 16 with no qualifications ... I trained for typing at night school although I did some typing at school ... I went to College through Manpower Services for shorthand and typing and English - Jan 1983 for 6 mths. I got Certificates for these ... I've done the pre-5 and the 5-10 ... I have thought of pushing ahead with some further education and going back to school.'*

She left school in 1976 and soon after took a typing course and later further courses through the MSC, two years after these ended she began her first OU course which was followed by another, and she may continue her education by going back to school. The later parts of this student's career reflects new opportunities - particularly from the MSC, and the chance of returning to school and the OU courses themselves. However, she was quoted earlier at length (p. 157) concerning features of the system that have left a significant impression on her, in brief she says:

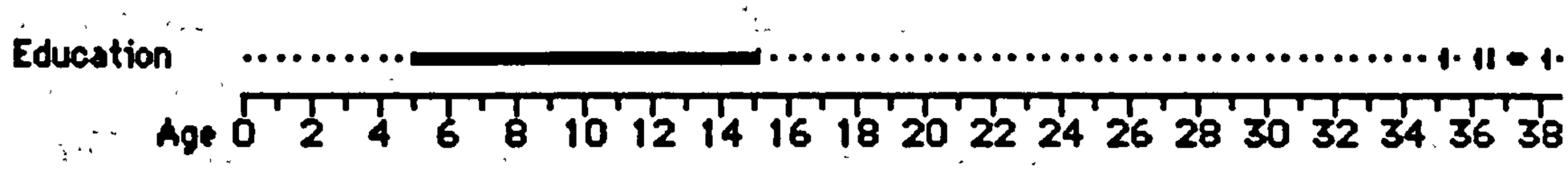
136 *I felt such a failure. It seemed so unfair. The [OU] courses really did boost my self esteem very much.'*

She illustrates the legacy of failure that examination opportunities can have. In spite of this disappointment she has continued her education, first with typing at night school, which she built on when she took a further typing course with English. The OU courses are not linked to these but may provide a stepping stone back to 'O' levels.

Student number 144

The next student left school in 1964 and her educational career (type 3) is shown below:

Chart 4.6 Educational career of student number 144.



She describes her career as follows:

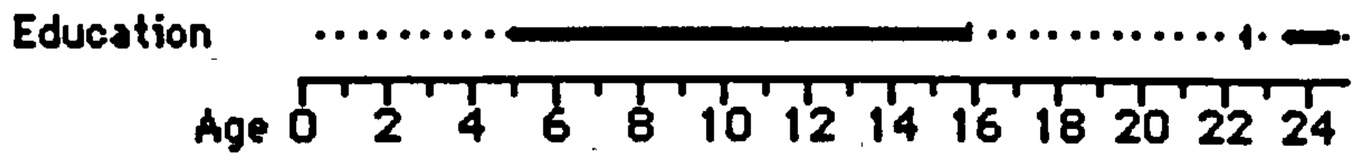
144 *'Not too bad. I quite enjoyed school - not many successes. I think I would have stayed on but didn't get enough push from my family, I wish I had now. I got a Leaving Certificate for doing full 3 yrs at school ... I enjoyed doing the [OU] courses at the time ... I felt proud of myself, it was an achievement getting through them, opening to other subjects ... I started going back to school to do 'O' levels but hospital visits were interrupting classes so I gave it up, I would think about doing it again.'*

This student was at school before the leaving age was raised and left at 15 with a 3rd Year Leaving Certificate. She did not take any further courses until starting the OU although she had three years on-the-job training as a bookbinder after leaving school. Taking three OU courses helped her to take up 'O' levels but had to discontinue these for non-educational reasons. She has since returned to another OU course.

Student number 145

The third student's educational lifeline is shown below:

Chart 4.7 Educational career of student number 145.



She left school in 1979 and her comments on her educational career (type 3) are given below:

145 *'I loved school, I was always clever at school. In primary you always got prizes at exam time. I left school when I got the chance of a job, so I had to leave immediately. I was going to sit 7 'O' levels ... From Nov 86-Oct 87 I was a Trainee Media Assistant, the [Media and Research and English] course was only for 1 yr ... It [The OU course] helped me start to get my confidence back. I wouldn't have had the confidence to do the English course otherwise.'*

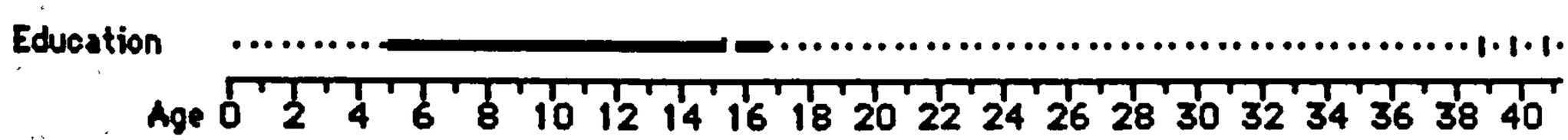
She left school at 16 before taking her 'O' levels and did not return to education until her OU course, this was followed by training job supported by MSC which included taking English and Media and Research courses. The OU course gave her confidence particularly

to tackle the English course.

Student number 157

The final student left school in 1962:

Chart 4.8 Educational career of student number 157.



She says the following about her educational career (type 2):

> 157 *'I loved it [school] - I would have liked to stay on, but opportunities weren't there. I left at 15 and a half because I had to, I got a Leaving Certificate, I stayed on an extra 6 mths to get it ... I did a typing and shorthand course at night school after I left school ... I wish the OU would extend its range of things, its a bit limited - I've done 3 courses and I don't know if there's anything else I'd like to do. I think its something needed in the community, I've enjoyed it.'*

She left school with a 3rd Year Leaving Certificate because at that time the opportunities were not there. She took a typing and shorthand course soon after leaving and no further courses until the OU. She has taken three OU courses and is looking for something else to do.

Conclusions

The case studies illustrate career types 2 and 3 - where courses are taken after leaving school but none after the OU; and where courses are taken both before and after the OU courses. Although students share the same career types their experience differs and occurs over differing time periods. The examples include students aged from 24-41 years at the date of their interviews. The two youngest left school at 16 but without qualifications, although one was going to sit 7 'O' levels; both the older students have 3rd Year Leaving Certificates. Typing at night school has remained an option and was

taken up after leaving school by an older student and 13 years later by a younger student. However, both younger students were able to take up opportunities supported by the MSC, one before her OU course and the other after. Also after OU courses another student returned to school. The influence of the OU courses was to boost the first student's educational confidence, and help two students take up other courses, while the other is looking for further courses. The case studies show the place and influence of OU courses in these students' educational careers.

Returning to the whole sample and the questions raised at the beginning of the chapter - the educational background of this sample ranges from about half who have no qualifications at all, through to some with one or more 'O' grades and a few with 'H' grades. A number of the older students have 3rd Year Leaving Certificates. After leaving school two thirds had taken no further courses before their first OU course, a third took other courses ranging from nursing training to a short first aid course, nearly all of those gaining qualifications already had qualifications from school so that the proportion without qualifications remained around half.

When did the OU courses occur in their educational careers? For over a quarter of the students the OU has been their only experience of education following school so far; less than a fifth had returned to education before the OU courses but have not yet returned after; the biggest group of over a third did not return until the OU courses and then continued with other courses; and another fifth took courses after leaving school and after the OU courses. The kinds of courses that students go onto after the OU courses may be linked to their previous qualifications.

Who is influenced educationally? Around a half the students said the OU courses helped them to go onto other courses or to think about this. The OU courses are more helpful to those who had not previously returned to education and those who go onto academic and professional courses. The OU courses help students to gain confidence in their ability to study and enable them to find out about

other educational opportunities.

Who else is influenced? Students' participation in the courses and their example of studying at home influences their children's views of the importance of education. Students' involvement in their children's schools is examined in chapter seven under community activities where it is also pointed out that students talk to and encourage their friends to take courses (helping to change the local culture to being more positive towards education). Their interest in taking courses helps create viable numbers for classes which provide local opportunities for others.

The OU courses seem to have an important influence in encouraging students to take up the increasing range of educational opportunities available. Not only does the success with their first OU course encourage students to take another but to go onto non-OU courses as well. Fifty five non-OU courses were taken in three years since 1985 when they took an OU course, compared to far fewer over a much longer period before this date, this is not just related to the personal careers of the students but is also due to the growth of opportunities. We have seen that these include MSC schemes, courses in schools, modular courses, community education and so on. The changes in the school system mean that students may start OU courses from a different base regarding the amount of schooling and qualifications. There are positive signs of a virtuous circle where increased awareness of the OU and other courses reduces barriers which in turn increases participation and so on. While students are helped to go onto other courses, and this in itself is one aim of the Region's Education Department, the question remains - education for what? This is looked at in subsequent chapters where the links between education and other areas of life are examined.

The extent that components in students' educational careers are linked and can be can be accounted for in terms of the careers or the educational system can be summarised as follows. All sixty of the students went to school, 29 left with some qualifications and 12 used these for entry to further courses; of the total of 22 who

continued their education nearly all these took more than one OU course; out of the sixty, 34 went on to other courses and 23 were helped to do this by their OU courses. This shows that there are some linkages and closer examination revealed others, but for many students their reasons and the time they start courses and the ways they benefit lie outside their educational lives and the educational system.

This chapter shows how far we can get in describing and explaining educational careers by focussing on the careers and the educational system. However, it is obvious that the particular components taken up, their timing and the gaps between them are influenced by events occurring elsewhere in students' lives. The concepts of career pattern, components, and linkages give us the basis for analysing other careers and looking at their interactions. The following chapters examine careers in other areas of their lives and explore how these interact with their educational careers.

Chapter 5 - Family Life and Education

Introduction

This chapter begins by reviewing the main changes in family life during the period of students' lives and involves an examination of aggregate trends in the birth, marriage and divorce rates. The chapter then focuses on students' family life and the family they were born into and grew up in as well as the family they started on marriage and formed by having children of their own. Considerable attention could be given to this area of life in its own right, but the more limited purpose here is to analyse the patterns of family life within the sociohistorical context in order to explore how this area interacts with their educational careers and in particular participation in the OU courses. A similar set of questions is applied to each area of students' lives, in this case they can be summarised as: what is the family background of the students; when in their family and childcare lives do they take the OU courses; which students are influenced in these areas of their lives and who else benefits?

The nature of family life is particularly influenced by who makes up the family unit, initially the student's parents and later their spouse; and by changes in the composition of the family due to separation or death. Also important are the student's brothers and sisters and later their own children. The main activity connected with family life is housework and childcare which begins in the student's family of origin and is usually a major part of their adult lives.

The chapter considers the patterns of family life so that descriptive categories can be identified. The relationship between the composition of students' childhood families and family work is examined as this may have implications for their progress in school. The transition from childhood family to adult family and the interaction between the changes in family life and involvement in

education is explored. Students' adult families, their formation and continuity are examined and related to the place of OU courses and to the help the courses provide in family life. Where students are in their childcare careers and their reaction to the courses is examined to see whether there is a systematic relationship between these. For students who have experienced marital breakdown, the timing of this in relation to the courses is considered to see whether their views about the courses are connected to this experience.

First, the aggregate trends describing the wider social context in which students have lived their family lives are reviewed so that individual patterns of family life can be located historically.

Family and marriage trends

The older students where born during the post-war baby boom in the late 1940's. By the early 1950's the birth rate declined until the baby boom of the late '50's to early '60's (the 'baby bulge'). This ended with a downturn which continued up to 1977 when the birth rate then made a slight recovery. Kendrick (1983) describes this reduction as follows:

> 'Quantitatively, the single most massive social change in Scotland, as in the rest of the industrialised world, in the last twenty years has been the fall in the birth rate - from a value of 20 births per 1,000 population in 1964 to a historic low of 12 per 1,000 in 1977.'
> (Kendrick, 1983: 54)

Therefore, many of the students were having children of their own at a time when there was an unprecedented fall in the birth rate. This was mainly due to catholic and working class birth rates coming down so that religious and class differences largely disappeared. Also the differences in the proportions of married mothers who have their first birth before 20 years of age has changed over time. For example, in 1955 15% of working class mothers in Scotland were having first births under 20 years of age,

whereas in the mid '70's this increased to 45% in spite of the falling birth rate. The figures have fallen back since and in 1981, 36% of first births were to young mothers (Kendrick, 1983: 61). There has been a large increase in the proportion of births outside marriage from around 5% in the '50's, 10% in the '70's to 23% in 1987. However, about half of the babies are born to cohabiting couples (Roll, 1989: 23).

The proportion of women marrying increased from 1951 when only 43% of women in Scotland of marriageable age were married, reached a peak in 1971 with 70%, and since then there has been a decline so that by 1981 the figure was 60%. This decline is due to the increase in single parents and cohabiting (Kendrick, 1983: 57). The numbers of teenage marriages in Britain halved during the 1970's - in 1972 one in three women getting married for the first time were teenagers, ten years later this was one in five (Clarke, 1987: 112). The average age of marriage for women in Scotland was around 24 in the '50's and declined to approximately 22 years in the 1970's. Since 1980 it has increased again so that by 1986 the average age of first marriages for women was nearly 24.

There has been a dramatic rise in the divorce rate, in the decade from 1951-60 an average of only 2.3% of the married population divorced each year, this increased to an annual figure of 3.2% in the next decade. Following changes in the law relating to divorce in 1971, the rate went up to 9.8% in the 70's. The figures from 1981 are around 12% and have remained around this level in the mid '80's (Nissel, 1987: 218).

There is a clear relationship between divorce rates and social class, with rates around four times greater for unskilled manual workers than for the professional class. The rate is even higher for unemployed men of all classes. As unskilled workers experience more unemployment these affects are linked (Clarke, 1987: 113). While the remarriage rate was high in 1971 with 227 per 1000 divorced people remarrying, it has been falling to only 90 per 1000 in 1987 (Roll, 1989: 22). There has been a huge increase in single

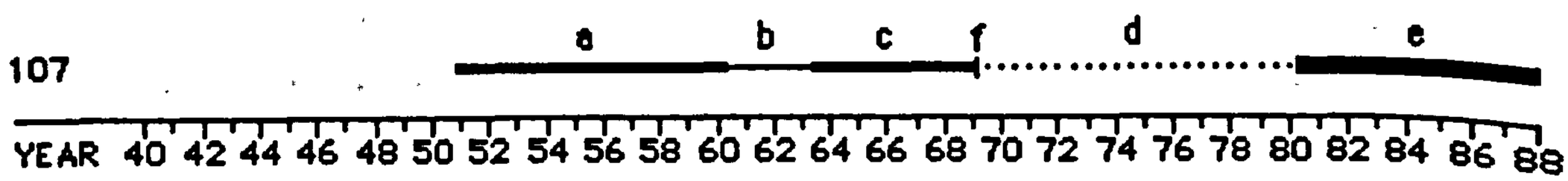
parent families so that in Glasgow in 1986 an average of 30% of all families with children were headed by lone parents (SRC, 1989b: 66).

In summary, there has been a major decline in the birth rate leading to smaller families; women have been beginning their families at a younger age; the popularity of marriage has been declining while divorce, single parents and cohabitation has increased. Roll says 'there has been an enormous increase in the proportion of women living, giving birth, and raising children outside marriage (Roll, 1989: 23). While the trends are based on cross sectional data taken at different times, individuals may move from being single to getting married, then divorcing to become single parents and to remarrying or cohabiting. It is to these patterns that we now turn.

Patterns of family life

Students' family lives can be represented by lifelines to show particular features of their families and to changes in these. The family lifeline of student number 107 is given below as an example:

Chart 5.1 Family lifelines for student number 107.



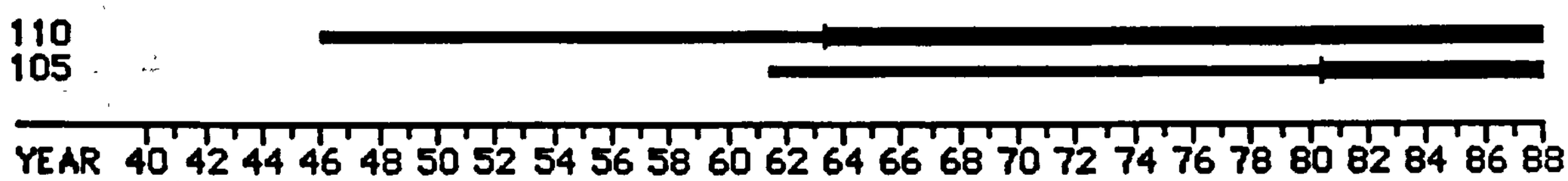
To show each student's childhood and adult families on the same lifeline and to keep the representation as simple as possible, four thicknesses of line are used. A dotted line (d) shows when the student was single, either before getting married or following a separation, or if in childhood both parents died before the student left home. A thin continuous line (b) shows that the student was living with one parent; a thicker continuous line (a) shows that both parents were present or that a single parent had remarried and the student had a step-parent (c). The fattest line (e) begins when the student gets married and continues until this marriage ends and

restarts on remarriage. Also added to the family lifeline is a short vertical line (f) to show when the student left home, either to get married or to live as a single person

In the above example the student was born in 1950 and lived with both parents for 10 years. Her parents then separated and she continued to live with her mother. Her mother remarried in 1963 and then the student lived with her mother and step-father until she left home in 1969 to live on her own. She got married in 1980 and was still married at the date of the interview.

While students may have similar patterns, they may have been born and got married at different historical times. The examples below show two students both of whom lived with their parents until they got married and have remained married up to the date of the interview. However, one student was born in 1946 and the other in 1961, they married at similar ages but at different times. The prospects for beginning adult family life in the early '60's were quite different compared to the early '80's, also getting married at a particular time would be a different prospect depending on whether you are 17 or 27.

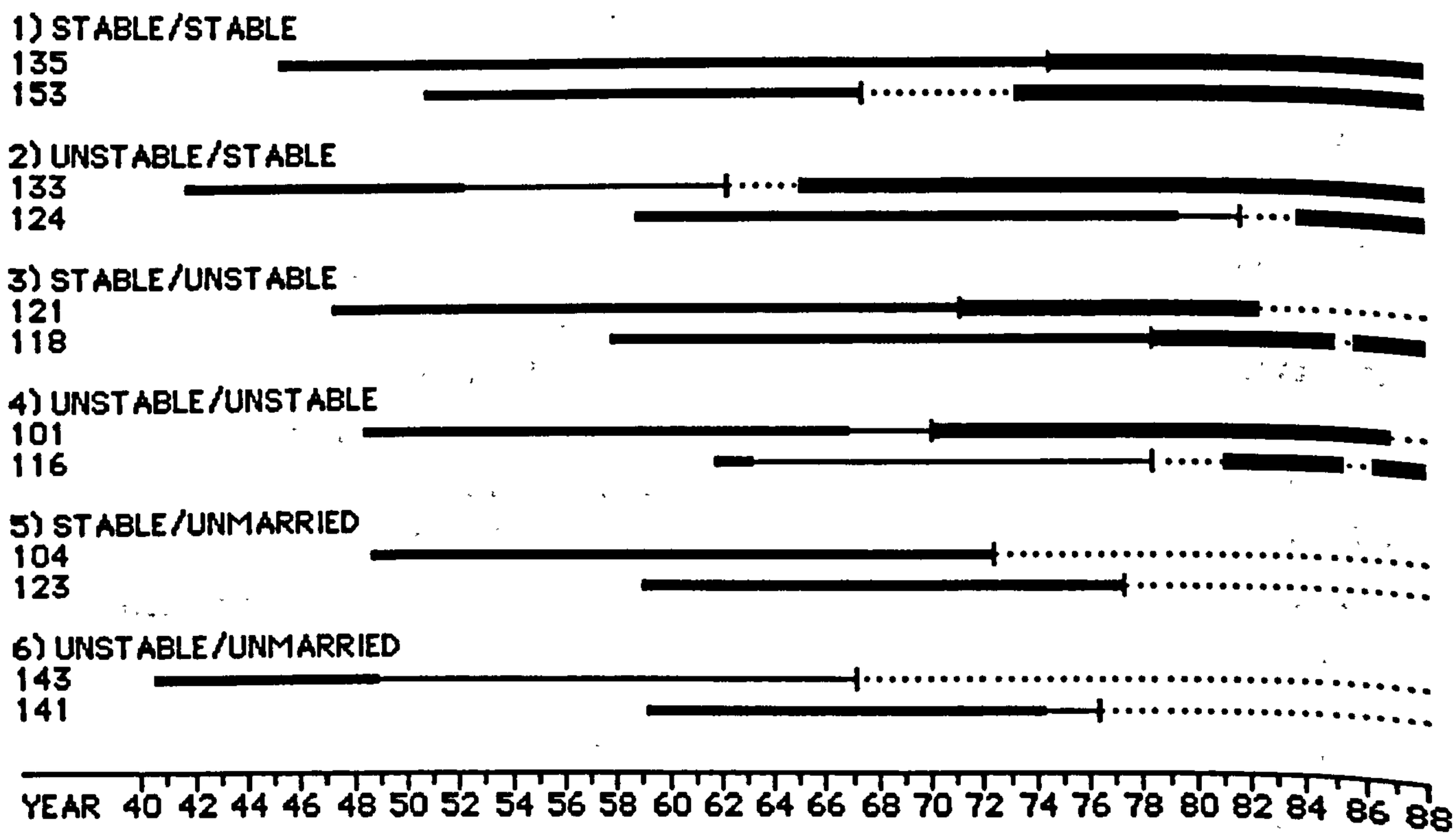
Chart 5.2 Students' family lifelines in different historical times.



Bearing in mind the different historical and individual times, the patterns of family lifelines can be used to group students into descriptive categories based on whether the student: 1) as a child experienced any separation from a parent and 2) as a adult experienced marital separation. Also there is a group of students who have not married. For simplicity separation from parents for whatever reason is referred to as *unstable* parenting or unstable childhood families, in contrast to those without parental separation whose experience is termed *stable*. The experience of marital

separation for whatever reason is referred to as *unstable* marriages or unstable adult families, compared to continuing first marriages, which are referred to as *stable* marriages. Students who have never married are referred to as *unmarried*. The following six categories can be defined in these terms and are illustrated by the family lifelines of two students in each category:

Chart 5.3 Patterns of family life.



The numbers of students whose pattern of family life falls into each category are given in table 5.1 below.

Childhood	Stable married	Adulthood Unstable separated	Never married	Total
Stable	25	7	4	36
Unstable	18	3	3	24
Total	43	10	7	60

Table 5.1 Numbers with stable and unstable childhood and adult family lives.

This shows that 36 students had stable childhood and 25 of these also had stable adult families; 24 students did not have one or both parents before they left home; 18 of these lost parents before they left school; a further three had parents separate when they were between 16 and 18 years old and three more had parents die in their twenties, before they left home.

There were ten students who have experienced marital instability. Of the seven who came from stable backgrounds four are now single, two have remarried, one of these separated for a second time and one got back with her husband again. Of the three from unstable backgrounds two are now single and one remarried.

There is no statistical relationship between whether students experienced family instability as children and their experience of unstable adult relationships (up to the date of the interview).

The three main stages of family life defined by these lifelines involve childhood and adult families and the transition from one to the other. The transition period may be instantaneous or extended. These stages are discussed and the interaction between them and students' educational careers considered. When examining the first two stages, ie. childhood and transition, students can be differentiated in terms of whether they experienced stability or instability in their parenting and the duration of the transition; in the third stage differentiation can be based on the stability of their adult family and the stage of their childcare careers.

Students' childhood families

Students' family lives began on their date of birth which fixes the cohort and the historical period through which they live. Family circumstances and the place and time of their birth have a major influence on their life chances. Students in this sample were born over a 30 year period between 1938 and 1968. The majority (54) were born in Glasgow, 4 elsewhere in Scotland, one in England and

one in Ireland.

All the students except two were born into two parent families of whom one mother remained single and the other died two years later. One student's father left when his daughter was one year old. A further eight had parents who separated when they were young and three of these had mothers who subsequently remarried and thus had a step-father and in some cases step-brothers and sisters; three more students had parents who separated when they were between 16-18 years old. Four students had mothers who died before they left school and three fathers died. For one student this includes both parents who died within 8 months of each other and another whose mother died when she was 15 and her father two years later.

Their fathers' main occupations were predominantly manual working class - including unskilled (25) and semi-skilled (22) but also a few who were skilled (7) and professional or managerial (4). The largest categories of employment were general services (12) - which included postal, traffic warden, retail, security and window cleaning; then labouring (10) and metal work (9); followed by then bus and general driving (5); factory work (5); building work (5); farming (2); a printer, miner, sailor, crane operator, linesman, and a chain inspector. Included in these groups are those who were skilled, most of whom had trades in metal work. In the professional and managerial group there was a pharmacist and three managers. Categorising these occupations in a different way, there were 16 in manufacturing; 13 in construction; 25 in services; and 2 in farming; 1 in mining and 1 in the armed services.

Thirty five students had mothers who worked, most mothers did not return to work until their children were older. There is no difference in the proportions of students with mothers who worked in the groups with stable and unstable parenting. Thirty one of mothers' jobs were unskilled and included cleaners (8), shop assistants (7), factory work (7), cooks (5), home-helps (3) and a hospital auxiliary; two were semi-skilled as a secretary and manageress and only two had skilled jobs as a nurse and a laboratory

technician; their work was mostly part-time.

Nineteen of the students were first born and 4 of these remained the only child. 29 were the first girl born in families which went on to have further children. Ten students were the youngest and the last to be born in their families and ten students later had step or adopted brothers or sisters in their family, and two were themselves adopted when their mothers died or left. The average number of children in the family (including the student) was 4.15 which ranged from one to eleven. Nearly two thirds had four or more children in their families and a third had five or more. There is a significant difference between the average number of children in families with both parents (3.6) and those with separations (5.0) which includes some with remarriage and step-children.

Students' experience of childhood

Students recollections of their childhood experience are explored with reference to two main variables which might have influenced progress at school: the families financial situation and the amount of housework/childcare a student did as a child. The relationship between these variables and with parental stability is considered.

Students were asked to rate their families financial situation in their childhood on a three point scale: 'struggling' - 'adequate' - 'well-off'. Sixteen students described their families as 'struggling', all the remainder as 'adequate' except for two who described their situation as 'well-off'. 42% of students who had parental instability described their families financial situation as struggling compared to 17% of those with both parents. While this is not quite statistically significant, the difference in percentages is in the direction that would be expected given that single parents and large reconstituted families are more likely to be struggling financially (Townsend, 1979: 288).

Students were asked generally about the amount of childcare and housework they did as a child and whether they did 'a lot', 'some' or 'none'. Eighteen said they did a lot of childcare or housework, ten

said they did a lot of childcare and 15 a lot of housework, and eight of these did a lot of both. There is no relationship between parental stability and the amount of childcare or housework recalled by the student. However, there are close relationships between the amount of childcare and housework done and the families financial situation. In general, those who said their families were struggling said they did more of both types of family work. The students do not give details of their families financial situation and the connection with housework and childcare it may reflect more on how they felt about the amount of work they had to do as children than be an accurate assessment of their families finances.

The students give various reasons for doing family work. The main reason was that their mother worked, 9 gave this as the reason for doing childcare and 13 for housework. Other reasons include mothers' illness, being the oldest girl, parents separating or remarrying. For childcare having a considerably younger brother or sister sometimes due to remarriage, was mentioned by 6, and 4 others regularly looked after other people's children. Also it is significant that all those in the sample who did a lot of childcare as a child were the eldest girl (but not all eldest girls did a lot). The reasons for not doing childcare were being the youngest or only child, ages being close and an older sister doing it. A reason given for doing housework by 8 students concerned everyone doing their fair share, also mentioned was their mother leaving or dying. The reasons given for not doing housework was that their mother or an older sister did it.

The students' comments shows that from around the age of 11 some of them were called upon to make a significant contribution to family work often in response to changes in family circumstances. Eleven students mentioned there was a specific time when they started childcare and 13 for housework. Because some started both there is a total of 15 who started childcare and/or housework. Eight had reasons connected with separation, deaths of parents or remarriage, the rest were due to their mother starting work, being ill, and beginning to look after a sister's child.

Interaction between family life and schooling

In their review of education and social class Mortimore and Blackstone (1982: ch. 1) review the frequently found association between poor attainment in school and manual working class occupations of fathers. Raffe (1983) puts the point vividly when he says:

> 'If you want to do well at school you should choose your parents carefully. In virtually every advanced society there is a strong correlation between educational attainment and the occupational class of a child's parents; Scotland is no exception.'
> (Raffe, 1983: 193)

The students' fathers in this sample were predominantly in manual occupations and from the general relationship summarised above, it would be expected that many would have lower educational attainment and would leave school earlier than those from middle class backgrounds.

According to Gray et al. (1983), the explanations of class differences in attainment point to a variety of factors in addition to ability, such as 'cultural capital' or the material circumstances of the home. They use the term 'non-school' factors 'to describe all the influences on attainment, including ability, which are located outside the educational system in the family and elsewhere. Non-school factors are distributed unequally between classes' (p. 214).

Mortimore and Blackstone (1982) elaborate on what they call 'home-based' factors which may be related to low attainment. These include: one-parent families and remarriage; family size; health; poverty; low income; conditions of work; unemployment and parental attitudes. These authors point out that research on the influence of one-parent families is inconclusive and low attainment may be because of other factors often associated with single parenthood, such as low income. They conclude:

> 'From the evidence available it would appear that it is not usually the family disruption by itself which is important, but

> the longer-term social and economic adversities which are often associated with the disruption, which have implication for educational disadvantage'
> (Mortimore and Blackstone, 1982: 36)

For the sample, there is no relationship between parental instability and staying on at school, gaining qualifications or going on to any further education. That is, those students who experienced their parents separating or remarrying were no more or less likely to stay on, get qualifications or go to further education as those with parental stability.

Townsend (1979: 288) showed that the likelihood of a family being in poverty increased with family size. A number of studies have also shown that children from large families tend to have lower intelligence scores and lower attainment (Douglas, 1964: 131). Large families tend to have poor housing conditions and spend less per head on food. In the sample a large proportion of students came from large families and this may have contributed to the low level of success at school. But the average number of children in families where students gained qualifications was not significantly different from those who did not. It is possible that the relatively homogeneous working class background of the students in the sample reduces the variance and the likelihood that differences between these variables will be significant.

Low income and large families may mean that parents have to spend more time in paid work and household tasks which leaves less time to invest in their children (Leibowitz, 1974). Unemployment and material disadvantage may mean less to spend on outings, toys and books; increased stress and less encouragement for the children; pressure to leave school and start earning; more paid or unpaid work for the children while at school leaving less time and energy for their studies. Parental attitudes are also important for achievement in school and under difficult conditions parents may not have the time or resources to develop or maintain positive attitudes.

Mortimore and Blackstone state in their review 'it is unlikely that causal links between disadvantage and low attainment will be identified' (p. 24). In general the links are multiple and complex, but students' comments do suggest, in individual cases, particular linkages between their families financial situation, separations and remarriages, ill health, family work - and their schooling and decision to leave early:

120 *'I went to ordinary primary school, I didn't mind primary, but I didn't like secondary. I left at the earliest leaving date, no qualifications. I missed a lot of secondary education due to my ill grandmother, I stayed at home to look after her ... I stayed with my grandparents, it was a hand-to-mouth existence. I had two brothers and one sister. My parents split up when I was a child, I don't know my mother since then, my father came and stayed at my grandparents [presumably his parents] ... I did it [housework] all as my grandmother was blind and diabetic, as the oldest girl it was up to me, I looked after my younger brother and sister and grandmother and grandfather from 11 years. I cooked, washed, took washing to the steamie [wash-house]. My grandmother died when I was still a teenager.'*

124 *'I hated school, I left school at 15 or 16 and I had to leave because my dad was unemployed and I had to work. No qualifications, no successes ... My mum was a cleaner, my dad never worked at all because he had bad health ... I cared for my brother and sisters, and did housework all the time. I cared for them most of the time. Housework - I did everything.'*

133 *'I got the School Leaving Certificate. I liked Arithmetic, I didn't like sports and crafts but I did like all the academic subjects. I liked school, I would have liked to have done more ... I was the youngest of four. My mum died when I was 11. My father was old fashioned, he thought girls didn't need an education, they were only going to be housewives. I resented this for quite a while ... I was the youngest, my older sister took over my mother's role and I never had to do housework.'*

126 *'I left when I was 16. There was no encouragement to stay at school because my parents were splitting up at the time. I got 4 'O' levels and 2 RSA's.'*

These examples show how the factors may interact: how separation, remarriage and illness can create demands, particularly on the oldest girl to do housework and childcare and this may interfere

with progress at school; also the families financial situation may need an extra wage earner as soon as possible and prevent qualified students going onto further or higher education. These factors together with some school related factors may contribute to students' difficulties with schooling and reluctance to continue or return to education.

Transition from childhood to adult families

The time when young women switch from being primarily a member of their childhood family to beginning their adult family is influenced by factors which include work, education or training, marriage, pregnancy and housing. Some events associated with these factors can be identified as the precipitating event. But individuals are exposed to different events and various factors may have more or less influence on the decision to leave home. In addition there a various 'push' factors, such as restrictions, overcrowding, personal relationships, and so on, as well as changes in their parents' lives, eg. deaths, separations, emigration, moving away which lead to students leaving the parental home.

For 44 students the change from their childhood family to beginning their adult family occurred at marriage or, in the case of three of these, cohabitation. This change was not necessarily accompanied by setting up their own home and twenty students and their partners initially shared either his or her parents' homes. Three students left home to take up residential nursing training and four others went away to work. The remaining eight stopped living with their parents because their parents died or emigrated or the students went to live with a relative, later five of these also got married. Five of the seven who left home for work or training later got married.

Their husbands' jobs at the time of marriage were almost all working class occupations, including unskilled or semi-skilled (38); skilled (11); clerical/technical (3); and one was unemployed.

Unskilled and semi-skilled occupations included - butchers assistant, labourer, barman, driver, painter; skilled included - joiner, panel beater, engineer, fitter, electrician. The three in clerical/technician grades were a clerical officer, stores clerk and a technician.

All except one met their husbands in Glasgow, the exception was a holiday romance. The most popular place to meet future husbands was at a dance (11), followed by pubs and social clubs (10). A total of nine were either neighbours or school friends and had known each other since childhood. One husband had recently come over from Ireland, one was originally from South America and one was of Asian background and involved in an arranged marriage.

Fifty three students married or set up home with their partner and all but one of these have had one or more children (included are one couple who adopted 6 years after marriage). The students can be grouped on the basis of how much time there was between marriage and the birth of their first child: 1) more than two years; 2) up to two years; and 3) pregnant before marriage. Of the 52 students who had their own children, there were 12 who had two or more years between marriage and motherhood, most of these had around three years and only three (including the adoptive parents) had more than 5 years. There were 23 who had less than two years between marriage and the birth of their first child, and 17 who were pregnant before marriage.

Those who have two or more years between marriage and the birth of their first baby are more likely to begin marriage in a home they have bought (42%); the students who have their first pregnancy soon after marriage are more likely to start their marriage in a home rented from the council (43%); and those who are pregnant before marriage are more likely to start their marriage in their parents or in-laws home (59%). Three emigrated around the time of marriage and all returned around two years later; on returning one bought a house, the rest rented. Of the seven students who did not marry, four became single parents and after having a baby, two had their

own flats, one lived with her sister and the other stayed on at home. The one student who is married and has no children yet, has bought a home of their own.

The differences between the three groups based on the time between marriage and motherhood is reinforced by students responses to a question about whether they planned to start a family when they first became pregnant. The percentages and numbers in each group who did plan are: 75% (9 students); 52% (12); 18% (3). That is, 75% of the group with the longest time between getting married and their first baby said they planned their pregnancy, and this is significantly different from only 18% who planned in the group who got pregnant before marriage. In other words, the longer the time between marriage and the birth of the fist baby the more likely it is that the birth was planned. The reasons the 20 in these groups gave as to why they planned to start their family were mainly 'because the time was right' (14); 'liked family life/children' (3); 'we had been trying for a good while' (1); and two who gave no reason.

Interaction between family transition and education

Whether students continue in further education may be influenced by factors relating to their childhood family: social class, unstable parenting, family financial circumstances, and family work. Also factors related to their starting an adult family such as pregnancy and marriage may have affected their education.

Gray et al. (1983) in their study of a 1975-6 Scottish cohort of school leavers point out that there was a lower level of class inequality in further compared to higher education because:

> '... further education tended to be oriented towards the more technical and skilled manual jobs, the relatively high level or working-class participation could have resulted from a relatively propensity of working-class youths to enter such jobs.'
>
> (Gray et al, 1983: 221)

Most of the post-school courses taken up by 18 of the students in

the sample fit this description (see chapter four) and participation in these courses is mainly connected with work rather than home-based factors. After leaving school fourteen of the students began part-time or full-time vocational courses and continued to live at home; one took 'H' grades. However, three students left home and began nursing. It is possible that an unstable parental background, the families financial situation or the amount of childcare could have been factors in these students taking up residential training and leaving home. Both parents of one student had died when she was 13 and she was living with an aunt before starting nursing; the mother of another remarried when the student was 13 years old and she had to do 'a lot' of childcare for her mother's new baby; the other student came over from Ireland from a 'struggling' family.

Factors relating to beginning an adult family include an unexpected pregnancy which interrupted the schooling of one student (number 149) who left at the age of 17 but managed to get 3 Highers and 6 'O' levels and then married soon afterwards. Another (number 134) left a three year Occupational Therapy training course after two years because she was pregnant and got married at the age of 20. Three students waited until they had finished their training (in one case, number 114, failing her exams) before marriage and later pregnancy.

The direction of influence of various events involved in the transition from childhood to adult families on education and vice versa can be inferred by their timing and whether students had finished their courses and married before or after becoming pregnant. Finishing a course, getting married and having a baby more than nine months later suggests waiting to finish before marriage and marriage before pregnancy. This contrasts to pregnancy before a course ends, followed by marriage. Of the seventeen students who became pregnant before marriage only three had any school qualifications and it is unlikely that two of these were planning to go to further education. The one with three Highers who left at 17 may have planned to go on to further education.

Students' adult families

There are two related aspects concerning the progress of students' adult families - the first involves their childcare careers, that is having and rearing children, and the second concerns their marital lives, the continuity or otherwise of their marriage. We can differentiate between various stages in their childcare careers, and what has happened in the lives of those who have separated. The next section provides an analysis of those who have remained married in order to define stages in childcare careers; this is followed by an examination of those who have experienced separation. The relationships between these aspects of adult family life and participation in and reactions to the OU and other courses are examined. This chapter gives no further consideration to the seven students who have not been married except that one of the four who have a child of their own is included in the continuing case studies at the end of the chapter.

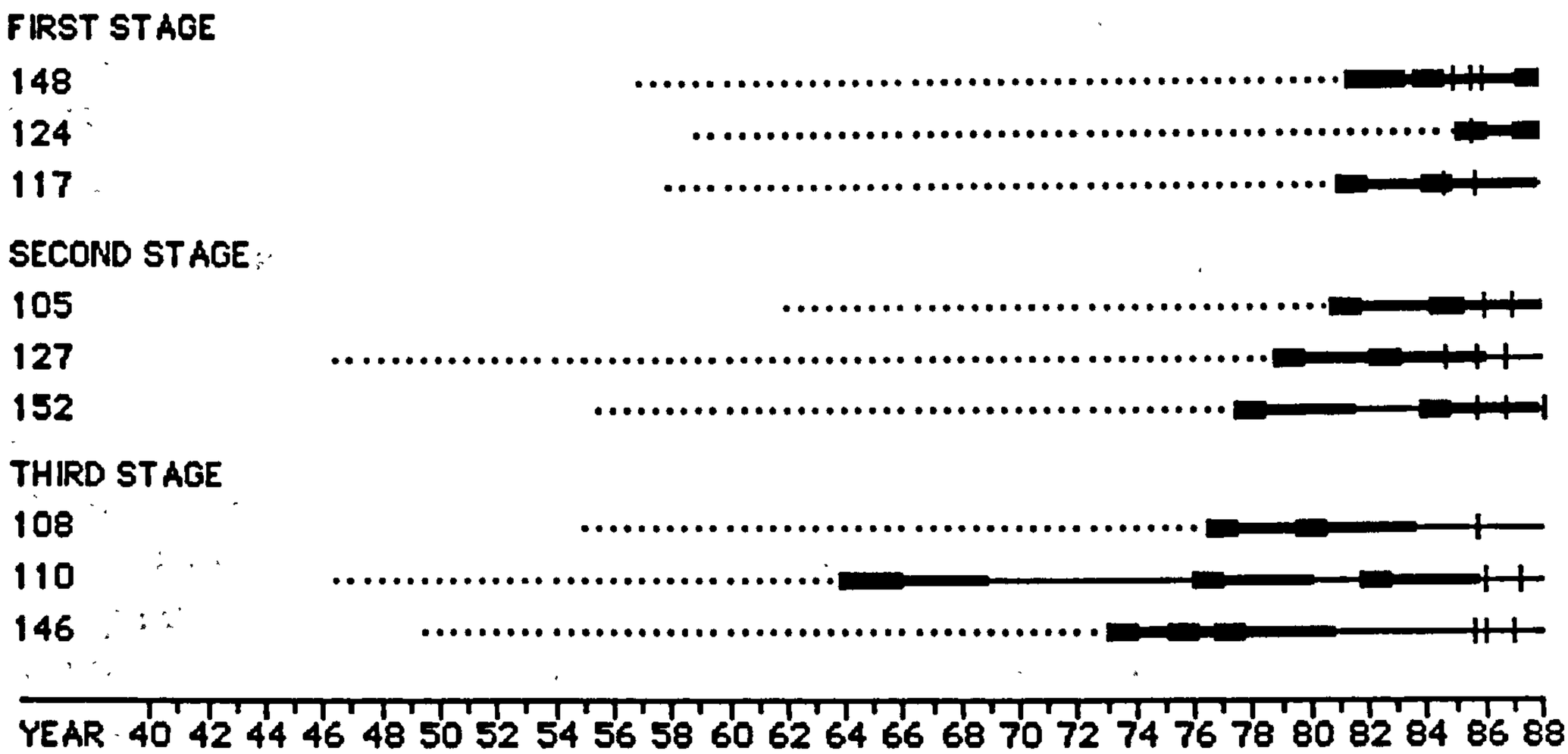
Students' childcare careers

At the time of the interview there were 43 students who were still in their first marriage, one couple did not have any children and another adopted four children at various ages. There are therefore 41 students in their first marriage who have one or more children living with them since birth. The childcare careers of these students can be considered as comprising three stages. These are defined in order to explore whether the influence of the courses and students' reactions depend on where they are in their childcare careers. The first stage begins with the birth of the child up to the first birthday and usually involves intensive childcare; the next stage begins when young children are one year old and can be looked after by others and extends up till they reach four years old; and a final stage begins at four around the time children can enter nursery or

primary school[1].

Where parents have more than one child they will pass through these stages with each of them. However, we can categorise the students depending on the age of their youngest child, and they can be considered to be at the first stage if at the time of their first OU course they have a child under one or have a baby afterwards. Students who have a child over one but under four and do not have any further children can be categorised as in the second stage; and students whose youngest child is over four and who have no more children are in the third stage. Examples of students at each stage in their childcare careers are represented by the lifelines in chart 5.4 below.

Chart 5.4 Examples of the three stages of childcare careers.



The dotted line begins at students' dates of birth, and the three stages of childcare are shown by a thick, medium and thin line. The beginning of the thick line indicates the birth of the first child and continues for the first year. This is then followed by a medium line

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1Children can actually start nursery school at age three if there is a place available. Age four is taken as the dividing point in order to balance the numbers of students in each group.

that continues for the next three years until the child is four when the line becomes thin. If another child is born a new thick line begins and lasts for the first year of this child, followed by three years of the medium, then the thin line. The short vertical lines show the start dates of OU courses. For example, the childcare line for the first student (number 148) shows that her first child was born in 1981, her second less than one year later (shown by the continuous thick line) and a third a little over a year after this, she took three OU courses after her third child was one year old and before the birth of her fourth.

The students who are in their first marriage and who have children can be subdivided on the basis of whether they are in stage one, two or three of their childcare careers. The table below shows the number at each stage:

Age of youngest child at the start of first OU course	Number
1) Less than 1 year and/or baby born after	14
2) 1-4 years	12
3) Over 4 years	15
Total	41

Table 5.2 The number of students at each stage of childcare careers.

In the first stage three students had a baby less than one year old at the time of the first course and eleven who have had another baby after this time. In the second stage are those whose youngest child was between one and four years old when they started the first OU course, in the third stage are students whose youngest was over four when they started.

As might be expected there is a difference in how students in each group answered the question of whether they had the number of children they planned. The proportions in each group were: 21%, 58%, 67% (the difference between those at stages 1 and 3 is statistically significant). Also as might be expected there are significant differences between the average ages of each stage.

Those who are in stage three had an average age of 34.5 years at the start of their first OU course, those in stage two average 31 years; and the average age of those in stage one is 26.5 years.

The first stage usually involves some full-time care of young children, but the mother may return to paid work between births as the youngest child gets older and before the arrival of the next. Whether a student really is in the second or third stage may not be clear cut as further children may arrive and there is the possibility of 'surprises' causing an extension or a return to the first stage. In stage two and three young children are likely to remain their mothers' main priority even if she takes up paid work and other activities. If the youngest child begins nursery school at three or four years of age and begins primary school by five, the time released may prompt the mother to take up options as she moves out of the early stages. In anticipation of this she may begin to consider opportunities and take a course to regain her confidence. In Glasgow the courses are not associated with preparing for a first baby, the one student who does not have any children took the courses as part of her training as a childcare worker and not in anticipation of starting a family.

Both the stage and age difference might be responsible for a number of other differences in the family life of these groups. For example, the younger students get more help with childcare from their husbands, but on average they have more children and more of them have husbands with unemployment. They also have less appliances and are unlikely to be buying their own house. Differences extend to their recollections of their childhood families; they did more housework as children, experienced more separation, and are more likely to describe their families financial situation as 'struggling'. More of them disliked school, although there is no difference in the proportion leaving without qualifications. It looks as if *the younger students are likely to be in stage one of their childcare careers and more disadvantaged than the older ones.* This may be partly due to their experience in their early married life of the economic recession, and the general increase in single parents might explain

why they experienced more separations in their childhood. Their recollections of the amount of housework and the families financial situation may be influenced by their current situation. But the fact that their views about the amount of childcare they did as a child are no different from the other groups suggests that there may have been real differences in the past regarding housework, and not be due simply to this groups current position.

Childcare careers and the OU courses

A key question is whether there is a difference in the way students in each stage of their childcare careers see the OU courses; whether in stage one or two they see them mainly in terms of this area of their lives; and at stage three in terms of changes elsewhere as they become less preoccupied with young children. This question can be considered in aggregate and then explored through the comments of individual students.

The main significant difference between groups in their reactions to the OU courses are that a large proportion (70%) of the students who are in stages one or two said the courses led them to change the things they do with their children. In comparison only 30% of the group that was in stage three said this. Other less marked differences include those who said the courses helped them change their relationship with their children (40% of those in stage one and two and 20% in stage three). Also the largest proportion (75%) who said the courses helped them take action affecting the family (mainly connected with food and healthier diets) were in stage three, with the lowest proportion (50%) in the group in stage one. These overall proportions support the point that *students' views of the help the courses give concerning their children are systematically related to the stage of their childcare careers.* That is, those in early stages are more likely to emphasise the help they received with their children whereas those in the later stage will emphasise the family and wider concerns.

Stages and reactions to the courses

The reactions of students whose childcare careers are represented

in chart 5.4 are explored qualitatively. Three students (numbers 148, 124, 117) who were in stage one of their careers and three (numbers 108, 110, 146) who were in stage three at the start of their first OU course are considered.

The reactions of the first student (number 148) to the four courses (two were taken in parallel) were:

148 *'I enjoyed it, it gave me something else to do. Judging what my own kids were doing it was helpful, sometimes it helped me understand the kids better too ... I think more about a lot of things now. I'm taking more interest in what's going on round about me. I take more interest in what my eldest boy is doing at school, I want to know everything about what's going on with my daughter too ... I've got a bit of a brain that I can use, I'm not a dotty as I thought ... I pay more attention to them [children] \now, I try to get them to do things, numbers, colouring in, writing with me ... I've got more time for them, I've got great patience ... I'll go and ask if I'm entitled to anything now, I didn't before.'*

This student had a baby a year before the interview and had had three before the first OU course. She seems to have gained confidence in herself, understands her children better and gives them time for educational activities. As expected for students in stage one and particularly one with four young children, she is child oriented, her interest is keeping up with the progress of the older children and she does not mention any plans for further education or work.

Student (number 124) reactions to the one course she took are:

124 *'I could actually do something, and I got some confidence out of it. It helped me to cope better with the kids, not so much with my partner but with the kids ... Michael was one year old and I felt it would help me bring him up, tell me what to do. The house doesn't come first now, I spend more time with the kids ... I'm not as abrupt as before, I'm more settled. I spend a lot more time with them, I play and read and teach them to learn ... I'm keen to take another one because I learned a lot with the other course and I thought this would help me for Michael going to*

school.'

Her youngest child was less than one when she started the first course and she had another baby 18 months later. As well as the increase in confidence, her other responses are entirely in terms of her children. Even though she has recently started a Typing and Word Processing course and works as a cleaner, she does not say the OU course was helpful in these areas. She is obviously still in stage one and her youngest was only nine months at the time of the interview and her thoughts regarding the OU course centre on her children.

The next (number 117) student's reactions to the three courses she took were:

> 117 *'Interesting, it gets you to meet others, starts your brain working and starts getting you to do other things. You're not so sure of yourself when you've stopped work to have children. During the course I felt you were having more opinions on things you don't really talk about when just meeting your friends ... It encouraged me to go on to the Committee and from there to get an interview for a job ... Tried more Keep Fit and try to achieve a healthy diet ... When they [children] are younger you don't realise how much they are capable, I let them try more things and because you feel they are more capable I did not treat them so babyish.'*

When she started her first OU course, her youngest child was six months old but by the time of the interview 3 years later her youngest had started nursery. Her interests seem to have moved towards those who are in stage three - eg. committee membership and starting work, although she does recall realising that her children were capable of more.

The next three students were in stage three of their childcare careers when they started their first OU course. The first student (number 108), reacted in the following way:

> 108 *'It [taking the courses] probably made me more aware, it gave me more confidence. I felt that I was vegetating*

before I did the OU. I have done the Welfare Rights course and Age Concern course that I would not have done if I had not got involved with OU courses ... I think the main thing I was very down before I took the course, it made me more aware of myself. I moaned about cooking - now, since my OU I enjoy cooking for my family. The Health Choices has been a great course ... I have thought about other courses but I am so involved I don't know if I'll have time to do them ... I've changed my routine, I go a bit more easy ... It made me take on my Age Concern job.'

The youngest of this student's two children was six when she started her first OU course and she was 'very down' at the time. She went on to become involved in Age Concern courses and voluntary work. While she says the course has helped her domestic work she does not mention her children at all. Her reactions are about herself, her routine and her outside activities and not about her children - as expected for someone in stage three of her childcare career.

Student number 110 made the following comments:

110 *'We had a video about the Pre-5's, it was quite interesting, how they reacted to things, it was different how a lot of folk reacted to their kids ... Look After Yourself you discussed a lot of things, you realised you weren't alone, folk had the same problems ... A lot for me to learn about myself, keep me feeling young ... Doing Keep Fit and watching out for fatty foods and after doing Look After Yourself I'm more concerned about additives in food ... I discussed the OU [courses] with him [husband].'*

This student began her first course shortly after her youngest was four years old and she still has concerns related to childcare. However, she is also concerned about herself and her health and fitness. She says of her husband's attitude to the courses, 'he was quite pleased that I was taking an interest, he helped with questions, it was something different' and she thinks that the courses had an influence on their relationship. As this student enters the later stage of her childcare career her interests seem to be shifting to herself and to her relationship with her husband.

The final student (number 146) explains what the courses meant to her:

> 146 *'Basically meeting people ... I made a few friends here ... It gave me confidence and the opportunity to do other courses'.*

She makes no mention of matters relating to childcare and emphasises making friends and the confidence to further her educational career. Being well past the earlier stages of her childcare career her interests are in other areas of her life.

In general, during stage one the role of the courses is seen as helping students to become more patient, boosting confidence and enabling personal growth through informed childcare and self-awareness; in stage three the focus shifts to wider concerns in other areas of life and to reactivation and redirection following childcare. These examples illustrate how students' interests and the help they get from the courses are influenced by the stage they are at in their childcare careers. The affects may be blurred because many students took more than one course over a period of time, so it is possible for some who started their first course in stage one were still taking courses in stage three. Nonetheless, the overall differences are significant and are born out by the students' comments.

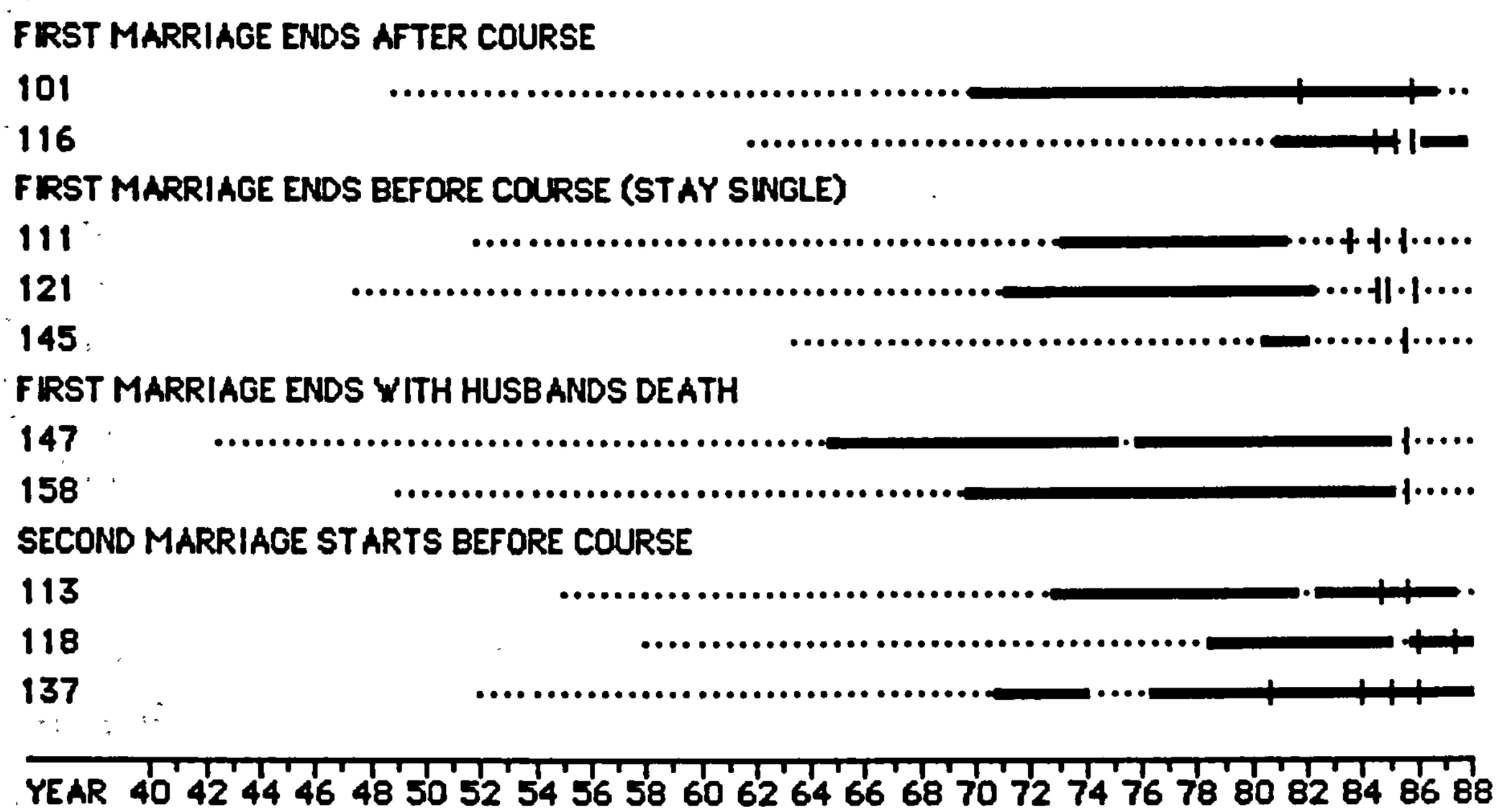
Students with separations

There are ten students who have experienced separation because of the breakdown of their marriage or their husband's death. The separations occurred at different times and after different durations of marriage, and in some cases have been followed by remarriage. This can be seen from the marital lifelines shown in chart 5.5 below.

In the chart the dotted line begins with students' dates of birth and the start of their first marriage is shown by the beginning of the continuous line, this line ends when their first marriage ends. If the student has a second marriage the line begins again, and if this

marriage ends this is shown by the line ending. The period of separation is shown by a return to the dotted line following the end of a marriage line. The start dates of OU courses are shown by short vertical lines. The marital lifelines show when the students took OU courses in relation to their separations.

Chart 5.5 Marriage lines for students with separations.



The students can be categorised with reference to their marital status at the time of the start of their first OU course and reason for separation. The identification numbers of the students in each category are as follows:

	Reason for separation	
Status at start of course	Marital breakdown	Husbands death
First marriage	101, 116	-
Separated and single	111, 121, 145	147, 158
Second marriage	113, 118*, 137	-

*got back together with first husband

Table 5.3 Marital status at the start of the OU course and reason for separation.

The students who take their first course before their separation may see the courses differently from those who have had a separation

and undergone the transition to single parenthood. Those who have remarried may have other preoccupations even though the experience will still be with them. These possibilities are examined with reference to the students in each subgroup.

Students in their first marriage

Two students were still in their first marriage when they started the first course. One student (number 101) was in the eleventh year of her first marriage and took her first OU course 5 years before she separated from her husband, but took a second course just before. She says her 'husband wasn't very supportive, and gave no emotional support or companionship'. Before her separation she had a nervous breakdown sometime after the first course and before she started working as a home help. She mentions that on one occasion after her separation it was necessary for her to contact the police to have her husband removed from her property.

She said that 'I had done The First Years of Life [in 1982] for the children, but I wanted to do something for myself [in 1986]'. She took Health Choices and said that:

> 101 *'It has helped me cope with the separation from my husband ... it has helped me to understand myself better. I have grown in all ways, I'm much more confident, due to the fact that I was able to talk out what I'd been thinking.'*

However, she suffered from depression around the time of her separation and was only 'beginning to feel much better' at the time of the interview. She also mentions giving her children more time and having more patience as well as not getting so involved in her work as a home help and being more positive about the future.

The other student (number 116) separated near the end of her first course after four years of marriage. She gives no details about her marriage except that her husband was good in the house and shared the housework. About the course she said:

> 116 *'I think it broke us up, it gave me more independence ...*

> *sometimes you learned about yourself, it brought you out of yourself ... it helped me learn about myself, lose my shyness, get confidence and it helped because when you're a mother you get stuck at home.'*

The courses helped her to 'see there was more to life than staying at home and being a mother'. She took three OU courses and became 'involved' and began cohabiting with another man a year after leaving her husband.

The common response of these two students is learning about themselves and gaining confidence during the period associated with separating. Neither of them mentioned helping their children cope with their fathers' departure, although one did say she gave her children more time. It may be that they were so personally involved in the experience and in coming to terms with it that they did not have much spare attention to focus on and learn how to deal with the children's reactions.

Separated and single

Three students who were divorced and single at the time of their first OU course had been married for 8 years (number 111), 11 years (number 121) and one and a half years (number 145); and took their first course in two cases two years later, and the other after three and a half years, respectively.

Their descriptions of the circumstances of their first marriage are:

> 111 *'I got married when I was 21, it was terrible after my daughter [first child] was born, I had depression. It was not a happy marriage. I started to drink and became alcoholic.'*
> 121 *'My husband was in the Merchant Navy, when he came home all was gone in drink, that was the reason for my divorce ... I suffered depression for about 3 years, just about the time my marriage broke up ... It was not so much a crisis as a relief to be rid of him.'*
> 145 *'I was married at 17 ... I was married one and a half years, it was a mistake.'*

Like one of the recently separated students who had a nervous

breakdown and depression, two of these students had depression. They took their first course sometime after their separation and reacted in the following ways:

111 *'They [the courses] made me more confident because I was fed up when my marriage broke up, it gave me a lot of support and I feel that I can stand up of myself now. It had made me understand my children and I listen to them now. It has helped me get back into the community.'*

121 *'I think the main thing was meeting other students and the satisfaction of passing the courses.'*

145 *'It helped me start to get my confidence back ... When you are used to being in on your own with the kids you're used to listening to yourself. Listening to other people helped me realise that I was only human ... It helped me cope with the children getting older, helped me understand them, referring to the course and remembering what it taught me, helped me realise that the kids were normal and so was I ... I felt I was a more important person to myself, it gave me self respect ... I felt the future was brighter, beforehand I couldn't see a future for myself.'*

These comments, like those for the first two students emphasise gaining confidence and in two cases they mention help with the children although not specifically in relation to their fathers' departure. The students are also active in other areas of their lives and find the courses helpful in these areas, also they now have positive views about the future. However, one student has recently had severe depression because of a miscarriage and another has been quite ill.

Husbands' death

Two students' husbands died before they took their first course, one (number 147) had a separation for 9 months and got back together for a number of years before he died:

147 *'We had a very happy marriage up until 1975 when he got involved with someone else, he put me and the kids out and I had to go back to stay with my grandfather until I got a house of my own. We were separated for 9 months then we got back together again and were very happy, but sadly he died 3 years ago of cancer. I had to give up work through my husband's health as I nursed him through his illness at home until he died.'*

158 *'My husband died 3 years ago ... my oldest girl took it very bad and she became very withdrawn, she is alright now ... I'm getting remarried in July 4th.'*

Their respective reactions to the courses are:

147 *'It helped me understand my daughter ... I give her a say in some matters.'*
158 *'It made me realise other people had problems and it helped me deal with my own kids. It made me appreciate what I had ... It helped my attitude towards other people and gave me more confidence ... I met two close friends through the OU ... I now do a swimming club ... I would never have thought of going to college ... Being a widow it made me realise I had to do something to support my kids.'*

The first student (number 147) found the course helpful in understanding her daughter but she does not refer to gaining confidence or help in her bereavement. She is forthcoming about her marriage and her husband's death; she may not have seen the course as having any relevance to her experience because she had worked through her grief by herself. The second student (number 158) said the OU course helped her make changes in her life after her husband's death. It also helped her deal with her children and presumably her daughter's grief. Unlike the first student she found the course helpful in coming to terms with her separation and was making plans, taking up activities and dealing with problems for which she saw the course providing help.

There is not much evidence to show that for these students separation due to husbands' death is a different transition from that due to marital breakdown. The first student appears to have coped with her husband's death herself, while the second mentions that the course gave her 'confidence'. It is possible that the destructive aspects of a failed relationship require more rebuilding of confidence than the death of a husband.

Students in their second marriage
There are three students who were in their second marriages when

they started their first course, one of these has since separated from her second husband:

> 113 *'I was with my first husband for 10 years, that marriage was not good. I got divorced, then I married a second time and that lasted for 5 years, I have been separated for 6 months now. My first marriage started OK but once I had my first baby he did not care for me, we were fighting all the time. My second marriage did not work out, he was nine years younger than me. He felt trapped once we got married.'*

Her responses to the courses are:

> 113 *'The first course did help me to understand my children and at that time I broke up with my first husband, so it gave me support [course started in Sept 84, separation in mid 82?] ... I think my children have benefited from the courses more than me ... We talk about our problems as a family now ... This year I was thinking of going back to college and it has given my more confidence about myself.'*

This student had two more children close together around the time she was taking the courses and postnatal depression after the second birth and before the second course. The main area of her life in addition to her married life is childcare and her response to the courses emphasise this, however she has also been thinking about going back to college.

The next student has not had a second marriage but has split from her husband on more than one occasion, and thus has experienced a particular form of marital instability:

> 118 *'My husband and I split up a couple of times and I had problems with them [the children] then, we have been together for the last couple of years.'*

Her response to the courses is:

> 118 *'I'm more assertive, I discuss more before things come to a head, he helps more ... My husband and children realised because of the course that he should help with housework and childcare ... found I had a lot more patience with the*

kids, I realised they were wee people ... Before I would never have thought about going to college, but I would like to do that now [already taken a typing course] ... I think it had something to do with me getting the job ... it helped in playing with children here.'

She does not elaborate the circumstances of their temporary separations, but the course helped her persuade her husband to help more with housework and childcare, she also became more patient with her children. She takes up other activities and is helped by the courses in a number of these areas. It looks as if, following the latest reunion, the courses helped not only in her family life but in other areas of her life in which she has made changes.

The second marriage of the next student has lasted for 11 years and she describes her first:

137 *'My first married life was terrible, he drank too much and he was violent. I was married for three years then I got a divorce.'*

Her reactions to the courses cover many areas of her life:

137 *'It gave me more understanding with my children and I had more confidence in myself. I feel that Graham [husband] and I talk to each other more about the children ... I have new responsibilities [at work] ... helps in doing voluntary work for playgroups and it gives me more confidence in using the services.'*

She took her first course in 1980, 5 years after the start of her second marriage and had another baby soon afterwards, she was occupied with childcare until beginning courses again when this child started playgroup and nursery.

In general, students who take a course before they experience their separation may respond at the time in a similar way to those who remain in their first marriage, and in a way related to their childcare or other careers. On the other hand, because they are likely to be experiencing difficulties before the time the actual split

occurs, they may anticipate separation and the possible consequences while they are taking the course. What they learn may be relevant therefore to their deteriorating relationship at the time and be useful to them when the separation happens. It may even precipitate the separation and lead to a feeling of release. Furthermore their recall of the courses is bound to be coloured by the subsequent separation during which they are likely to have been preoccupied with their own feelings and have been less able to give attention to their children's reactions to their father's departure.

If a course is taken after a separation and when the student is single again, it may help them come to terms with the transition (see Miller, 1986: 161). This involves the student in rebuilding her own confidence and her views about herself and the future, rather than in learning about childcare. Those whose husbands have died may also have to build their confidence but they are less likely to have lost confidence in themselves compared to those who have ended a destructive marriage. The courses are likely to be seen as helpful if they boost confidence and contribute to the changes in other areas of students' lives and not especially in relation to their childcare careers.

The longer a student is in a second marriage before taking a course, the more they can be expected to take on the characteristics of those in their first marriages and their interests related to their childcare and other careers. The courses might also influence students' ongoing relationship with their husband.

From the comments of students who have experienced separation it appears that *where they are in their marital careers at the time they take the courses may influence how they see the courses and the help the courses provide.* In short, we might say that the role of the courses prior to separation are concerned with *anticipation* and possibly *precipitation* and *release* from a relationship, for those who have separated the courses may help with *rebuilding* for those who have gone through marital breakdown; and *readjustment* for those whose husbands have died. For those in their second marriage the

courses help with *growth* and the *development* of wider activities.

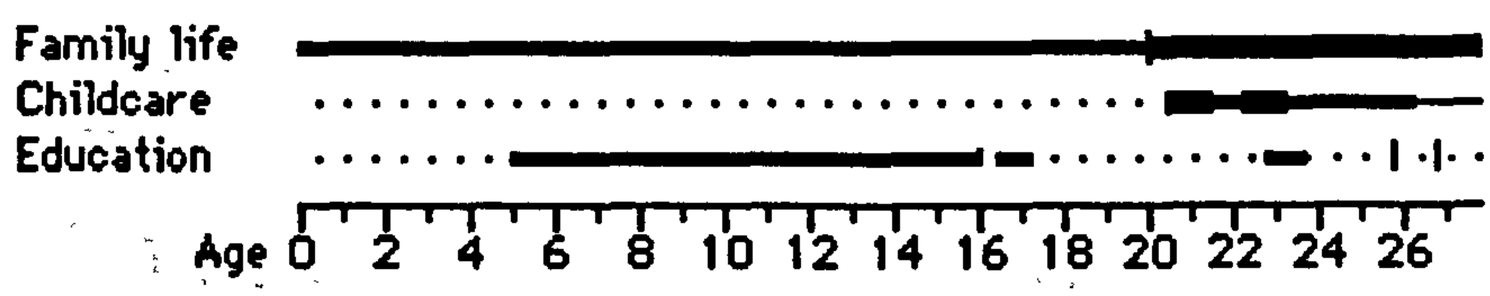
Continuing case studies

Returning to the four students introduced at the end of chapter four, the lifelines for their family and childcare careers can be added to their education careers.

Student number 136

The family life, childcare and education lifelines for the first student are represented below:

Chart 5.6 Family life, childcare and education lifelines for student number 136.



This student had stable parenting during her childhood, her father was a joiner and her mother did not start work as a cleaner until the student was 15, she has three sisters, one older and a brother. She did not have to do any household jobs until she was older because her older sister did them, however when her mother started work and possibly her sister left home she did more. She does not say if this affected her school work or contributed to her lack of school qualifications but it did not prevent her taking typing at night school after she left school.

In 1980 when she was 20, she left home to get married and has remained married for over seven years, her husband works in maintenance. Soon after she married she had her first child and another 20 months later. About her husband she says he gives her 'a lot' of emotional support and 'he's there for support when I need him ... We have a lot in common and go out often'. Regarding his attitude to her taking OU courses, she said that 'he thought it was okay and encouraged me', but the courses have not led to any

changes in her relationship with him.

She took her Typing and English course, which was full-time while her second child was in her first year and was cared for by her mother-in-law. When this child started nursery school and the older one was at school, the student begun her first OU courses and took a second OU course a year later. She has the number of children she planned and began her OU course while in the second stage or her childcare career and has moved into the third. She explains why she went on from The Preschool Child course to Childhood 5-10: 'My daughter came under the pre-5 and my son came under the 5-10, he wanted his turn and also I enjoyed the first one'.

In addition to what she said about the courses and her education career (in chapter four), she adds further points about her childcare career:

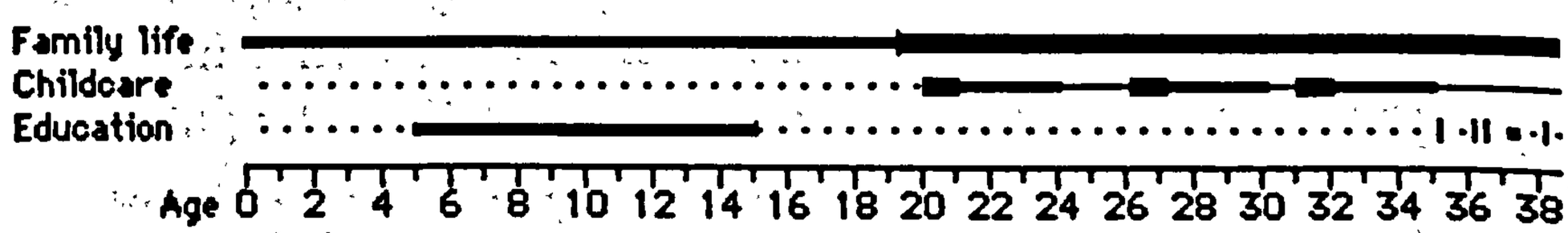
> 136 *'Maybe [the course helped] with the children - I treat them as people rather than children that I tell what to do or not to do. I talk things over with them ... I take their views more into consideration.'*

In three areas of this student's life: education, family life and childcare - we can see that the OU courses have not yet led onto further education, and nor affected her relationship with her husband, but they have helped in her relationship with her children.

Student number 144

The family and childcare careers of the second student whose educational career was considered at the end of chapter four are represented below:

Chart 5.7 Family life, childcare and education lifelines for student number 144.



This student had stable parenting and her father was a crane operator and her mother worked part-time as a cleaner when the student was young and later in full-time factory work. She is the youngest in a family of eight and left home at 19 to get married, her husband was working as a labourer at the time. He gives her 'a lot of emotional support and is a good companion'. Regarding her OU courses she says that 'he thought I was mental, he wasn't really for it, and didn't give me any encouragement' and there have been no changes in her relationship with him.

Her first baby was born soon after her marriage and was followed by two more. She started her first OU course when the youngest was 4 years old and she was in stage three of her childcare career. In addition to what she said concerning her education career she explains the help the courses provided in her childcare career as follows:

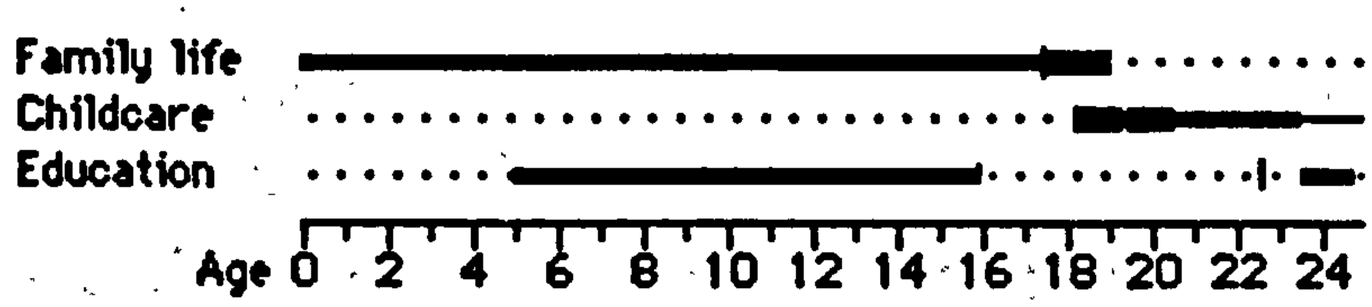
> 144 *'Parents and Teenagers helped me to cope with my teenager ... With the kids before, maybe when you would shout, you stop and think before saying ... It enhanced my relationship with my teenage boy, helped with ways to ask questions of him that were difficult to ask.'*

In chapter four she described how she was helped by the OU courses in returning to further education, here she describes the help in the later stage of her childcare career.

Student number 145

The third student whose educational career was introduced earlier has experienced separation, and her family and childcare careers as well as her education career are represented below:

Chart 5.8 Family life, childcare and education lifelines for student number 145.

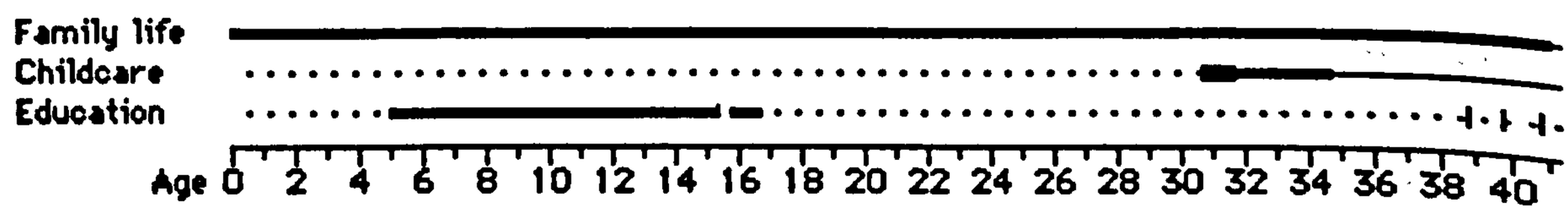


This student had a stable childhood, her father was a printer and her mother worked in a factory from when the student was about six. She has an older brother and a sister who is eleven years younger whom she looked after while her mother worked and did a lot of housework. She married 18 months after leaving school and had her first child soon afterwards. About her marriage she says that there was 'no sharing, it was a mistake. I was married one and a half years, I did everything'. Her first OU course started when her two sons were at nursery school and in the quotation above (page 200) she describes how the course helped her. Her separation was over three years before the start of her OU course and she does not mention this directly regarding the help she gained from the course. However, she talks the effects of being on her own and how she realised she was 'only human' and 'normal' and this may have been due to the experience of separation. She also explains that the course helped her cope with her children.

Student number 157

The final student introduced in the previous chapter has not been married but has a daughter, she still lives at home and now looks after her mother. Her family, childcare and education lifelines are presented below:

Chart 5.9 Family life, childcare and education lifelines for student number 157.



She was born in 1946 and is an only child, her father worked in the cleansing department and her mother was a factory worker. Her father has recently died. She had her baby when she was 30. Her first OU course began when her daughter was 10 and she says that 'Parents and Teenagers made me more cautious, and more give and take in our relationship'. At this stage in her childcare career she does not give especial emphasis to help in this area and her concerns are more with health and diet (see chapter six).

Conclusions

The continuing case studies show that all these students had stable childhoods, two are married and have stable adult family lives, one had a marital separation, and the other is unmarried although she has a teenager. Furthermore, they are all towards the end of stage two or at stage three of their childcare careers when they take OU courses. One student took a further education course when her second child was in her first year, two others went on to other courses after their youngest child started school. The addition of family and childcare lifelines to the education careers adds important information on how the courses fit into these areas of their lives and how the help provided is related to the stage they are at in these careers.

The questions raised at the beginning of the chapter concerned the background of the students, when in their family and childcare careers they take they courses, which students are influenced in these areas of their lives, and who else benefits. In summary, we can say that the students were almost all from working class backgrounds and Glasgow born, 24 students lost one or both parents before leaving home and 18 of these lost parents before they left school. They came from families in which there were on average over four children. Some students were called upon to make a significant contribution to family work often in response to changes in family circumstances. Their husbands' jobs at the time of marriage were almost all working class occupations. Most had their first child in less than two years after marriage and a third were pregnant before their marriage.

Students can be categorised on the basis of the place of their first OU course in their childcare careers and their views of the help the courses give concerning their children are systematically related to which stage they are at in this career. Also for those students who have experienced separation, the way the courses are viewed and the help they provide appears related to where they are in their

marital careers.

Regarding the students who benefit in the marital and childcare areas of their lives: about a quarter of those who are in their first marriage at the time of the interview say the courses help in their relationship with their husband. Almost all of these have husbands who give them 'a lot' or 'some' emotional support. In other words, the courses do not help students change their relationship with unsupportive husbands, possibly their response to husbands in this category is to put up with things or to separate. Students who make changes in their relationship with their children are mainly those who are in stage one of their childcare careers, although the changes often concern older children.

Who else benefits: we have seen how the help provided for children depends on where students are in their childcare careers. The courses also help some students change their relationship with their husbands, and this may or may not benefit husbands themselves. Students with separations tend not to see the courses as helping in their childcare careers or in supporting children coping with their fathers' departure. They are more preoccupied with themselves, however, this may enable them to cope and continue providing support for their children.

This chapter has examined students' family lives and given particular attention to their marital and childcare careers and the place and influence of the OU courses in these areas. Because separation is often associated with being dependent on the benefit system and having to live on a low income, this group is compared to students who remain married in chapter nine where changes across all areas of life are examined.

Chapter 6 - Health and Education

Introduction

This chapter begins by reviewing the health status and trends relevant to the inhabitants of Glasgow since the war. It then examines students' health in their childhood and adult lives and the relationship between health and education, in particular the OU courses. The World Health Organisation defines heath as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity' (WHO, 1946). Defined in this way health is not a separate area of life but a resource affecting activities in all areas. People talk about their own health in terms of their ailments, illnesses and hospitalisation and the effects these have on what they can and cannot do. Even though they usually under-report ill health and its effects when asked about this formally (Cornwell, 1984: 124). In this chapter attention is given to students' health careers and the influence of mental and physical health on participation in education and vice versa. Students' social lives and well being are examined in chapter eight. The main questions are addressed regarding the health background of the students, the stage in their health careers they take the courses, the influence of the courses on their health and whether anyone else benefits.

Health is closely related to social class, gender and to poverty (Graham, 1984; Hubley, 1983; Black, 1980; Whitehead, 1988) and is affected by and affects other areas of life. As children, poor health may have led to absences from school and to difficulties with learning while in school. Later the opportunities for work and training may be more limited for those whose attendance is interrupted by illness. The poor health of mothers may lead to difficult pregnancies, birth problems and miscarriages, which may interfere with work and put extra demands on childcare. The stress of bringing up children with low resources, on your own or with husbands who are frequently unemployed, often leads to depression

and other psychiatric illness, poor diet, and smoking. As women get older hysterectomies and gynaecological problems may disrupt their lives.

Health can be important in preventing or interrupting participation in education, for example, the end of a period of depression may be associated with starting courses. Also the factors contributing to poor health and depression, eg. poverty, lack of emotional support, social isolation, may affect students' educational careers indirectly through ill health. Education can also help promote mental and physical health (eg. improving morale; learning about healthy living; providing social support) which, in turn, benefits other areas of their lives and the lives of others. The next section reviews some of the health concerns and the how they have changed since the war.

Health status and trends

Data on the health status and trends relevant to the inhabitants of Glasgow provides a context for students' health careers. The trends reflect the changing health of individuals at particular ages, for example, infant mortality rates apply to babies up to the age of one and each year refer to different cohorts, whereas other trends may include individuals over a wider age range. Overall trends may conceal large social class differences and these are highlighted where possible.

Infant and child health

Infant mortality rates have shown a general decline since the war but the difference between social classes has not narrowed. For example, the differences in infant mortality between the professional and manual classes in Scotland since 1950 is shown in table 6.1 below.

More recent figures show that infant mortality rates for Strathclyde have reduced from 19 per 1000 births in 1975, to 13 in 1980 and 10 in 1985. (SRC, 1989b: 44), however it is likely that the social

class differences have remained.

Social Class	1950	1960	1970	1977
Professional	25.9	15.7	12.2	9.2
Unskilled manual	53.6	33.8	31.8	21.5

Table 6.1 Infant mortality (per 1000 live births) by social class (Hubley, 1983: 206).

An explanation of the latest decline in infant mortality is given below:

> 'Factors influencing this trend are likely to include improvements in obstetric practice (greater use of caesarean sections), a larger number of abortions on medical grounds, and the trend towards smaller family size, which means fewer pregnancies among "high risk" women.'
> (SRC, 1989b: 43)

Evidence suggests that smoking by pregnant mothers would do more to reduce infant mortality than any other single action. A woman who smokes is more likely to miscarry, to have a premature baby or to loose her baby in childbirth (HMSO, 1977b: 33). Generally about one in six pregnancies end in a miscarriage which usually occurs between the 6th and 10th week.

Children's problems with early development, sight, hearing and dental decay are more common among low income families and all these are likely to affect educational performance (Wedge and Prosser, 1973: 42). The familiar infectious diseases of childhood are more prevalent in disadvantaged areas (Stewart, 1984: 104). Also children from these areas were shorter in stature, were up to ten times more likely to be knocked down by a motor car and nine times more likely to be admitted to hospital than those from other areas (Butt, 1985: 130). Other research has shown that there is a connection between childhood accidents and ill health, marital tensions and shortages of money in the family (Hubley 1983: 208 ff).

Adult health

Maternal death rates in Scotland have also declined from around 4 per 1000 births in 1940, to one in 1950; to less than one per 2000 births in 1960 and down to around 1 in 10,000 in 1970. It is thought that this is due to general improvements in nutrition and technical advances such as the early detection of high blood pressure (HMSO, 1976: 28).

In Scotland immediately after the war tuberculosis was still a major health problem, for example, in 1949 over 8,000 cases were notified, but by 1974 this had dropped to just over 1,000 (HMSO, 1976: 26). In 1981 cases were still being notified in Glasgow, for example, there were two new cases in Drumchapel and 15 in the East End (Robertson, 1987: 170).

Death rates from heart disease and lung cancer in Scotland have increased and are among the highest in the world (Hubley 1983: 207). Glasgow has the highest death rates in the developed world for adults under the age of 65. In spite of increased life expectancy the inhabitants of Glasgow have a 50% higher risk of death before they reach 65 than those in England. The main causes are heart disease, cancer, stomach disorders and accidents (Butt, 1985: 129). The proportion of disabled or permanently sick non-pensioner adults is six times greater in disadvantaged compared to more prosperous areas (Danson, 1984: 27) and there are high absentee rates from work due to illness (Stewart, 1984: 104).

In Britain by the end of the war two out of three adult males smoked, but during the '60's and '70's the proportion declined so that by 1980 the percentage was down to 42%. Among women the proportion remained around 40-45% from the late '50's to '70's when a slow decline began and in 1980 it was down to 37% (HMSO, 1981: 35). However, while smoking by males in all social classes declined, female smoking actually increased in social class 5 (Hubley 1983: 216):

'Despite the public pressure to restrict smoking, the wives of

> unskilled Glaswegians continue to smoke more, a clear indication of the higher than average stress within this group and a limited regard for health education.'
> (Butt 1985: 130)

Furthermore, there has been an increase in heavy smoking 'in the last 25 years the average consumption by each cigarette smoker has gone up by about 20 per cent for men and by about 70 per cent for women' (HMSO, 1981: 35).

It has been estimated that at least one in ten families in Scotland suffer from the ill-effects of alcohol dependence and this appears to be on the increase. In the '70's the consumption of wines and spirits have more than doubled and admissions to hospitals for alcohol related problems have increased. In particular admission rates for females with alcohol problems has increased by five times during this period (Mark, 1982: 133).

Brown et al. (1975: 232) found that 25% of working class women had had a recent psychiatric disturbance compared to only 5% for middle class. For those with a child under six, 42% experienced psychiatric disturbance. These differences were due to crises involving husband, children, or housing:

> 'Working class women have, for example, more threats of eviction, more have a husband sent to prison, a son arrested for breaking and entering, a husband losing his job and so on.'
> (Brown et al, 1975: 233)

Even so, the extent that severe events of this kind lead to depression depends on the whether women have a confiding relationship with their partner. Only 37% of working class women with children under six have such a relationship compared to around 70% of women with older children and middle class women. Other factors which increase the vulnerability to disturbance include the loss of mother in childhood; three or more children under 14 living at home; and lack of full or part-time employment.

From 1967-1974 Scottish GPs prescriptions of tranquillisers

increased from 6.1 - 9.4% of all medicines prescribed (Hubley, 1983: 217) and as many as one in five women will take tranquillisers or sleeping pills during the course of a year (Graham, 1984: 78). Research has suggested that tranquillisers do not so much cure depression as enable women to cope with the responsibilities which trigger it, including the role-strains of domestic life (Graham, 1984: 81).

A survey conducted for Glasgow District Council showed that 19% of council tenants regularly take part in any physical exercise, training or play active sport. Nearly three quarters of those who regularly take exercise go swimming (Burns and Merrifield, 1985). In the East End 7% of women went swimming and similar percentages took part in indoor or outdoor sport in a three month period in 1982 (Middleton and Donnison, 1987: 197).

In summary, there has been significant improvements in infant and maternal mortality and in the incidence of tuberculosis. However, for working class women there are increases in smoking, alcohol abuse, prescriptions of tranquillisers and sleeping pills, and there are high rates of depression and psychiatric problems; and generally heart disease and cancer. Also a higher proportion of children of working class families suffer sensory and physical handicaps, illnesses and accidents. There is low participation in physical exercise. Many health problems are poverty related and increases in unemployment during the recession are likely to have led to a deterioration in psychological and physical health (Warr, 1985).

Students' health

The focus now shifts to the health of the students and this is examined, beginning with their childhood. A quarter of the students in the sample had trouble with their health as children: two had jaundice, two asthma, two nose and throat problems, bronchitis and a chest infection, one had a minor congenital deformity in her feet and one was backward and had problems with her hearing. One

student was in and out of hospital in her first four years, another had a shadow in her lung and another had kidney problems. Two were knocked down by cars and spent time recovering from their injuries.

Their health problems may have affected their schooling, although there is no overall relationship between childhood ill health and their liking school or gaining qualifications. However, there are clear links for three of them:

118 *'I was in and out of hospital till 4 or 5 yrs old ... Primary and Secondary school I detested because I had a terrible stutter. I dreaded going to school, so I didn't do very well. I found out at Secondary School, I needed glasses, I couldn't see the board, so that held me back ... I didn't have any qualifications, as I left school before 'O' levels came in.'*

137 *'I missed primary school a lot because I had asthma but when I was there I liked it. I quite enjoyed secondary school. I have no 'O' grades.'*

147 *'I was backward and had trouble with my hearing ... I went to a special school ... I left there when I was 16 yrs. I liked reading but I was never very good, I also liked arithmetic. The special school was instead of going onto my secondary school, I never went to normal secondary school.'*

Two thirds of the students said they had had problems with their health as adults. Their problems are grouped in table 6.2 below to show the number of problems and of students experiencing them.

Health Problem	No. of Students	No. of Problems
Depression	21	22
Miscarriages/stillbirths/perinatal mortalities	11	17
Hysterectomy/sterilisation/'women's troubles'	11	12
Nervous breakdowns, alcoholism, allergies, phobias	5	8
Other: stroke, breast lump, Meniers, cancer, shingles, over-active thyroid, bronchitis	8	17
Total	41*	76

* Some students have more than one health problem so the total is less than the sum of numbers in each line.

Table 6.2 The number of health problems and students experiencing them.

A third have suffered from depression and, if those with nervous breakdowns, alcoholism, allergies and phobias are included, there is a total of over 40% who have had psychiatric problems. The other major area concerns pregnancies and gynaecological problems.

The seriousness and duration of the health problems vary, some students had only a brief period of depression whereas for others this lasted months or even years. The difficulties surrounding miscarriages usually lasted for a short time although they were occasionally accompanied with depression. 'Women's troubles' can drag on over years and a hysterectomy involves may involve months of recuperation. Nervous breakdowns and allergic reactions can last for months or more usually years. The student who had an early stroke was unfit for work for over ten years. Nearly half the students currently smoke, a third have never smoked and the rest (who on average are significantly older than the smokers) have given up.

There appear to be no obvious connections between health problems in childhood and adulthood, and six out of the fifteen who had problems as a child have had no problems as adults. A third of the students have had no health problems as adults; another third have had one and the rest have had two or more. Of those who had only one problem, 13 had depression, the rest miscarriages or illnesses. For those who had more than one problem these included: eight students who had repeated miscarriages and/or 'women's troubles'; three had depression and/or nervous breakdowns on more than one occasion; and two had depression following a miscarriage, and one following a stroke; and the remaining eight had combinations of either miscarriages, sterilisations, depression or other illnesses.

Because vulnerability to depression is related to the absence of a confiding relationship with a partner (Brown and Harris, 1978: 176) students were asked about the emotional support they received from their husbands and who they would turn to when feeling low. Out of the 41 who have husbands and their own children, 24 (59%) said the had 'a lot' of emotional support; 11 'some'; and 5 'a little'

and 1 'none'. The number who said they would turn to their husband when feeling low was 26 (63%). Whether or not students have children aged under 6 or older children makes no difference to the proportions who have a lot of emotional support. Of the 41 there were 15 students who said they had suffered from depression, six of these had had post-natal depression, one after a miscarriage, three with bereavements, three when things got on top of them, one was homesick and another was depressed due to a mugging. Three of these said their husbands gave only 'a little' emotional support. However, only a third of those who had had depression would turn to their husband when feeling low compared to over 80% who had not had depression. This difference in whether they would turn to their husband is significant ($p<0.01$) and in as far as this is related to depression it appears a better indicator of a confiding relationship than students' assessment of the amount of emotional support they receive.

It is not possible to say whether there are physiological linkages between health problems occurring on separate occasions in an individual's health career. However, an individual's circumstances might lead to different health problems, including depression, miscarriages and illnesses, whereas for another these circumstances might lead to repeated periods of depression or, for someone else, successive miscarriages. Therefore, the application of the concept of linkages between health problems and *within* an individual's health career may not be useful here. However, there are linkages from other areas of life to health and vice versa. There are links between health and ones own or spouse's unemployment, health and social isolation, health and marital stress, and health and childcare and Graham (1984) has reviewed the relationships between women's health and other areas of life. The main interest here is the links between health and education.

Health and education

Beginning a course may be associated with the end of a period of ill

health, also health problems may interrupt education. The health benefits which can arise from participation in OU courses include: improved self-esteem and confidence which may in turn help students cope with a crisis; and changes in knowledge which can lead to changes in diet or taking up exercise and thus better health.

One student's comments provide an example of recovery from depression which is associated with starting a course:

108 *'I was very down before I took the course ... I felt I was vegetating before I did the OU.'*

There were three students whose health interrupted their OU or other courses:

108 *'I had started the 5-10 course [her second course] but I wasn't well so I had to stop and I didn't take it up again.'*
144 *'Started going back to school to do 'O' levels but hospital visits were interrupting classes so I gave it up, I would think about doing it again.'*
152 *'Arts and Crafts in Sept 87, not completed through ill health.'*

There are few clear cut linkages between health and the start or interruption of the courses, and students' reports of the influence of the courses usually refer to health problems around the time of the courses or afterwards. In table 6.3 below students are grouped on the basis of when their health problems occurred.

Health Problems	No. of Students
1) No problems	19
2) Problems around or after courses	30
3) Problems >2 years earlier	11
Totals	60

Table 6.3 When students experienced health problems.

Those with health problems more than two years before their first OU course are divided from those whose problems were current with the courses or came after. Those with no problems are a

separate group.

Help from OU courses

To examine the relationship between whether and when they had problems and the helpfulness of the courses, we can distinguish between general improvements in well-being and help with a specific problem. There were 38 students who mentioned that their general well-being had improved and 11 who said they had help in coping with a specific crisis. *For over 80% of the students participation in the OU courses led to specific or general health benefits.* Examples are given below:

General well-being:

104 *'It gave me more confidence and I'll try things now. I'll take a challenge now.'*

109 *'It made me feel more capable and more understanding.'*

124 *'I could actually do something, and I got some confidence out of it.'*

130 *'Yes, during the time it made me feel a person. It gave me more confidence in myself and it made me like myself a lot more.'*

149 *'It's been quite interesting, its something to keep me and my brain active, I hate the idea of vegetating, it saved my sanity.'*

Specific help:

111 *'They made me more confident because I was fed up when my marriage broke up, it [the course] gave me a lot of support and I feel that I can stand up for myself now ... It has helped me to get back into the community.'*

134 *'It [the course] has helped me cope with a death in the family and how to help other family members in the same situation, especially when my sister was murdered.'*

120 *'Made me feel I knew how to cope, the answers I was giving seemed sensible, I wasn't getting paranoid after all ... When I've had to be independent it has made me feel I know I can cope.'*

150 *'[Depression] last year when my [adopted] son was very bad ... I do not feel so helpless about myself and it [the course] helped me to cope with the children.'*

158 *'My husband died in 1985 ... It [the course] made me realise other people had problems and it helped me deal with my own kids. It made me appreciate what I had ... Because being a widow it made me realise I had to do something to support my kids.'*

The type of help is likely to depend on whether students had a health problem and when this problem occurred. The following table differentiates between the type of help and when and if students had health problems in relation to the courses.

Health Problems	Course Help (Nos.) General	Specific	None	Totals
No problems	14	0	5	19
Problems >2 years earlier	8	0	3	11
Problems around courses	16	11	3	30
Totals	38 (63%)	11 (18%)	11 (18%)	60 (99%)

Table 6.4 Type of help and when students had health problems.

Obviously, the 19 who had no problems could not have had specific help but three quarters of them felt that their general well-being had improved. Out of the 41 students who had health problems 30 had these around the time of the courses and 16 had general help, 11 had specific help, and 3 no help from the courses. Of those who had their problems over two years before the courses, eight had general help. *Almost all of the students who were helped with specific health problems had crisis connected to what was happening in other areas of their lives.* Most of these concerned the marriage area and the loss of their husbands through separation, death or prison; in one case it was the student's social network and the murder of her sister; and another involved childcare difficulties with an adopted son who was retarded.

As far as general help is concerned *most of those who have no problems and past problems mention improved well-being* whereas those with problems around the time of the courses have less general help, because a significant number mention specific help. *Only small percentage of those with health problems concurrent with the courses do not get any help.*

In addition to the general improvements in students' morale, *nearly 60% of those with children say they have more patience and are able to cope better with their children,* this is likely to lead to

improvements to children's well-being:

105 *'I've more patience; you can understand them a bit better, found more ways of occupying them.'*
151 *'I try and have more patience, spend more time and give less punishment, a wee bit of each.'*
155 *'I remain calmer during children's tantrums, I can relate to them better.'*

Health changes

Students also made changes in their diet, exercise and smoking as a result of the courses. A summary is given in the following table:

Health change	No. of changes
Diet, eat less fat, sugar, salt, read labels, more fruit and veg	17
Exercise, Keep Fit, swimming, health club	9
Smoking, out of 32 smokers 4 stopped, 1 cut down	5
Total changes	31
Total students*	23

*Some students made more than one change

Table 6.5 Type and number of health changes.

Nearly 40% of the students made practical health changes associated with participation in the courses. There is no relationship between whether or not they had health problems and the changes they made; and those who had health problems did not make significantly more health changes. The changes they make often involve taking up community activities, such as Keep Fit and swimming. Also changes made as the result of learning about diet affect others in the family, particularly children and to a lesser extent husbands. Giving up smoking not only benefits the student's health but also future pregnancies, and children's health. Examples of these benefits are:

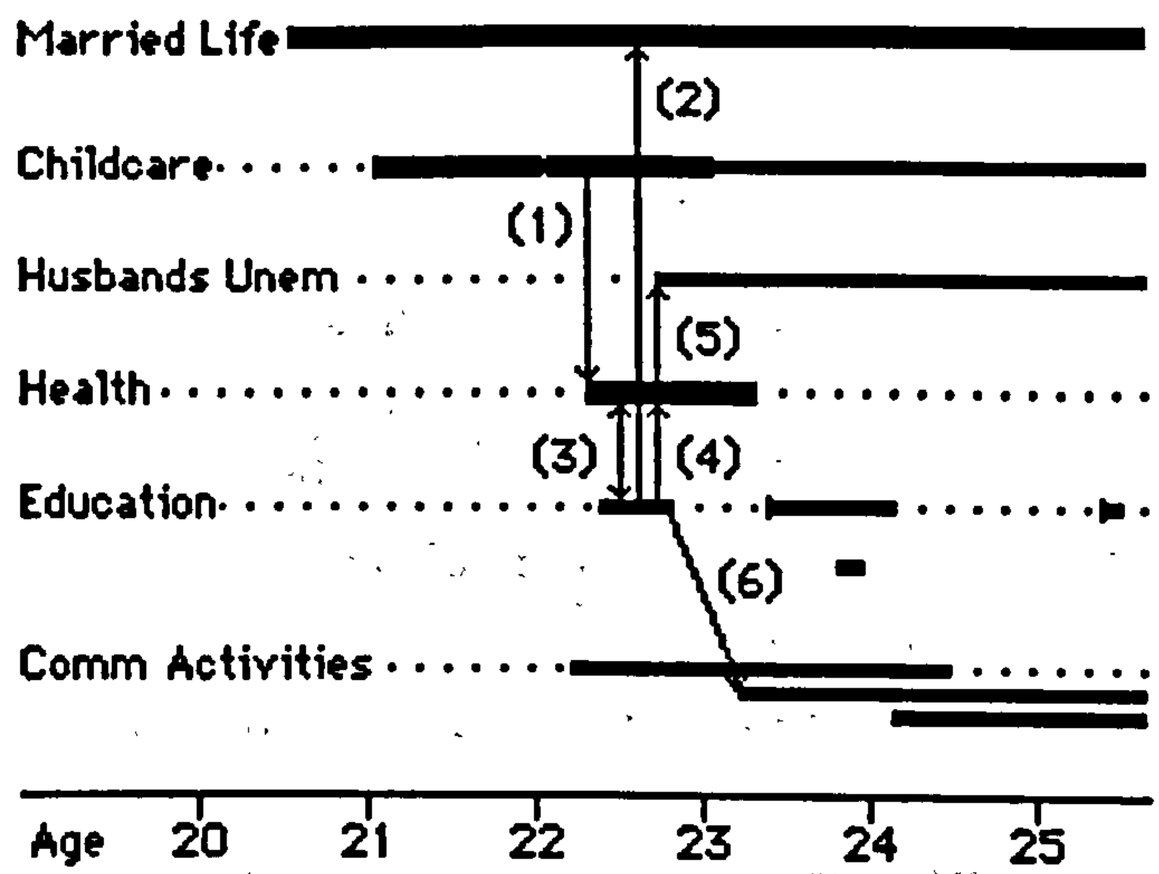
107 *'I take daughter swimming more often.'*
127 *'I gave up smoking for my children's health*
111 *'I changed the diet with the children, eating more healthier foods.'*
130 *'The children get less sweets and we eat more health food like fruit and vegetables.'*

Linkages between health and the OU courses

The linkages between health and the OU courses can be complex, they might involve a crisis in one area being linked to health problems, and then help coming from the courses, either through boosting morale or providing support or by enabling the student to tackle the crisis itself or all of these. An analysis of such a network of linkages is illustrated for one student.

This student (number 106) had post-natal depression after the birth of her son. She started Health Choices which helped her post-natal depression and influenced her marital relationship, but she became depressed again when her husband was sent to prison. The course helped her cope with this and the experience led her to set up a support group for other wives of prisoners. The relevant lifelines and the network of linkages are shown below in expanded form:

Chart 6.1 Network of linkages between health and other lifelines.



Each linkage is described with the student's supporting comments:

1) Childbirth to post-natal depression: *'I had post-natal depression after David was born.'.*

2) Health Choices course to marital relationship: *'Health Choices made me assertive, I didn't want to be a wife and mother. He didn't appreciate that.'*

3) Health Choices course to post-natal depression: *'It built up my*

confidence.'

4) Health Choices course to husband's departure to prison (shown as husband's unemployment): *'Again when he went into prison if I hadn't done the assertiveness bit I wouldn't have coped.'*

5) Health Choices help to further depression: *'I was devastated, if I hadn't done the courses I 'd have been a shattered person ... I was still part of the human race, at one point I thought I wasn't.'*

6) Health Choices help to community responsibility: *'I've set up a support group for prisoner's wives ... I'm trying to pass on the confidence I've gained, which helped me start up the group.'*

The courses built up her confidence to go onto other things which may also help prevent depression returning, and enabled the confidence she gained to be passed on to others.

The influence of the courses can be helpful sometime after they were taken. The student who had problems with her adopted son which led to her depression, found that the courses she had taken over a year ago helped her cope with the problems. There are occasions where students have experienced a crisis after the courses which had not led to depression and it is possible that the courses help students avoid depression. On the other hand, depression might be avoided because students have begun work or community activities following the courses. Also those without any adult health problems are on average significantly younger than the others (29 compared to 36 years), perhaps their problems are yet to come, or if the courses are successful they may avoid problems with depression.

Continuing case studies

The health careers can be added to the other careers of the four students making up the continuing case studies.

Student number 136

The first student had pneumonia as a child but has had no health problems in her adult life. However, the OU courses provided

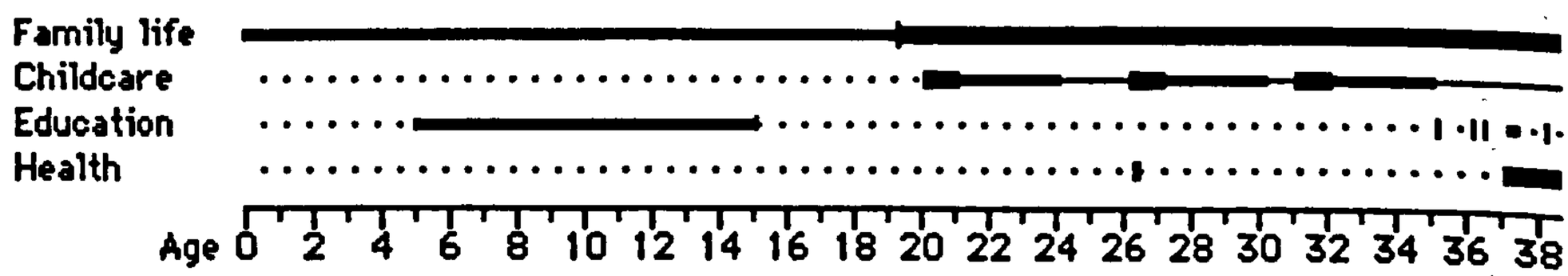
general help for her mental health and 'really did boost my self-esteem very much'. Also she has more patience and treats her children 'as people rather than as children that I tell what to do'.

Student number 144
The next student describes her health career as follows:

> 144 *'Health - fine until 2 years ago - then I've been to the Western Infirmary for tests, breathless and pains in my chest. I never had any bother before that. They are treating me for a heart complaint but now they think it is a post viral fatigue syndrome ... After my second child I was a bit depressed, it didn't last for long. They gave me tablets but I only took one and would not take any more, it gave me a terrible feeling.'*

She had post-natal depression after the birth of her second child, and she turns to her husband when feeling low. Her post viral fatigue syndrome began two years prior to the interview. Her health lifeline can be added to those considered so far and her relevant lifelines are shown below:

Chart 6.2 Health and other lifelines for student number 144.



Her illness started while she was taking her third OU course and around the time she began her 'O' levels (shown by the short horizontal line) which she had to discontinue because of hospital tests. She has recently begun another OU course. The courses made her feel proud and have more confidence in herself, however she makes no reference to the courses helping her specifically with her illness. The courses helped her cope with her teenager and have a more open relationship with him. For this student her health has interrupted her educational career, and while she may return to her 'O' level courses later she has recovered sufficiently to take another OU course.

Student number 145

This student says she has had 'severe depression quite recently when I had a miscarriage'. However she has not had medical treatment for this. Her relevant lifelines are shown below:

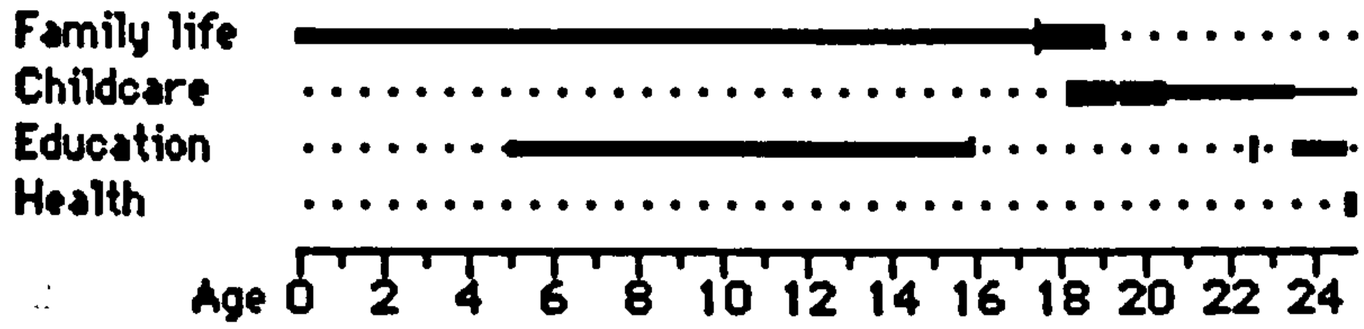


Chart 6.3 Health and other lifelines for student number 145.

Her recent depression has occurred sometime after her OU course but shortly after she finished a media and research and English course. She mentions how the OU course 'helped me to get my confidence back' and to 'realise that she was only human'. It also:

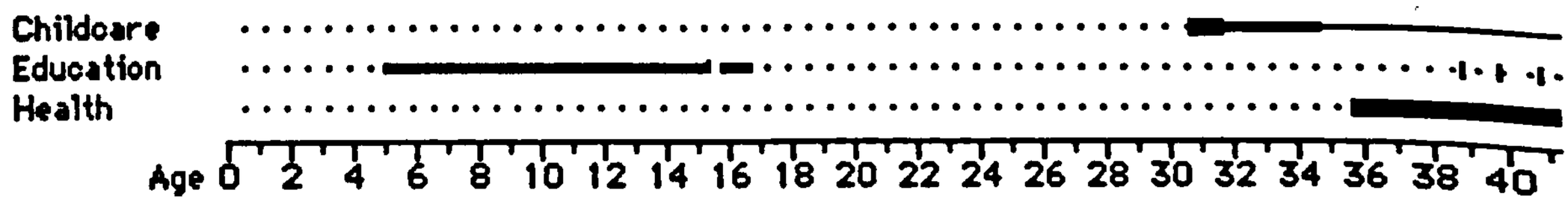
> 145 *'Helped me cope with the children getting older, helped me understand them, referring to the course and remembering what it taught me, helped me realise that my kids were normal and so was I.'*

However, she is referring to the period around the time of the OU course and the beginning of her further education courses. She does not mention the OU course in the context of her current depression and it is possible that this is partly related to her finishing her other courses as well as to her miscarriage. There may be occasions when the beginning of depression is associated with finishing courses, as well as its ending being linked to starting courses.

Student number 157

The final student who is a single parent has suffered from claustrophobia for a number of years. The timing of this in relation to other areas of her life dealt with so far is shown by the lifelines below:

Chart 6.4 Health and other lifelines for student number 157.



Her claustrophobia started when her child was four and has continued through the time she took three OU courses. She says that she 'is able to talk better, mentally more alert and able to converse better and communicate'. It is not clear whether this has specifically helped her with her illness. Also the courses appear to have 'opened my eyes about the foods we eat' and when she plans her meals she is 'more aware of what's in the packet'. She says 'I try to steer the family onto a healthier way of eating'. She has learnt to let her daughter 'go her own way to a certain extent'. This student has a particular health problem and the courses may have helped with this; she makes clear the help she has had with healthy eating and that she has made a positive change in her relationship with her daughter.

Conclusions

The continuing case studies illustrate the interaction between students' health and the OU courses and the kinds of help provided. The first student has no health problems as an adult but the courses boosted her self-esteem; she has more patience and a more positive relationship with her children. The next has a serious health problem which made her give up further education; the OU courses provided general help for her morale and helped her cope with her teenager but no specific help with her particular illness. The separated student is young and has had depression recently due to a miscarriage which coincided with the end of her further education courses. The OU courses earlier had provided general help, boosted her confidence and helped her cope with her children. The last student has has claustrophobia for the last 5 years and the courses may have helped with this, they did help with making health changes concerning her and her family's diet as well as with making

a positive change in her relationship with her child.

The case studies illustrate health careers which during adulthood included one with no adult health problems, one with depression, and two with longer term ill health. The place of the OU courses in these careers varies - in one case with health problems starting before and in two cases after the students began courses. In one case a health problem interrupted further education and in another the start of depression was also associated with the end of further education courses. The help the courses provided includes general help with self-esteem and confidence; possible specific help with claustrophobia and help in making health changes and positive changes in their relationship with their children.

Regarding the health background of the sample as a whole, a quarter had problems with their health as a child; as adults two thirds have had problems - 26 had depression and other psychiatric disturbances, 11 of the younger students had problems connected with pregnancies and the same number of older students had gynaecological problems. Also a few have heart and lung diseases, cancers and other illnesses.

Half the students had health problems around the time of the OU courses or afterwards and 11 two or more years earlier, only three had courses interrupted by ill-health. Whether the OU courses provide general or specific help partly depends on when the students had their health problems, general help of improved morale and confidence was reported by most students and specific help by only those with current problems. Nearly 40% make practical health changes concerning diet, smoking or exercise and most of these have also changed the diets of their children. Almost 60% have more patience and are able to cope better with their children. Thus, children's health may be improved by their mothers changing their diet and coping better. Some students also talk about health and diet to other people in the community and through their work.

This chapter has shown how students' health careers are linked to other areas of their lives, and how these can affect and be affected by participation in education and lead to complex networks of linkages.

Chapter 7 - Employment and Education

Introduction

This chapter reviews the main changes and trends in employment in Glasgow during the time students grew up and began their own working lives. It then examines students' employment careers and how these careers relate to their participation in education. It also considers the influence of husbands' unemployment on students' education and reactions to the OU courses. While much of women's time is spent in unpaid as well as paid work, the focus here is on paid work. Their employment careers up to the time of the interview are analysed by the use of lifelines which show periods of full-time and part-time paid work. As in previous chapters the basic questions are asked, in this case concerning students' employment backgrounds, the stage in their employment careers they take the OU courses, the influence of the courses on their careers and whether anyone else is affected.

The economy of Glasgow has undergone major structural changes since the war as the old manufacturing base of iron and steel, heavy engineering, and shipbuilding have declined. Some new manufacturing industries have been established but of greater importance is the expansion of service industries. As a result the patterns of employment in Glasgow has been transformed; the number and nature of jobs have changed and the participation of women has increased. Since the war unemployment has always been higher in Glasgow than the UK average, but in the early '80's the proportion out of work rose to figures not seen since the '30's. The first section of this chapter reviews the changes in employment opportunities; the increased participation of women in the labour market; and the wide scale (particularly male) unemployment - which have had an influence on the lives of the students.

Most researchers who study women's employment careers (eg. Dex,

1984; Chaney, 1985; Yeandle, 1984) concentrate on the relationship between the birth of children and participation in employment, ie. the interaction between these two areas of life. This is because of the dominant influence of childbirth and childcare in determining women's patterns of employment. However, the focus of this study is on the interaction between education and other areas of areas of life, including employment. This chapter examines the pattern of students' participation in paid work and where education, including the OU courses, fits into this pattern. The influence that employment has on participation in education and the affect that OU courses have on employment are considered. Questions are raised as to whether taking post-school courses is linked to students' employment careers, in that their work may have provided the opportunity to take the course, or that a course helped in their subsequent employment. The same questions are asked about the courses that were taken after a break in employment.

Because of the importance of the employment position of their spouse, husbands' unemployment is taken into consideration as an influence on students' educational careers and their responses to the OU courses. The purpose is to look at the interaction between: 1) students' employment and their educational careers and 2) husbands' unemployment and students' educational careers. Research on wives withdrawal from paid work when their husbands are unemployed (for a review see Cooke, 1987), which examines the interaction between partners' employment careers is of importance here only if the student's decision to start or continue paid work around the time of the OU courses is affected by her husband's employment status. Before focusing down to students' and their husbands' employment, the main historical changes and trends in employment are reviewed to provide an overall context.

Employment history

Since the war the labour market in Glasgow has undergone major changes. In the period from 1961-81 'it is not an exaggeration to say

that in twenty years Glasgow (and the whole conurbation) has gone from being an industrial city with 60% of its labour in manufacturing, to a service centre with 60% of its labour in service occupations' (Lever and Mather, 1986: 3). This figure had increased to 70% by 1984 (SRC, 1988b: 34). It is not just women who are involved in the service jobs, 'in 1981 for every Glaswegian male employed in manufacturing there were two employed in the service sector' (McGregor and Mather, 1986: 22). The decline in male semi-skilled manual workers in Scotland took place between 1961 and 1971 with their numbers stabilising up to 1981, whereas male unskilled workers maintained a steady share in the 60's. The collapse in employment in manufacturing hit the unskilled in the '70's with a 37% fall in their numbers from 1971 to 1981 (Kendrick, 1983: 50).

The proportion of women in the work force has increased substantially since the 1950's. Kendrick (1983: 52-53) reviews women's participation in employment over the last 40 years in Scotland. He reports that in 1951 women made up around 34% of the labour force, this increased slightly by 1961 to 36%; and by a larger amount by 1971 to 42%; and to 47% by 1981. The figures for Glasgow for 1971 and 1981 are higher at 63% and 67% (McGregor and Mather, 1987: 27). Kendrick points out that the increase in the employment of women can be entirely accounted for in terms of the expansion of the service sector. In 1951 the numbers of women working in manufacturing was only slightly less than in services, whereas by 1976 there were three times as many in services. The increase in female participation consisted entirely of married women which is partly due to a decline in the age of marriage and an increase in the length of time in full-time education (eg. the raising of the school leaving age in 1973). The increase was at its steepest during the '60's when the percentage of married women in the labour market nearly doubled, and was concentrated among women in the age groups immediately after the child-raising years. The change can be illustrated by the proportion of married working women in the age group 35-44: in 1951 only 17% were economically active whereas this figure had leaped to 64% by 1981,

with the biggest increase in the '60's when the figures went from 28% to 52%. The 1981 census shows that in Glasgow female participation rates are generally high even during the main child rearing years 25-35 when the rate falls to below half of all married women and rises to two thirds of all married women in their '40's. More recently in Great Britain generally there has been a large increase in participation in the labour market for women with children under 5, so that by 1987 35% were employed compared to 24% in 1983 (GHS, 1989: 160).

Kendrick also shows that the growth of women's employment is due to the increase in part-time working from a very low base in 1951, to 17% of employed women in 1961, 33% in 1971, and 41% in 1981. Three occupational categories accounted for half of the part-time women's jobs in 1971 - shop assistants, maids and related workers, chars and office cleaners. There were also part-time manufacturing and clerical jobs, and nurses and teachers.

The difference between the jobs available and the size of the labour force is reflected in the unemployment figures. In the fifteen years after 1945 Glasgow had low levels of unemployment averaging between 3 and 3.5%, although this tended to be double the average for the United Kingdom as a whole (Checkland, 1976: 46). The level in Strathclyde began rising during the 1960's and by 1967 had reached 4.3%. In the next twelve years the rate doubled and then doubled again in the four years from 1979 to 1983, reaching 18.6%; and remained around this level until it began falling in 1987 (Fraser and Sinfield, 1987: 147). Figure 7.1 below shows the rates of unemployment in Strathclyde from 1977-88.

In 1988 male unemployment in Glasgow was 25.9% and 11.6% for females (SRC, 1988b: 12), but 'female unemployment rates must be treated with particular caution, as there are a number of reasons why unemployed women are less likely than their male counterparts to be registered as unemployed' (SRC, 1989b: 29). These include their non-eligibility for benefit and their involvement in unpaid housework and childcare (Walby, 1985: 266).

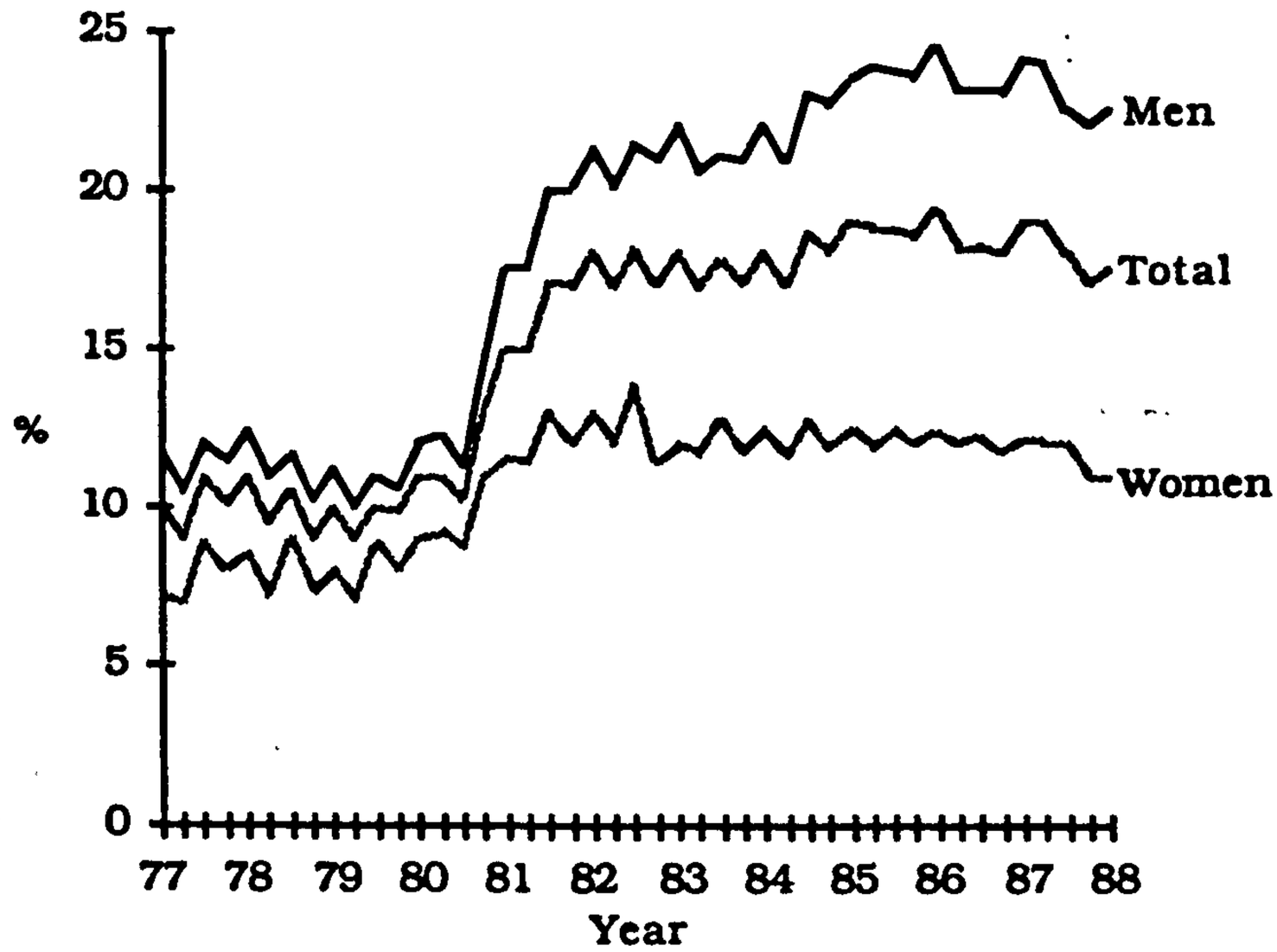


Figure 7.1 Unemployment in Strathclyde 1977-88 (SRC, 1988b: 13).

The distribution of unemployment has not been even across age groups or areas of the city. In 1988 in some Areas for Priority Treatment, male unemployment was over 40% and 15% for females compared to around 5% in middle-class areas (SRC, 1988b: 15). Regarding different age groups, in Strathclyde in 1988 the rates of unemployment of economically active men and women are shown in figure 7.1.

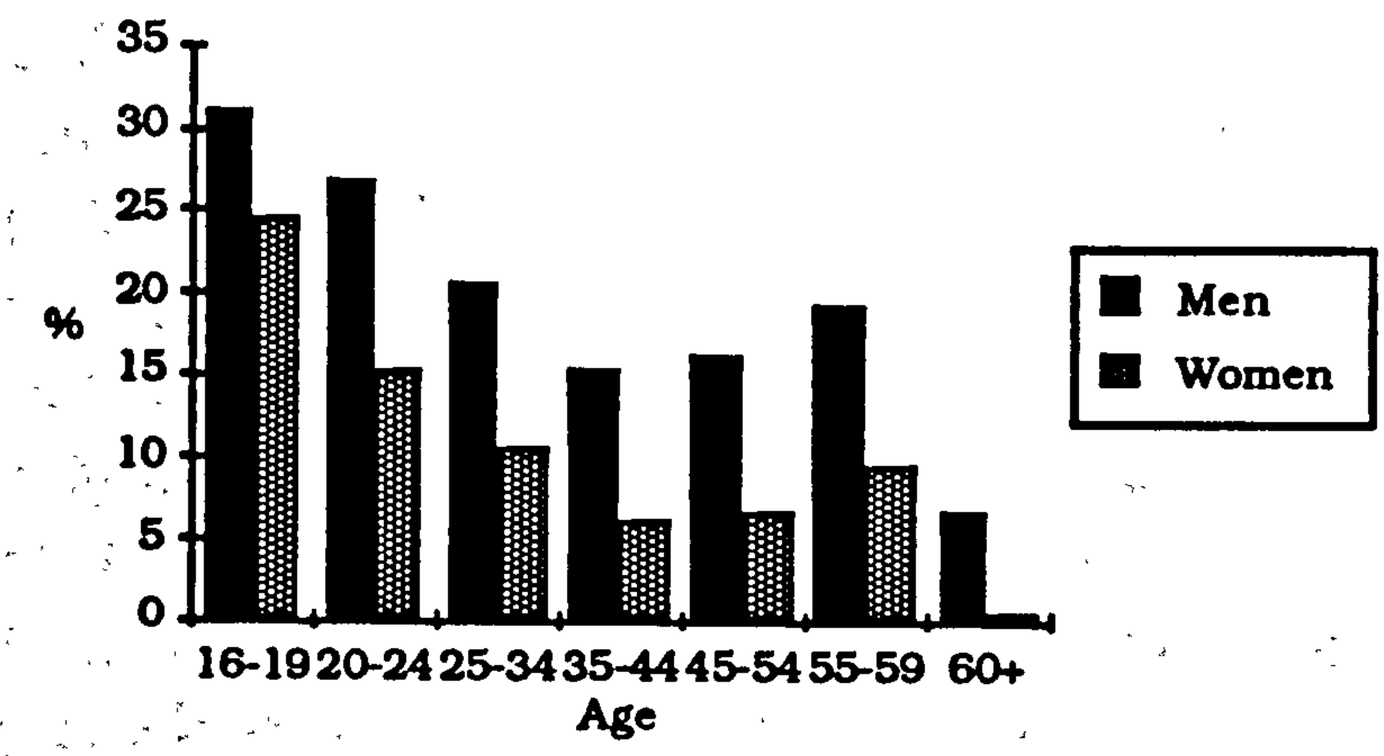


Figure 7.2 Unemployment rates in Strathclyde in 1988 for different age groups (SRC, 1988b: 19).

Therefore, the husbands of younger students (eg. under 25) are twice as likely to be unemployed that those who are older (eg. over 35), although they are less likely to be registered unemployed themselves. Much of the unemployment is long term, for example, in Strathclyde in 1988 nearly 47% of the men had been unemployed for more than a year and nearly a third for more than two years. This particularly affects men who are in the 35+ age groups (SRC, 1988b: 20).

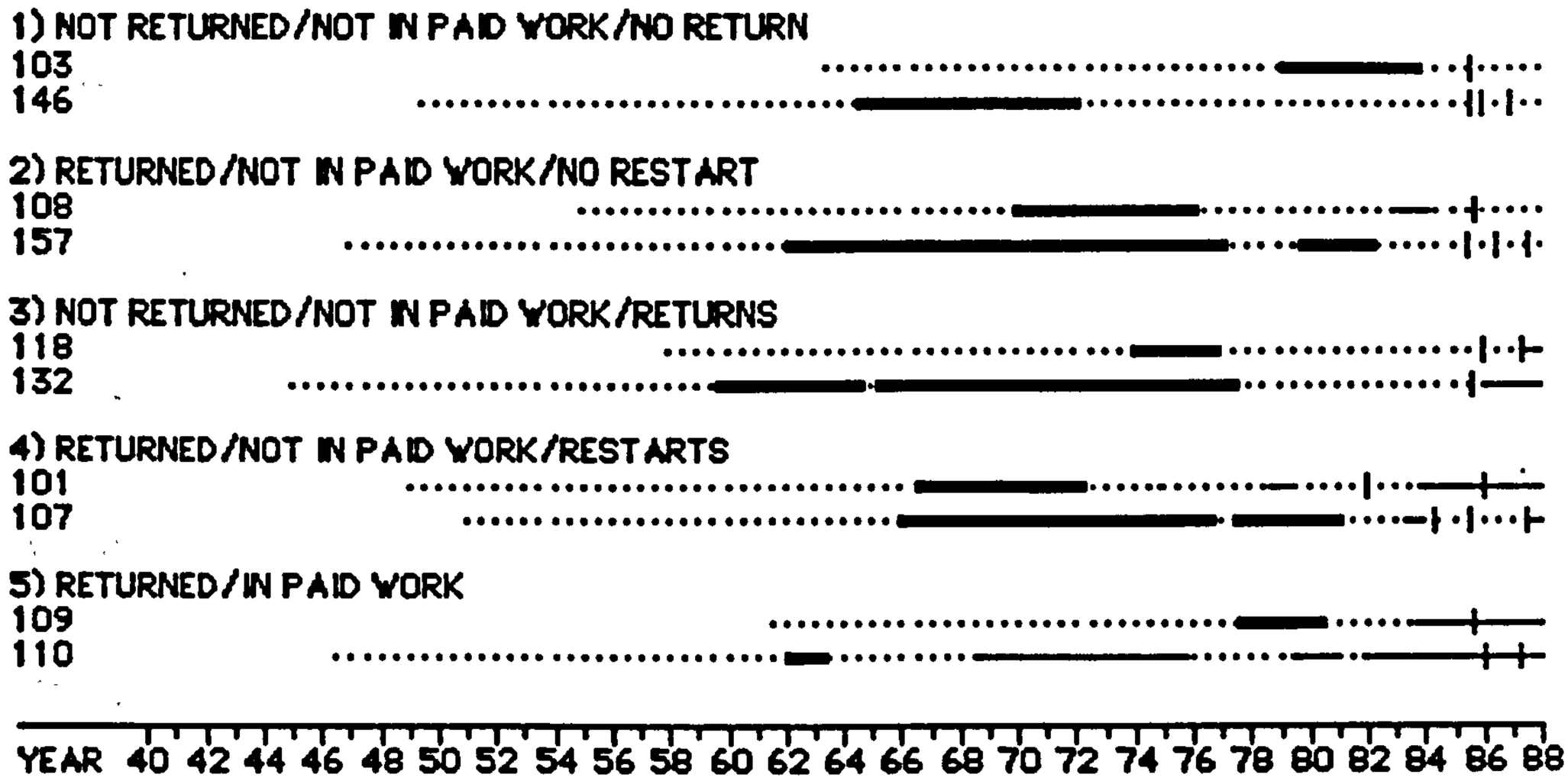
In summary, in Glasgow more men are now employed in the service sector than manufacturing. The rates of male unemployment rose dramatically in the early '80's and have remained high particularly in APTs and for young men. The participation of women in the labour force is high, including those with young children. While the unemployment rates for women are lower than for men, they do not accurately represent the number of women looking for work. The bulk of women's employment is in the service sector, part-time and low paid. To see how these trends have affected the students in the sample we now turn to their patterns of employment.

Patterns of employment

There are difficulties in characterising employment patterns for individuals at different ages and stages of their lives (Dex, 1984: 8). This is because in the future some students who are not in employment may return and others may give up paid work or shift to full-time employment, thus altering their patterns. Students' employment patterns up to the date on interview can be classified with regard to two periods of paid work, the first stage of full-time employment up to a break followed by the second stage mainly part-time. The main sub-division is based on whether or not students have returned to paid work after a break. If they have then a further distinction can be made depending on whether they returned before or after the start of their first OU course, and whether they were employed at this time. This gives five main types of employment career which are illustrated by the lifelines below

showing the relative timing of the OU courses:

Chart 7.1 Examples of five patterns of employment.



Each students' employment lifeline shows when she began full-time paid work with a thick line. This line ends where she ends full-time employment, if the student returns to part-time employment this is shown by the start of a thin line and this ends where the period of part-time employment ends. Note that a continuous line does not necessarily mean that there were no end-on job changes. The start of each OU course is shown with a short vertical line. The numbers of students in each career type in table 7.1 below

There are four other students who do not fall into the pattern of full-time employment followed by part-time, and none of these have children. One (number 122) has had short periods of full and part-time paid work and is currently employed full-time; another (number 131) started part-time paid work and is now employed full-time; one (number 138) has had long periods of full-time paid work but has not been employed for over ten years; one other (number 143) has been employed full-time continuously for over 30 years.

Career type	Nos.
1) NOT RETURNED/NOT IN PAID WORK/NO RETURN Those who have not returned, and are therefore not in paid work at the start of their first OU course and who do not return afterwards.	15
2) RETURNED/NOT IN PAID WORK/NO RESTART Those who have returned but are not in paid work at the time of the start of their first OU course and who do not restart afterwards.	5
3) NOT RETURNED/NOT IN PAID WORK/RETURNS Those who have not returned at the time of their first OU course, and are therefore not in paid work at this time, but return afterwards.	17
4) RETURNED/NOT IN PAID WORK/RESTARTS Those who have returned, but are not in paid work at the time of their first OU course and who restart afterwards.	6
5) RETURNED/IN PAID WORK Those who have returned (one or more times), and are in paid work at the time of the start of their first OU course (and may or may not continue up to the time of the interview).	13
6) OTHERS	4
Total	60

Table 7.1 The numbers of students in each employment career type.

The cessation of full-time education is usually associated with the beginning of employment, in other words there is a direct transfer of their main activity from education to employment, a switch from one area of life to another. Full-time paid work often ends with a transfer of activities to childcare. In general, women's employment is characterised by its interrupted nature which is primarily due to childbirth and the switch from full and part-time employment to periods of full and part-time childcare. General relationships have been found between the length of the first period of employment and subsequent periods and earlier return to work. Also there is frequently downward mobility regarding the nature of the job to which women return to in comparison to their first job (Martin and Roberts, 1984: 147; Chaney, 1985: 170).

The components of students' employment careers and the interaction between these and education and/or training is considered. This includes students' first jobs on leaving school,

their jobs before stopping full-time paid work, the jobs they take on returning and their jobs and further education around the time of, and following, the OU courses.

Full-time employment and education

The first stage of employment careers usually begins with students' full-time jobs on leaving school and may include a number of job changes before finishing the first stage. (A few students start part-time jobs while still at school but these are excluded). Fifty five students started full-time employment (including nursing training) and one began part-time paid work soon after leaving school, of the remaining four, two went full-time to college (occupational therapy and YTS catering) and two were occupied with housework. The types of first jobs students went into were:

Job type	No. of students
Clerical and office work (plus 1 part-time)	26
Machinists and factory workers	18
Shop assistants	4
Nursing, RCN, SEN, dental nursing	4
Skilled work (dressmaking, bookbinding, hairdressing, lab. ass)	4
Total	56

Table 7.2 Types of first jobs.

The first two categories show the split between office and factory work, which seem to be the two main options, only four students leave school for professional training. However, the pattern of first jobs may change over time because of the major switch in Glasgow from manufacturing to service jobs particularly during the 1961-81 period. As the number of factory jobs declined we would expect the pattern of first jobs to have changed. Table 7.3 below shows that for these students there was only a small reduction in the proportion going into factory work.

Type of work	Date left school (Nos. and %) Before 1973	After 1973	Total
Office work	16 (57%)	10 (63%)	26
Factory work	12 (43%)	6 (38%)	18
Total	28 (100%)	16 (100%)	44

Table 7.3 Numbers going into office and factory work before and after 1973.

Schooling and the qualifications gained have a significant influence on the kind of job that students can aim for. The breakdown of qualifications and the main types of work is shown below:

Qualifications	Type of work (Nos.) Office	Factory	Total
'O' Grades and above	12	3	15
Leaving Certificate	6	1	7
No qualifications	8	14	22
Total	26	18	44

Table 7.4 Qualifications and type of work.

There is a significant split between those having 'O' Grades and above going on to office work, and those having no qualifications beginning factory work. Also more of those with 3rd Year Leaving Certificates get office jobs compared to factory jobs. Therefore it appears that school qualifications have remained important in getting an office job throughout the period when the number of factory jobs has declined and the proportion of qualified school leavers has increased.

Gray et al. (1983) concluded from their study of Scottish school leavers that:

> 'School qualifications at all levels, and including the lowest marginal levels, were significantly associated with initial success in the job market among the 1977 sample members. The extension of certification to cover a large proportion of secondary-school pupils may therefore have tightened the bond between certification and occupation.'
> (Gray et al, 1983: 115)

In chapter four it was noted that those students who went on to further education and training after leaving school either did this part-time at evening class or where the training was paid and combined with work, as in nursing. There were 10 students who took some training courses in their first jobs and three more who started nursing after leaving their first jobs. The bulk of the students were in relatively unskilled work and did not take courses to obtain a better paid job or advance their career.

Students' reasons for leaving their first jobs were moving/marriage/pregnancy (19), bored/fed up/dislike/disagreement (14), to get a better job/more money or to begin nursing training (11), and redundancy/work closed down (6). Thus, around a third stayed in their first job up to when they left full-time work. Also 22 students appeared to advance in their jobs and 13 of these took courses which may have helped their employment opportunities. For example, moving from office junior to a secretary, or from a student nurse to being able to obtain qualified work in other hospitals. One student began as a factory worker then started nursing but failed her nursing exams and then became a typist. The movement from factory worker to typist might be counted as an advance but it is not closely linked to nursing training.

The reasons that 43 (out of 56) gave for ending their first period of full-time employment was because they were expecting their first baby; 7 left work on marriage and the remainder had reasons including the lack of childcare (2), having a second child, fostering, emigration and redundancy.

Employment and education after a break

Of the 40 students who returned to work after a break, all except four returned to part-time jobs. In common with findings from other research, there was downward mobility on returning to work for some. Seven took what appeared to be lower grade jobs compared with those that they had had previously, examples of downward movement are from cashier to chair stacker, computer operator to factory worker, and auxiliary nurse to waitress.

Surprisingly, five obtained higher grade jobs, the remainder were approximately equivalent. Upward mobility included the move from waitress to daycare assistant, shop assistant to an auxiliary in adult education, and clerkess to nursing auxiliary.

There were only five courses taken after a break from employment and prior to the first OU course. All these courses were connected with employment except a First Aid course which was related to voluntary work. A Pub Management course was in-service training, SEN training involved working as a student nurse, occupational therapy training was connected with paid work and a childminding course led to later employment as a childminder.

The experience of OU courses at different stages

To examine whether students' perception of the courses varies depending on where they are in their employment careers when they take the courses, the reactions of students in the main groups are considered. The table below summarises the numbers and percentages of students who said they were helped in their employment careers by the OU courses:

Career type	Nos.	Helped
1) Not returned	15	3
2) Returned, not in paid work, not restart	5	1
Percentage helped who do not return or restart		*(20%)*
3) Return after OU course	17	7
4) Returned, not in paid work, restart	6	2
Percentage helped who return or restart		*(39%)*
5) Returned and in paid work	13	5
Percentage helped who are in paid work		*(38%)*

Table 7.5 Career types and numbers helped in their employment careers.

20% of those who have not returned to or restarted paid work were helped in thinking about employment, 39% of those who returned were helped, mostly to get jobs, and 38% of those who were in paid

work at the time of the courses use what they learnt in their work. The comments regarding the kind of help from the courses are examined below for the main employment career types:

Career type 1 and 2: All the students with career types 1 or 2 except one have not yet applied for a job, but three said that the courses had helped them think about their future employment:

128 *'When Mark is older I hope to find work in the community.'*
148 *'I think more about jobs now for when my kids get older.'*
154 *'Yes, I would like to work again.'*

One student with career type 1 said the OU course did help her get a job but she did not take it up because of the effect it would have on her husband's benefit.

152 *'I applied for a job to set up a Pre-5 Resource Centre and quoted my Certificates in my CV. I got the job but didn't take it since my husband was unemployed and his benefit would have been cut.'*

Most of the students with careers of these types had concerns in other areas of their lives and saw the courses mainly in terms unconnected with their employment careers.

Career type 3 and 4: Out of the total of 23 who got a job after the beginning of an OU course, seven said they thought the OU course had helped them get the job, one was encouraged to look for a career and another was helped in her job and is thinking about a better job:

106 *'Because I had built up my confidence again ... Its given me the motivation to constantly better myself.'* [Clerical admin].
107 *'I now have a job as a playleader, which I would not have gone for before taking the courses ... Because the job is involved in childcare and I have more knowledge and understanding now.'* [Playleader].
116 *'I worked with old people, I got that job partly due to an OU course, it helped ... It gave me confidence to believe I could do something. Human Development covered senility*

for example so it helped in that way too.' [Daycare assistant].

117 *'It is interesting, it gets you to meet others, starts your brain working and starts getting you to do other things. You're not so sure of yourself when you've stopped work to have children. It encouraged me to go onto the [local adult education] Committee then from there to get an interview for a job.'* [School domestic].

118 *'I think it [OU course] had something to do with me getting the job ... I'm more confident, talking to people knowing I was right about some things, makes me feel good about myself.'* [Childminder].

132 *'Because it was about the playgroup age group and it helped us to choose toys etc.'* [Playleader].

145 *'Because Clyde Action could see I hadn't just been sitting around the house.'* [Trainee media assistant].

123 *'Encouragement to look for a possible career, I went to East Bank Academy for a computer course.'* [Job not known].

101 *'I'm more patient, I don't get too involved ... It has made me think of further education, not academic, but perhaps to help me get a better job in the community.'* [Home help].

The students who said the OU courses were helpful in getting them a job included four with no qualifications and three with 'O' grades and above. Jobs involving caring, particularly for young children (playleading and childminding), are obviously related to the subjects of the main courses, and these courses are likely to be a help for this kind of work. Those who did not say the courses helped them to return to paid work obtained jobs as - cash point operator, sales assistant, bank clerkess, chair stacker, book keeper, machinist. Although the courses help most students to gain confidence, there is no direct connection for those not helped between the content of the courses and their jobs.

Career type 5: 13 students were working when they started the course. The reactions of five of them show how the courses influenced their current work or thoughts about future employment.

133 *'I can talk to the tenants about subjects that would have embarrassed me before, 'aids' for example.' [Full-time warden].*

141 *'I had to take it through my work but I must say I enjoyed it ... I'm doing Modules in Cardonald College on a*

Wednesday morning and I am going to go full-time when my job finishes in August. I am going to do the full course on community service.' [Community Project worker].

144 *'I would not go into cleaning, I would look for something more skilled where you had to use you brain a bit more. It made me see things better for the future. I try things now that I would not try before ... If going for a job I'd be able to cope with it better.' [ex-Hospital domestic].*

158 *'It made me more confident, , , I would never have thought of going to College [to train as a Nursery Nurse] ... Being a widow it [the OU course] made me realise I had to do something to support my kids ... I really enjoy my work just now, well College - its not really work but I will enjoy it even more when I qualify as a nursery nurse.' [ex-School crossing attendant].*

160 *'Because I was working with the elderly ... It has helped me understand old people.' [Part-time warden].*

The remainder for whom the courses did not influence their work were employed as - a factory worker, shop assistants, adult education auxiliary, computer operator, nurses, book keeper, and cleaner.

Whether students perceive the courses as being related to their work depends on where they are in their employment careers. Of those who have already returned and are in paid work, 38% mention the courses in connection with their jobs; a similar proportion of those who go onto get a job after the start of the courses believe that the courses helped them; whereas 20% of those who have not returned mention the courses in connection with their future employment plans. These figures suggest that *if work is an active area or becomes a new area of students' lives, they are more likely to see a helpful connection between the courses and employment.* Whereas those for whom employment is not currently an active area of their lives, will be less likely to see the courses in this context.

This conclusion is what might be expected but is important because employment is not primarily an area that the courses are aimed at. This data suggests that students reactions to the courses are influenced by where they are in their employment careers, and the courses can influence these careers through helping them get jobs.

Employment and further education after the first OU course
There are differences in the types of courses students go onto depending on where they are in their employment careers. Less than half of the students who are in paid work at the time of their first OU course go onto further OU courses, compared to over three quarters of those who are not in paid work, either because they returned after the start of their course or do not return. *Those who return to paid work after an OU course are also more likely to take up further education.* 70% of those who return go onto other courses compared to 54% of those who are already in paid work and only 27% of those who do not return. This is a significant difference between those in paid work and those who have not returned. The kinds of courses and the jobs students were involved in are shown in the table 7.6 below.

Course	Job
Welfare rights	Clerical admin.
Welfare rights	Cash point operator
English 'O' grade and computer studies	Daycare assistant
English; media and research course*	Trainee media assistant
Cookery and sewing 'O' grades	Playleader (job not taken up)
Tutoring course	School domestic
Typing	Childminder
Typing	Chair stacker
Typing and word processing	Cleaner
Computer programming	Childminder
Playleaders course*	Playleader
Playgroup course and computer course	Book-keeper

* Courses linked to jobs.

Table 7.6 Types of courses taken up by students and their jobs.

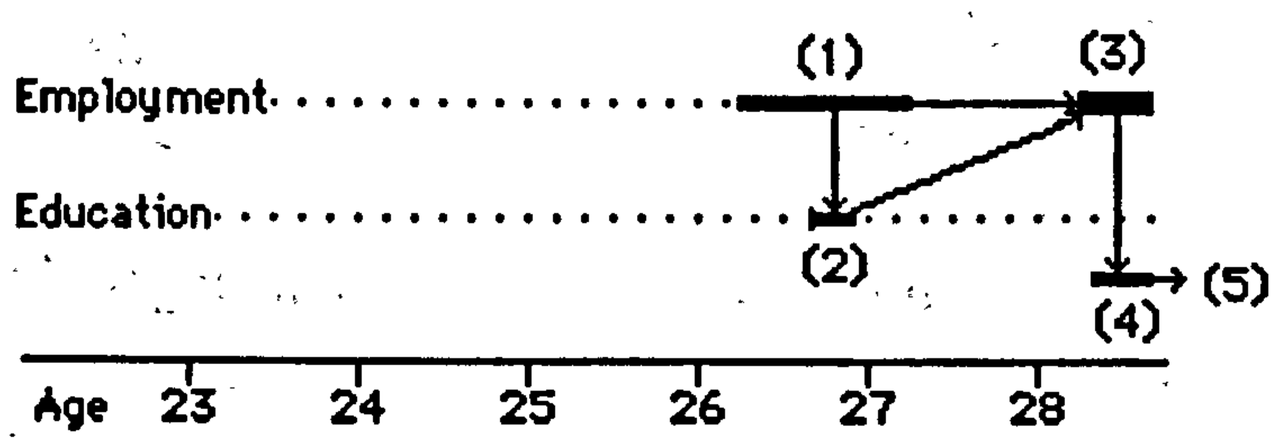
The table shows that there is little connection between the jobs that students return to after an OU course and the other courses they take up. In only two cases (marked with an asterisk) are the courses linked to the jobs. The remaining courses are either linked to community activities, eg. welfare rights and tutoring or may be aimed at qualifications for jobs, eg. in typing and word processing, that students would like to get in future. There are more links from the OU courses to the jobs taken up than from the other courses

and current employment. The OU courses can act as a bridge back into employment which is related to students' recent activity of caring for young children, and as a stimulus to further education courses connected with other (possibly earlier) skills and better paid work.

For some students there could be multiple linkages from OU courses and future paid work through further education, as well as links from paid work to OU and other courses. Furthermore, these linkages may extend back to previous jobs and qualifications which affect how much OU and other courses can change students' options. The case studies below show some of the multiple linkages within and between education and employment careers.

Linkages between recent education and employment
Examples of three students who have linkages between components of their education and employment careers are examined. Expanded lifelines for the first student (number 141) who has a career type 5 are shown below:

Chart 7.2 Recent employment and education lifelines for student number 141 showing linkages.

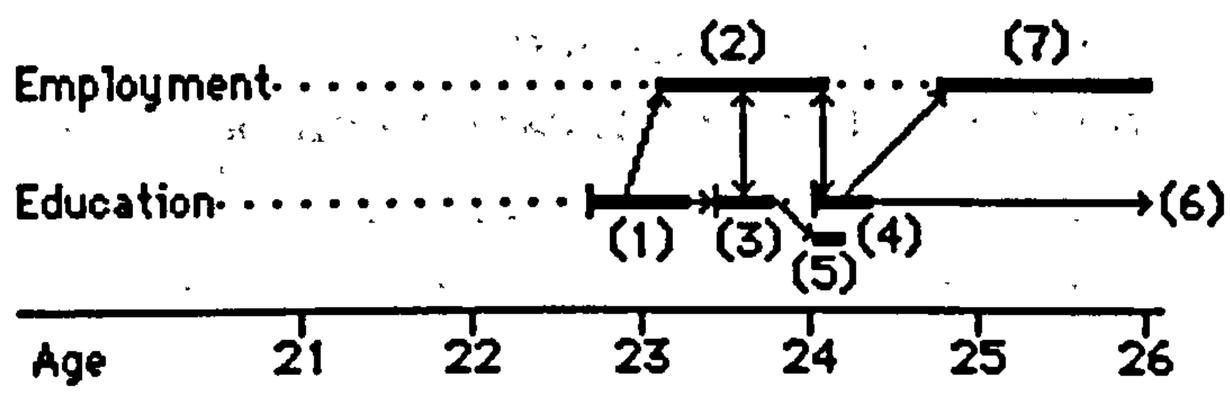


For this student the linkage goes from her part-time job as a community project worker (1), to the OU course (2): 'I had to take it through my work, but I must say I enjoyed it ... It has given me more confidence ... I am very friendly with my boss through doing the course'. The contact with her boss may have helped get the full-time job (3) in which she uses what she learnt in the OU course: 'I do a mother and toddler group through my work and what I learned in my OU course helped me'. In connection with this job she is doing a community service module (4) which will lead to a full-time

college course (5). There is a missing link between her OU course and the module, ie. from (2) to (4), and she answers 'no' to the question of whether the OU course helped her take up an non-OU course. For this student the initial link is from employment to the OU courses which leads onto further education and into another related job.

For the next student (number 116) the link starts from the OU courses to work and further education. The expanded portions from the employment and education lifelines for this student who has a career type 3 are shown in the next chart:

Chart 7.3 Recent employment and education lifelines for student number 116 showing linkages.

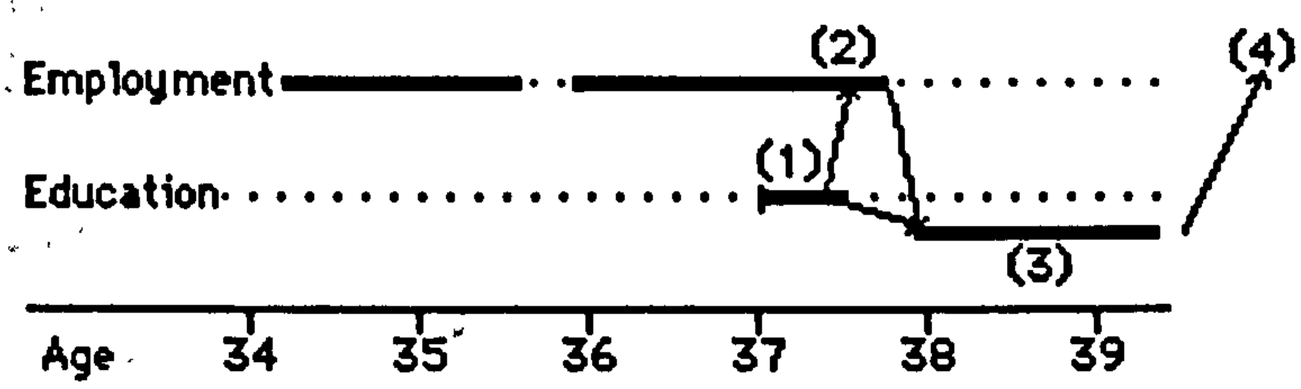


The OU course (1) helped her get the MSC day care job (2), she said 'It gave me confidence to believe I could do something', and she continued getting help from OU courses (3 and 4) while doing this job: 'Human development [in the course Health Choices] covered senility for example, so it helped in that way too'. She took her second OU course (3) 'because she enjoyed the first one. The OU courses also encouraged her to start 'O' grades (5) which she had to give up due to a teachers' strike. 'It gave me confidence and an appetite to learn more', and they 'could have changed my life because I tried for College places (6) but they were full up'. There were no further employment links, except that she may use what she learnt in her childminding (7) for her sister, although she does not mention this. Because this student took three OU courses over a period of time, the courses can link to more than one job as well as to further education.

The final student (number 158) was in employment at the time of

her first course and this led to her stopping paid work and taking up full-time education. The expanded employment and education lifelines for this student are shown below:

Chart 7.4 Recent employment and education lifelines for student number 158 showing linkages.



At the time she started her first OU course (1) she was employed part-time as a crossing attendant (2). The OU course made her more confident and without it she would never have thought of going to college to train as a nursery nurse (3). In order to go to college she gave up her job (ie. link 2-3). She is looking forward to qualifying and working as a nursery nurse (4). In this example the OU courses helped her take up a new career which involved giving up paid work (ie. link 1-2).

These examples show that links between education and employment can operate in either or both directions, from education to employment for two students - in one case help in getting a job, and in the other in providing a good reason for stopping paid work through the help given in taking up full-time education. A link from employment to education meant that the other student took the OU course as part of her job, and this led to further education and subsequent employment which was linked to the previous job. We saw in chapter four that there were linkages between previous education and courses taken after the OU course and these may also have had an influence in these examples. Also in chapter five there were links from certain stages of students' childcare and marital careers to the OU courses and further education, and these may also have been relevant here. At the end of this chapter the continuing case studies show some of the links between these areas of life.

At this point it has been sufficient to show that the stage students are at in their employment careers is related to the kind of help the courses provide; and to provide examples of the complex linkages between employment and education. The next section explores husbands' unemployment and its influence on students' educational careers and on the links between their education and employment.

Husbands' unemployment

In order to examine whether the interaction between students' education (particularly the OU courses) is influenced by the employment status of their husbands, we can focus on those students who have remained in their first marriage (or a stable relationship and no separations) and whose husbands have experienced unemployment. A total of 16 students have stable relationships and husbands who have had substantial and/or frequent periods of unemployment before, after or during the time they took the OU courses. This section considers whether husbands' unemployment is related to students' responding to the courses in a particular way, and to changes in their lives which affect their employment careers. Long term unemployment may lead to passivity for men but for their wives it may require them to cope with a low income and perhaps to initiate changes of their own (Elder, 1982: 104; McKee and Bell, 1985: 394).

The students with husbands who have experienced unemployment can be compared to the students whose husbands have remained employed. Overall there is no significant difference between the proportions of students whose husbands have unemployment and who return or restart paid work after the beginning of their first OU course and those whose husbands do not. That is, *husbands' unemployment does not influence whether students return or restart paid work in the time around the OU courses.* However, there is a significant difference in the help the courses give in getting jobs. *Most of those (67%) who return or restart work and whose husbands have unemployment say the courses helped them*

get a job, whereas none of the students with husbands who have no unemployment were helped in this way. For the students who get jobs it may be that those with unemployed husbands take a more instrumental approach to the courses for the purpose of getting a job, compared to those whose husbands do not have unemployment. As a consequence the majority who get jobs feel that the OU courses helped them.

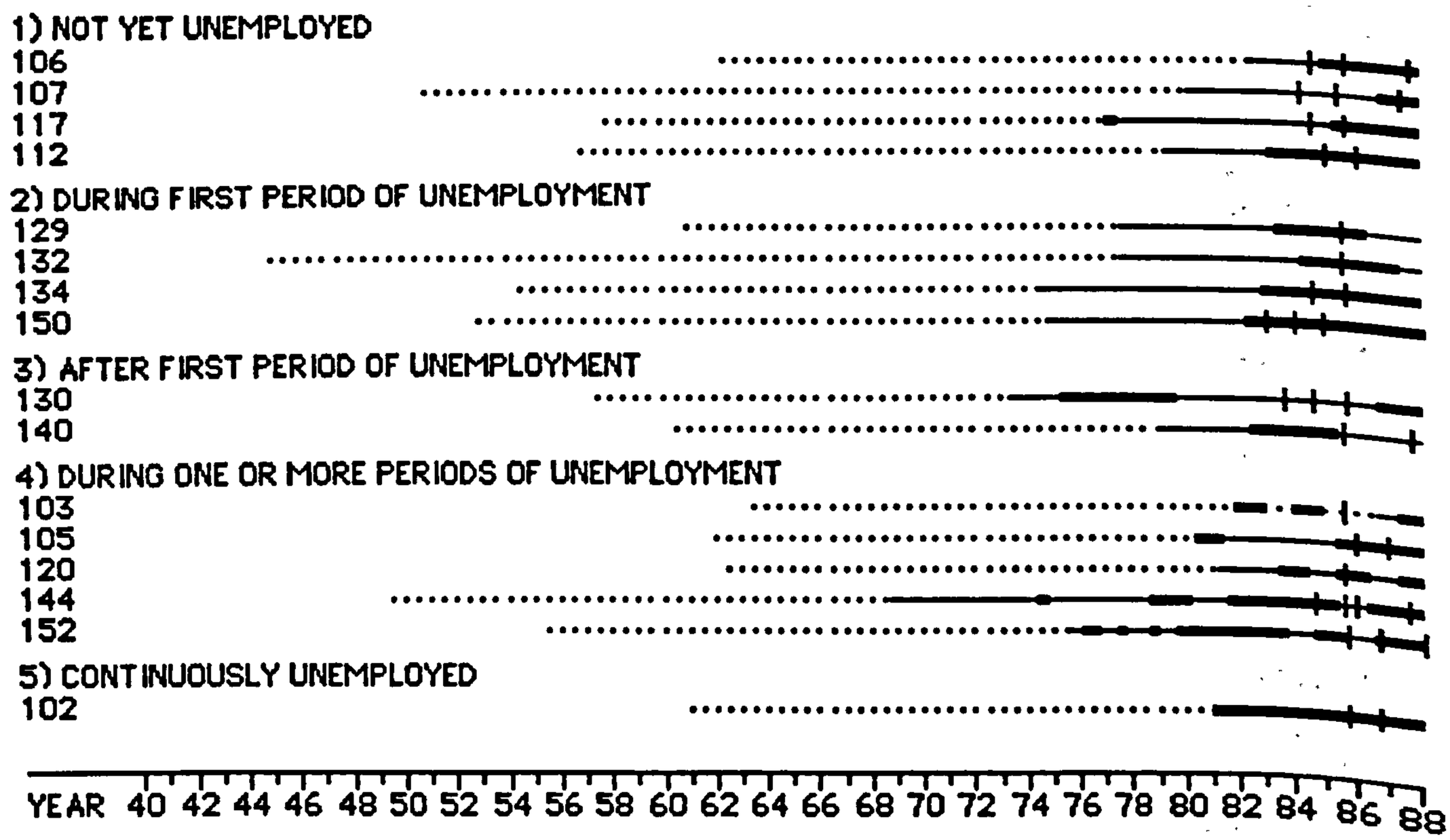
For all the husbands unemployment occurred after they had been employed, except for one student (number 102) whose husband has been unemployed all their married life. Another student (number 103) cohabited with her future husband and during this time he experienced unemployment and did again after they were married. The cohabitation period is included as part of a stable social relationship. Another (number 117) student's husband is unable to work because of disability and for her this may be a different experience to his unemployment. One student (number 106) cohabited with the father of her children and he had a period of unemployment before beginning a prison sentence. Her experience may be significantly different to others in this category particularly as she is physically separated as well. These differences are taken into account in examining students' comments. But first the patterns of husbands' unemployment and the place of the OU courses in these is considered.

Patterns of husbands' unemployment

The students whose husbands experienced unemployment include those for whom unemployment is frequent or ongoing and those whose husbands became unemployed for the first time. Unemployment might occur after a long period of relatively secure and well paid work. On the other hand, students may have experienced frequent periods of their husbands' unemployment. They may have taken the first course before their husband becomes unemployed for the first time; during or after the first period of unemployment; or during or after more than one period.

Lifelines for all students whose husbands have experienced unemployment and who have remained in their first marriage are shown in chart 7.5 below. The lifeline, marriage line, husband's unemployment line and the course line have all been combined so that a composite line for each student can be presented. The dotted line begins at the students' dates of birth; the thin line starts when they got married; the thicker line shows the period of their husbands' unemployment and the vertical line markers show the beginning of OU courses.

Chart 7.5 The stages of husbands' unemployment and OU courses.



The impact of the recession in the early '80's can clearly be seen by the frequency that unemployment occurs, also for these men this may be compounded by their being in younger age groups and their lack of skills. The students whose husbands experienced unemployment make up around 38% of the sample of those who are and remain married. However, not all are unemployed at a single point in time although more become so towards the middle of 1987.

Table 7.7 shows the students subdivided into five groups on the

basis of when the first course occurred in relation to their husbands' unemployment:

Husbands' employment status at start of course	Total	Student identification numbers
1) Not yet unemployed	3	106, 107, 117
2) During first period of unemployment	5	129, 132, 112, 134, 150
3) After first period of unemployment	2	130, 140
4) During or after one or more periods of unemployment	5	103, 105, 120, 144, 152
5) Unemployed continuously since marriage	1	102
Total	16	

Table 7.7 Husbands' unemployment status at the start of the first OU course.

The experience of students in Group 2 whose husbands became unemployed for the first time is different to those in Group 4 who have had some experience of this before. Group 1 did not have any unemployment before the first course (excluding the short period for student number 117 when they got married). The husbands of the two students in Group 3 were working again around the time their wives took the OU courses, although one becomes unemployed afterwards.

Husbands' unemployment, students' employment and the OU courses

The timing and extent of husbands' unemployment may be related to whether students take up work after the start of their first OU course and the help the courses provided. To examine this the categories used in the first part of this chapter describing where the courses occur in students' employment careers can be related to those concerning husbands' unemployment defined above. Figure 7.3 shows in each cell the identification numbers of students at various stages in their employment career and their husbands' unemployment.

WIFES EMPLOYMENT AT START OF OU COURSE	HUSBANDS UNEMPLOYMENT AT START OF OU COURSE				
	5) Continuous unemployment	4) During one or more periods	3) After first period of unem.	2) During first period of unem.	1) Not yet unemployed
1) Not yet returned		103 105 120	140	112 150	
2) Returned/not in paid work/not restart		152	130		
3) Returns afterwards	102			129 132	106 107 117
4) Returned before/not in paid work/restart					
5) Returned/in paid work		144		134	

Figure 7.3 Husbands' and wives' employment status at the start of the first course.

While the numbers are too small to carry out a statistical analysis, the clustering suggests that there may be a tendency for those who return to paid work to have husbands who have not yet been unemployed or to be in the first period (eg. student numbers 129, 106 etc). Whereas those who do not return or restart have husbands with more unemployment (eg. student numbers 103, 152 etc). Also a comparison of students with husbands with unemployment and those who have none suggests that the students who have greater involvement in the labour market, are less likely to have husbands who have unemployment. In other words, the more unemployment their husbands have the less likely they are to be involved in paid work. This is a common finding although the linkages are unclear (Hakim, 1982: 441; Martin and Roberts, 1984: 97).

To explore the influence of husbands' unemployment on students' reactions to the courses a qualitative analysis based on students' comments is undertaken.

Case studies of education and husbands' unemployment
The comments of students whose husbands' pattern of unemployment is in the main groups 1, 2, and 4 are considered and compared. These groups contain all the students (numbers, 106, 107, 117, 132) who were helped by the OU courses to get a job, and one (number 144) whose future plans were influenced.

Group 1 - Husbands not yet unemployed: All these students were not in paid work at the start of their first OU courses but began employment after this. Student (number 106) started her first OU course just before her partner left work because he was depressed about his imminent imprisonment which followed soon after and has continued. Her reactions to the course are as follows:

> 106 *'When he went into prison, if I hadn't done the assertiveness bit [in Health Choices] I wouldn't have coped ... It's given me an incentive to reach my own goals in life, not just him and the kids ... [It helped me get the job] because I had built up my confidence again.'*

Her main response to the courses is obviously influenced by having to cope with her partner's imprisonment. In his absence the courses helped her return to work and become active in voluntary work.

Another student (number 107) returned to nursing part-time but left after six months 'because it was not financially beneficial'. She then took two OU courses and after finishing the second course her husband became unemployed after his freelance work ended and he took up further education. During this time she took one more OU course and a computer studies course before beginning paid work three mornings a week as a playleader. Her comments about the courses which are relevant to these areas of her life are:

107 *'I now have a job as a playleader which I would not have gone for before taking courses ... [They helped me get the job] because the job is involved in childcare and I have more knowledge and understanding now ... I intend doing other courses.'*

Her main concern relates to childcare but this has had a spin-off for her in getting the job as a playleader and in using what she has learnt in her paid work. She has not returned to nursing and it may not be worthwhile at this stage while her children are young and her husband is not in employment. There seems little direct connection between her husband's unemployment and her reactions to the courses.

The next student (number 117) took one OU course before her husband stopped work because of invalidity caused by arthritis of the hip. She took a further OU course and then returned to part-time paid work as a school domestic and continued with her third OU course. Her comments about the courses concerning employment are:

117 *'It is interesting, it gets you to meet others, starts your brain working and starts getting you to do other things. You're not so sure of yourself when you've stopped work to have children. It encouraged me to go onto the [local adult education] committee, then from there to get an interview for a job.'*

Her husband helps in the house and in the morning when she goes off to work, 'he puts them [the children] out to school and nursery'. The courses seem to have helped her return to paid work which is also helped by her husband looking after the children in the morning.

To summarise: in the first case unemployment is connected with imprisonment and the courses help the student cope with this and to reach for her own goals; in the second there is little direct connection between unemployment and to the help in the childcare area which is related to her job; in third case the student's return to paid work was helped by her husband being at home and looking

after the children, and by the courses which restored the loss of confidence she experienced during the early stages of childcare.

Group 2 - During first period of unemployment: The students in this group began their first courses when their husbands were in their first period of unemployment. Two of the students' husbands in this group (numbers 129 and 132) had found work by the time they were interviewed and the students themselves had returned to paid work after the OU courses. Another student (number 134) was employed at the time of the OU courses and continued in her job, and two others (number 112 and 150) had not began to think about returning to paid work.

The husband of the first student (number 129) was unemployed for 4 years and she took only one OU course about 3 years after he left his job. She did not find the course helpful for further education or employment. When her husband got a job she left the course and returned to paid work for a year as a fuser in a cutting room before being made redundant. The end of her husband's unemployment may have provided the opportunity for her to return to paid work so when she heard about the job she took it. The course did not help her get the job.

The next student (number 132) is in a similar position, but finds the course more helpful. Her husband was unemployed for the first time for 3 years and about a year after he lost his job she started the course. She says this about the course:

> 132 *'After the course Pamela [her youngest] went to school and I would have been at home all day myself, but I went for the playgroup job and got it ... I've written away for fostering. I got fed up with playgroup and wanted to do different things. I filled in the form last week with my husband's agreement, he'll help me. I don't think I would be doing it if I hadn't done the course.'*

The course also encouraged her to take a playgroup course. The OU course helped her go for the playgroup job and she uses what she has learnt. Some months after her OU course finished her husband

got a job. The only connection between her husband's unemployment and the various changes in her life is suggested by her husband's support for their application for fostering.

The husband of another student (number 134) was made redundant and then had a nervous breakdown and is now on invalidity benefit. She was employed at the time she took her OU courses and says this about her job:

> 134 *'I am a child's crossing attendant, I really enjoy it but I think that I will have to give it up as we are getting a rise in our wages and I will be earning over the limit which I am allowed so it will affect my husband's invalidity money.'*

She studied the OU courses by herself and only spent a week on each. With her husband at home she may have been discouraged from joining a group but she says that since the courses 'I get more help from my husband' and they may have encouraged her to ask him to provide this. Her husband's situation may affect her job but she makes no connection between the courses and her paid work nor does she mention any plans for further education.

In summary, the end of her husband's unemployment may have been enabled one student to return to paid work, and another is going to give up her job because of her husband's benefit situation. For the other students there seems to be little connection between husbands' unemployment and their involvement in paid work. However, the OU course helped one student with an unemployed husband apply for fostering but they have had no influence of the other students' employment careers.

Group 4 - One or more periods of unemployment: This group have husbands who experience more than one and in some cases repeated periods of unemployment. All their husbands were unemployed when the students were interviewed and only one student (number 144) is working at the time of the OU courses, all the rest were not in employment or did not restart paid work.

The comments made by a young student (number 103) relating to her husband's unemployment are provided below:

> 103 *'He hasn't worked since last year, its getting him down, he's too old for some jobs, he's 10 years older than me ... Terrible, but we get there, our 'social' money has been cut last week ... Sometimes I could do myself in, staying in all the time, the boredom gets to me ... I don't really tell him much, I cope by myself. He says 'everything will be alright', its easy to say that ... I've got the younger one and you don't enough time. I live 10 floors up and they can't get out much.'*

This student is isolated, does not get out much and has three children under five, her the main concern is bringing up her children and she sees the course mainly in these terms. She did apply for a playgroup job but was unsuccessful. Her husband's unemployment, their low income and her childcare load leaves her little capacity for responding to the course and her application for the playgroup job may not have been a practical proposition. The other young students include one (number 105) who felt that the courses had helped her relationship with her unemployed husband in that they 'discuss more about the children ... I tell him about the videos we watched and some questions and general things I learned'.

Another student (number 120) feels that her life is: 'humdrum, my husband is unemployed and we have money problems, it is an existence really'. Although he does his share she does not have any emotional feelings for him at all because there was a 'mishap' in their marriage three years ago and since then she does not trust or love him. She had another baby a year before the interview and her responses are mainly concerned with her relationship with children. It appears that she has cut off her relationship with her husband and has attempted to isolate herself from him and his situation. The course has helped her build up her independence and her skills in relating to her children.

One of the older students (number 152) in this group returned to

paid work as an escort for Social Work when her first child was 3 years old. She then switched to voluntary work for the Citizens Advice Bureaux until her second child was due. Her husband has been without a job on average for every year of their nearly 13 years of marriage and has been unemployed for the last two years. He does little housework and provides no emotional support but does provide some help with the children. She said he was 'wary, very wary' about her starting the course. She has completed two OU courses and was taking a third at the time of the interview. Her reactions to the courses are:

> 152 *'I would like to stride ahead to find my own niche, maybe do something in FE, find out what I'm good at ... I'm more assertive [in her relationship with her husband] ... I applied for a job to set up a Pre-5 Resource Centre and quoted my Certificates in my CV, got the job but I didn't take it since my husband was unemployed and his benefit would have been cut.'*

The first OU course helped her to go onto get RSA Typing and 'O' level French. She explained why she did not take up the job and her husband's unemployment may have influenced decisions she made in the past, like switching to from paid to voluntary work and more recently when she took up further education and a voluntary responsibility when he became unemployed again.

Student number 144 is one of the continuing case studies and details are given in the next section. The OU courses raised her aspirations regarding which type of job she would seek when she restarts paid work when her health improves.

Many of the students in this group are not involved in and are not looking for paid work for various reasons including their husbands' unemployment, their childcare load and illness. Overall these case studies of students whose husbands experience unemployment provide some illustration of how women's involvement in the work force can be influenced by their husbands' being out of work. The students whose husbands have most unemployment tend not to be involved in or return to paid work around the time of the courses or

afterwards. The courses therefore do not influence their employment careers, those that are helped by the courses to get a job are those whose husbands' become unemployed later or who had less unemployment.

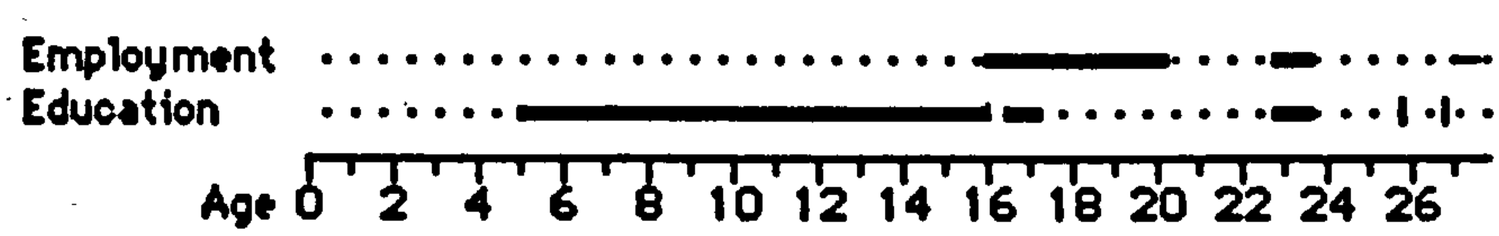
Continuing case studies

Returning to the students whose case studies are followed in chapters 4-9, we can consider their employment careers and relate these to their educational and other careers.

Student number 136

In chapter four we learnt that the first student (number 136) left school without any qualifications, took typing at night school and a Manpower Services course before her first OU course. Her employment career is shown with her educational career below:

Chart 7.6 Employment and education lifelines for student number 136.



She says this about her employment career:

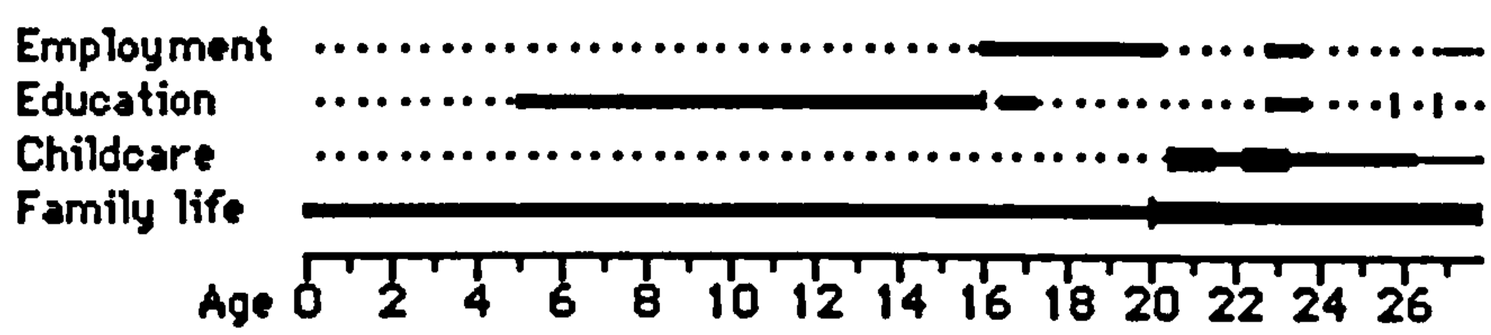
> 136 *'I left [school] to get a job ... I started off as an office junior in a solicitors and worked my way up to typist and trained for typing at night school although I did some typing at school ... I did a Manpower Services course, shorthand, typing and English, although it was a course I was paid for it ... I worked for about six months with my sister-in-law and brother who started their own business and did their book-keeping. This was part-time ... I went to an interview just recently and felt the interview was lost when I said I was married with two children.'*

It appears that the additional training at night school may have helped her progress in her office job. She returned to education through the Manpower Services financed course which is shown as both education and employment. She started the part-time book-

keeping job after her first OU course and while she was doing a second. Because she had already returned to employment before the first OU course and also restarted paid work afterwards she has a career type 4. She does not mention that the courses were any help for this particular job. We do not know what kind of job she recently applied for and she does not mention the courses in this context. From chapter five we learnt that she is married with two children, and in chapter six that she has not had any health problems.

Adding her family and childcare careers we can see that she finished full-time paid work when her first child was due and took up the Manpower Services course when her second child was only one.

Chart 7.7 Education, employment and two other lifelines for student number 136.

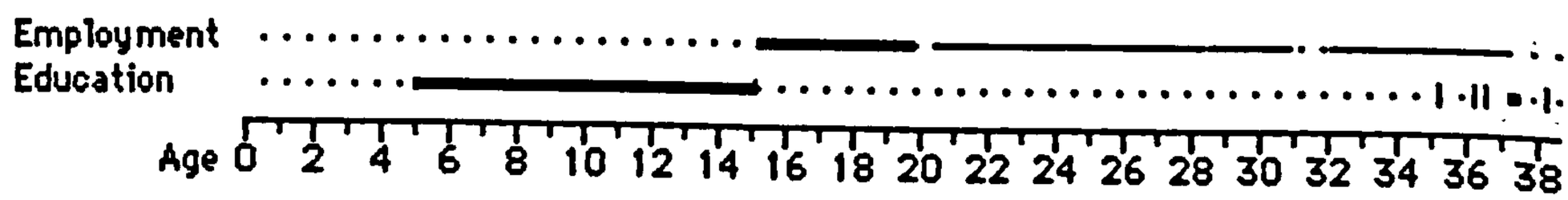


Her short-term and part-time paid work occurred when her youngest was four and now this child is five and has started school she is applying for other jobs. Although she improved her employment prospects before she took her OU courses, she feels that her childcare responsibilities are seen as a handicap by employers. Her husband has not had any unemployment.

Student number 144

In chapter four we saw that this student had left school with a 3rd Year Leaving Certificate. Her employment and education career is shown below:

Chart 7.8 Employment and education lifelines for student 144.



She describes her employment as follows:

> 144 *'I worked as a bookbinder until I got married ... then a biscuit factory, conveyor belt job [part-time, back shift] for 8 years when I was made redundant ... I was a cleaner in schools for three years ... I was a domestic in a hospital on part-time nights.'*

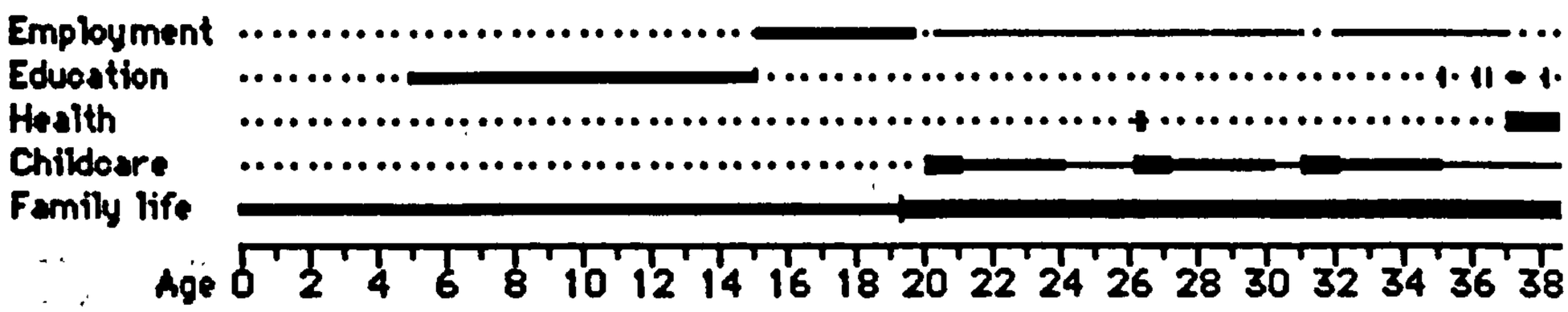
She has had almost continuous part-time paid work and was employed when she began the OU courses and is therefore has career type 5. When her last job ended she began 'O' levels (interrupted by hospital tests) and took another OU course. Her comments regarding the influence of the OU courses are:

> 144 *'[I am unemployed] at the moment, but I am not looking for work until the hospital tests are settled ... I would not go into cleaning, I would look for something more skilled where you had to use your brain a bit more ... If going for a job, being able to cope with it better.'*

She did not use what she learnt from the OU courses in the job she had at the time, but they have influenced how she thinks about future work and she feels that she would be able to cope better when going for a job.

The previous chapter showed that she has had post viral fatigue syndrome for nearly two years and in chapter five that she has remained married and has three children. Adding these lifelines to her employment and education careers gives a fuller picture of her life:

Chart 7.9 Employment, education and three other lifelines for student number 144.



She says that she left her job because of ill health as well as having

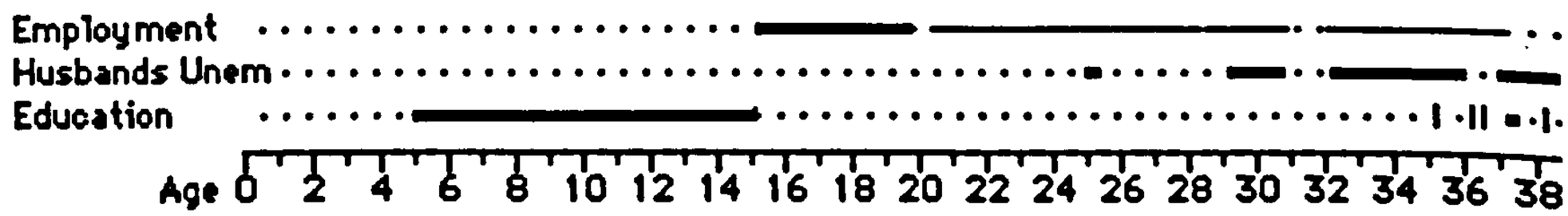
to discontinue her 'O' levels. Also she has remained married and continued employment through the period when her children were young with a break when the youngest was born.

Her husband has had a lot of unemployment which has affected her decisions about work:

> 144 *'My husband was unemployed at the time [when she was 32] and helped with the children. When my husband started work I left the schools job, I was pregnant with the youngest ... My husband is not working at the moment - it gets you down a bit ... I'm not used to him being about the house'.*

The periods of her husband's unemployment are shown alongside her own employment and participation in education:

Chart 7.10 Employment, husband's unemployment and education lifelines for student number 144.

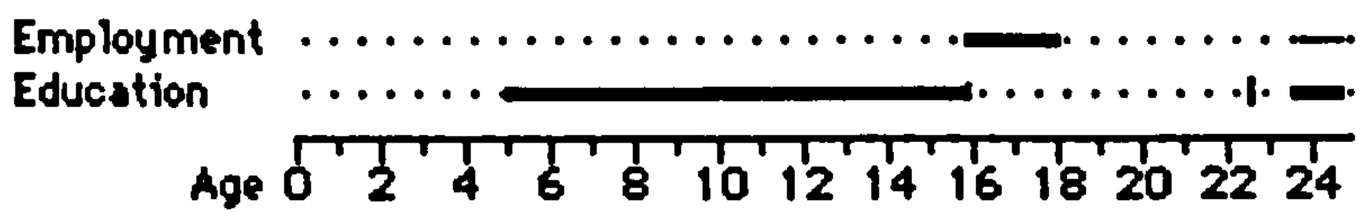


During previous periods of her husband's unemployment she was working but his current unemployment coincides with her not being in paid work and accounts for her remarks about her husband being around the house, perhaps the situation is also made difficult because of her illness. She started OU courses when her husband was unemployed, he then worked for a year before becoming unemployed again.

Student number 145

We saw from chapter four that she left school without any qualifications even though she was going to sit seven 'O' levels. Her employment career is given below with her educational career:

Chart 7.11 Employment and education lifelines for student number 145.



The details she gives concerning her employment are:

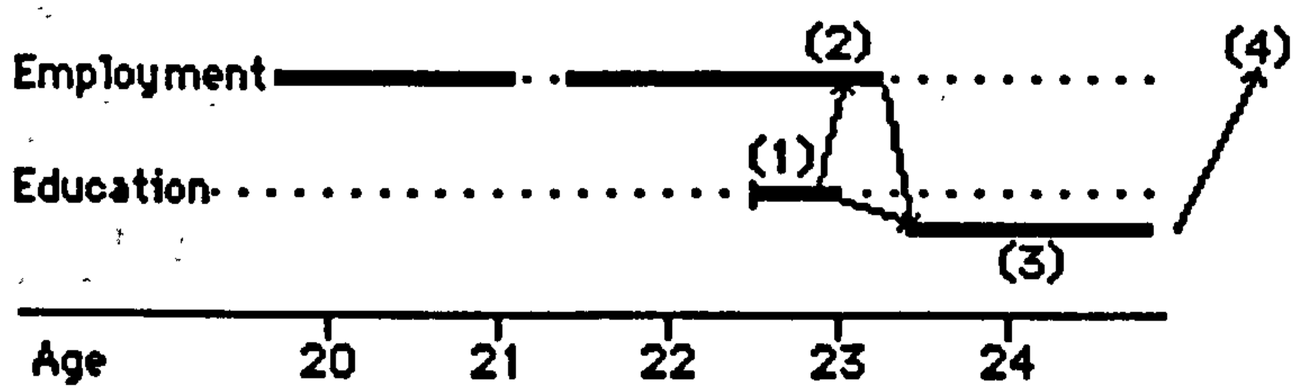
> 145 *'I left school when I got a chance of a job, so I had to leave immediately ... I started in a shop's office doing general office work. Then I got a job with better wages as an administrative assistant ... I was a trainee media assistant for Radio Clyde, the course was only for one year ... I'm job hunting at the moment'.*

She has career type 3 as she took her OU course before returning to paid work and returned afterwards. Her full-time employment lasted only two years. She believes that the course helped her get the job and return to education (see chapter four):

> 145 *'Yes [it helped me] because Clyde Action could see I hadn't just been sitting around the house ... I think it [the OU course] helped because I've something to fill in an application form for a job and some of the jobs I'm going for I think it might help with them.'*

She points out that her recent employers could see that she had been doing a course, she can include this in her CV and that the courses might help with some jobs she is currently going for. The linkages between her recent education and employment are shown in the expanded lifelines below:

Chart 7.12 Recent employment and education lifelines for student number 145.

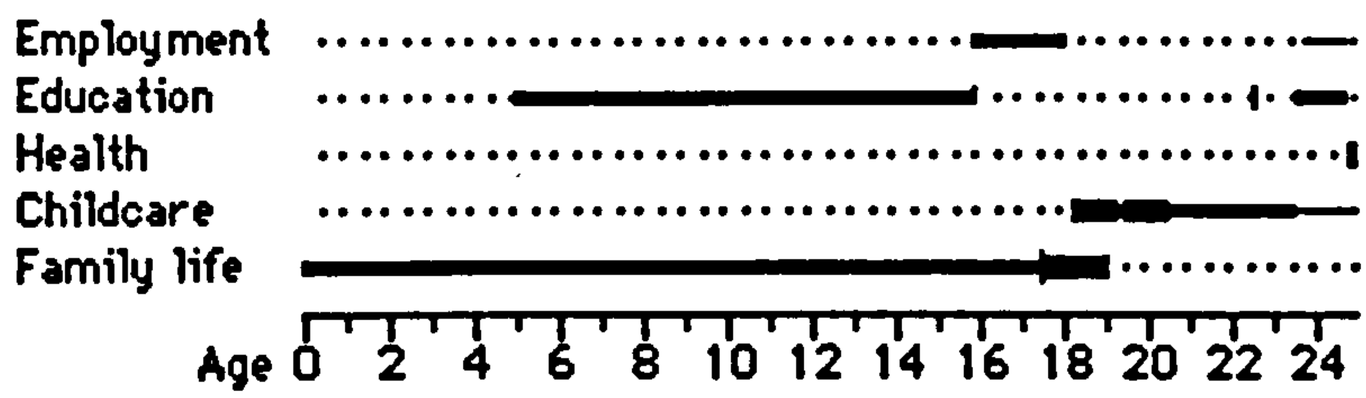


The OU course (1) helped her to go onto take the English course

(2): 'I wouldn't have had the confidence to do the English course otherwise'. The OU course also helped her get a one year job with Clyde Action (3). She took the Media and Research course (4) in connection with her job.

Chapter five explained that this student had separated from her husband and is a single parent and recently she has had severe depression following a miscarriage. Adding her employment career to her health, family, and childcare careers gives further details of her life:

Chart 7.13 Employment, education and three other lifelines for student number 145.

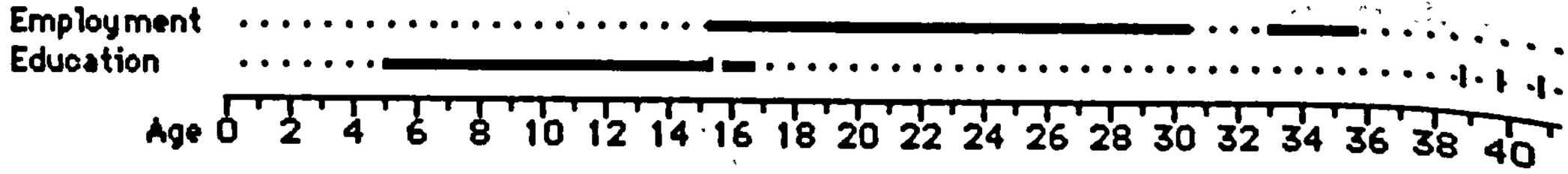


We can see that she stopped full-time work when her first child was due and returned when her youngest was 4 years old. In chapter six it was suggested that her depression might also have been associated with finishing her media and research course, which was related to her paid work.

Student number 157

This student left school with a 3rd Year Leaving Certificate and did a shorthand and typing course at night school. Her employment career is show with her education career below:

Chart 7.14 Employment and education lifelines for student number 157.



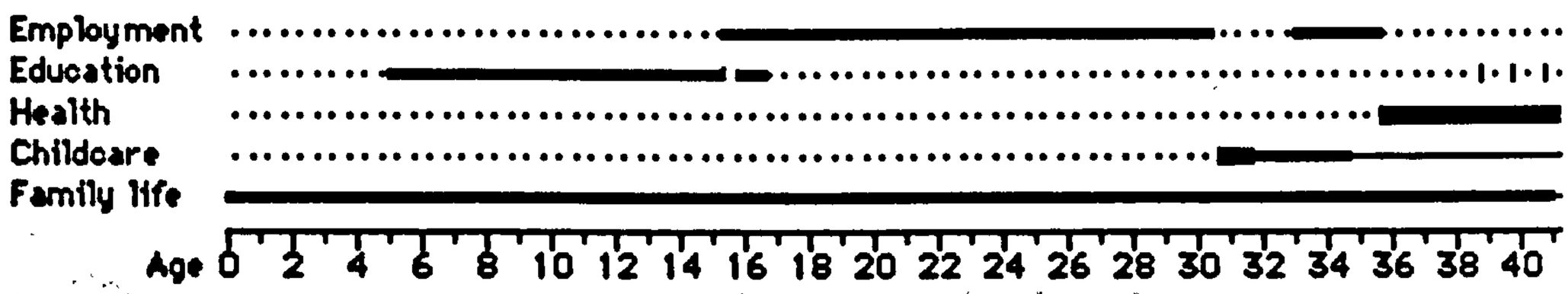
She describes her employment career as follows:

157 *'I worked in Woolworths then went to Grattspool. I was a*

> *live-in nanny for a short while, then typing and office duties in an office for about a year [did a typing course after I left school]. I went into Littlewoods for about one and a half years, then I worked on the buses, then I left to try to get a job in Coventry and came home and worked on the buses again, then I left and went back to Littlewoods and stayed there till I became pregnant ... I returned to Littlewoods from 1979 to 82'.*

Her full-time employment career has been made up with a variety of jobs. She had a break and returned for three years. She was not in paid work when she started the OU courses and has not restarted, she is therefore has career type 2. She makes no mention of the courses in connection with her employment career. This career can be added to the others looked at previously:

Chart 7.15 Employment, education and three other lifelines for student number 157.



She has never married and we can see that the break in her employment started when she had her child and continued for two years after this, she then returned to full-time employment. However, she stopped paid work in 1982 when this child was five years old due to the beginning of her illness.

Conclusions

While the help provided by the OU courses in students' employment careers is generally related to where they are in this career, the first student in the continuing case studies does not mention any help from the courses for the job she started or for the jobs she is applying for. This may be because she has already taken other steps before the OU courses to improve her employment prospects. The OU courses helped the second student to raise her aspirations

regarding jobs and to start 'O' levels but she has not been able to put these to the test or continue her studies; the third student was helped to return to short-term paid work and to further education and is now job hunting; the final student makes no mention of continuing her employment career or of any help from the courses in this area. The husband of the first student has had no unemployment; the second has had frequent periods out of work; the next student is separated and single and the last has never married. The student with an unemployed husband stopped work in an earlier job when her husband got work but it is other areas of her life that now prevent her restarting paid work or education. None of these students are in the early stages of childcare. The continuing case studies show that the main events in employment are often associated with events in childcare careers such as having a baby or the youngest starting nursery or school. This latter event often occurs at a time when OU courses are taken which can give rise to close links between the beginning of this childcare stage and OU courses, employment and further education.

Concerning the employment backgrounds of the sample as a whole - the better qualified students were initially employed mainly in office work while those with no qualifications went into factory work, and in spite of the decline in manufacturing jobs this split does not appear to have changed much for these students over the years. Almost all were employed full-time and then had a break. At the time of the first OU course just over half had not returned to paid work and the remainder returned before the first course and some were employed at the time.

A few of those who do not return or restart work after the first OU course are helped to think about future jobs; around a third of those who return or restart said they were helped by the courses to get the job; and slightly highter proportion of those in paid work at the time use what they learnt in their jobs or were helped to think about future employment. Thus, the nature of the help that students receive from the courses depends on where they are in their employment careers. Furthermore, most of those who return after

OU courses also take up further education mainly oriented to improving their employment prospects.

About 38% of the students who remain in their first marriage have husbands who experience unemployment which reflects the high levels in Areas of Priority Treatment and for the younger age groups. Most of these students have husbands who have been unemployed before the start of the first course and became unemployed as the recession progressed in the '80's. Many have been unemployed for over a year and some have had more that one period out of work. There is no clear relationship one way or the other between husbands' unemployment and students who get jobs following OU courses but there may be a tendency for those students whose husbands have had most unemployment not to take up paid work.

The benefit system may not make it worthwhile for some students to be in paid work or to take up employment following their OU courses if their husbands are unemployed. When unemployed husbands do get a job this may mean that students can also start paid work again irrespective of any help from the courses. In some cases unemployed husbands may be prepared to do some childcare and make it easier for students to go to work outside the home. Continued periods of husbands' unemployment coupled with the demands of the early stages of childcare may be demoralising and distance students from their husbands. On the other hand, students may be able to talk to their husbands about childcare and housework and encourage them to do more.

Although students whose husbands have had repeated periods of unemployment are unlikely to be involved in employment, most of those whose husbands are not yet unemployed and a few who experienced some unemployment, find the OU courses helpful in getting a job. This is in contrast to the students whose husbands are in continued employment - none of whom find the courses helpful in getting jobs. In other words, the OU courses are more helpful in getting jobs for those whose husbands are likely to become unemployed.

In as far as the courses help students get jobs the additional income will benefit other members of their family; and the importance of women's earnings for keeping families out of poverty has been pointed out by researchers (eg. Townsend, 1979: 631; Hunter, 1983: 155). Also their use of what they learn in their paid work may enable them to provide a better service to members of the community, as customers, clients or dependents.

This chapter has focussed on students and their husbands' employment and the affects this has on their educational careers, in particular the place and influence of the OU courses in this area of their lives. Employment has a major influence on students' material well-being and their options, and those with unemployed husbands or no husbands are usually dependent on the benefit system and must survive on low incomes. The importance of husbands' unemployment across all areas of students' lives is considered further in chapter nine.

Chapter 8 - Social and Community Life and Education

Introduction

This chapter reviews the main changes in the communities in which students have grown up and lived their adult lives. It then focuses on students' social and community lives in order to describe their social networks of relatives and friends, and consider the influence of the OU courses on friendships and social networks. Also the pattern of their involvement in community activities and responsibilities is examined to see where the courses fit into this, and what influence the courses have. Involvement in community activities may also be related to friendships and vice versa. This chapter addresses the main questions regarding the social and community background of the students, where the OU courses fit into their social and community careers and what influence the courses have; and of particular importance in this area of life is the question of who else is affected by students' participation in the courses and whether this contributes to the community development aims of the social strategy.

There is a substantial literature on community studies and much of it deals with working class communities (eg. Young and Willmott, 1957; Cornwell, 1984 and her criticism of this work, p. 40 ff). Of special interest is work deriving from Bott's hypothesis concerning the relationship between family roles and social networks (Bott, 1957/71; Harris, 1969; Newby et al, 1985; Morris, 1985). Also there have been contributions clarifying the meaning of community from a community education perspective (Fletcher, 1987; Newman, 1983; Brookfield, 1983: 61 ff). This work provides a background to the more limited purposes of this chapter.

Enormous changes have occurred in Glasgow since the war which have affected community and social life, these include population decline, slum clearance, new building, rehousing, economic

restructuring and in common with trends elsewhere, there has been earlier marriage, reduction of family size, increases in single parents, high levels of unemployment, a larger proportion of married women in employment and so on. Some of these trends are reviewed in earlier chapters and this chapter deals mainly with the changes in population and housing, and in particular, the building of the peripheral estates and the demolition of the older areas. Students' exposure to and involvement in these changes will depend on where they were in their life course at the time. Their experience of this may carry forward to influence their participation in the OU courses and what else is going on in their lives and their options. For example, the changes will have influenced where they live, who their neighbours are and what local facilities they have.

The community students live in is likely to be where they have their social networks. Some students live near their relatives, particularly their mothers and sisters, and friends who they have known since their childhood. Whereas others may no longer have living parents and their sisters and brothers may have moved away or they may have moved; some of those who are married may be close to their husbands' parents but students who have separated are unlikely to keep in contact with his parents and relatives. Students may come to the OU courses at a stage in their lives when there are changes in their social networks or involvement in the courses may lead to changes, for example new and strengthened friendships. This chapter considers students' social networks and the influence of the courses on these.

Participation in the OU courses themselves is a community activity and the courses are often provided at the same time and in the same place as playgroups and other activities which may be run for and by the community. The OU group may therefore consist of the same people who are involved in other activities which help develop friendships. There are opportunities to take part in community activities and to take responsibility for them by being a member of a local committee. People can progress from being a helper, to a member of the committee and then secretary or chairperson, and

take one or more OU courses along the way. In contrast, an individual's community activities may be separate from their involvement with the courses and take place with different people in a different place.

Some students participated in community activities when they were younger but the majority did not begin to get involved until after they had children. This may begin with a mother and toddler group where a mother attends with her young child. Following this there may be a playgroup and nursery school where mothers can deposit their child and leave, or more often take part in helping out and other activities. Involvement in a mother and toddler group, playgroup or nursery may also be connected to beginning an OU course. In this way there can be an interaction between the events in the childcare area of life and community activities, where mothers are involved in activities associated with opportunities for children of a particular age. Also participation in community activities and the OU courses are frequently intertwined and both these activities may lead onto other things which may continue to be related or develop in separate ways. The interaction between courses and community activities and students' comments about the connections are examined in this chapter.

First there is a brief review of community and social changes in Glasgow since the war, which is followed by an examination of students' social lives and then their community activities, finally these areas of life are added to those already examined in the continuing case studies.

Community and social changes

At the end of the war the housing in Glasgow was severely overcrowded and in poor condition, it was common for four people to live in a single room and share a toilet in rented tenements. Checkland (1976: 64) describes how 'the classic four-storey tenement of the nineteenth century, 60 feet high, with a doorless

passage from the street and common, uncarpeted stairs, still dominated the city ... many black with soot and far advanced in decay'.

In the '50's the city embarked on a vast redevelopment plan, involving building massive peripheral estates within the city boundaries and slum clearance in the central areas. In the '50's Easterhouse, Drumchapel, Castlemilk, and Pollock developed from minute populations to become during the '60's populated by 25-60,000 people in each estate, most of whom were housed in rows of three or four storey tenements. As well as building on the periphery, high rise blocks were built on the limited space cleared in the central area. During the 1960's, 163 blocks were built and by 1982, there were 321 blocks ranging form 8 to 31 storeys (Checkland, 1976: 74; Gibb, 1983: 171).

The population of Glasgow, in common with other large cities has declined since the war, down from over a million in 1951 to less than three quarters of a million by 1986 (Gibb, 1983: 160; SRC, 1988a: 57). This was encouraged in order to relieve the overcrowding but led to sustained out-migration by those who are younger, better qualified and more mobile which has affected the age structure and skill range of those remaining. At its height in the '60's as many as 20,000 people left the city each year as redevelopment reached its peak (Gibb, 1983: 160). There has also been large-scale internal change in population distribution as the peripheral estates expanded and demolition took place in the inner areas. For example, the east end which was the industrial heart of the city with a population of 145,000 in 1951, was reduced to a mere 41,000 by 1981 (Donnison and Middleton, 1987: 29). Many of these people were rehoused in the peripheral estates within the city boundaries, some moved to the new towns and elsewhere in Scotland and others left Scotland (Wannop, 1985: 95).

The first arrivals on the peripheral estates in the 1950's and were gripped by a kind of 'culture shock' (Gibb, 1983: 166). In the desperate race to provide accommodation, virtually no amenities -

shopping centres, pubs, community facilities or even schools were provided. Children had to bussed into old Glasgow schools and teacher shortages meant that many had part-time schooling until the 1970's (Keating and Mitchell, 1986: 3). The contrast between tenement life in the new estates and in the old city is drawn by Checkland (1976):

> 'Such peripheral housing schemes were thus a kind of parody of the traditional tenement life in Glasgow: they consisted of tenements indeed, but they were far removed from the urban context in which that mode of life had developed, and incapable of generating their own community life ... these new units were not only devoid of facilities themselves, but were miles from the traditional centre of Glasgow life.'
> (Checkland, 1976: 68)

Donnison and Middleton (1987) summarise the social consequences of such large movements of the population as follows:

> 'The huge emigration brought about by demolition must have weakened family and kinship networks which are crucial for the support of disadvantaged people in any working-class community, and depleted the groups - couples in their 30's and 40's - who play a large part in giving political leadership, helping the young into jobs and establishing standards of behaviour.'
> (Donnison and Middleton, 1987: 30).

The social cohesion which had characterised the old inner-city tenement areas had been broken up in the move to the periphery (Keating and Mitchell, 1986: 204). In the allocation of houses, it was rarely possible to fulfil the wish of applicants to be rehoused near a relative and this led to an erosion of social support available for young families (Cook, 1983: 30).

By 1965, 43% of all housing was held by the local authority and by 1979 the figure had increased to 59% across the city as a whole, while in the peripheral estates the figure was 95%. One effect of the large local authority ownership was that few people in Glasgow had a stake in their own home, and if they were able to buy many had to move out of Glasgow to find a suitable house for sale (Checkland,

1976: 64). Since 1979 the proportion of housing stock owned by the local authority has declined slightly to 56% as owner occupation and housing associations have increased. The proportion of privately rented property has continued to decline from 38% in 1965 to 3% in the 1980's. Consequently for the majority, their housing choices are dependent on the local authority's allocation policies and the Regional Council believes that APTs have been 'primarily created by past housing allocation policies' (SRC 1983a: 29).

The Grieve Inquiry (1986) considered that 'poor housing management practices and inappropriate lettings policies over a sustained period have contributed significantly to the social malaise in many areas of local authority housing in the city' (Grieve, 1986: 7). The report explains that the problems of the peripheral estates have been exacerbated over the last 35 years by:

> 'a) seriously deficient housing management, especially so for a population moving to a completely new and distant environment.
> b) poor building construction and faulty building system.
> c) a repair and maintenance system which has not coped with the housing stock.
> d) rent levels which were too low to meet the costs of good management and maintenance; and
> e) an allocation system which encouraged the segregation of social and economic groups.'
> (Grieve, 1986: 19)

Those who rent from the council have limited choice of housing type - over 70% of the council housing is either tenements or high rise and there is an acute shortage of homes with gardens which are particularly sought after by families with young children. Mobility to council houses elsewhere in the city is also limited, for example in 1984 over 8,000 applicants wished to move out of Easterhouse but only 441 succeeded (Grieve, 1986: 20).

The scope for becoming an owner occupier is also restricted as incomes are very low, in 1986 over 95% of council tenants earned less than £7,800 and 70% less than £3,800 (Grieve, 1986: 58).

Nonetheless, over 4,000 council houses, including 71 in Easterhouse and 129 in Drumchapel, had been sold from 1982-86. The average price paid for a council house was around £10,000 whereas the prices for privately sold houses in Glasgow averaged £22,000 in 1985.

An idea of the pattern of movement of families across the city is provided by a study based on an analysis of moves made in 1974 during the period of large scale demolition (Forbes and Robertson, 1981). There were of two types of movement: 1) radially outwards and 2) within locality moves, with about half the moves being less than one mile. There was considerable local movement within certain of the public authority estates. For example, households moved in large numbers within Easterhouse and Drumchapel which suggests moves to more appropriate accommodation.

The main radial movement of population was from the older tenement areas in the inner city where demolition had forced families to leave these areas and settle in new estates on the margins of the city. Particularly prominent are the large number of moves from the East End to Easterhouse and from Maryhill to Drumchapel. Even though there was no new building in Drumchapel at this time many people were evicted or absconded which created vacancies. Moves from local authority to owner occupation are often from the peripheral housing estates back to older tenement buildings, nearer the centre of the city. Shorter distances were usually involved when moving from the private rented sector to local authority housing because of demolition (Forbes and Robertson, 1981).

The pattern of movement of families can be appreciated by considering how different cohorts intersect with the main phases of building and demolition. The peripheral estates were built from 1950-60 followed by high rise from 1960-75 and large scale demolition from 1968-74 (Gibb, 1983: 164). The figure below shows when the building of the peripheral estates and high rise and the large scale demolition occurred in the lives of four cohorts: one born

in 1940, the second born in 1950, then 1960 and 1970. The lifelines for the first three cohorts shows marriage typically at 22 years of age, the final cohort born in 1970 have not yet reached the age of 22.

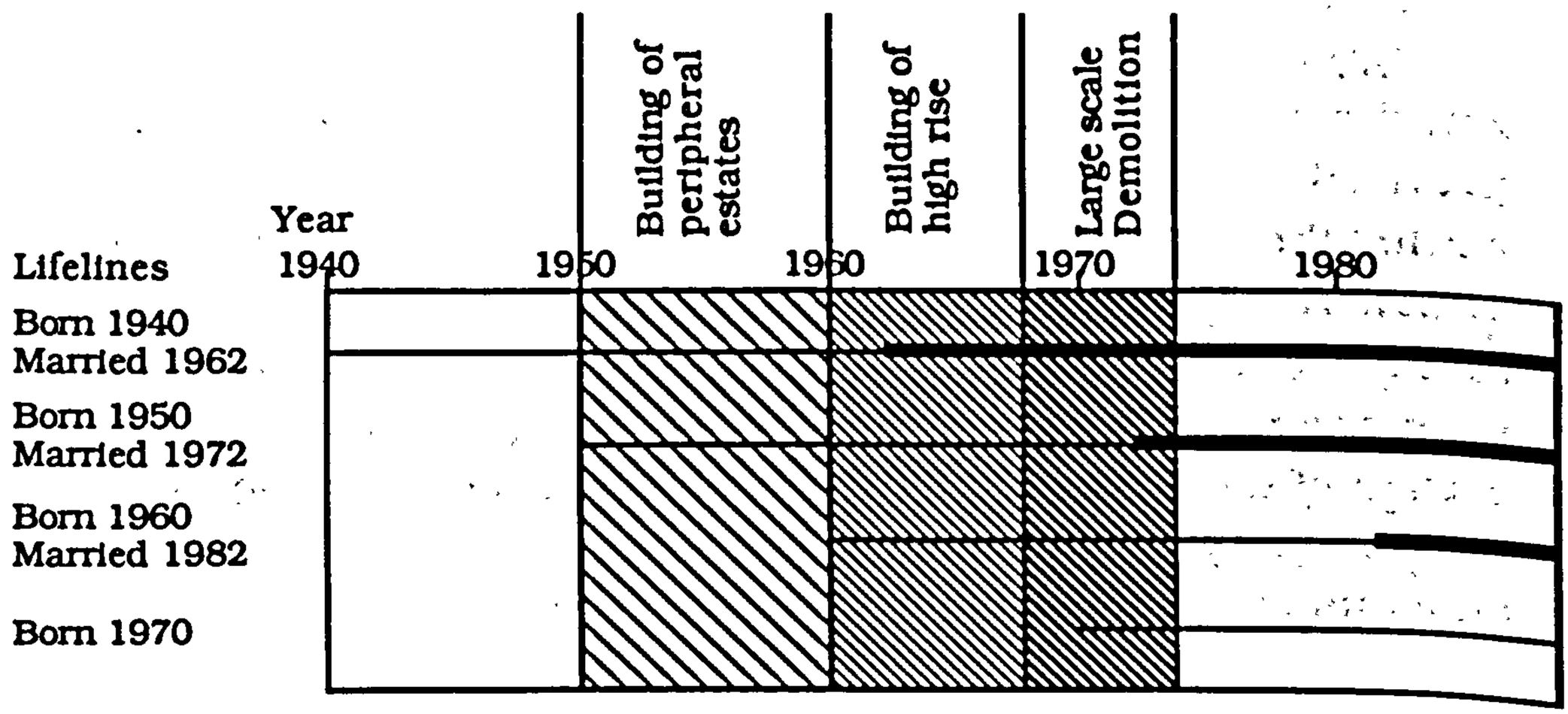


Figure 8.1 Intersection of four cohorts and the main phases of building and demolition.

Grossly simplifying we might say that a child growing up in the '40's-'50's is likely to have lived in the crowded inner city tenements but then experienced a move to the peripheral estates. People born in the '50's-'60's may have been born in the new estates or the inner city. Couples who got married for the first time in the '60's and '70's were likely to be allocated housing in the new estates or high rise accommodation. Anyone who was able to buy might leave the peripheral estates and move to accommodation in the older inner areas or outside Glasgow.

The communities in which each cohort of students spent most of their childhood can be categorised by whether they are inner or outer areas. About half were brought up in inner and half in outer areas. The proportions in each of three cohorts who as children lived inner areas are: two thirds of the older students born from 1938-47; less than half of those born between 1948-57 and slightly over half of the youngest students born from 1958-67. In other words, the older students are more likely to have spent their

childhood in inner areas. However, the students are split more or less evenly as to whether they are living in inner or outer areas at the time of the interview. There is no difference to the proportion in each cohort who have remained in the area of their childhood, it is around half irrespective of how long ago this was. To see how these changes have influenced the social lives of students we now focus down to their patterns of relationships.

Social life

The pattern of relationships between family and friends changes over the life course. The relationships begun in the family that people are born in, usually continue to be important into adulthood. Parental separations may cut off contact with one parent, often the father, and the death of parents will remove a source of support and help. Grandparents may be important especially if parents have separated and continued contact with brothers and sisters is common particularly if they live nearby. Friendships also develop and change over the life course, beginning with school friends, friends at work, male friends leading to marriage, and new friends made through children's activities and so on.

There are two main components to students' social lives outside their immediate family - their relatives, particularly their mothers and sisters; and their friends. Their relatives are not usually directly involved in the courses although sisters may pass information on to one another and occasionally two sisters will attend courses together. However, the views of relatives about the courses can have a positive or negative influence on students' participation (Cross, 1980: 125). Also students' friends may influence their involvement in the courses which in turn, may lead to deepening their relationships and making new friends. People who know one another may take up the offer of a course together or a group of friends who undertake a community activity together may decide to take a course which may then strengthen their friendships.

Chapter five reviewed students' parental background and noted that nearly half experienced the loss of one or more parents. Nonetheless, at the time of the interview two thirds of the students have mothers alive and all but 8 of these see them one or more times a week. They turn to their mothers for help when feeling low, with childcare, problems with money and with their relationship with their husband. However, ten do not turn to their mothers for any kind of help and five students have only their fathers living and they see them frequently. Seventeen have mother-in-laws surviving and ten see them one or more times a week and most turn to them for help mainly with childcare and a few concerning their relationship with their husband. Around half the students have sisters that they see frequently and may turn to for help, and 17 see brothers regularly. When changes occur in their social network these usually concern relatives and may be due to death (of parents); to moving away (usually sisters or brothers) or to separation where the wife may cease contact with her husband's family.

Students' patterns of friendships over their lives begin with those made during their school years which may continue into adult life and twelve students still have close friends from their school days. A few made close friends from work. Some of the younger students and a few of the others say their closest friend is their husband or boyfriend and that they do not see many other friends. Friendships between mothers with young children may begin and lead onto OU courses and community activities. The following comments illustrate these friendships:

139 *'I have been friendly with a girl I went to school with for about 15 years. I have also got really friendly with one of the girls I met through my little girl starting school.'*

107 *'I've got some friends from school, and two from nursing, and I still carry the friendships on. I met new friends through Mother and Toddler group and one of my best friends I met when my daughter was young and now is a close friend.'*

122 *'I have a couple of close friends but I don't see much of them because I'm with my husband most of the time.'*

116 *'I did have a close friend but I don't see her now, she's moved away. My closest friend just now is probably my*

boyfriend.'

At the time of the interview eight students said they did not have any close friends, 23 students have one close friend, 17 have two, and 12 have three, but only about a quarter who have close friends turn to them for help when feeling low or with the relationship with their husband.

Social networks

Students' social networks can be represented in diagrams showing their relationships with relatives and friends and can include their immediate family (see Wallman, 1984: 61 and Sugarman, 1986: 11). The diagram below has additional features - the thickness of the lines indicates the 'strength' of the relationship estimated from responses to questions concerning emotional support and other help, and less from frequency of contact. Frequency of contact is not a good indicator of the closeness or emotional significance of a relationship (McKee, 1987: 110; Cornwell, 1984: 112). Another feature concerns the location of children which are to the left of the six o'clock position if the husband is not much involved in childcare and toward the right if he is. That is, they are placed closer to the husband when he is involved with the children. Where friends are shared they are shown around the six o'clock position, if they are the wife's friends then to the left of this. An example is shown as figure 8.2 on the next page.

This student's husband is supportive 'he gives me plenty of emotional support and companionship ... he's there when I need him when I feel low', and he does 'some' childcare:

115 *'I have only one brother-in-law and one sister-in-law, I get on great with them. I don't see my parents that much but I have a good relationship with them . My father-in-law died one year ago, I see a lot of my mother-in-law. I get on good with her. We don't have close friends, just a couple we go out occasionally with ... Yes [I made close friends in the OU group], I still meet some through coming into the school for a chat.'*

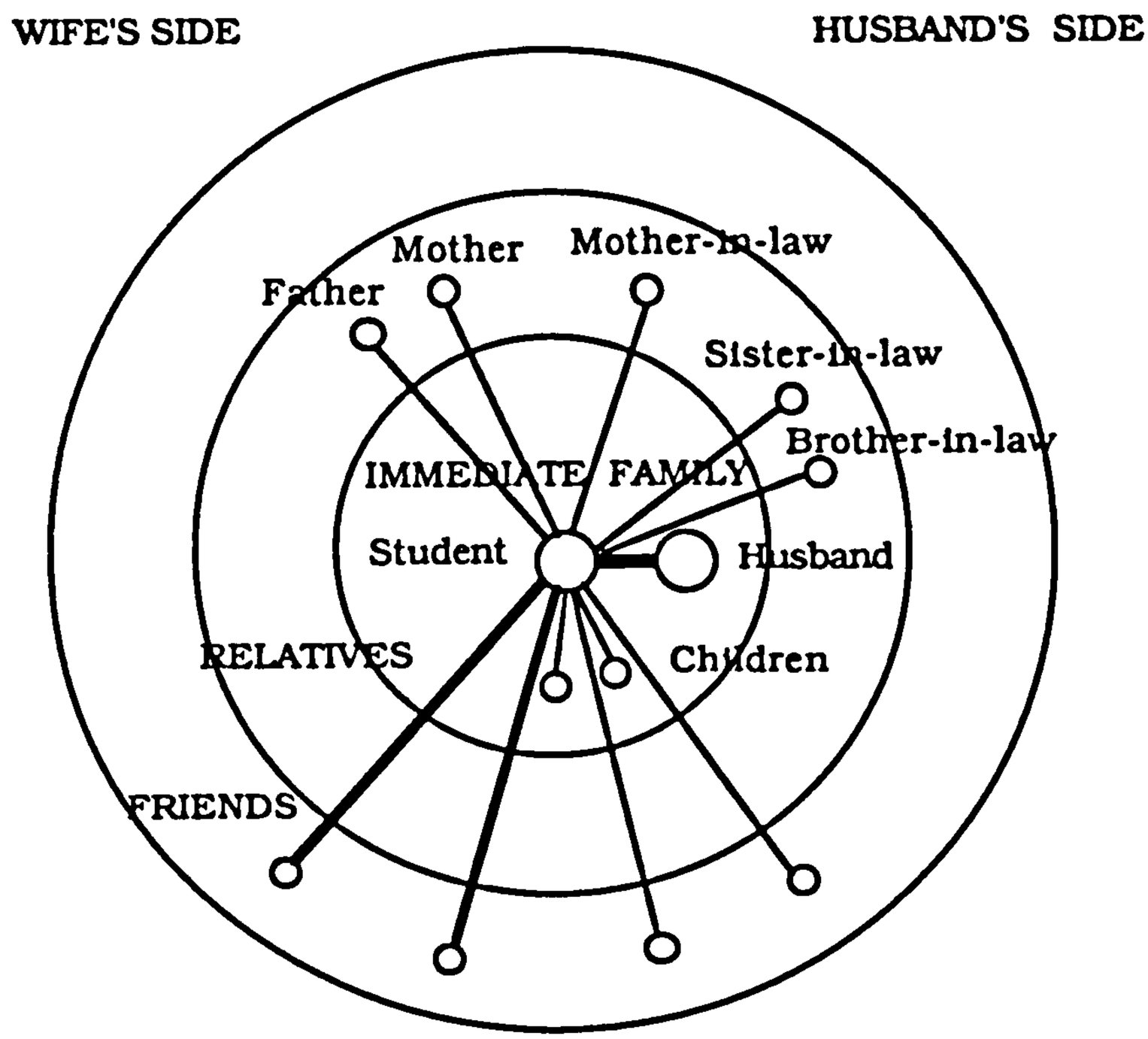


Figure 8.2 Social network diagram for student number 115.

She says she would turn to friends if she was feeling low or for help with her relationship with her husband, but to her mother only for help with childcare. The relationship with her husband has a thick line because he provides a lot of emotional support. Her relationship with two friends from the OU group are shown with a medium thick line because they are identified as people she would turn to for emotional support.

Diagrams of this kind are useful to give a snapshot of students' views of their social networks - and represents a section across social lifelines, but unless two or more diagrams are used they cannot show changes over time. The diagrams provide a way of visualising how changes might influence existing relationships and how the strengths of relationships might shift over time.

Social life and education

The attitudes of students' relatives to their taking the courses is mostly positive (68%) or neutral (27%) with only three negative comments. Typical examples of students' reports of their relatives views regarding their taking OU courses are:

Positive:
104 *'They thought is was good and I was doing well. They were surprised at first.'*
120 *'Mother-in-law thought it was clever of me.'*
128 *'My brother and mum thought is was good for me to learn.'*

Neutral:
114 *'They were not bothered.'*
137 *'They did not understand so they said nothing.'*
138 *'They didn't seem to take too much notice of it.'*

Negative:
103 *'Never bothered, my sister was in it but gave up and said it was boring.'*
113 *'My mother thought it was a waste of time.'*
157 *'Cynical, some thought it was just passing time, not really learning.'*

Some students have moved from the areas they grew up in and this may influence whether they know members of their group before the course starts. Two thirds of those who are still living in the areas the spent their childhood knew some or all the group before their first OU course started, compared to only around one third of those who were living in another area. However, most students knew other members of their first OU group before the course started but not necessarily as close friends, only eleven did not know anyone. Therefore *on starting an OU course most students were able to benefit from the positive support from people they knew*. For example:

120 *'Chatting with friends, encouraged by them to give it a try.'*
113 *'My friend thought it was good for me.'*
104 *'My friends were interested, we discussed it and thought we'd go for it, it sounded interesting.'*

The benefits of learning in a group are illustrated by the following quotes where students describe what the courses meant to them:

101 *'You get to meet other people, you find out that other women feel the same as yourself. You're learning all the time.'*
155 *'It's been interesting, I've met people, I enjoy them. I really enjoy the group atmosphere and discussions, sharing problems, realising you don't have as many problems as some people.'*
123 *'Meeting new people, having better contact with nursery teachers, better knowledge of children and how nursery schools work and other places like that.'*

The courses enabled many students to make close friends from their OU group. To examine the links between knowing other members of the group before the course starts and making close friends, the students can be placed in the following categories:

Change in social networks	No. of students	
1) Knew no one before and did not make close friends	5	
2) Knew some or all before and did not make close friends	21	
Total who did not make close friends		26
3) Knew some or all before and made close friends	28	
4) Knew no one before and made close friends from the group	6	
Total who made close friends		34
Total		60

Table 8.1 Familiarity with other members of the group and making close friends.

Those in groups 1 and 2 may have made friends but did not consider these to be 'close'. The social networks of those in groups 3 and 4 were affected by the courses. Included among those who made close friends are students who knew people before the course but as a result of participating in the group became closer, for example:

104 *'We already knew each other but even better now.'*
121 *'They were always friends but they are much closer now.'*
133 *'We knew each other but Margaret and I are much closer now.'*
140 *'Yes, with people who were acquaintances before, we have*

more relaxed deeper conversations.'

Those who did not know other students and did not make close friends included two who studied on their own. Two others made friends but not close friends. There appears to be direct links between the courses and changes in students' social life in that *irrespective of whether students knew members of the group before the start of the course, over half report that participation in the courses led to close friendships.* In other words, the courses are as likely to add to the social networks of students who do not know anyone at the start as they are for those who know one another.

OU courses and social networks

The OU courses can promote friendships at a time of change in students' social networks. Starting a course at a time of the loss of close friends through moving or of relatives through death, may lead to new friendships developing. Also changes in social networks occurring around the time of the courses may be linked to other changes, for example, giving up work or starting a community activity. Taking the courses when going through a separation, when the student cuts her links with parents-in-law, may lead to building up stronger links with her own relatives and friends. Following a husband's death the support provided by relatives and friends and from other students may also lead to changes in social networks. That is, the other members of the group may become part of a student's social network at the same time as other social changes are occurring.

To illustrate changes in a student's social network and the role of the courses, social network diagrams showing relationships before and after the courses can be drawn. An example of a student's social network before starting the course is shown below in figure 8.3. It shows that this student was married with two children, she had one close friend and saw her parents and sister regularly. Her husband was an only child and his parents were dead. Her husband then died and shortly afterwards she started her first OU course. Her social network two years later is represented in figure 8.4.

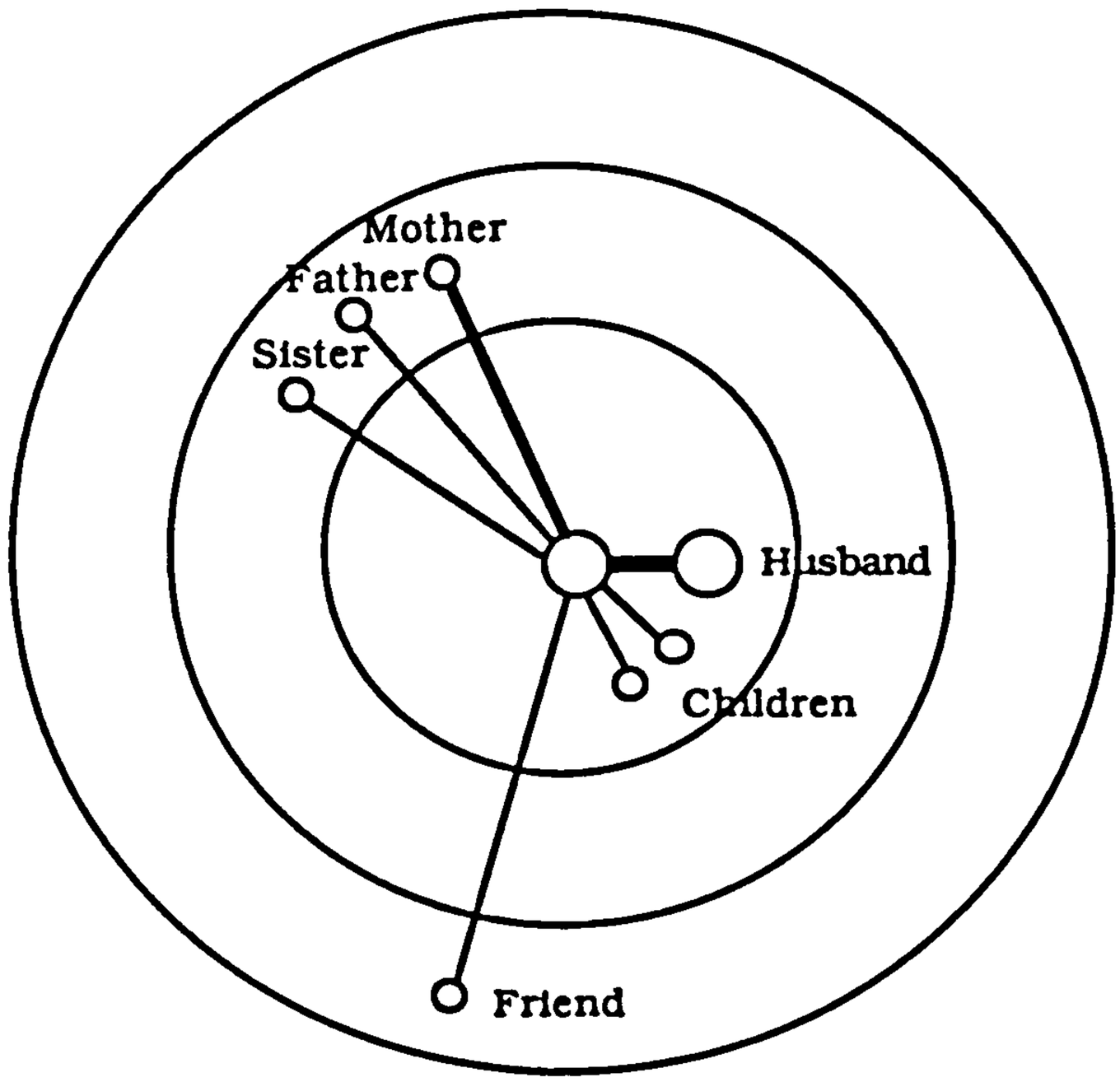


Figure 8.3 Social network diagram for student number 158 (before starting OU course).

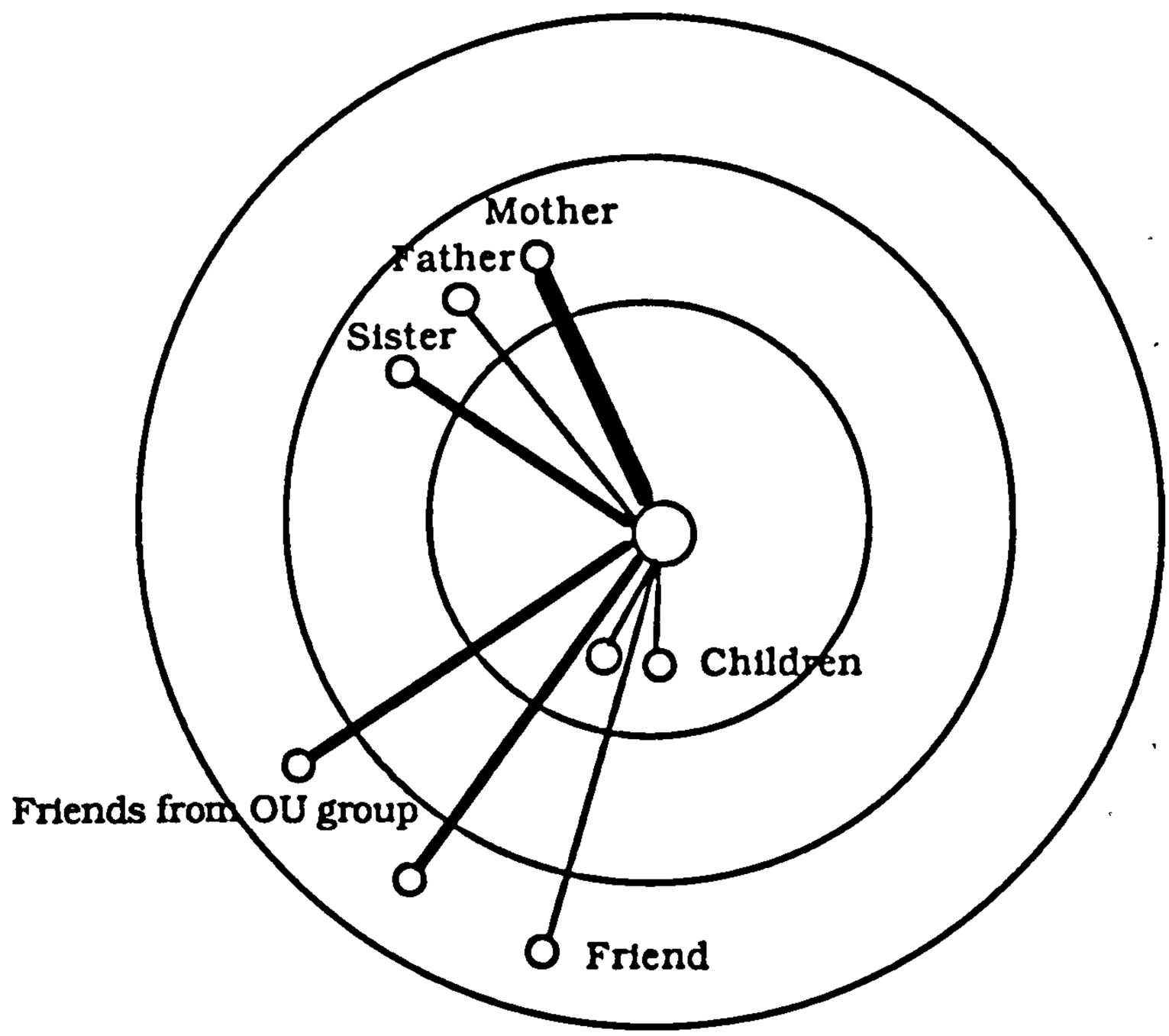


Figure 8.4 Social network diagram for student number 158 (after husband died and OU course).

She says: 'my husband dying left me quite alone ... I had to turn to my family.' She has two close friends she met trough the OU group and continues to see. The course 'made me realise other people had problems and it helped me deal with my own kids. It made me appreciate what I had ... It has helped me with my attitude towards other people and gave me more confidence'. The ending of her close relationship with her husband led to her drawing on the support of her family of origin, particularly her mother, and to take the OU course which led to her making two new friends.

There are examples of shifts in relationships between relatives and friends and between friends which are linked to making new friends or strengthening friendships through the OU groups:

104 *'I don't see them [relatives] as often, I used to see my mother daily, now its about twice a week ... I don't take my relatives problems on board so much because I've learned that causes me needless stress ... I had a best friend who I don't see as much as I used to ... [Before the OU group] we [the members] already knew each other but even better now ... My relationship with my [new] best friend is closer, we communicate and have taken on new interests [community activities] together.'*

140 *'I see less of them [previous friends] and more of my OU group ... I go out socially with some of the group.'*

159 *'Yes [relationship with friends has changed], I had something interesting to talk to them about ... [I have] two good friends from here [with whom she took the courses] ... Normally I'd have turned to my Dad, now its other people [ie. friends] who might be of more help.'*

The close relationships that are built up in the OU groups through students sharing experience and supporting each other can lead to changes in their social networks and to whom they turn to for help.

Making friends and further courses

It might be expected that making friends from the OU groups is more likely if students take more than one course, also they may be more likely to take more OU or non-OU courses if they have made friends - assuming that the friends also continue to take courses with them. Those who make close friends from the OU groups have

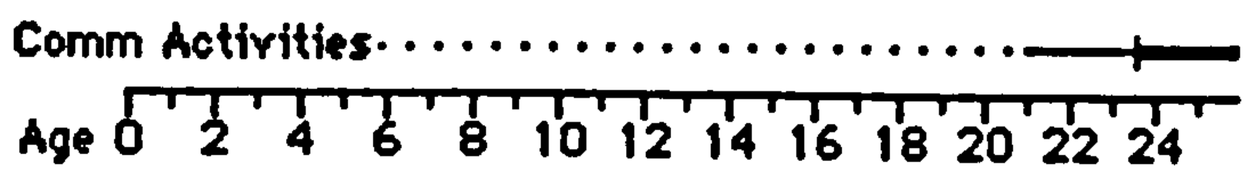
taken on average slightly more courses than those who do not (2.3 and 1.9 respectively) but this difference is not statistically significant. Also there is a slight difference in that 62% of those who made close friends go onto non-OU courses compared to only 42% of those who did not make friends, but this not significant.

Students' patterns of relationships with their friends and relatives change over time, some changes occur prior to an OU course and others result from friendships made during the course. Friendships may lead to involvement in OU courses and arise from community activities, and the courses can lead onto other activities and responsibilities. Students' community careers are examined next.

Community careers

Students' community careers consist of their community activities and responsibilities over time. In their childhood a total of 32 students said they were involved in 47 community activities, these included 22 in sports (swimming, netball, running clubs), 12 in brownies/guides, 10 in youth clubs and 3 in church activities. A community career, like other careers, can be represented by a lifeline showing where activities and responsibilities begin and end and their duration. However, because of lack of data concerning the duration of childhood activities these are not included on the lifelines. In the lifelines below adult community activities are shown by thin lines and responsibilities by thicker lines. The community lifelines in this chapter have a separate line for each activity or responsibility so that overlaps and parallel activities can be seen. As usual the start of OU courses are shown by short vertical lines. The first example shows a simple community career:

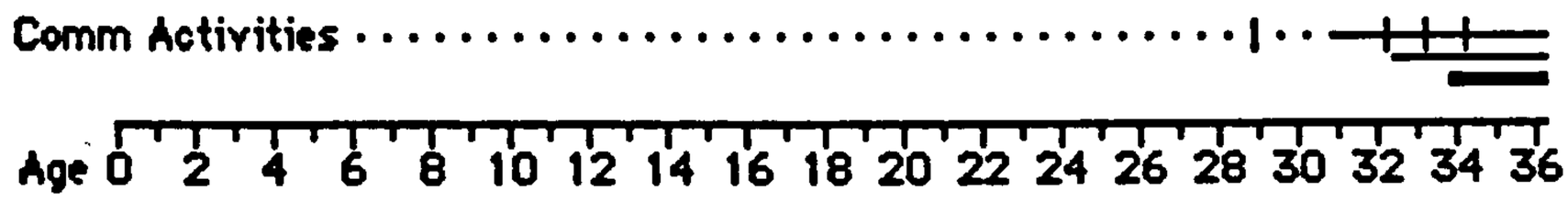
Chart 8.1 A simple community career (student number 120).



This student (number 120) joins a mother and toddler group as a

member when she is 21 and joins the committee two and a half years later around the time she began The Preschool Child course. An example of a more complex career is shown next:

Chart 8.2 A more complex community career (student number 137).



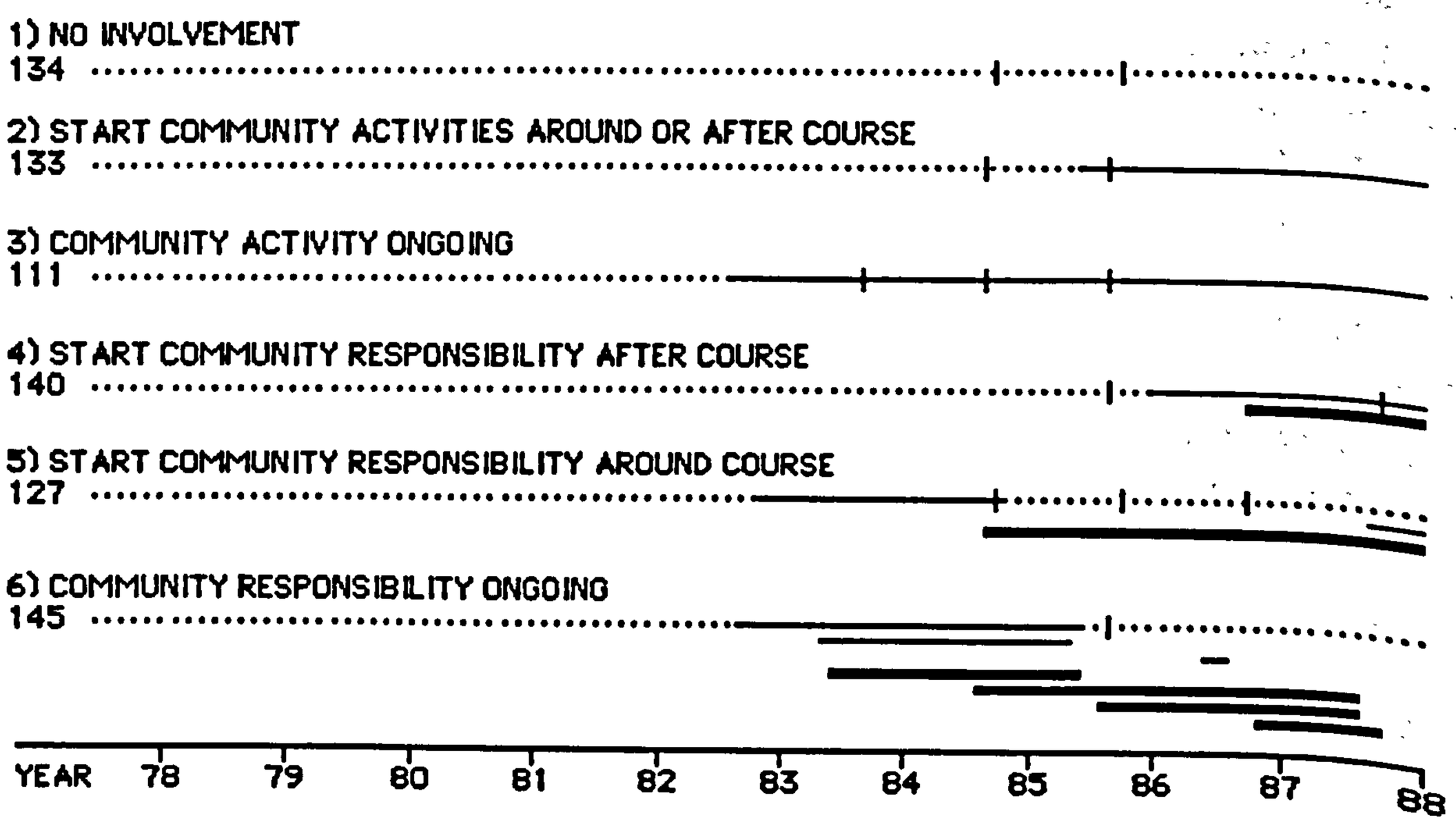
About two years after starting her first OU course this student (number 137) became a member of the Parents' Association, when her child began playgroup she started another OU course. She also started helping in the playgroup, took more OU courses and at age 34 became secretary of the Parents' Association.

In common with other chapters the lifelines of students are grouped into similar patterns, in this case based on their community activities and responsibilities in relation to the start of their first OU course. There are those who have not been involved in any community activities; those who are involved before they start their OU course and who continue; and others who get involved after the start of the course. Similarly with community responsibilities, some students take these on around the same time or after the course, and others who have responsibilities before the course that continue after, with or without adding new activities and responsibilities. There are a few who do not fit these patterns. In general the types (1-6) describe community careers from the least involved to those who are most involved. Examples of expanded lifelines for each type of community career are illustrated in chart 8.3 below.

The first lifeline illustrates the first type of community career, the next type the second and so on. For example, the first student, number 134 (type 1) has not participated in any community activities or responsibilities except the OU courses and no lines are shown. Student number 133 (type 2) did not participate before starting her first OU course but a little later she became a member

of a First Aid group shown by one thin line. Student number 111 (type 3) helped out at the day centre whenever she could before taking OU courses and continued doing this afterwards. After taking an OU course, the next student number 140 (type 4), became involved in the school Parents' Association and later took on the job of treasurer (shown by a thick line). The next student number 127 (type 5), after being a member of a mother and toddler group, started as a member of the PTA and became the representative on the School Council around the time she started her first OU course. Finally, student number 145 (type 6) was involved in community activities and responsibilities before her OU course, which included mother and toddler and playgroups and helping in summer playschemes, she finished with the mother and toddler committee and started on a Pre-5 Link-Up committee during which she took her OU course, and then went onto local Festival and Health Fair committees.

Chart 8.3 Types of community careers.



The numbers of students of each type are summarised in the next table.

Type of community career	No. of students
1) No involvement in comm activities or responsibilities	8
2) Start comm activities (only) around or after the course	7
3) Community activity (only) ongoing	13
4) Start comm resp after the course (no resp before)	14
5) Start comm resp around the same time (no resp before)	8
6) Community responsibility ongoing	5
7) Others	5
Total	60

Table 8.2 Types of community career.

Most students participated in a range of activities and responsibilities and only eight were not involved at all. Almost half took these up for the first time around the time of the OU courses or afterwards and a substantial number (22 of type 4 and 5) took on their first community responsibilities around this time. A further 6 (five of type 6 and one from type 7) continued their responsibilities or took up others. Of the others (type 7) who do not fit the above patterns, two were involved in an activity before and a different one after their first OU course, two had responsibilities before the OU course that had ended but they continued their activities, one had had responsibilities before and different ones after.

Community activities and responsibilities

All students except those with type 1 careers were involved in community activities or responsibilities. A breakdown of the areas in which students take on community activities as helper or member is given in table 8.3 below.

Some 44 students have taken part in 76 community activities, the largest group involves pre-5 children, followed by leisure and recreation, then groups associated with older children.

Community activity	No. of Students	No. of Activities
Pre-5's - mother and toddler and Playgroups	27	33
Leisure and recreation - keep fit, swimming clubs	11	12
Parents' associations - PTAs	8	8
Playschemes - summer schemes	7	7
Childrens' clubs	3	3
Church groups	4	4
Community groups - tenants, residents' associations	4	4
Other - first aid, Oxfam shop, visiting old people	3	3
Women's groups	2	2
Totals	44*	7

* the total is less than the sum as some students undertake activities in more than one category.

Table 8.3 Type and number of community activities.

The following table shows the areas in which they held responsibilities as committee members, officers, ie. secretary, treasurer, chairperson, or as leaders.

Area in which responsibility was held	No. of Students	No. of responsibilities
Pre-5s - Link-up, resource centre, M&T, playgrp	11	14
Parents' associations - PTAs	9	9
Community groups - tenants, council, centres	9	12
Children's clubs - cubs and guides etc	4	5
Women's groups - support, foster parents	4	5
Playschemes - summer schemes	3	3
Church groups	2	2
OU Course group leader	2	2
Welfare - Age Concern, CAB	2	2
Totals	31*	54

* the total is less as some students undertake responsibilities in more than one area.

Table 8.4 Type and number of community responsibilities.

A total of 31 students had 54 community responsibilities. Again preschool groups predominate, followed by parents' associations connected with school. However, responsibilities in community groups which are not connected with children are also high in the list.

Links between community activities

In examining students' community careers a check can be made as to whether there are any continuities between those who were involved in childhood and those participating in adult activities. This shows that the only difference between the seven types in the proportion of those involved in childhood activities was those of type 2 of whom less than a third were involved in childhood activities, compared to between half to two thirds for the other groups. It might have been expected that those of type 1 who were not involved in any adult community activities might also have been less involved in childhood but this is not the case.

The links between adult community activities and responsibilities can be explored. Some students have community careers which show a coherent progression, such as, beginning with membership of one or more groups and then progressing to a responsible position, gaining experience and being invited to take on responsibilities elsewhere. For example, a career might involve being in a mother and toddler group and then playgroup, followed by helping out in the nursery and then becoming member and later an officer of the parents association in the school. This progression can be connected to the ages of their children (Maxwell, 1982: 9). Other students may simply continue their membership of one group over a long period without taking on responsibilities and without joining other groups. Some have a more sporadic membership of different groups.

The list of areas in which students are involved in activities and responsibilities shown above gives an overall picture of the range but not the links between activities and responsibilities. For example, of the 27 involved in pre-5 activities - eleven have gone onto post-5 activities or responsibilities (parents associations, playschemes) and the same number have not taken up activities or responsibilities outside the pre-5 area yet, and the remaining 5 have gone elsewhere. Of the eleven who were involved in leisure and recreational activities, 7 have started nothing else, 3 got involved in post-5 activities and one started another leisure activity. These

examples only give a partial picture because some students were active in more than one area at the same time and have been involved in others earlier. Some of those involved in the pre-5 area were also active in leisure and recreation and many of those who were active in leisure and recreational activities had been involved in other areas before.

Community activities and education

There were 22 students who took further education or training courses in the time between leaving school and the start of their first OU course (see chapter four). Only one of these was linked to a community activity or responsibility and was a first aid course taken by a committee member of a playscheme. Regarding the OU courses the links can be of two kinds - 1) from community activities to the OU courses, that is, when participation in activities leads to becoming involved in the courses and 2) when the courses lead to subsequent activities and responsibilities. Each of these is considered separately. Finally after starting their first OU course students take up non-OU courses which may be connected to their community activities and this link is examined below.

Community activities to the OU courses
Nearly half the students became involved in the OU courses in association with other community activities, particularly as members of mother and toddler and playgroups or helpers in the nursery. Others became students when their child started nursery even though they were not helpers at the time. This difference is related to the question of whether community activities led to involvement in the courses or vice versa and can be examined for each type of career.

The table below summarises the percentages of students of each type who came to the courses through being involved in community activities or responsibilities:

Types of community career	Students of each type who came to courses through community activities or responsibilities Nos.	%
1) No involvement in comm activities or responsibilities	0	0
2) Start comm activities (only) around or after the course	0	0
3) Community activity (only) ongoing	7	54
4) Start comm resp after the course (no resp before)	3	21
5) Start comm resp around the same time (no resp before)	7	88
6) Community responsibility ongoing	5	100
7) Other	5	100
Total	27	

Table 8.5 Career types who came to OU courses through community involvement.

The students with career types 1 and 2 were not involved in any community activities or responsibilities when they started the courses and most of them joined the courses after their child started nursery. Two became involved in the courses through their work, two through the school and two approached adult education centres. Of type 3 over half came to the courses through their community activities, mainly in nursery schools, the rest were involved in other activities and joined the courses through their child being at nursery, school or by making contact themselves.

Although all the students with careers of type 4 took on responsibilities sometime after the courses, only a few came to the courses through their involvement in the community, all the rest came through their child's nursery or school. The majority were not involved before the courses and only after the courses did they join activities and take up responsibilities. However, almost all of those with type 5 careers came to the courses through their preschool related community activities, only one started a course after she had taken on a community responsibility elsewhere and through contact with a neighbour. For type 6 careers all the students came to the courses in connection with their community activities or responsibilities and went on to further responsibilities.

Having ongoing responsibilities or taking on responsibilities around

the time of the courses makes it more likely that students will come to the courses through their activities or responsibilities, compared to those who take on a responsibility or activity after the courses or community activity around the same time. Obviously, students who were not involved before do not become involved in the courses through community activities or responsibilities.

OU courses to community activities

To assess whether there is any connection between the courses and subsequent activities and responsibilities students were asked whether they use what they learnt in their community activities or responsibilities. A total of 23 students said they did and the overall the proportion of students with each type of community career who said they used what they learnt is given below:

Type of community career	Use what was learnt Nos.	%
1) No involvement in comm activities or responsibilities	0	0
2) Start comm activities (only) around or after the course	3	43
3) Community activity (only) ongoing	2	15
	(Average	*25%)*
4) Start comm resp after the course (no resp before)	9	64
5) Start comm resp around the same time (no resp before)	3	38
6) Community responsibility ongoing	5	100
	(Average	*63%)*
7) Other	1	20
Total	23	

Table 8.6 Career types who use what was learnt.

For those who are only involved in community activities, it appears that more of those who do not begin community activities until after the course say that they use what they learnt compared to those with ongoing activities. Curiously this does not apply for responsibilities, it is those with *ongoing* responsibilities who most use what they learnt. However, they all take on further responsibilities and they may be referring to these or their activities rather than their ongoing responsibility. More of those who take on

a community responsibility for the first time after their first course make use of what they learnt (from this course and subsequent courses) than those who begin their responsibilities around the same time as their first course. Overall there is a significant difference in the proportion who make use of what they have learnt between those who are involved in community activities (25%) and those with responsibilities (63%). A greater proportion of students with community responsibilities use what they learnt in the courses compared to those who are only involved in community activities.

The students with ongoing responsibilities say that they use what they learnt - 'at Link-up groups and Health Fairs', when 'helping people with problems', when dealing with children at the playscheme', 'to cope with the children better in the clubs', and one student said the course 'helped me with discussions [in her committee work]'. Students with responsibilities are not necessarily referring to their committee work but may be referring to their activities. For example, the student who uses what she learnt in helping people with problems is a branch secretary for Age Concern, she is also involved in the work of that organisation with elderly people and it is here that the Health Choices course has been most helpful. Similarly, the student who refers to applying what she has learnt in her community activity - a playscheme - and not to her responsibility as a School Council parent representative or as Chairperson of a Pre-5 Link-Up committee.

Only three out of the eight students who started their first community responsibility around the same time as their first course said they used what they learnt. Two of them refer to their activities - in a mother and toddlers group and playgroup and not to their committee responsibilities. The other says 'I'm trying to pass on the confidence I've gained [from the courses], which helped me start up the group [a support group for women whose husbands are in prison]'. The rest also have responsibilities and activities but did not use what they had learnt.

Two thirds of the group who started a community responsibility for

the first time after the course used what they had learnt. Some in their responsibilities: being encouraged to go on a committee and being helped to put over what she had to say without stuttering or mumbling; passing on fund raising ideas; if a problem arises knowing where to go to find out about it; in fostering; and in becoming an OU group leader for a course taken as a student two years previously. Most of the remainder refer to their activities which include mother and toddler groups, children's club activities, and playschemes.

Only two with ongoing activities said they used what they had learnt, both in their voluntary work, one with the elderly and the other with children in daycare. Three in the group who started community activities around or after the course used what they learnt, one in the health club she had joined after taking Health Choices; another is more aware of the needs of the elderly people she visits; and one student believes that the courses helped her to become more involved in the nursery.

There is no difference between the groups in the average number of OU courses they take. That is, *whether or not students go on to take another OU courses after the first is not related to their community careers.*

Community activities and non-OU courses

There are substantial differences between the groups in terms of the proportions who went onto one or more non-OU courses after their first OU course. Table 8.7 below summarises the data and shows that there is a close relationship between community careers and going on to further education in that those who are more involved are more likely to take up other courses. For example, only one of those who was not involved takes up other courses compared to all of those who have ongoing responsibilities. However, this relationship does not necessarily mean that there is a direct connection between the courses and community activities. Students may be taking courses to improve their chances of getting a job rather than because of their community activities or simply for

recreational purposes. Overall 40% of those who took non-OU courses took courses related to their community activities, all the rest were related to employment, except two which were recreational. The proportions who took courses related to their community activities range from no one in the non-involved group to 60% in the most involved group, with intermediate figures for the other groups.

Type of Community Career	Students who went onto non-OU courses Nos.	%
1) No involvement in comm activities or responsibilities	1	13
2) Start comm activities (only) around or after the course	3	43
3) Community activity (only) ongoing	6	46
4) Start comm resp after the course (no resp before)	1	71
5) Start comm resp around the same time (no resp before)	5	63
6) Community responsibility ongoing	5	100
7) Others	4	80
Total	34	

Table 8.7 Career types who went onto non-OU courses.

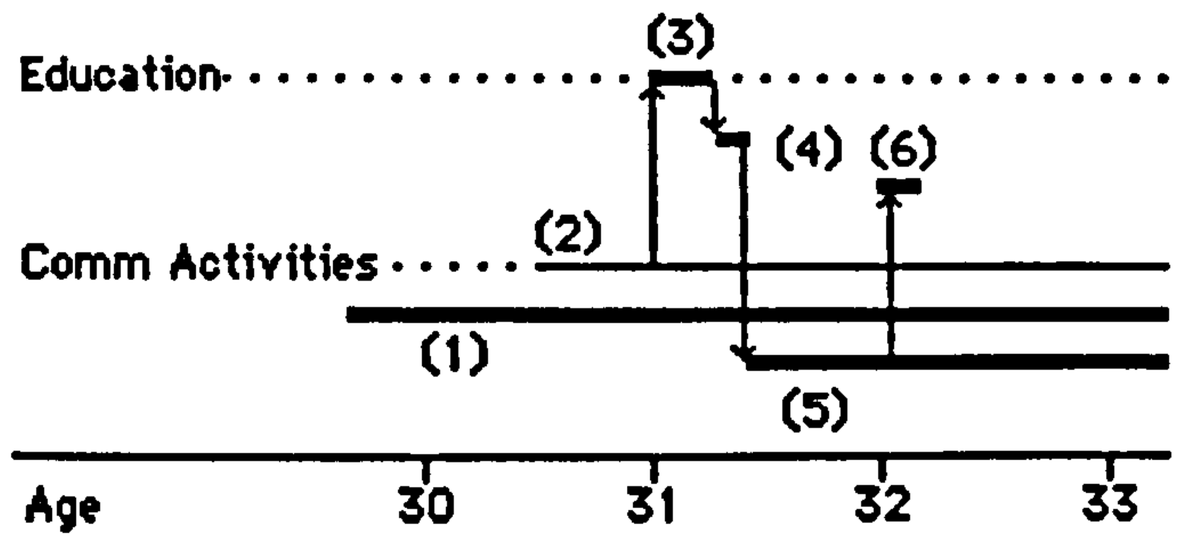
Examples of the types of course/community activity links are shown in table 8.8 below.

Comm. Activities/Responsibilities	Non-OU Courses
Old peoples visiting	Welfare studies, Community
Adult Ed. committee rep.	Tutoring course
Age Concern branch sec.	Welfare rights course, Age
M&T, playgroup, parents' assn.	Playleaders course
M&T, Community Centre cmtt.	First aid course
Playschemes, Clearance committee for housing	Scotvec Community Service course
Founder of handicapped children's group, group leader for club for 5-10s	Youth leadership

Table 8.8 Linked community activities and non-OU courses.

The details of the linkages can be complex. For example, expanded lifelines network of linkages for one student are shown below:

Chart 8.4 Linkages between community activities and education (student number 108).



She was a Girl Guide leader (1) and was involved in Keep fit (2) where she heard about and joined an OU course (3), this gave her the confidence to enrol in an Age Concern course (4) and begin voluntary work (5) with them. After doing this for a while she took a Welfare Rights course (6) linked with her voluntary work and also became branch secretary. She says:

> 108 *'The organiser told us when we were at Keep Fit ... I felt that I was vegetating before I did the OU. I have done the Welfare Rights and Age Concern Course that I would not have done before I took the course ... [it gave me] more confidence ... It [the course] made me take on my Age Concern job.'*

The linkage is from a community activity to an OU course; from the course to a non-OU course and a new community responsibility; community responsibility to another non-OU course; and her community responsibility led on to another.

Social and community life

Returning to the students' social life we can ask whether there are links between their community activities and responsibilities and their social life and in what way the courses influence these. It might be expected that students who were more involved in the community would be more likely to know the members of their OU

group before the course started. For all community career types except one, three quarters or more students knew some or all the other OU group members. The exception is *not* those who had no involvement at all but the students who began community activities at the same time or after the course. For these less than half knew the group members before starting. A possible explanation is that those who do not become involved had friends elsewhere whereas those who become involved at the same time or after did not. This explanation is supported by the proportions who make close friends in the OU groups - no one in the uninvolved group made close friends whereas nearly three quarters of the group who begin community activities did. In other words, *many of those who do not get involved in community activities know other members of their OU group but they do not make close friends; whereas many of those who become involved for the first time make close friends from the OU group.* Of course, making close friends and becoming involved may be linked. You might become involved because you make friends and vice versa.

Students with type 5 community careers tend not to make close friends either. *Those who start a community responsibility around the same time are less likely to make close friends from the OU group.* Only slightly over a third (38%) make close friends compared to 60-80% for the rest which includes those who start a community responsibility *after* the course. It is not clear why taking on a community responsibility around the time of the course is linked to fewer students making close friends than those who have either ongoing responsibilities or who take up responsibilities after the course. There may be some truth in one student's comment: 'I wouldn't go on committees, you could loose friends that way' (number 144).

Continuing case studies

The four case studies are taken up again and the social and community areas are added to the picture built up so far.

Student number 136

The first student spent her childhood in Easterhouse. Her husband has been continuously employed and they now live in Rutherglen where they are buying their apartment. She describes her social network as follows:

> 136 *'My neighbour Joyce who lives upstairs, my friend Hilda who has been my friend since school. One sister I see every couple of weeks, my other sister lives in Malta and I don't see her very often. I see my brother about once a fortnight, I see my mum once a week and the same with David's mum. I get on well with my parents and in-laws.'*

Her mother was supportive of her taking the course and she knew all the group before the course began and still sees them now and again, however they are not included amongst her two close friends, nor does she mention the courses having any influence on her social life. There were only two others in her first group who went through to get a certificate. She may not have made close friends because she already had two long standing friends and she says that she discusses the courses with them.

As a child she went to youth clubs but she has no adult community activities or responsibilities. We saw in earlier chapter that she returned to a short-term job and is currently looking for employment and thinking about going back to school.

Student number 144

The next student grew up in Drumchapel and she lives there now in a rented flat with her husband who is frequently unemployed. She says about her social network:

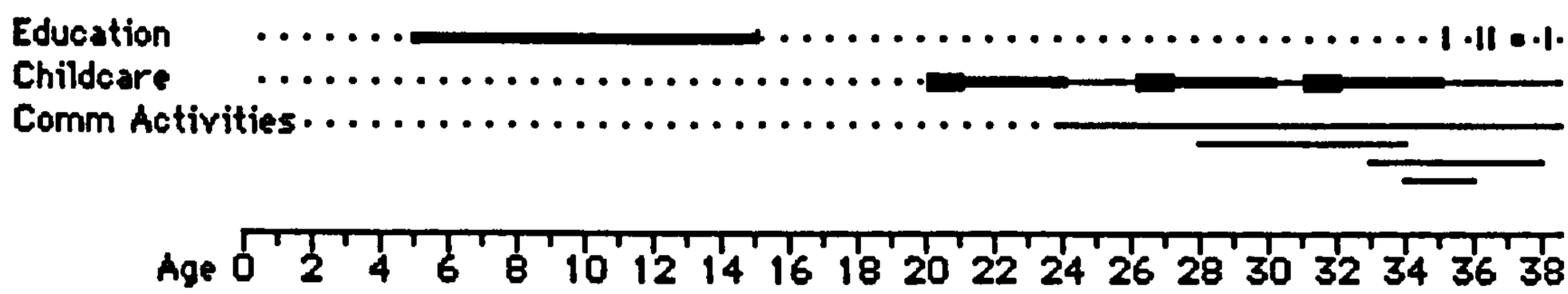
> 144 *'I'm close to all my [six] sisters, one sister is in Canada now. I am friendly with my in-laws and I have a lot of friends, a big circle of friends but not any specially close friend. Both my parents are dead and my husband's parents are dead, I get on well with my husband's relations.'*

Her sisters thought it was good for her to take the courses but they

did not get round to doing any themselves. She knew some of the group before the course started and during the course made some close friends which she still sees. The courses helped her to 'relate more to other people, I can understand them a lot better'.

When she was young she went to youth clubs and swimming. Her adult community career is made up of a number of community activities and by including her childcare as well as her education career we can see how some of these are connected to the ages of her children and to her first OU course:

Chart 8.5 Community activities, education and childcare lifelines for student number 144.



She has been a member of a residents' association for 15 years which she joined when her first child was 4; a mother and toddler group when her second child was one and continued in this for her third child; she then became a member of a women's group and a playgroup when her youngest was three. It was through the women's group that she took the OU courses and she has recently left this group. However, she has no community responsibilities and is the student quoted earlier who says that 'I wouldn't go on committees, could lose friends that way'. She did not use what she learnt from the courses in her community activities and is now only involved in the residents' association.

Student number 145

This student lived in Castlemilk as a child, she is divorced and now lives in a rented flat in Dalmarnock. She describes her social network as follows:

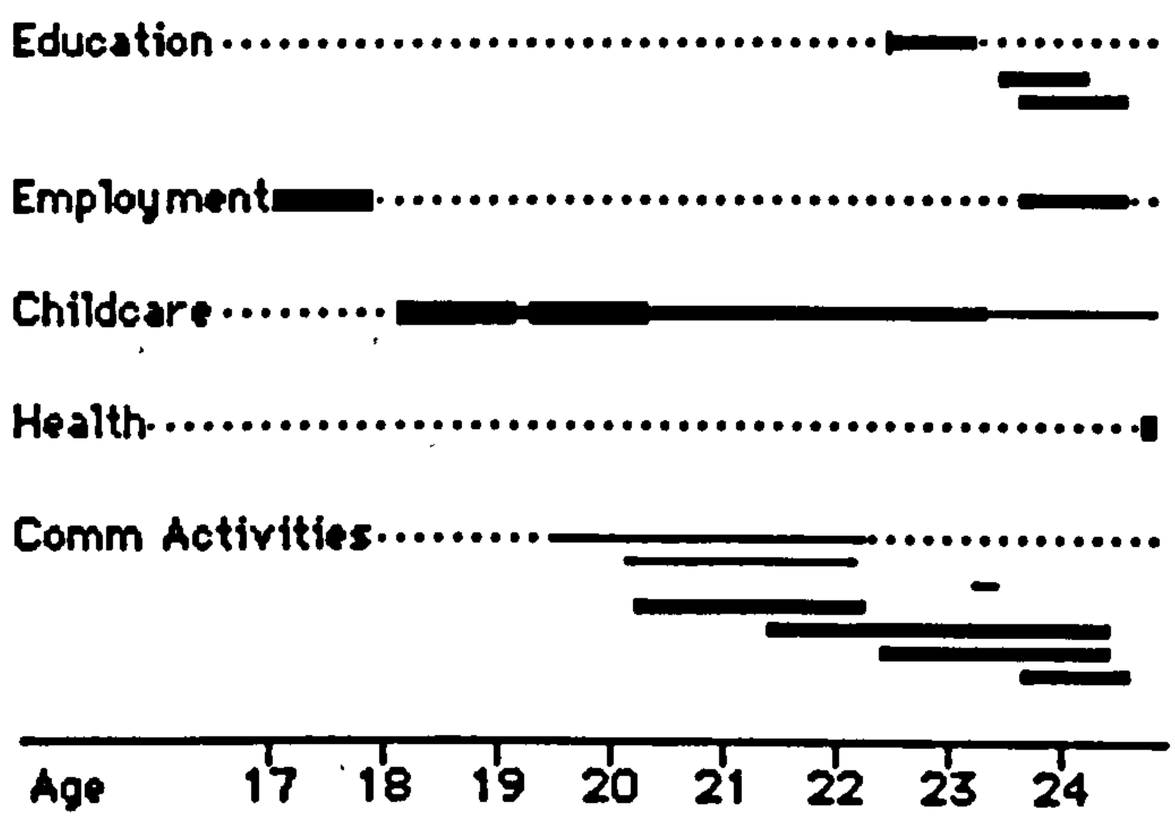
145 *'My closest friend is one I went to school with (Liz). Katy, I go out with her a lot, we've a lot in common, she's separated. I get on fine with my relations but we're not*

> *that close. I'm close to my mother. I get on well with my young sister. My brother and I get on OK although we have different points of view. My father has more or less given up on me because we don't have the same attitudes.'*

When she started the course her relatives and friends 'were glad to see the change in me, all of a sudden I had more confidence'. She joined the course because 'I didn't know anyone and I thought it would help me meet people and get me out during the day'. The course 'helped me meet new people and make new friends ... Katy, we go out a lot'.

Her adult community career has developed and this is shown in expanded form with other relevant careers examined in earlier chapters.

Chart 8.6 Expanded lifelines for student number 145.



Her first community activity was a mother and toddler group which she joined when her first child was one, she moved onto playgroup and involvement in summer playschemes. Her community responsibilities began when she became a member of the mother and toddler group committee, then a Pre-5 Link-up, Festival and Health Fair committees. She came to her OU course through her children being at nursery school and an approach from the head, at the same time that she was on the Pre-5 committee. She used what she learnt on the Pre-5 committee, and for the Health Fairs:

145 *'When I started in the [Pre-5] Link-up group, it [the course] made me more aware of what I was looking for then, I felt I knew more about what I was talking about, I could get my point across more and when I started up the Health Fair it helped me to know more what I was looking for in a Health Fair. It helped me see what was/wasn't needed for children in the Health Fair.'*

The course helped her 'fight for better play areas, creche facilities for our kids and we got them'. When her youngest started school she ceased being on the Pre-5 committee. The course also gave her the confidence and knowledge to disagree with the school at parents' night, 'I feel I can ask more from the schools now and I know what to expect from school'. Her involvement in the community has recently ended as well as her further education and employment. All these have occurred around the time of her depression and miscarriage.

Student number 157

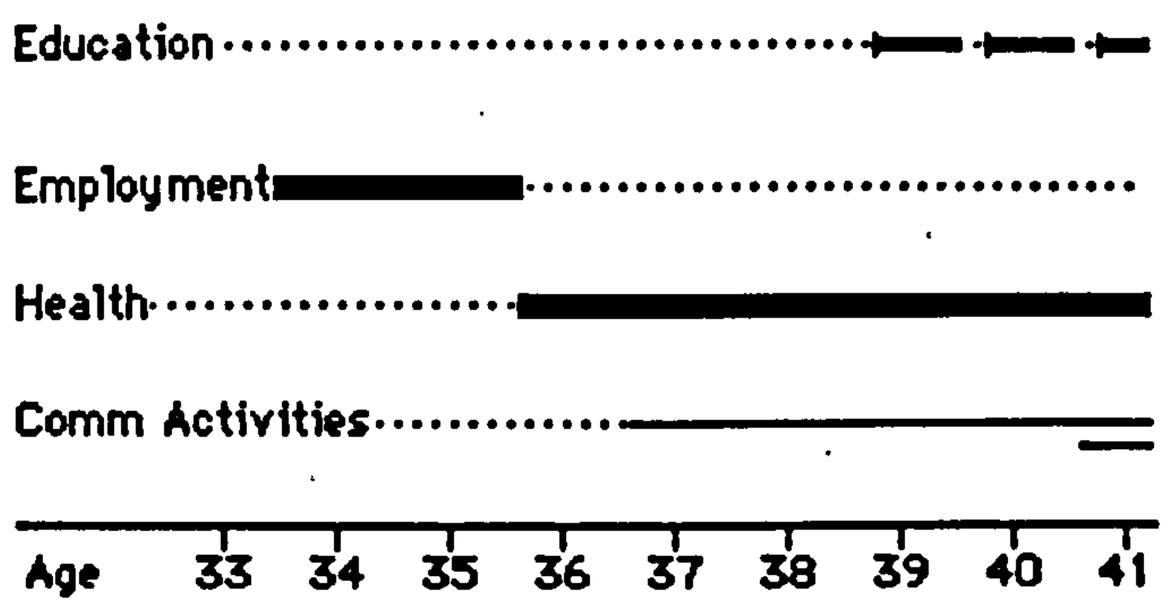
The final student, it will be recalled, was an only child, has never married and has a daughter. She still lives at her parents' rented home in the Gorbals and looks after her mother. She says:

157 *'I never really made close friends, one since I worked on the buses, she lives in Barrhead, I don't really see her a lot. I'm close to my mother, my dad died last November. I'm close to two or three cousins.'*

Her friends and relatives attitudes to her taking the courses were 'cynical, some thought it was just passing time, not really learning'. She knew everyone in her OU group before the start of the course and she has made close friends with the group leader. She says she is 'able to talk better, mentally more alert and able to converse better and communicate'.

When she was young she was in the Guides, went ice skating and was involved in church activities. Her adult community career shows that she is involved in two community activities. This career and other relevant careers that were considered previously are shown in chart 8.7 below in expanded form.

Chart 8.7 Expanded lifelines for student number 157.



She began her first community activity after giving up paid work because of her illness and is as a member of a swimming club which she attends with her daughter. Her second activity is a boys' club where she became a helper. However, she does not mention using what she learnt from the three OU courses in these activities but she does say that taking the courses has 'made me more assertive at inquiring about public services and questioning things instead of just accepting them'.

Conclusions

The continuing case studies illustrate: students' social networks, the attitude of relatives and friends to the courses, making close friends, student's community careers, how these developed and the use they make of what they learnt. The influence of the courses on the social and community lives of the four students varies from none, to their making close friends, and to helping them with new activities and responsibilities.

Two students still live in the same area they grew up in, one has a big circle of friends and relatives and the other was an only child and does not have close friends. One student whose mother was supportive, has moved to another area where she is not involved in the community. She already had two close friends which she did not add to from her OU group. The interplay between the ages of children and the progression of community activities is clear for

another student but she does not use what she learnt from the courses in these activities. Her sisters gave support and she made close friends but she avoids committees for fear of losing her friends. The student who was separated is living in another area from the one she grew up in and did not know anyone, through her OU group she made friends with someone in the same situation and her relatives were glad to see the change in her. Her activities were connected with pre-5s and then she became responsible for organising community events where she applies what she learnt. The remaining student still lives with her mother in the same area she lived in as an only child. Some of those around her were cynical about the courses and she has no close friends but made friends with the group leader. She is involved with two community activities with older children but does not use what she learnt. However, she is more assertive about using public services.

The main questions concern the social and community background of the sample of students - almost all were brought up in Glasgow and about half in inner and half in outer areas; the same proportions now live in inner and outer areas; and around half still live in the same areas as they grew up in. More of those who have remained in the same area knew other students before the start of the first OU course. Only a few did not have any close friends, and most students already knew some or all of the other group members. Over half the students made close friends from their OU groups either from meeting new people or from deepening their friendships with people they already know.

Over half were involved in community activities or responsibilities before the start of their first OU course and most came into the OU courses in connection with these. Around the time of the courses or afterwards most became involved in other community activities and more students took on responsibilities, and nearly half took up their first community activities or responsibilities around this time. Many were involved in community activities in the pre-5, leisure and recreation areas and PTAs; some had responsibilities in the pre-5 area and in PTAs, community groups and groups for older children.

Nearly half of those who are involved use what they learnt in the OU courses in their community activities or responsibilities, particularly those who take these up for the first time. Those who are involved in the community are more likely to go on to non-OU courses and 40% of these are related to their activities or responsibilities.

Students' backgrounds range from those who have been rather isolated to those who have been more involved in the community. We have seen that community activities can be lead to the OU courses and the courses can lead to various activities, but the courses do not 'cause' people to become involved any more than the activities 'cause' people to take the courses, the courses are part of the changing milieux in which people move in and out of a range of often interconnected activities.

Almost all the community activities and responsibilities that students are involved with are related to maintaining or developing services which benefit both themselves and others. Being a member of a mother and toddler group involves making a personal contribution as well as increasing the groups viability and benefiting the children. Helping in playgroup, playschemes and children's clubs provides a service for other parents and their children. Taking responsibility on committees assists in the organisation and leadership needed to sustain and improve community facilities, including pre-5 services, schools, children's groups, tenants' groups, caring for the elderly, welfare groups and so on. In addition to the provision of community services, many groups are involved in articulating needs and providing pressure on the authorities for improvements and additional resources. The courses assist in this by encouraging people to become involved and in developing their knowledge and skills which can be applied in their community activities and responsibilities. The aims of the social strategy include strengthening the social infrastructure of the communities and this chapter has explored the role of the OU courses in social and community development. No doubt many of these activities would continue if there were no OU courses, but the courses seem to provide opportunities of a particular kind for developing

friendships, learning social skills, acquiring knowledge about the needs of children and how to bring about changes in the community.

This chapter concludes the chapters which take a longitudinal view of the socioeconomic context and areas of students' lives. The next chapter switches to a systemic perspective on the changes across all areas of students' lives around the time of the OU courses.

Chapter 9 - Changes, Course Help and Stability

Introduction

This chapter shifts from a concern with student careers in particular areas of their lives to looking across all areas around the time of the courses and afterwards. That is, the approach moves from a longitudinal perspective on selected careers taken in the previous five chapters, to a systemic view across all careers in a particular time period. It begins by relating where students are in their careers to the events and changes which occur around this time. It examines the number of changes across all areas of students' lives and the extent that changes in one area are associated with changes in other areas. This is followed by an assessment of the influence of the OU courses in terms of the number of areas in which the courses are helpful and the extent that help in one area is associated with help in another. Two variables - the number of changes in a student's life around the time of the OU courses, and the number of areas in which the courses are helpful, are found to be closely related. The implications of this finding and the relationship between the changes and course help in each area of life are examined.

In chapter five students are categorised in terms of whether they have experienced marital separation, and in chapter seven those who have remained in their first marriage are sub-divided depending whether their husbands have been unemployed or continually employed. To explore why some students experience more changes and therefore find the courses more helpful than others, these two areas of life: marriage, and if married, husbands' unemployment, are used to group the students. Not only do changes occur in these areas but they also appear to act as parameters which influence the number of changes in other areas. That is, students' marital lives and their experience of their husbands' unemployment affect the number of changes in other areas of their lives. Because

students with more changes around the time of the courses find the courses more helpful, these parameters also affect the helpfulness of the courses.

We return to a longitudinal view to pick up on students' childhood and the presence or absence of one or both parents, and their families financial situation, which were examined in chapter five. This information provides an indication of childhood family and economic stability, and the helpfulness of the courses generally is compared for those who experienced different kinds of instability in their childhood and later, as adults.

Career stages and changes

The last five chapters have addressed the question of the place of OU courses in the lives of students by asking - at what stage in their various careers did the courses occur? This question has been answered for students in terms of their progress through various areas of their lives - their progress in their married life; where they were in their childcare careers; when they had health problems; whether they had returned to paid work; when their husband had been unemployed; and when they became involved in community activities. For example, a particular student may have started the courses - before taking up further education; before her separation; during early childcare; after a health problem occurred; before she returned to paid work; after her husband became unemployed; before she became involved in community activities and so on.

The careers in each area of life are characterised as types, and the location of the courses (the start of the first course was used for reference) is described in relation to career types. That is, each student is categorised in terms of their career type, the definition of which takes into account at what stage they started their first OU course. Each student has multiple careers and it is not possible to talk of students being at an overall stage that summarises where they are in all the areas of life, and to some extent progress in one

career proceeds independently of progress in another. The categorisation carried out in the previous chapters means that each career type can represented by a single numerical digit. Thus, a student's 'career profile' can be defined by a series of digits specifying each career type and stage that a student was in when the first course started. In appendix K the career profiles for all the students are given and in appendix L each career type and stage is numbered and defined, and the students in each category are listed by their identification number.

Some stages in a particular career type are associated with changes occurring, whereas in other stages no events or changes occur. For example, those who do not return to paid work by definition have no change in this area of life, whereas there is an event for those who return. Also for those who have returned, further events might include a job change, becoming unemployed and so on; similarly after a separation, remarriage would be a further event. The stages defined in the previous chapters involve active and eventful stages and stages where less happens. At a particular time for a particular student there may be a coincidence of eventful stages, while at other times and other students may be in less eventful stages. An indication of the coincidence of eventful stages across the various areas of life is given by the number of areas in which changes occur during a particular period, for example around the start of the first course up to the date of the interview. In general when a number of eventful stages coincide over a particular period an individual will experience more changes in her life over this time and vice versa.

The lifelines for each student show the main events in each area of life. The changes or events occurring around the time of the courses and up to the date of the interview only involve the more recent portion of the lifelines. Chapter three explained that all the students in the sample gained a Course Certificate in September 1986 which means they took an OU course sometime between August 1985 and August 1986. The interviews began in October 1987 and went on until April 1988. However, some students were awarded Certificates in earlier years and for them the time from their first course to the

date of the interview is longer. The average time between the start of the first course and the interview is 2 years 9 months, which ranges from a year and a half to over seven years; for 54 of the students the range was under 4 years and for 38 under 3 years. For students whose course careers extend over a long period and during various stages in their careers, the link between a particular stage and the influence of the courses may be somewhat blurred. In chapter three it was argued that changes occurring before the courses as well as after may be relevant to students' reactions to the courses. Therefore for the systemic analysis the time period for events is defined as from one year before the start of the first course up to the date of the interview. However, a few particularly serious changes such as a separation which were more than one year before the start of the first course are included if they appear to have continuing significance.

Number and types of changes

To assess the number of changes occuring in a student's life around the time of the courses, the changes were noted from students' lifelines and then checked against their recorded comments. Events usually refer to starting something, such as a part-time job, a community responsibility, having a baby, starting a course etc. Also included is stopping an activity such as paid work or resigning from a community responsibility if this occurs within the defined time period.

Marriage events around the time of the courses refer mainly to separations, mostly permanent but including in one case a temporary separation, and in another getting married. A committed relationship involving cohabition and children is treated in the same way as marriage. Childcare includes events such as the birth of a baby and a child starting nursery or school. Health events are operations, miscarriages, depression. Employment mainly refers to starting paid work but also includes stopping. Husbands' unemployment is an event which is included if it begins or ends around the time of the courses or afterwards. In the education area because all students take at least one OU course, their first is not

counted as an event, but a further OU course counts as a change in this area. Also if a student goes onto a non-OU course this counts as an event, therefore if a student does another OU course and a non-OU course this counts as two changes. This slightly biases the proportion of events towards education but is considered justified in order to differentiate between OU courses and other courses. Events in the social network area are mainly making close friends through the OU courses. Community activities include becoming involved and taking on a responsibility and less often leaving a community group or resigning from office.

Rather than attempt to quantify the size of a change, simpler measures are used - if any change in activity (ie. stopping or starting) occurs then this is counted as an event. Occasionally, there is more than one event in a particular area of life within the time period under consideration but no attempt is made to count events in the same area of life, the only distinction made is between no event, and one or more events occurring (see appendix M for the areas in which each student experienced change events). Thus, the main variable is the *number* of areas of life in which one or more change events occur. More change means that there are more areas in which one or more events occurred. The total number of areas in which changes can take place is nine, including the possibility of two in the education area - further OU courses and non-OU courses.

The average number of change events per student in the period around the start of the first course to the date of the interview is 4.7 with a range from 1 to 9. The numbers of students and the number of changes for the sample of 60 are shown in the table below:

	Number of areas in which there were events									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
No. of students	1	6	9	10	17	9	5	2	1	Total 60

Table 9.1 Number of students and number of changes.

The number of students experiencing a change in the period under consideration and in each of the areas is given in the table below.

Area of life	Students experiencing changes in each area of life No.	%
Childcare	43	(72)
Community activities	38	(63)
Education - OU courses	37	(62)
Employment	34	(57)
Education - Non-OU courses	34	(57)
Social network	33	(55)
Health	30	(50)
Husbands unemployment	20	(33)
Marriage	10	(17)
Total events	279 (av. 4.7)	

Table 9.2 Number of students experiencing changes in each area of life.

In the first area, childcare, a total of 43 students (which is 72% of the total) experienced changes in this area of their life during this time. As might be expected for women in this age group most events centre in this area, followed community activities, then by education (more OU courses), then employment and non-OU courses. Husbands' unemployment events are experienced by 33% (which excludes one who has been continuously unemployed, includes two husbands who have brief periods and three students in their second marriage) and finally only 10 students have an event in the marriage area.

Because the number of areas in which students experience changes might simply be due to the length of time between the start of the first course and the date of the interview, the correlation between the change events and the length of this time was tested. The correlation was low and insignificant (Pearson $r=0.21$, $p>0.10$). Thus, there no relationship between the number of events and the length of time over which the events are being counted.

Relationships between changes across areas

Are events in one area of life likely to be associated with changes in other areas? This can be checked across all students by counting the occurrence of events in each two areas of life and carrying out a chi squared test. There are only two areas where a similar pattern of

events occurs. This is for husbands' unemployment and childcare events where almost all the students who experienced a change in their husbands' employment status also had an event concerning the care of children, ie. a new birth and less often a child starting nursery or school. This means the students in earlier stages of their childcare careers are also likely to experience husbands' unemployment. This association in unremarkable, what is more important is that the occurrence of events in other areas of life are *not* related. Overall and for this particular period we can say that changes in each area of life seem to occur independently. This does not mean that these changes are unrelated for individual students (we saw in earlier chapters that they are). It means that except for childcare and husbands' unemployment events, *there was no systematic tendency for changes in the remaining areas of life to be accompanied by changes in another.*

However, there is a close association between childcare events and starting their first OU course for a total of 42 students in that they had children who started nursery or school around the time they began the OU courses. But because all students took at least one OU course this event is not included in the totals, although its link with childcare changes is obviously important.

Helpfulness of the courses

This section deals with the helpfulness of the courses in different areas of students' lives. The structure of the Interview Document was described in chapter three and Section 6 of the document included open ended questions asking what the courses meant to students and probes which directed their attention to areas of their lives in which they may have made changes. The topic questions in Section 7 asked direct questions and provided prompts about whether the courses were helpful in the following themes: Personal and Family, Employment, Community and Social, Services and Looking Ahead (see appendix D). The responses to most of the questions were coded initially as 'yes' or 'no', and if 'yes' the

elaboration was recorded. In assessing whether students felt that the courses had been helpful all the information recorded in the Interview Document was taken into account but questions 13-25 in Section 7 were particularly important in indicating the helpfulness in each area . For example, one student's responses to the starter and topic questions are given below. The first comments are from the open ended part of the interview while the latter are responses to the topic questions (the question numbers are in brackets):

101 *'It helped me to understand myself better. I have grown in all ways. I'm much more confident, due to the fact I was able to talk out what I'd been thinking (Q6D) ... It helped me cope with the separation from my husband, I now think things out, rationalise, rather than blowing my top (Q6E) ... It has helped me think of further education, not academic, but perhaps to help me get a better job in the community (Q6F) ... I had done The First Years of Life [first], I wanted to do something for myself (Q13) ... I read labels on food more (Q17) ... I have more time for them (children), more patience (Q18 and Q19) ... I'm more patient (in her job as a Home Help), I don't get too involved (Q22).'*

These responses are not the complete record from this student but they contain the information on which the helpfulness of the courses in each area of life can be assessed. Her remark that the courses helped her cope with her separation is obviously a contribution to her marital situation. Her comment about having more time for her children is taken as helping with childcare; her increased patience in her job and not getting too involved is a contribution to her employment; her wanting to go onto do something for herself by taking her second OU course indicates the help the first one gave in clarifying what she wanted to do next. She mentions the course helped her think of further education although she has not yet gone onto non-OU courses. The courses also helped her mental and physical health by increasing her confidence, helping her think things through and read food labels more. Thus, according to the comments of this student the courses helped in six areas of her life (see appendix N for a list of areas in which each student was helped).

Number and areas of course help

The courses can help in all areas of life except husbands' unemployment where they cannot help directly, and indirect help for example, in changing their relationship with their husband, in getting a job, taking up community activities, is recorded under these areas. The same procedure is adopted for quantifying the helpfulness of the courses as that used in assessing the numbers of areas in which there were changes in students' lives. No attempt is made to assess the degree of help or to take into account more than one kind of help in each area. The decision is simply whether or not the student mentions the courses helping in an area or not. Each area mentioned is scored and the totals added. This assumes that help in each area is numerically equivalent even though it may not be to the student. There are a total of eight areas in which the courses can be helpful (including help in taking another OU course and in taking a non-OU course as two areas).

The average number of areas in which the courses helped were 4.3 per student, ranging from 0 to 8. The distribution of number of areas helped is as follows:

	Number of areas helped									
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
No. of students	1	5	5	9	13	6	15	5	1	Total 60

Table 9.3 Number of students and number of areas in which the courses helped.

The number of students who were helped in each area in the period under consideration is given in table 9.4 below. This shows that for the first area, health, a total of 50 (83%) received general or specific help concerning their mental or physical health. The courses contribute most to this and the childcare area, and these are the subjects of many of them. Obviously, the favourable reception of one OU course helps with the decision to take another and for this sample this is a popular direction in which to go. Making close friends through the course is an important outcome and contributes to the students' social network. Nearly half are helped in the area of further education although some are only thinking about taking up courses in future.

Area of life	Students helped in each area of life No.	%
Health	50	(83)
Childcare	44	(73)
Education - OU courses	37	(62)
Social network	35	(58)
Education - Non-OU courses	28	(47)
Community activities	23	(38)
Marriage	21	(35)
Employment	19	(32)
Total areas helped	257 (av. 4.3)	

Table 9.4 Numbers of students helped in each area of life.

Relationships between helpfulness across areas

Is it likely that helpfulness of the courses in one area is associated with help in another area? This can be checked in the same way as associations between changes. There are four significant relationships between areas in which the courses gave help: 1) in making changes in students' relationships with husbands and help in going onto another OU course; 2) with childcare and going onto another OU course; 3) help with getting a job or in paid work and using what was learnt in community organisations; and 4) help in further education and in community activities. In other words, those who reported that the courses were helpful in their marital relationship, were also likely to be those who were helped to go onto another OU course, as were those who were helped with their children. If a student found a course useful in the employment area and for further education then they were likely to find it useful in community activities as well.

Changes and course help

The overall comparison between the areas in which there are changes and those that the courses provide help is shown in the following table:

Area of life	Students experiencing change events % Rank	Students experiencing course help % Rank
Childcare	72 (1)	73 (2)
Community activities	63 (2)	38 (6)
Education - OU courses	62 (3)	62 (3)
Employment	57 (4.5)	32 (8)
Education - Non-OU courses	57 (4.5)	47 (5)
Social network	55 (6)	58 (4)
Health	50 (7)	83 (1)
Husbands unemployment	33 (8)	na
Marriage	17 (9)	35 (7)

Table 9.5 Number of students experiencing changes and course help in each area of life.

There is no significant correlation between the rank orders (excluding husbands' unemployment) which is particularly due to the health area, which comes seventh in the number of changes and first in the number of students who were helped in this area. This is because the events in this area are not necessarily directly related to the help the students had in gaining confidence or making health changes. On the other hand, some areas such as help in making close friends or going onto another OU course, are almost always related to the event of actually making close friends or taking a course.

Number of changes and course helpfulness

Irrespective of the particular areas, a key question is whether there is a relationship between the number of areas in which a student experienced changes and the number of areas that the courses were helpful. This can be tested by correlating the number of areas of change and the number of areas of course help across all students. This gives a correlation of 0.64 (Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient) which is highly significant ($p<0.001$). *There appears to be a close relationship between the number of changes a student experiences and the helpfulness of the courses.* Students who have more areas of change in their lives around the time of the courses report that the courses are helpful in more areas, compared to those with fewer areas of change; and students with few areas of

change report little reaction to the courses. Figure 9.1 below shows the relationship between the number of changes experienced and the number of areas in which the courses were helpful. Each student identification number is located in the box corresponding to the number of changes and course help.

NUMBER OF AREAS THAT COURSES WERE HELPFUL	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8							152			
7						159, 114	137	118		116
6					141	101, 104 123, 132 133, 148 149, 158	117, 145	113, 155	107, 144	
5					111	110	105, 140 150	106		
4			130, 143	112, 153 154	102, 138, 157	134, 139 156	124, 127			
3			119	128, 136 146, 160	108, 109	120		121		
2		115		126	129	125, 147				
1			131, 135 151	122	142					
0					103					

NUMBER OF AREAS IN WHICH CHANGES OCCURRED

Figure 9.1 The number of changes and course help plotted for each student.

A correlation as high as this raises the question of whether similar things are being counted twice or whether an obvious common factor is responsible for this result. However, the finding has been arrived at by using two measures which for most areas of life were derived independently and there does not appear to be a simple common factor. The first measure, the number or areas in which changes occurred, is based on students' descriptions of what is

happening in their lives and on the dates that changes occurred. For all areas except two (social network and OU courses) this information was collected in a separate part of the interview and not related to questions about the courses. Identification of changes was based on the analysis of lifelines and confirmed by reference back to students' comments. Students' reactions to the courses were explored in a specific section of the interview and the same prompts were used for all students, irrespective of their changes. Their responses were coded separately from the identification of events.

If students over-reported the helpfulness of the courses (as well they might) why should this be related to the number of change events in their lives? Perhaps they over-reported changes as well, but these are mainly factual and students are unlikely to have felt that this was what was expected even if they felt inclined to overstate the influence of the courses.

For two areas there are common sources of evidence for both a change and the helpfulness of the courses. The evidence for a change in social network is mainly drawn from the question about whether the courses helped students make close friends from their OU group. If they answered 'yes' this is taken as evidence for a change in their social lives, namely adding close friends, and for the courses helping in this, and therefore producing a direct relationship. Similarly for those who took more than one OU course, the question why they took another course was almost always answered in terms of satisfaction with the first, thus giving a high correlation between those who went onto another OU course and the help that the first course gave towards this. Furthermore, students are more likely to report that the courses were helpful in areas where they had actually gone on to take up the activity in question, even though, as we have seen in earlier chapters, a number say that the courses helped them to *think about* taking up further education, returning to paid work, or getting a better job and there have been no changes yet. This tendency may contribute to a high correlation between those who experienced these changes

and who say the course helped. Generally, the use of cumulative measures (ie. totalling the *number* of changes and areas of help) may contribute to a spuriously high correlation overall. In order to examine the components of this correlation the individual relationships between changes and help in each area of life are considered next.

Relationships between changes and help in areas

Given the strong correlation between the number of changes and areas of course help, it is reasonable to expect that there should be high correlations between changes and help in particular of areas of life. That is, we might expect that where students' report a change in a certain area of life around the time of the courses, they are likely to find the courses helpful in that area. The special case of two areas - social network and OU courses has been mentioned above and they obviously support this proposition. Of the remaining six areas three have events and help significantly related.

These are for further education ($p<0.001$) - where students who went onto non-OU courses were helped by the OU courses in doing this; childcare ($p<0.01$) - where child events and help with childcare are related; and community activities ($p<0.05$) - where those who mainly became involved in community activities and responsibilities also used what was learnt from the OU courses. Changes and help in the remaining areas - marital life, health and employment were not significant. These relationships are examined across the sample as a whole, while other chapters show that there are also linkages between changes and the helpfulness of the courses in these areas of life for particular career types and sub-groups (eg. those who had separations, health problems and who had returned to employment).

There are other significant correlations between changes in one area and help in other areas - these include, those with child events are likely to have been helped in their relationship with their husband; and those who go onto further education are also likely to use what they learnt from the OU courses in community activities.

In order to clarify the patterns of changes and help, students are grouped on the basis of two areas of life and the differences between the groups are explored. This is carried out in the next section.

Family and economic stability

Two areas of life are important in determining students' socioeconomic circumstances, these are their marital status and if married their husbands' unemployment. In chapter five students with stable adult family lives were distinguished from those with unstable family lives. Out of a total of 52 students who had married and had children (including the couple who adopted and excluding the couple who have not started a family yet) there were 10 who had experienced separation. Of the 42 with a stable adult family life there were 16 identified in chapter seven as experiencing husbands' unemployment. Thus, there were 26 who had stable adult family life and economic stability; 16 with stable family life and economic instability and 10 with unstable family life and economic instability. The remaining seven had not married or cohabited and therefore had not experienced adult family instability or economic instability. The numbers in each group are shown in table 9.6.

In the earlier chapters the three main categories were useful in exploring the influence of the courses on particular areas of life, in this chapter they are used to consider what happens and the helpfulness of the courses across all areas of students' lives around the time of the courses and afterwards. That is, to examine the relationships between family and economic stability, the changes in students' lives and the helpfulness of the courses. Also these categories illuminate other aspects of students' adult lives and suggest how their childhood stability might affect the helpfulness of the courses.

If there is a relationship between family and economic stability and the number of changes in students' lives around the time of the courses, there is also likely to be a relationship between stability and

the helpfulness of the courses because of the close relationship between changes and helpfulness. With more instability there may be more areas of change which would mean the courses would be more helpful.

Type of Group	No. of students
1) Stable family life and economic stability Stable first marriages to continuously employed husbands and with children	26
2) Stable family life and economic instability Stable first marriages to husbands who experience unemployment and with children	16
3) Unstable family life and economic instability Marital breakdown, separation or death of husband and associated economic instability and with children	10
4) Single stability and economic stability Single people or single parents who have not cohabited or married	7
5) Other Recently married with no children yet	1
Total	60

Table 9.6 Types of groups and numbers of students in each group.

To test this the number of changes or events in each area are totalled for each of the three main groups. The changes in marriage and husbands' unemployment are included only if they occurred in the defined time period. The average number of areas with changes for each group are as follows: 4.0; 5.3; 6.1 (out of a maximum of 9), the differences between group 1 and 2 and 1 and 3 are significant ($p<0.01$ and 0.001 respectively). Thus *those who have experienced family and economic instabilities have more changes than those who have experienced only economic instability and these have more than those with stability.*

It can be argued that because of the way the groups are defined it is to be expected that they will have more changes. To check whether those with instabilities experience more changes in the *other* areas

of their lives, any changes in marital life and husbands' unemployment can be excluded from the totals. If this is done, the average number of changes for each group are: 3.9; 4.3; 5.1 (out of a maximum of 7). That is, on average the group with family and economic stability have changes in nearly four other areas of their lives, whereas the group who experience family and economic instability have changes in a further five areas. The average difference between the stable group and the group experiencing most instability is more that one area of change. This difference is statistically significant ($p<0.05$) and these results suggest that *those who have experienced family and economic instabilities tend to have more changes in other areas of their lives as well.*

Regarding the helpfulness of the courses, the average number of areas where the courses were helpful for each group was: 3.7; 4.6; 5.5 (out of a maximum of 8, including married life and excluding husbands' unemployment). These differences between group 1 and 3 are also significant ($p<0.01$). This means that for *those who had experienced instability the courses are likely to be helpful in more areas of their lives than those whose lives had been stable.* Leaving out the marriage area the average number of other areas in which the courses have helped are: 3.4; 4.1; 5.0 (out of a maximum of 7) and the differences between groups 1 and 3 are statistically significant ($p<0.01$).

These findings can be summarised: *Students who have experienced family and economic instabilities are likely to have changes in more areas of their lives and conversely those who experienced stability have changes in fewer areas.*

From this it follows that: *Students who experienced family and economic instabilities tend to report that the courses are more helpful than those who have had stability.*

Differences between groups

We can ask - what are the differences between the groups of students in what happens in their lives around the time of the

courses and after, and in the helpfulness of the courses?

The percentages of students in each group for whom events and changes occurred in various areas of their lives, and who report that the course was helpful in these areas, are given in two tables below. An asterisk (*) shows where there is an area and a group with a significantly higher percentage than another group or groups.

	Percentage with changes in each group		
Areas of life	Stable Group	Econ Unstable	Fam & Econ Unstable
Education (go onto FE)	54	44	80
Health	35	63	80*
Average events per student	(4.0)	(5.3)	(6.1)

Table 9.7 Areas of life in which there are differences in the proportion of changes.

Two areas are of interest - the significant tendency of those with family and economic instability to have health problems and for more to go on to further education (this does not reach significance). A closer examination of the health problems shows that in the unstable group, five had depression, two hysterectomies and one a miscarriage.

The areas where the courses gave more help to particular groups are given in table 9.8. This shows that the significant differences in the proportion helped in the family and economically unstable group are for further education and community activities, and smaller differences in help with employment and social networks. Other small differences are for the economically unstable group in childcare and continuing OU courses.

To make a more accurate assessment of the differing proportions helped by OU courses to get a job, go onto further education and in taking up community activities the figures can be expressed as a percentage of those who actually did these things rather than of all the students in each group (see table 9.9).

Areas of life	Percentage helped in each group Stable Group	Econ Unstable	Fam & Econ Unstable
Education (go onto FE)	46	25	80*
Community activities	23	38	70*
Employment	19	38	50
Social network	50	56	70
Childcare	65	94	80
Education (further OU courses)	54	81	70
Av. number of areas helped	(3.7)	(4.6)	(5.5)

Table 9.8 Areas of life in which there are differences in the proportion helped.

Area	Helped as a % of those who got job, go onto FE or are involved in comm activities Stable Group	Econ Unstable	Fam & Econ Unstable
Employment	0 (0/9)	67 (4/6)	57* (4/7)
Community activity	33 (6/18)	50 (4/8)	86* (6/7)
Education (FE)	57 (8/14)	29 (2/7)	75 (6/8)

Table 9.9 Percentages helped who went on to a job, FE or community activities.

This shows that 67% (or four students out of six) of those with family stability and economic instability (ie. husbands with unemployment) and 57% of those with both kinds of instabilities (ie. who have had separations) are helped to get a job compared to none of those with stability. Also more of those who have had separations are helped in their community activities than the stable group and to go onto further education than the economically unstable group.

The results show that helpfulness in a particular area may depend on the type of instability, eg. for economic instability - help in getting a job (less for going onto FE); for family and economic instability - help in going onto further education; in getting a job and in using what they learnt in community activities. The courses help in the areas of change in students' lives and where there is more instability there are more areas that the courses are likely to help.

Adult life of students in each group

As well as the particular areas of life examined above and in earlier chapters there is other data on their adult lives which further clarifies the differences between the main groups. The variables on which there are significant differences between groups are identified to elaborate the characteristics of each group. A summary of the data is presented below.

Adult background	Stable Group	Econ Unstable	Fam & Econ Unstable
Av. age at time of interview (yrs)	34.9*	31.0	35.2
Number of appliances	5.7*	4.6	5.4
Buying house (%, N)	42 (11)*	6 (1)	30 (3)

Table 9.10 Differences in adult background of each group.

Table 9.10 shows that there is a significant difference between the average age of the stable group and the group with economic instability in that the stable group is older. Even though the group with separations is older on average, this is not significantly different from the economically unstable group because the numbers in this group are only 10 and the variance is larger. This age difference between the stable and economically unstable groups also applies to their average ages when they started their first course.

The average number of appliances (see checklist in Section 9, question 19 in the Interview Document, appendix D) is an indicator of the material wealth that has accumulated over students' adult life. The stable group have significantly more appliances than the economically unstable, and the group with separations are more similar to the stable group.

There is a significant difference between the numbers buying their house (or apartment) in the stable group compared to the group with economic instability. Only one student is buying their house in this group compared to eleven in the stable group. In the group who have had separations there are three buying, two who in the last

three years have separated from their husbands who were both in continuous employment for more than 15 years of marriage and another who divorced her first husband 13 years ago and two years later married her second husband who has had no unemployment.

While this analysis focuses on those variables where there is at least one significant difference between the groups, there are a larger number of variables for which there are no differences. These include the average number of children at the start of the first course and at the time of the interview, average age of marriage, age at first birth, number of moves in adulthood, whether students planned their first birth, whether they had worked since their first birth, whether they were working at the time of the first course, whether they had done any other courses before the OU, difficulties with the services etc.

We have seen that the number of areas of change in terms of events and the helpfulness of the course increased with increasing instability. The particular areas which have emerged here are not all directly relevant to this finding, nonetheless they are consistent with and extend the description of family and economic stability and instability. The stable group have more material wealth and are older than the economically unstable group. The group with separations seems closer to the stable group which may be because in the period under consideration some of them had stable years before or after their separation.

Childhood and adult stability

We return to a longitudinal perspective to examine the early background of students in order to look for childhood differences between the groups which are related to their more recent experiences of family and economic stability. The concept of stability can be used to link students' childhood and adult experience with their responses to the courses and what happens afterwards. Features of their childhood may be linked to their later

stable or unstable circumstances and their reactions to the courses.

Early background of students in each group
Following the same approach as above, childhood experience is related to students' adult experience of family and economic stability and instability. We can consider how differences in early life might affect how students respond when faced with adult instabilities and whether the influence of the courses differs.

In their early background there are only three areas of significant difference between the groups:

	Adult Family and economic stability (% or number in each group)		
Early background	Stable Group	Econ Unstable	Fam & Econ Unstable
Mother in paid work (%)	50	62	90*
Some or a lot of childcare (%)	35	63	90*
Av. no of children family of origin	3.6	5.6*	4.0

Table 9.11 Differences in the early background of each group.

The family and economically unstable group differ from the other groups in that in their childhood they had a much larger proportion of mothers who were in paid work. Regarding the amount of childcare that students did as children for other children, usually younger brothers or sisters, the difference between the stable group and the family and economically unstable group is significant. For the average number of children in students' families of origin, there is a significantly larger number for the economically unstable group compared with that of the stable group.

Again there are many areas where there are no significant differences between the groups, these include: absence of parents, number of house moves as a child, the amount of housework the student did as a child, their assessment of the families financial

situation, their health, qualifications from school and whether they liked school. However, these results show there are two important areas in which the childhood experience does differ for those who later have a separation from their husbands and one for the economically unstable group.

Continuities between childhood and adult stability

Some students who experienced economic instability in their childhood now experience this in their own family, and some who in their early life experienced their parents separating have experienced a separation in their own marriage. In chapter five it was shown that there was no overall relationship between parental instability and students' marital instability. Here we can add economic instability and match the three main groups of adult family and economic stability and instability to their childhood situation defined in similar terms. The students can subdivided depending on whether they had parental instability, including separations, deaths and single parents, (up to when the student was 20 years old). An indicator of economic instability in students' childhood is their assessment of their families financial situation. The students with parental stability can be subdivided depending on whether or not they described their families financial situation as 'struggling'. Although not all the students who experienced parental instability also said their childhood families were struggling (see p. 179), parental instability is assumed to include economic instability as well.

Table 9.12 presents subgroups of students based on their childhood and adult family and economic stability and instability. The differences are not statistically significant which means there is no tendency for students who experienced parental and family economic instability to also experience either kind instability in their adult lives (and vice versa).

Childhood family and economic stability	Adult family and economic stability (N and %) Stable	Economically unstable	Family and Econ unstable
Stable	15 (58%)	7 (44%)	6 (60%)
Economically unstable	5 (19%)	0	1 (10%)
Family and economically unstable	6 (23%	9 (56%)	3 (30%)
Totals	26 (100%)	16 (100%)	10 (100%)

Table 9.12 Numbers with childhood and adult family and economic stability.

Continuities in stability and the helpfulness of the courses

The differences in the helpfulness of the courses might be affected by the contrast between childhood and adult experience of instability. To explore this the average number of areas in which the courses were helpful for students defined by their childhood and adult family and economic stability are shown in the following table:

Childhood family and economic stability	Adult family and economic stability (av. helpfulness and N) Stable	Econ unstable	Family and Econ unstable	Average Helpfulness
Stable	3.6 (15)	5.3 (7)	5.7 (6)	4.5 (28)
Economically unstable	4.2 (5)	0 (0)	6.0 (1)	4.5 (6)
Family and economically unstable	3.7 (6)	4.0 (9)	5.0 (3)	4.1 (18)
Average helpfulness	3.5 (26)	4.6 (16)	5.5 (10)	4.3 (52)

Table 9.13 Helpfulness of the courses and childhood and adult family and economic stability.

Along the bottom row we have already seen that on average those with more instabilities in adulthood find the courses more helpful.

The numbers in the cells are too small for statistically significant differences to emerge, but reading across the table we can see that in each of the three groups with different backgrounds, students find the courses progressively more helpful as they move from stable to economically and to both unstable groups in adulthood.

Combining the unstable categories into one simplifies the table:

	Average helpfulness Adult situation	
Childhood situation	Stable	Unstable
Stable	3.6 (15)	5.5 (13)
Unstable	3.9 (11)	4.4 (13)
Average	3.7 (26)	4.9 (26)

Table 9.14 Helpfulness of the courses and childhood and adult stability.

The table shows the average number of areas in which each of four sub-groups found the courses helpful. The difference between the stable and unstable adult groups (ie. the average of 3.7 and 4.9) is statistically significant ($p<0.05$). While the difference between the currently unstable sub-groups does not reach statistical significance the averages suggest that *those who have had a stable background find the courses more helpful now they are facing instabilities than those who are more familiar with instability.* The students who had a stable childhood but are now experiencing instability may need (or appreciate) the help of the courses more than those who also had instability in their childhood. Both the currently stable sub-groups find the courses less helpful than either of the currently unstable sub-groups. While these figures are suggestive further evidence is necessary before it can be stated with confidence that the courses are more helpful to those who are inexperienced in coping with instabilities. However they are consistent with Elder's point that: 'Smooth sailing in a protected childhood may not develop adaptive skills which are called upon in later life' (Elder, 1974: 98).

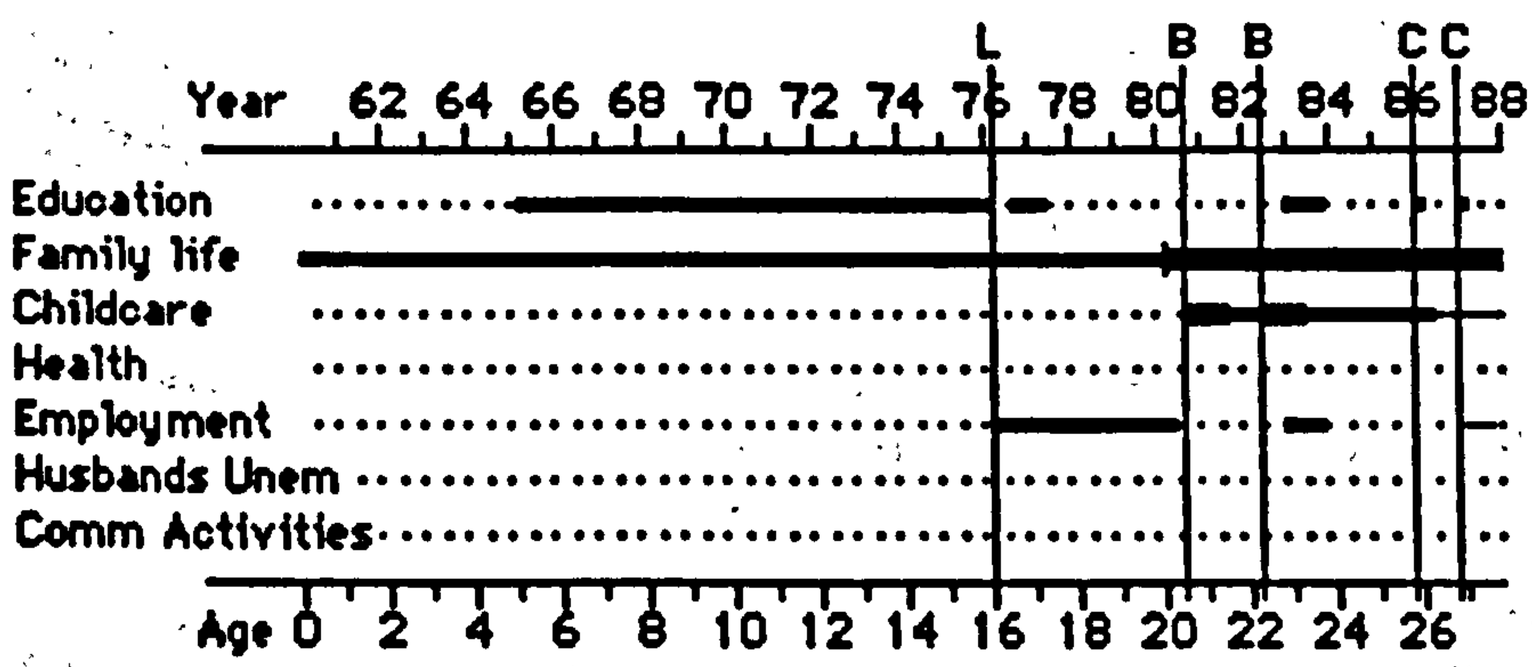
Continuing case studies

The general findings in this chapter can be illustrated with reference to the continuing case studies. The areas of life in which these students experience changes and help from the OU courses and their circumstances regarding their family and economic stability in their adult and early life are examined.

Student number 136

This student is in the first group with family and economic stability, that is, she is in her first marriage with a husband who has not had any unemployment. Earlier chapters examined where the OU courses occurred in her particular careers, and the influence of the courses on these careers. This data can be collated and the place and influence of the courses summarised. For reference a set of lifelines are presented in the order that they are considered in the earlier chapters. Although family life and husbands' unemployment might be more appropriately placed at the top and bottom respectively to show that they act as parameters within which the other areas of her life are managed. Also vertical lines are added to assist in examining what is happening simultaneously across lifelines.

Chart 9.1 Lifelines for student number 136 - with family and economic stability.



L=Leave school
B=Birth of child
C=OU Course starts

The place of the OU courses in this student's life started when her youngest child was 3 years old and was therefore in stage two of her childcare career; although she was not employed at the time she had returned to paid work and restarted again after the start of her second OU course (ie. in employment career type four). She had also taken courses after leaving school and before the OU courses but has not gone onto further education afterwards (ie. she has a type two educational career). Other than the OU courses she had not been involved in any community activities and she had two friends before the OU courses. The areas of her life in which there are changes around the time of the courses and afterwards are: one child starting nursery and the other starting school; going onto another OU course; and starting her short-term part-time job. Her previous involvement in further education and paid work are not included because they happened over a year before the start of her first OU course. Thus, within the relevant period there were three areas in her life in which there are changes, which is at the low end of the continuum.

Regarding the influence of the courses we saw in earlier chapters that she was encouraged to go on to take a second OU course; helped in her relationship with her children; and felt her self-esteem was boosted. She was not helped to restart paid work; in her marital life; to make close friends or to become involved in community activities. Thus, she was helped in three areas of her life. Table 9.15 below summarises the areas of life in which there were changes and course help.

In common with other students in this group there are relatively few areas of her life in which there are changes and few areas in which the courses provide help. She is younger than the average for this group, she has more appliances, is buying their house and is relatively well-off. In her early life she had stable parenting, her mother had a job but not until she was 15, she did not have to do any childcare, and came from a large family whose financial situation was adequate. She therefore falls into the subgroup who enjoyed family and economic stability both as a child and as an adult and has

found the courses less helpful than many other students.

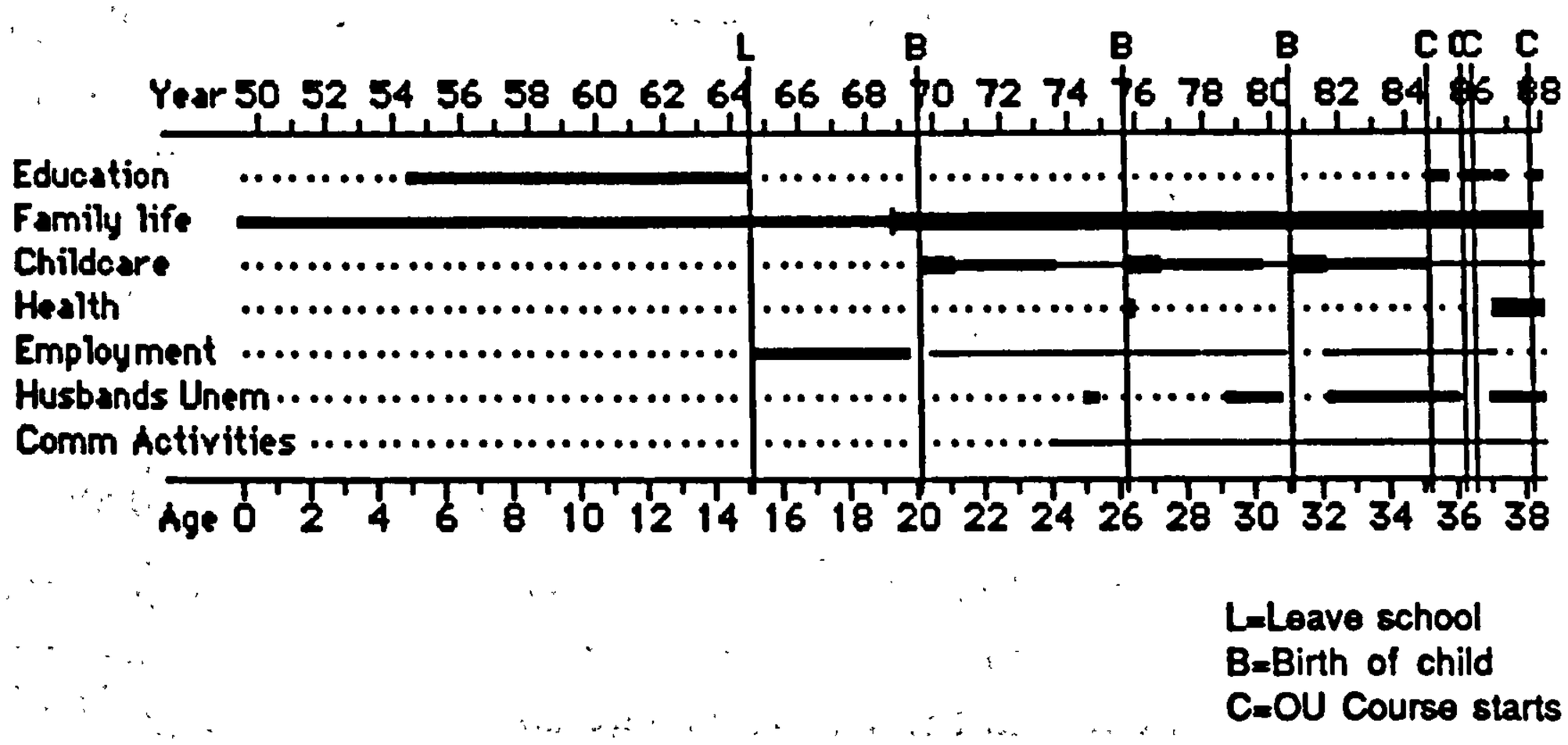
Area of life	Changes	Course Help
Family life	None	None
Childcare	Youngest starts nursery	Treat them as people
Employment	Starts part-time work	None
Education	Go onto another OU course	Encouragement
Comm Activities	None	None
Social	No change	None
Health	No problems	Boost self esteem
Husbands unem	None	NA
Total	3	3

Table 9.15 Changes and course help for student number 136.

Student number 144

This student comes into the second group with family stability but economic instability because she is in her first marriage but her husband has had periods of unemployment. The full set of her lifelines are shown below:

Chart 9.2 Lifelines for student number 144 - with family stability and economic instability.



The place of OU courses in this student's life occurred when her youngest child was 4 years old (but did not got to nursery because the nearest was too far away). She came to the courses through her community activity with a women's group and had been involved in mother and toddler and playgroups before this. She gave up the

women's group and has avoided taking community responsibilities and going on committees. The student had a particularly strong attachment to the labour force and had been employed almost continuously since leaving school, switching to a part-time job after her first child was born. She was employed as a hospital domestic when she began the first OU course. Her husband had had periods of unemployment and was without a job when she started OU courses. She began the OU courses before a serious health problem occurred which meant that she had to give up her job and hospital tests interfered with the 'O' level courses she had gone onto after taking three OU courses. Her husband became unemployed again around this time and has remained without a job. She has recently begun a fourth OU course.

The main influence of the courses was on her relationship with her teenage son and the encouragement to go onto 'O' levels and other OU courses. Her health problem has interrupted her life but the courses have raised her expectations for a better job and she may take up 'O' levels again when she is better. She met some more friends through the courses and the courses helped her relate to other people and understand them better. The courses have improved her morale and confidence and she will try things now that she would not try before.

There were eight areas in her life in which there were changes around the time of the OU courses: she went onto 'O' levels as well as further OU courses; her youngest started school; she began a serious health problem; she gave up her job and her husband's unemployment ended and started again; she gave up a community activity and she made some close friends. Three of these changes are related to her poor health. The six areas where the courses provided help are: in giving her confidence to go onto 'O' levels; and to continue OU courses; in her relationship with her teenager; general improvements in her morale and confidence; raising her expectations for a better job; and help in relating to others. Although her expectations for a better job have not been put to the test yet she was working at the time and this may have been

involved her decision to stop. There is no help in her relationship with her husband or in her community activities.

The table below summarises the areas in her life in which there were changes and help from the courses:

Area of life	Changes	Course Help
Education (FE)	Go onto 'O' levels	Confidence
Education (OU)	Take 3 more courses	Pride and enjoyment
Family life	None	None
Childcare	Youngest starts school	With teenager
Health	Post viral fatigue	Morale and confidence
Employment	Gives up work	Expectations for better job
Husbands unem	Ends and restarts	NA
Comm Activities	Women's group ends	None
Social	More close friends	Help relate to others
Total	8	6

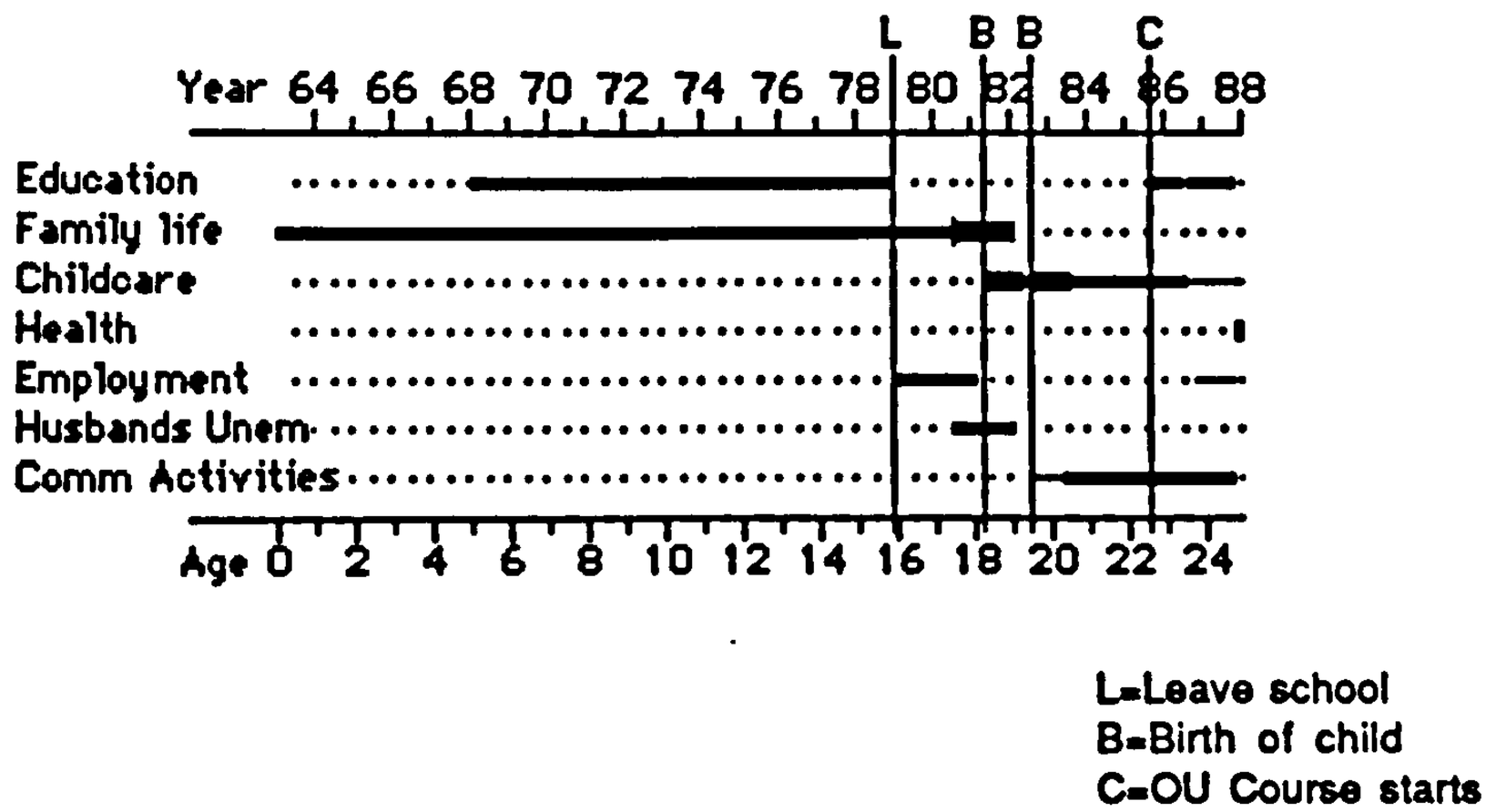
Table 9.16 Changes and course help for student number 144.

On average, students in this group have changes and find the courses helpful in more areas of their lives than the first group. This student is at the high end of the continuum regarding the number of changes and helpfulness of the courses. She differs from the average in this group in that she not only went onto further education but was helped by the OU courses in this. She is considerably older than others in this group and this may account for her having many more appliances; she also lives in a rented apartment. In her childhood she lived with both her parents, her mother always had a job, and their financial situation was adequate. She did some chores and was the youngest in a very large family. She is therefore in the subgroup which had family and economic stability in childhood and while she has had family stability as an adult she has had economic instability due to her husband's unemployment. As someone who has has to cope with unfamiliar economic instability she finds the courses particularly helpful.

Student number 145

This student is in the third main group who have had a separation and therefore experienced family and economic instability and is a single parent. Her lifelines are presented below:

Chart 9.3 Lifelines for student number 145 - with family and economic instability.



The place of the OU courses in her life is: after her separation; when her youngest is three and starts nursery; before she takes up further education and returns to paid work; before a health problem; while she is involved in community responsibilities and before she takes on others; and she had one close friend but did not know anyone else. There are six areas in which there are events around the time of the courses and afterwards. Because her separation happened over three years before the OU course started, it is not included as a change within the defined time period.

The same areas are influenced by the OU courses. She is helped in her childcare career; in returning to paid work; in taking up further education; in her community responsibilities; in her health earlier but not with her recent problem; and to make close friends. The table summarises the areas of life in which there were changes and help from the courses:

Area of life	Changes	Course Help
Education (FE)	Go onto two courses	Confidence
Family life	NA	see health below
Childcare	Youngest starts school	Realise children were normal
Health	Depression/miscrge.	Get confidence back after sep.
Employment	Starts job	Helped with CV and to get job
Husbands unem	NA	NA
Comm Activities	More comm resps.	Use what she learnt
Social	More close friends	Met someone in same situat'n
Total	6	6

Table 9.17 Changes and course help for student number 145.

Like others in this group she has a high number of areas in which there are changes and course help. She is similar to the group as a whole who are more likely to experience health problems and go onto further education and to be helped in going on to paid work, further education, community activities and in her social network. She is much younger than the average age for those with separations and this may be a contributory factor to why she has fewer appliances, and she is also renting an apartment. In her childhood she had both her parents, her mother worked and their families financial situation was adequate. She had an older brother and a much younger sister for whom she did a lot of childcare. She is in the subgroup who has a stable family and economic childhood but in adulthood experienced both instabilities. She was unfamiliar with instability and has found the courses helpful in a number of areas of life.

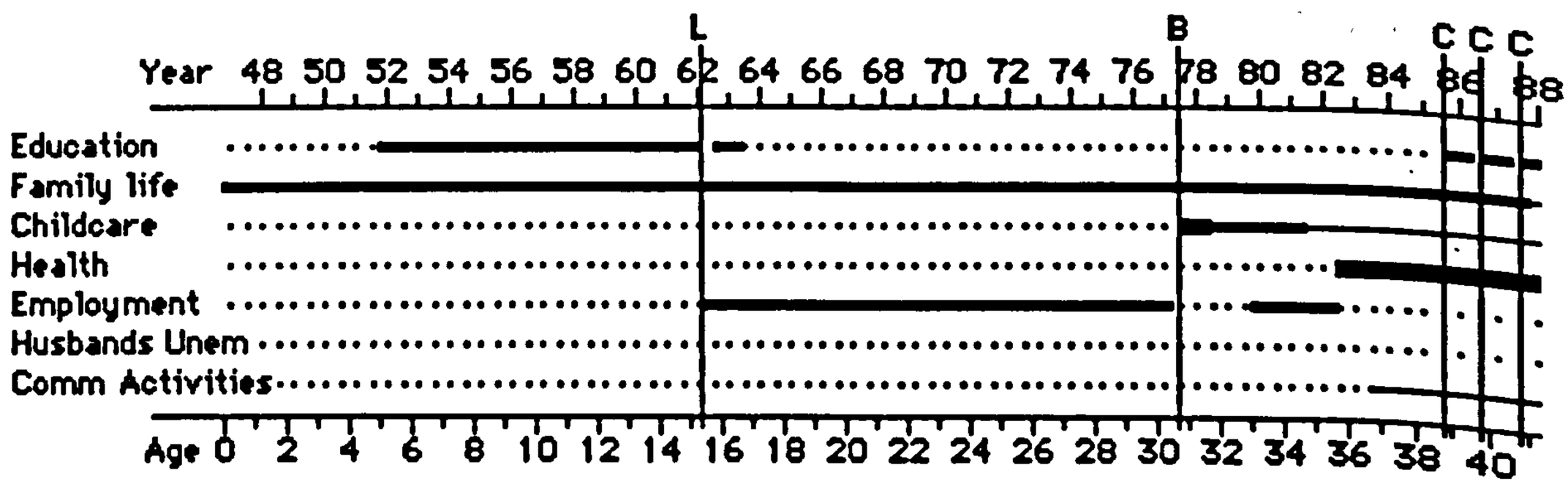
Student number 157

This student falls into the group not considered in detail who have not married but in her case she has a child. Her adulthood has therefore been in a stable family and economic situation compared to those with separations. Her lifelines are presented in chart 9.4 below.

The place of the OU courses in this students life is: while she was still living at home and looking after her parents; before her father died; when her only child was 10; after she had stopped paid work

due to ill health; and while she was involved in one community activity and she took up another after she started her second OU course. The areas of her life in which there were changes around the time of the first course and after are: education in that she went onto take further OU courses after the first; starting another community activity as a helper in a boys' club; and making close friends with the group leader. Also because her illness was affecting her life around this time and the courses may have helped, this is included as an event though it began over two years before the start of the course. Consequently there are four areas in her life in which changes are included.

Chart 9.4 Lifelines for student number 157 - with single family and economic stability .



L=Leave school
B=Birth of child
C=OU Course starts

The influence of the courses are in four areas as well: in childcare where the courses helped her give and take more in her relationship with her daughter; she enjoyed her first OU course and has taken two more; she has been helped with healthy eating and to converse better; and she has improved her social skills. The areas of life in which there were changes and help from the courses are summarised in table 9.18 below.

She is older than the average for the sample, she lives in her parents' rented home where she looked after them, and they have about the average number of appliances. She was an only child so she does not have many relatives nor has she many friends.

Area of life	Changes	Course Help
Education (OU)	Two more OU courses	Enjoyment
Family life	NA	NA
Childcare	None	More give and take
Health	Claus'phobia (ongoing)	Converse better, healthy eating
Employment	None	None
Hus. unem	NA	NA
Comm. Actvts	Helper in boys club	Not mentioned
Social	Made close friend	More assertive
Total	4	4

Table 9.18 Changes and course help for student number 157.

When she was young her parents' financial situation was adequate and both her parents were employed. Her childhood and adult life appears stable in terms of family and economically. Although she has a child, is involved in the community and now has claustrophobia, she finds the courses helpful only in a limited number of areas of her life.

Conclusions

The case studies were selected to include one from each of the main three groups regarding adult family and economic stability and one from the group who have not married. This group in which the final student is a representative is not analysed in aggregate on account of their heterogeneity, and is not included in the analysis of childhood and adult stability and the helpfulness of the courses.

The first student has family and economic stability and is in line with the general finding of not having many areas of her life where there are changes, and therefore does not find the courses helpful in many areas. The next student has family but not economic stability and she has many areas of change and finds the courses helpful in these. She is above average for her group for both changes and course help, and has more areas of change than the next student who is separated and therefore has experienced family and economic instability. The separated student is also above average

and again follows the relationship between number of areas of change and course help. The single student who has a particular kind of family and economic stability has a lower number of areas with changes and course help.

Each of these students had childhood stability but included stability and different kinds of instability in adulthood. The first had adult stability in both areas and found the courses least helpful; the second had economic instability in adulthood and found the courses helpful as did the student with both family and economic instability; while the student who remained single experienced family and economic stability did not find the courses particularly helpful. These are in line with the possible relationship where those like the second and third student who are unfamiliar with instability, find the courses most helpful; followed by those who suffered instability throughout their lives but who are not included in the case studies; and least helpful to those who are currently stable and also had childhood stability, and are represented by the first student.

Returning to the main questions we can answer in detail regarding the changes around the time of the courses. The students who participate in the courses experience on average changes in 4.7 areas of their lives around this time and afterwards. The highest number are in childcare where nearly three quarters have another baby or a child start nursery or school, followed by two thirds who have events in community activities and further OU courses, then over half in employment and further education, social networks, and health and a third in husbands' unemployment and a sixth in their marriage.

The place of the courses in students' lives can be described by their career profile which specifies the career type and the stage the first OU course began for each student in each of their careers (see appendix K). It is not possible to give a general answer which summarises the place of the courses in students' lives as each career is to some extent independent of the others, although they are also interlinkages. It is possible for two students to be in the same

career type and stage in one area of life but be in different career types and stages in another area. Furthermore the career types and stages are not necessarily sequential. Thus, any answer involves getting into the detail of students' lives and how students compare with others in particular careers, as has been done in earlier chapters.

The issue of whose lives are influenced by the courses is simpler to answer. Those who are most influenced are those who have changes in most areas of their lives, those least influenced have less areas in which there are changes. Furthermore, students with family and economic instability, followed by those with economic instability, have more changes and therefore find the courses more helpful than those whose lives are stable. It is possible that those who are unfamiliar with instability in that they had stable childhoods but instability in their adult lives may find the courses more helpful than those who are familiar with instability and those who have stability in adulthood, irrespective of their childhood experience.

Who else benefits - obviously their children, both in terms of their relationship with their mother and their health, and particularly in healthy eating. Second in importance to childcare are community activities, and the help the courses provide for these. In chapter seven we saw how many students are involved in community organisations and take on responsibilities concerned with ensuring that resources and facilities are provided for the community. Others work for caring agencies in the community and the courses help them in their work. Also social networks are strengthened through the courses and students talk to other people encouraging their participation and helping them with problems they have learnt about in their groups. In these various ways the courses contribute to the objectives of the social strategy and particularly help those who are most disadvantaged cope with changes and to make changes in their own lives, in their families and communities.

Chapter 10 - Contribution and Conclusions

Introduction

This chapter draws together the main conclusions of the study and considers the methodological, theoretical and policy contributions, which are presented in an order that relates mainly to chapters three, two and one respectively. A number of conclusions concerning each of the areas of life - education, family life, health, employment, community and social - are considered in earlier chapters and are presented briefly. In this chapter more general conclusions are derived relating the role of OU community education courses to the changes in people's lives and their social and economic circumstances. The extent that the methodology developed operationalises the concepts and provides practical techniques for conducting life course analysis is considered, and the limitations of the study are assessed and possibilities for further research suggested. The theoretical contribution of the study is reviewed in terms of the literature discussed in chapter two and a resource based model is proposed which links the helpfulness of the courses to the social and historical context. The contribution of community education to the wider processes of social and economic change and as a component of a social strategy which aims to intervene in these processes, is assessed. The implications for policy in Strathclyde and the Open University are considered.

Methodological contribution

Various methodologies - life history, evaluation and documentary analysis, have been applied to the main levels of analysis of this study which include: students' lives and reactions to community education; the Open University's Community Education programme and Strathclyde Regional Council's social strategy; and the wider social and historical context. The empirical work involved: data

collection, presentation and analysis and the contributions made by particular developments in methodology are reviewed below.

Data collection

The study has confirmed that the method of collecting life histories developed by Johnson et al. (1981) is robust and productive, and can be applied in the evaluation of community education. In a manageable time it is possible to obtain and write down a reasonably detailed life history as well as students' reactions to the OU courses. This method by-passes the elaborate and often unwieldy process of transcribing open-ended interviews. Recently the interview document has been simplified and modified for further work with old people (Johnson et al, 1988) and is being used to collect life histories as part of a longitudinal study of Open University undergraduate students (Morgan and Farnes, 1990). It is believed that this technique has considerable potential and could be used more widely.

This study faced difficulties in following up students up to two years after completing their courses and for whom no addresses were kept. The complex and sensitive procedures for locating and persuading past students to take part in the interviews requires knowledge of local networks and community facilities to which students are confident to return. Without the help of many people involved in community education in Glasgow this would not have been possible. These difficulties may have led to some bias towards those who continued to participate in OU courses or related activities and were therefore easier to contact. However, the success in reaching an adequate sample shows that it is feasible to undertake further studies in Glasgow requiring contact with students, and one has already has been completed (Hanna, 1989) and another underway (Houston, 1990).

While the sample size of 60 was justified at the beginning of the main study, in retrospect a larger or quota sample would have been useful, particularly to increase the numbers of students who had experienced separation. Also little exploration of the lives of

students outside the three main groups has been possible due to their small numbers.

The assistance of trained interviewers for the main study was arranged in order for the students to talk to people whose experience was close to their own. The data recorded was more complete and detailed than that collected by the author in the pilot interviews. However, this was mainly because the interviewers followed the procedure laid down in the interview document rather than to students' unwillingness to disclose details of their lives. Although the points raised by feminist researchers concerning the importance of shared experience have some validity, the author's association with the courses plus the fact that his experience and background was entirely *different* from the students may have encouraged them to talk openly in the exploratory and pilot studies.

Data presentation

The adaptation of Buhler's schematic presentation technique is important in this study, less in terms of showing the overall structural aspects of a life history and more in allowing activities and the linkages between events to be examined. Elder's work on the life course is central to this study, but his concepts have required operational development before they could be applied systematically (see definitions in appendix O). His call for a 'multidimensional concept of the life course (work, consumption, parenthood, marriage) that represents the interdependent careers of husband, wife and children' (Elder, 1981: 85) - has been taken up and developed into the main analytical tool where progress in these careers is represented as parallel lifelines. In other work, particularly counselling and teaching a single lifeline is frequently used for representing the course of individual's lives. Also Dex (1984) used a computer to draw women's employment careers showing childbirth and other events. Super (1980) uses a diagram showing parallel careers to make the general point about different roles through the life course. It is surprising that the technique of drawing parallel lifelines to represent the multidimensional careers of individuals does not appear to have been more extensively

applied. Even Buhler appears to have published only two examples and one of these refers to a figure from history. Recently this approach has been applied by Burke (1990) in analysing the lifelines of women returning to work. As this study has shown, with computer assistance a complete set or subsets of lifelines for a single individual or groups can be easily presented, extracted, collated and expanded. This method is being used to establish a life history database in the large scale study of Open University undergraduate students (Morgan and Farnes, 1990).

This study follows Dex's approach in displaying and then grouping lifelines into various types, and examining the sequence and coincidence of events. However, she points out that the techniques for handling this kind of data are in their infancy (Dex 1984: 3). In this study the place of the courses has been related to where students are in each career and the different types compared. By taking educational careers as the focus, the location of events on this lifeline is compared with events on the others. These methods enable a degree of precision to be brought to questions about possible links between events in the same and in different areas of life. The identification of linkages from the lifelines are then validated through students' comments about their lives and the influence of the courses. These developments of life course analysis have proved useful in interpreting the patterns of students' lives and in analysing their responses to the OU courses, and showing that where they are in their various careers affects their reactions to the courses. There is scope for applying these techniques in further studies.

Data analysis

Rather than using Riegel's model of a dialogue, the analytical approach used in this study identifies 'linkages' between components within and across areas of life and to the wider context. In addition to single linkages, *multiple* and *networks* of linkages have been used to describe more complex relationships between events and activities. The use of the term 'interaction' implies reciprocal effects and the term 'influence' or 'affect' has been used

to imply directionality. As we have seen this can be complex, for example where taking an OU course helps a student get a job which then leads to further training and this is also helped by the OU course. Dialogue represents one particular pattern of linkages and does not have the flexibility that single, multiple and networks of linkages have in describing what happens in people's lives.

The particular characteristic of the life course approach is that it considers situations where individuals, those around them, local institutions and the wider socioeconomic context are *all* interacting and changing. A process where all the main elements are in a state of change puts a premium on techniques that enable events to be represented in a way that facilitates inspection. In other words, on techniques that pin down the continual flux of change and makes this amenable to analysis. The approach adopted and developed in this study enables these changes to be analysed without losing sight of their complexity.

The application of the life course approach to adult education enables due attention to be given to the context of students' lives and the general procedure adopted in this study is to:

1) give attention to social and historical context of students' lives;

2) examine the patterns of students' lives;

3) consider where community education fits into these patterns and

4) assess what influence participation in the OU courses may have had.

A more traditional approach (eg. 'What difference does the programme being evaluated make?', Caplovitz, 1983: 391) is to concentrate on (4) and give less attention to (1) - (3). The approach used in this study moves towards what might be called 'indirect' or 'incidental' evaluation where participants in some activity are not asked directly about the activity at all, but are asked about their lives, what they have done and why, and how they feel about it (Johnson et al, 1981: 58; French, 1989: 14). The significance of the particular activity is assessed by how much and in what way it

features in their account. The traditional 'direct' approach is at the other end of a continuum and concentrates on the activity in question from the start and people are asked about their views or reactions, what influence the activity may have had, and finally about themselves.

Indirect evaluation shares with the illuminative and goal free approach the concern for the wider context but these are likely to focus on a particular activity or intervention. Methods which assess the extent that participation in an activity achieves specified objectives employ the direct approach. The indirect method not only provides a fuller picture of participants lives but is likely to reduce the tendency to over-report and to attribute undue influence to the activity under consideration. This study only goes some way towards this in asking students about their lives first and later moving onto the courses. However, students were well aware that the study concerned OU courses and it would have been difficult to persuade them to take part in the interview unless this connection was made clear. However, the indirect approach could be adopted for an evaluation of the influence of the social strategy generally on people's lives.

In chapter four the point is raised that analysing students' careers mainly in terms of patterns means that two students may have the same pattern but this could be extended over different time periods. The decision to analyse their careers in this way rather than to give greater emphasis to the timing and duration of the components means that sensitivity to historical time is reduced. On balance it seemed more important to examine where students were at the time of the courses in terms of the pattern of each career. With a larger sample it would be possible to differentiate between groups of students with similar patterns but located in different times.

The importance of social and historical context has been emphasised but there are methodological difficulties in relating events and trends to the lives of individual students. For example, in what way does the dramatic increase in the number of single

parents affect a student who is a single parent, or the life of one who is currently married? The increase in numbers means that there will be many more people in a similar situation, and there may be more awareness by the services and voluntary organisations of the needs of single parents. For the currently married student there is a higher probability of separation which may affect her view about marriage and her options. More attention needs to be given to these kinds of influences which could be explored through open ended interviews on how people see their lives and their views of why they make particular decisions and carry out certain activities (Clarke, 1987).

Summary assessment of the contribution to methodology
This study has drawn on and developed the methodology of other researchers. A set of practical techniques have been employed for collecting, presenting and analysing life histories and assessing the influence of a particular activity. These could be applied to other courses and students as well as to looking at the place and influence of activities and events outside education. For example, the impact of separation or unemployment on people's lives could be looked at in their own right using the same techniques as this study. Difficulties remain in tracing the influence of social and historical trends. Nonetheless practical methods now exist for using life histories in a wide range of social impact studies.

Contribution to theory

The contribution to theory is reviewed mainly with reference to the work considered in chapter two. This includes the life-span development theories, the life course and systemic approaches to adults' lives and to their participation in education. This leads to the development of a resource based model and to consideration of the nature of the linkages between the helpfulness of the courses and the socioeconomic context.

Life-span development

The students in this study are in Buhler's stage three - involving stationary growth and reproductive ability and stage four with the beginning of decline and loss of reproductive ability. These parallel changes in goal setting and activity phases and include 'definite and specific self-determination towards goals and fulfilments' coupled with a plateau in activities, around the age of 45 this moves onto 'self assessment of obtained results' and the beginning of a decline in activities. At a descriptive level the importance of childbirth and childcare in the lives of many of the students clearly matches the preoccupations of Buhler's phase three and for the older students health problems such as hysterectomies and 'women's troubles' show the onset of phase four. The concern at phase three with self-determination of goals seems a particularly appropriate description of what many of the students are engaged in, including those who are older. Although the next phase involves self assessment of obtained results, it appears that many students are also engaged in this, not because they have passed through the previous phase but because they began their family and parenting responsibilities early in their lives. At the time of the courses they begin self-assessment of the years as young adults where their lives were mainly driven by events, and they now have a little space to consider self-determination of their future. This supports the suggestion that women in continuing education may be encountering experiences ten years later than males experienced in their early periods of adulthood (Chickering and Havighurst, 1981: 22).

Problems with Buhler's concept of decline in activities were raised in chapter two and the limited number of students in phase four does not provide a basis for assessing whether there really is a decline in activities at this phase. Certainly the life courses analysed in this study show an increase in activities following the arrival of the first child and a diverse pattern of changing activities thereafter. Other chapters have shown that the OU courses are often associated with taking up new activities by both younger and older students, and there is no evidence of the beginning of a general decline. However, it may be that people who take courses are looking for

change in contrast to others who prefer to let their activities plateau or decline. The opportunity to take up courses may be important in preventing a plateau and decline by providing encouragement to go onto other activities.

Riegel's view of change occurring along interacting dimensions, including those of immediate others and the wider context, has been adopted in this study and the areas of life used in the analysis can be seen as subdivisions of his more abstract dimensions. Although Riegel considers stability to be transitory some areas of individuals' lives are more stable than others. In chapter nine attention is given to the way marital and economic areas of life may act as parameters affecting the changes in other areas. The relative stability of some students who do not separate or whose husbands do not experience unemployment, does not mean that their lives in these areas are unchanging, it means that the changes are within the limits defined. That is, changes in the marital relationship do not reach the point where separation occurs, and with husband's employment his job may change, overtime and pay levels vary and so on, but unless the change reaches the limit where he is no longer in employment this area of life is regarded in this study as stable. This is consistent with Ashby's (1952) concept of dynamic stability within limits.

The levels and events in adult life referred to by Riegel apply to the students who are mainly at his levels two, three and four. These changes which he says are mainly due to the interaction between psychosocial and biophysical dimensions certainly occur in students' lives, but the explanatory power of his levels is limited because of their level of abstraction.

Baltes model of the three types of influences on development: normative, age-graded; normative history-graded; and non-normative is useful in drawing attention to the distinction between individual and historical time, and non-normative events. The fact that age-grading of events occurs early in students' lives is particularly visible in schooling, it also applies to marriage and first

birth; history grading is especially important regarding the increase in the proportions acquiring qualifications changing since the war and in the provision of the OU courses (and other services) which were not available when the older students had young children. Also the decline in employment in the '80's and the differential affect particularly on males of different ages, shows the interaction between history and age graded influences. There are also non-normative events in students' lives but beyond identifying them as such and possibly relating them to age or history graded influences, the analysis proceeds in ways that do not draw further on Baltes' work in spite of his view that his paradigm is potentially useful in the search of causal relationships.

Education and the life course

In chapter two the tenets of the life course approach are presented and most of these have been drawn on, in particular the concept of multi-dimensional careers, including aspects of the careers of significant others (husband and children), which has been central to the study. The educational careers of students beginning with their schooling are examined in chapter four and the interdependencies between career lines, especially education with other careers, were analysed in chapters five to eight.

The main findings of the place and influence of OU courses in each area of students' lives are briefly summarised below, the theoretical implications are then considered.

Education: The analysis of students' educational careers showed that continued participation in OU courses was not dependent on school qualifications. As all students had taken at least one OU course it is not possible to compare students with people who have not taken any courses but this result suggests that lack of school qualifications is no barrier to participation in the courses.

However, those who take courses after leaving school and before their OU course are more likely to go onto further OU courses. Those who go onto non-OU courses do not have different

community responsibilities or take on responsibilities around the time of the courses. More of those in the group who do not begin community activities until after the course say that they use what they learnt compared to those with ongoing activities. A greater proportion of students with community responsibilities use what they learnt in the courses compared to those who are only involved in community activities. Those with ongoing responsibilities most use what they learnt. Also there is a close relationship between community careers and going onto further education in that those who are involved are more likely to take up other courses.

When they started the courses most students were able to benefit from positive support from their social networks. However, over half report that participation in the courses led to close friendships irrespective of whether they knew members of the group before the start of the course. Many of those who do not get involved in community activities knew other members of their OU group but do not make close friends because they have friends elsewhere, whereas many of those who become involved for the first time make close friends from the group. Those who start a community responsibility around the same time are less likely to make close friends from the group.

Education and characteristics

The earlier chapters show that the application of life course analysis to education provides a powerful way of examining educational careers and the place and influence of education on other careers. The study of educational careers also helps clarify and develop some of the main concepts of the life course. In chapter four it was pointed out that success at one level of education is usually required to enter subsequent levels. Progress at each level or component is often formally tested by an examination and the outcome represented by a certificate showing grades attained. This qualification becomes a characteristic of the individual and is carried forward to influence future educational and other opportunities.

In all areas of life participation in any activity contributes to an individual's experience and this becomes part of their characteristics which carry forward to subsequent activities and may influence their opportunities. The focus on education draws attention to the discrete and sequenced components of a career and makes explicit the way linkages between components operate. Because educational qualifications are required for entry to many jobs, it also illustrates how linkages operate across areas of life. Similar linkages may exist between the components of other careers and across other areas of life but they are rarely formalised, for example a period of membership of an community organisation is usually a prerequisite before becoming an officer in that organisation; experience in a voluntary job may 'qualify' an individual for entry into certain kinds of paid employment.

The linkages between activities or components are mediated through the individual's characteristics and it is these which affect their options (given circumstances remain the same). The characteristics an individual brings to an activity, such as participation in OU courses, also influences how they participate and what they get out of it. This experience, in turn, adds to their characteristics and may contribute to their future options.

An important question concerns the extent that being involved in an activity adds to or modifies an individual's characteristics. This varies depending on the duration, intensity and nature of the activity. For example, education is usually designed to continue over a period, to be intensive even if part time, and increase knowledge and skills. Routine activities are likely to have less influence than dramatic and intensive experiences[1]. A second question follows regarding the extent that the contribution to individuals' characteristics alters access to opportunities in the same or other

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[1]However, individuals are usually characterised by their routine activities. Bertaux (1982: 136) details how in France the demanding routines of bread making literally transform apprentices physically, psychologically and socially.

areas of their lives. A particular kind of education may have a major influence on individuals but not necessarily alter the opportunities open to them.

When participation in education is voluntary (ie. post 16), taking courses will depend on what else is going on in people's lives - their families, pregnancies, work, marriage, childcare, health and so on. We have seen how students' involvement in courses depends on and contributes to these other areas. Students' educational careers therefore, must be analysed with reference to these areas, and in this study participation in education is treated as the central strand around which the other areas of their lives revolve. While this may over-emphasise the importance of education to the students compared to their other concerns, it reflects the limited purpose of this study. It would be possible to treat any other careers in the same way, eg. their employment careers.

As noted above, the focus on education also shows clearly the influence of historical trends and events on the life course. Many changes in education, particularly in the numbers and grades of examination passes are documented and other changes due to legislation are introduced at a particular time, eg. the raising of the school leaving age. The impact of these changes can be seen in the life courses of students of different ages. Education also illustrates the dialectical relationship between what individuals do and historical trends and changes. For example, many pupils did not stay on and take examinations, and this contributed to the policy decision to increase the minimum leaving age, which in turn led to more pupils gaining qualifications.

Resources and the life course

However, there are tenets of the life course approach which have not been elaborated, for example in statements 2, 7, and 8 (p. 61) reference is made to individual and family resource management and utilisation. While lifelines make the concept of interdependent careers explicit, they do not *explain* the process by which resource management and scheduling take place. Key questions remain, for

example:

1) What are the different types of resources and how do they differ?

2) What is the relationship between activities shown in the lifelines and resources?

3) What resources are involved in learning and how does learning influence other activities?

4) What factors influence resource management by individuals and families?

5) How do resources link a student's reactions to the courses and to the wider social and historical context?

It is suggested in the conclusion to chapter two that an individual's characteristics can be considered as personal resources, and that their circumstances are determined by material and social resources. Personal, material and social resources provide the parameters within which activities are carried out. However, these parameters are not fixed, resources change and they change at varying rates - eg. hour-to-hour, day-to-day and over the years, the relatively slow changes in certain characteristics can be contrasted with changes in some circumstances on a day-to-day basis. The resources that vary slowly can be looked at *longitudinally*, others changing more quickly can be seen in *systemic* terms.

There is a relationship between resources and needs. Maslow's (1962) categories of human needs range from physiological, safety, belonging and love, esteem to self-actualisation. They are hierarchical in that lower order needs (physiological and safety) must be satisfied before higher order needs can be addressed. Resource depletion, ie. due to hunger or tiredness, must also be attended to within hours or at the most days, whereas other resources such as health (eg. fitness) can be depleted more gradually, knowledge can be forgotten, and social networks lost over a longer period. The rate at which these resources can be depleted may be of a similar order to the rate at which they can be accumulated, although there are occasions when sudden changes are possible. The use of the concept *resources* goes further than

that of *needs*; economics and the application of production functions show how resources can be combined and that there is some degree of substitutability in resource use and trade-offs are possible. Resources can not only be depleted and accumulated but distributed, transformed and shared. The flexibility of resources depends on whether they are personal, material or social.

The systemic models reviewed in chapter two suggest that a life event which demanded a change in activities is responded to with adaptive or non-adaptive responses depending on the individual's personal, material and social resources. The model based on the new home economics - where resources are used in activities to produce benefits which include other resources - is compatible with the models of adaptation to life events (Thorogood, 1987: 20). A further contribution comes from an adult learning theory (McCluskey, 1970) which identifies the need for a positive 'margin' between demands and resources to provide space for participation in adult education. Merriam (1987) points to adult learning theories based on the learners characteristics and those emphasising their circumstances. Also Aslanian and Brickell (1980) suggest that a trigger or life event leads to participation in learning in order to make a transition requiring competence in a new activity. Cross' (1981) chain of response model refers to barriers which create positive and negative forces some of which could be seen as lack of resources and the need to gain particular resources. Other aspects involve attitudes and expectations which are characteristics of individuals.

Put simply, what individuals *do* (ie. their activities) is a function of who they *are* (their personal characteristics), what they *have* (material resources), who they *live with* and know (social resources). In turn, what they do also adds to what they have and who they are. Learning requires something of the students (eg. their knowledge and experience) and of what they have (eg. time). It adds to who they are (eg. gains in knowledge and skills, improved health), and who they know (eg. extended social resources). These additions can be used to do new things.

Various personal resources are required for participation in OU courses, including time. Fortunately for many students this opportunity comes when their childcare load is lessened through a child being in nursery or primary school. In addition to time, other personal resources are needed - mainly enough confidence to participate, some knowledge and skills, and adequate mental and physical health; also required is the social support provided by group members and the leader. Studying the courses is an activity and therefore, like all activities, requires resources and contributes to some degree to well-being and other resources. The resources needed for participation are reasonably clear as is the contribution in terms of the resource gains of improved morale, strengthened social networks and increased knowledge and skills. These gains are the main concern of much educational evaluation and are often a sufficient justification for providing courses. However, this study goes further to examine how the increases in these resources are used for ongoing activities and help students to take up and apply these to various activities.

Resource management

Underlying the pattern of activities and the changes in activities are resource management decisions. For example, individuals and families have to take into account that - starting paid employment involves more income but less time for other things; a new birth means more time on childcare and expense; starting a course requires time and effort; taking on a community activity involves time and perhaps money; and so on. Scheduling these activities and balancing resources make up the resource management strategy of the family. This is similar to Wallman's (1984: ch. 2) concept of 'households as resource systems'; what Brannen and Wilson (1987: 11) refer to as 'strategies in the deployment of resources' within households; and what di Gregorio (1987: 272) calls 'managing' within different types of domestic 'economic units'.

Resource management strategies may involve short- and long-term decisions, in the short term individuals and families have to cope with the day-to-day demands of survival, with earning money, buying

food and so on. In the longer term decisions may be concerned with activities aimed at changing personal resources such as knowledge and skills, getting fit or building up friendships. The different rates at which resources can be accumulated and depleted require that activities are organised to meet short- and long-term resource needs. With few resources most of an individual's activities are concerned with making ends meet, those who are better off can engage in activities which contribute to personal resources in the longer term. McCluskey (1970) refers to this as having a sufficient 'margin' to engage in adult education.

The process is complex and fluid - different resources are being used at different rates for the same activity and different activities use different resources. Thus activities both draw upon and contribute to particular resources at different rates. The strategy adopted is therefore highly dependent on the opportunities available in terms of the resources needed to participate and the resource gains expected. Working long hours for low wages may not leave enough time for other tasks or provide sufficient income; shopping locally may be more expensive but save time; the cost of repairing a washing machine might be such that time has to be spent using a launderette instead.

What the lifelines show is the outcome of the strategy in terms of activities in response to individuals' and families' changing circumstances and as their characteristics develop. The characteristics of the individuals are important because opportunities are not open to everyone. For example, the jobs available are not just a function of what employers require and are prepared to pay but also of the individual's qualifications and experience. Being highly qualified does not guarantee you a job but usually increases choice and wage rates. Skill and experience in carrying out tasks are likely to affect the length of time and quality of the results. There is evidence that just as educational level can affect productivity at work it also affects household productivity and the efficiency with which individuals can combine resources (Michael, 1975; Terleckyj, 1976). An individual's health is obviously

important in what options they can take up. Other characteristics such as sociability are likely to influence the ease with which individuals can build up and maintain a social network.

As the students' circumstances change (eg. the number and ages of children, separation) and their characteristics (eg. health, qualifications, experience) develop, their activities also change and this occurs through a changing social and historical context. They experience schooling, start work and get married in different times and under different circumstances. They have participated in historical trends, particularly increased activity in the labour market, fewer children and more single parenthood. Major events such as the recession in the 1980's and rehousing in the 1960's affected them at different stages of their lives and as did the opportunity to participate in OU courses during the mid '80's.

Chain of linkages

The concept of resources also helps explain the chain of linkages between the socioeconomic context; the lives of families and individuals; and students' reactions to the courses. The distribution of resources and opportunities has a major influence on what people do and their well-being. Students' reactions to the courses are related to their resources and opportunities.

A chain of linkages between the wider socioeconomic context through to the helpfulness of the courses is shown in the figure below which represents a resource based model:

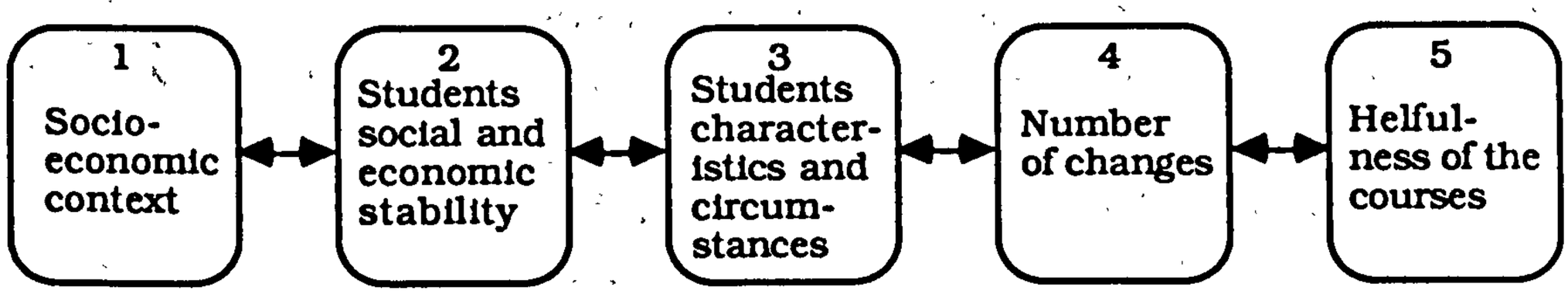

Figure 10.1 Resource based model showing linkages between socioeconomic context and the helpfulness of the courses.

The socioeconomic context affects individuals' social and economic position and stability which in turn is related to their characteristics

and circumstances. These include various personal, material and social resources which are allocated to activities. The number of changes in activities is linked to their material and other resources and to the helpfulness of the courses.

The links are two-way: helpfulness of the courses *interacts* with the number of changes; changes in activities involve reallocation of resources as well as contributing to resources. Changes of individuals' characteristics and circumstances interact with their social and economic stability; and individuals' social and economic stability has a dialectical relationship with the wider socioeconomic context. The links also connect different levels of analysis from the societal and institutional to the interpersonal and personal; and in the opposite direction.

Resource management centres around the individual's (and household's) characteristics and circumstances within the context of their social and economic position and stability and the wider socioeconomic context. It is concerned with the allocation of resources under changing circumstances and involves changes in activities. These linkages are examined in more detail below.

Link 1-2: Socioeconomic context and stability: The socioeconomic context has a major influence on the resources and opportunities of individuals and households. The primary distribution of resources and opportunities in society takes place through inheritance - genes, family, property; and the market - jobs, goods and services. In addition central and local government has a range of social policy interventions which have a secondary affect on resource accumulation and distribution. Government interventions involve distributing or redistributing resources and opportunities and encouraging or discouraging particular activities. These can involve provision of resources, regulation of activities and expropriation of benefits (Farnes, 1988: 37). For example, the knowledge and skills of an individual are influenced by access to education, and public provision of schooling and compulsory attendance (ie. regulation) are the main ways that education is distributed. Also the provision of

benefits for those with low incomes severely restricts what activities they can engage in for payment, whereas nursery education is a resource which releases time that can be used for new activities.

Distribution of resources also takes place within the household (Brannen and Wilson, 1987). Decisions are made about resource allocation, the activities each member undertakes and who benefits from these activities. Unequal and unfair distribution will affect the extent of domestication of particular household members (Farnes, 1988: 38). The socioeconomic status of individuals and households is based on their social arrangements and economic resources which affect their characteristics and circumstances and their resource management strategies. Social stability or instability is partly due to the employment and housing circumstances as well as individuals' characteristics.

Links 2-3-4: Instability and changes: The analysis in chapter nine showed that differences in social and economic stability affect the number of changes in other areas of life but did not explain how this might happen. The reason why family and economic instability is associated with more changes might be because the way both kinds of instability have been defined so that this involves periods of low income and lack of material resources. For example, we have seen that number of appliances and house buying are related to economic instability. Low income may also mean that when difficulties of one kind or another occur they usually involve a change of activities in one or more areas of life. Some substitution between resources may be possible, and responding to changing demands with limited financial resources may require frequent substitution of other resources and is likely to involve rescheduling or termination of activities. Whereas those who are better off have the resources to accommodate these sorts of problems without changing their activities. Even if students in all groups faced the same difficulties there might be fewer changes in activities for those in the group with more resources.

However, people with less resources actually face more difficulties

(Brown and Harris, 1978: 167). Not only do they have more problems, they have less resources for dealing with them and presumably have to make more changes to cope. For example, if a child becomes ill and must be taken to the hospital for regular treatment this is more likely to mean that the mother in a poorer family must give up paid work because she will need more time for public transport, and may be in a job where it is more difficult to get time off.

Furthermore with fewer resources a greater proportion of the household's activities will be essential and concerned with survival. These activities will be directed to meeting short-term hand-to-mouth needs, in contrast to longer term investment activities which lead to resource accumulation (including personal, social as well as material resources) and an increasing gap between households.

This view assumes that social and economic instability is related to low material resources and this affects other areas of life through the mechanism whereby common resources are drawn upon for a number of activities. With low income more frequent substitutions of resources and changes in activities are necessary to cope with change in demands and resources, and more of the activities are concerned with short-term needs. Thus, if OU courses contribute to resources which can be used in connection with a number of activities, then students with many changes will find learning contributing to many areas of their lives. However, the relationships between resources, changes and the helpfulness of the courses are unlikely to be simple monotonic functions and these are considered in the next two sections.

Link 4-5: Changes and helpfulness: The study found that there is a relationship between the number of areas in students' lives in which there are changes and the helpfulness of the courses. This is based on students who have completed courses in 1986 and does not include those who started courses in this year but dropped out for a variety of reasons. These students might have experienced so many changes or changes of such severity that they had to discontinue the

courses. Evidence for this possibility comes from data showing higher drop-out for younger students taking OU undergraduate courses which has been attributed to their lives being more unsettled, because those aged 18-21 experienced more life events than older students (Woodley and McIntosh, 1980: 254). If students have to discontinue, presumably they are unable to gain as much benefit as those who complete the courses. Thus, if the students who had dropped out had been included in this study they might have shown that the relationship between changes and the helpfulness of the courses, rather than continuing to rise, was actually an inverted U or V-shape:

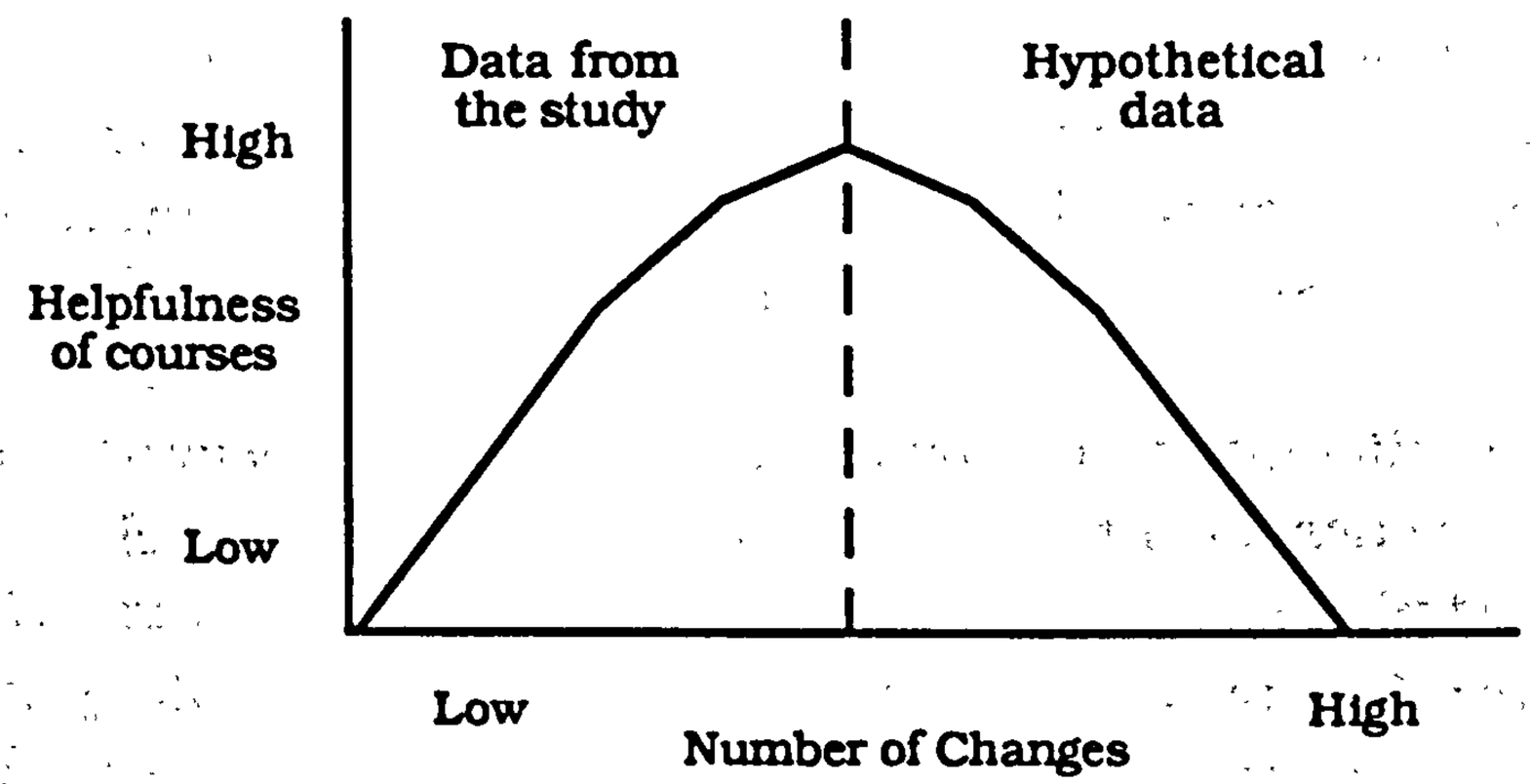

Figure 10.2 Hypothetical relationship between number of changes and helpfulness of the courses.

In other words, the number of areas in which there are changes and the courses are helpful might rise up to a point and, as the number of changes continues to increase beyond this point, the proportion of students who drop out might increase thereby reducing the average helpfulness. It was pointed out in chapter nine that the period of time over which the changes might have occurred could have been quite long and in the study no account was taken of the density or intensity of changes. It might be that either of these are crucial in affecting drop out.

Links 2-3-4-5: Stability and helpfulness: This study has also shown that those students who were economically disadvantaged (ie. either through separation or with unemployed husbands) are involved with

more changes, and the courses are therefore helpful in more areas of their lives. Those who are relatively better off economically are involved in fewer changes and consequently find the courses less helpful. It appears for these students that more material resources mean *less* benefit from the courses. However, people who are completely destitute would be unable to give time and attention to participation and if they did would have difficulty in making any changes for which the courses might help. In theory, extending the range of material resources downwards to include those with even fewer resources than the poorest students might also show an inverted U or V-shaped function which parallels that for the number of changes (but with the direction of the horizontal axis reversed). In other words people with very few resources would get little benefit from participation in the unlikely event of their taking part; those with a optimal level which enabled them to complete courses would benefit most, and those with more would be helped less[2].

Townsend (1979) attempts to demonstrate a relationship between resources and activities such that beyond a certain resource level the range of activities that individuals engage in drop disproportionately. He says:

> 'It may be hypothesised that as resources for any individual or family are diminished, there is a point at which there occurs a sudden withdrawal from participation in the customs and activities sanctioned by the culture.'
> (Townsend, 1979: 57)

He calls this point the 'poverty line'. It might be that this point is related to a hypothetical level of resources below which individuals who do participate in OU courses find them unhelpful. That is, they

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[2]This relationship between resources and benefit may be different with more academic courses (such as in the OU undergraduate programme). Higher levels of resources (time and money) are needed to participate and benefit and the vulnerability to drop out due to life events may be greater. The benefits may be more specific to a particular area of life, eg. employment and may include increases in income through promotion or a new job. Further work is needed to explore these relationships for other kinds of courses.

are involved in few activities (and changes in activities) to which the courses could be helpful. A certain resource level is necessary to sustain a range of activities and provide scope for changes before the courses can be helpful. However, individuals with resources above this point are involved in more activities, but they do not have to make many changes because they have the wherewithal to accommodate difficulties without changing their routines. Duke (1987: 326) makes a similar point when referring to those for whom relief is a priority before they are able to participate in a programme aimed at remedying their problems. Further research on the relationship between resource levels, the number of activities and changes could illuminate the dynamics of poverty.

A General Model

The study of educational careers has highlighted some of the mechanisms whereby linkages operate between and within components of careers and the influence of social and historical events.

The resource based model shows the chain of linkages between the helpfulness of the courses and the socioeconomic context. While the model focussed around participation in the courses and is systemic, the interactions between the components of the model proceed longitudinally through personal and historical time. Also the model can be extended so that helpfulness of the courses is replaced by the individual's reactions during their educational or other careers. Furthermore when considered in aggregate the actions of individuals, families and communities influence and are influenced by social change. A general model can be proposed which links an individual's life course and their reactions, to the socioeconomic context.

Figure 10.3 illustrates the general model and shows the linkages between activities in the life course and individual's reactions which add up to a number of changes over a given period and reflect resource management decisions. There is a vertical interaction up and down the chain as well as horizontal processes through time.

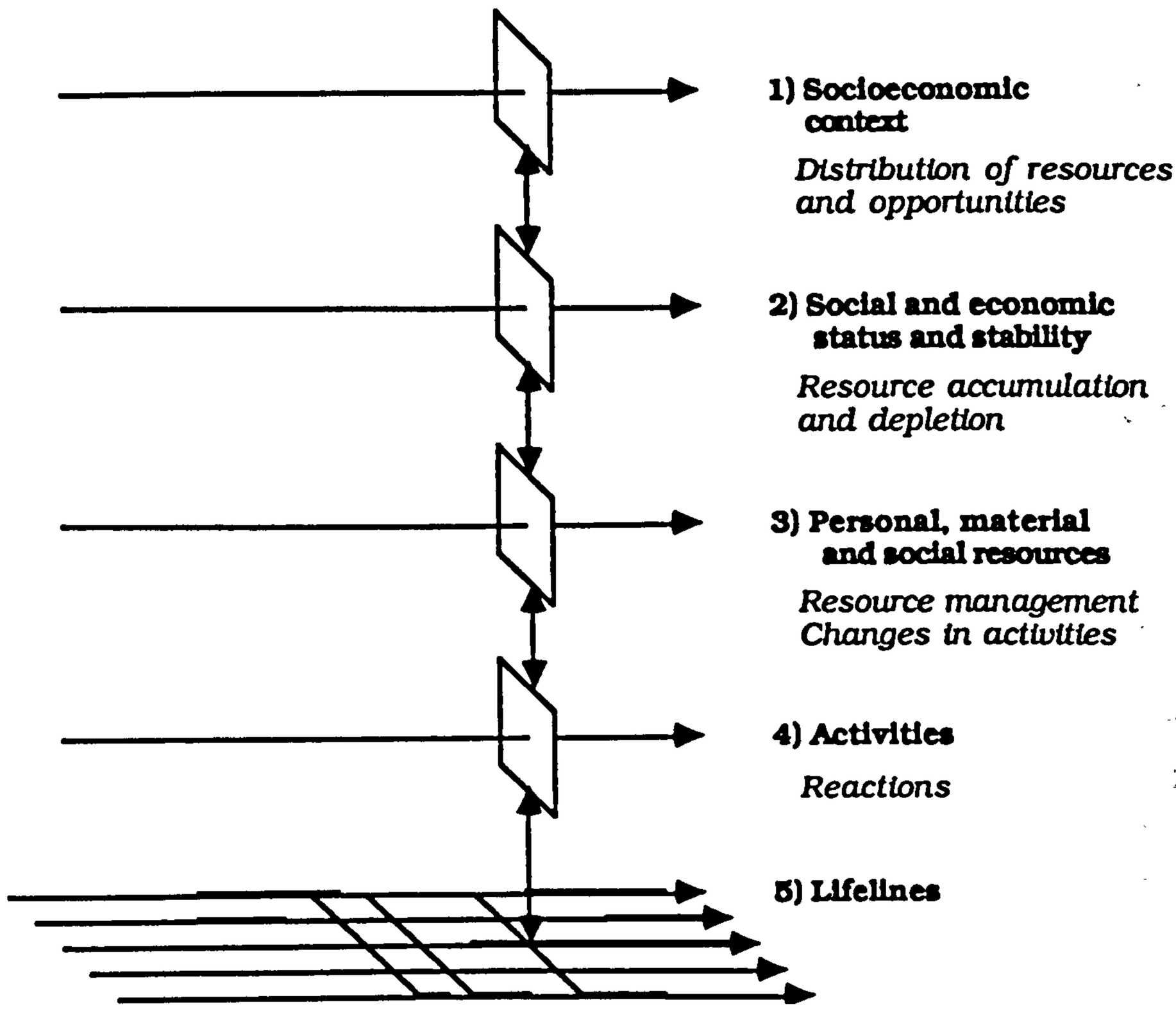

Figure 10.3 General resource based model showing linkages between lifelines and socioeconomic context through time.

Changes in the socioeconomic context eg. increase in benefit rates, interest rates, divorce legislation, will have a differential affect on stability depending on the resources of individuals and families and their vulnerability. Also decisions about moving to a different location, changing jobs, separating, and having children will affect families socioeconomic status and their resources. Socioeconomic changes may result in unemployment and pressures which lead to separation and alter the socioeconomic status of individuals. Through time changes will 'squeeze' individuals' and families' resources and further constrain what activities can be undertaken, and at other times may release pressure and make it easier to cope (di Gregorio, 1987: 283). Resource management strategies have to adapt to changing resources, status and context.

Central and local government, other institutions and other people

may attempt to intervene at particular levels, for example, by altering the context through legislation or regulations; distributing resources or providing services; making demands or offering help. These measures may connect with the lives of individuals and affect various points in the chain. How individuals respond or alter their resource management strategies will depend on the linkages between the change, their resources and their activities.

The social strategy can be seen as local government's attempt to alleviate the affects of changes in the wider socioeconomic context by intervening at the level of local institutions and services. The provision of OU courses is one service which can add to the personal and social resources of students and may lead to their participation in changes which affect the community and may influence the wider context.

Summary assessment of the contribution to theory

By focusing on educational careers, this study has illuminated the process whereby participation in a particular activity (eg. in a course) both uses personal resources and contributes to these, in other words a *dialectical* process. Education involves activities which lead to the acquisition of certain personal characteristics. At an institutional level this usually involves specifying entry requirements (characteristics needed for entry), the nature and duration of courses (learning activities), conducting examinations and accreditation (exit characteristics). By studying adult education and applying the concept of an 'educational career' we can see how this process interacts with other areas of life, and in particular how learning is used in new or existing activities. This has been described in terms of personal, social and material resources which enables an economic model to be applied in which resources are utilised and transformed in activities. The life course represents a pattern of activities in various areas of life (ie. careers) and is generated by the individual's resource management strategy. Individuals and families resource position is related to their socioeconomic status and the wider context.

The model makes explicit the linkages between the helpfulness of the courses, the changes in students' lives and their social and economic stability in the context of the social strategy and the recession. It maps onto the different levels of analysis on which the philosophical perspectives of social problems focus. The data collected illuminates some of the relationships - between helpfulness and changes and stability, and provides an explanation for the helpfulness of the courses, and predicts how the findings might be extended. It clarifies the nature of the linkages and suggests that the inverted U-shaped functions may be related to the difference between relief and remedy and to drop-out.

In examining the place and influence of community education in people's lives, the study has attempted to make connections between philosophical perspectives on social problems and community education, social theory, life course analysis, and adult learning theory. Community education is looked at in a context of people's lives and as social policy which has enabled a wider range of theories to be drawn upon than would be the case for a more limited evaluation study. While a broad framework has been built up, this requires further research and theoretical development.

Contribution to policy issues

This section addresses the research questions raised at the end of chapter one but rather than summarise the findings already dealt with in other chapters, key issues are picked up and discussed and policy implications are drawn out. The section concludes by pulling together the recommendations for Strathclyde Regional Council and the Open University.

Who participates

An important question is whether the students are disadvantaged or whether the courses only attract those who are better off. If single parenthood and husbands' unemployment are taken as indicators of disadvantage, then in the sample half the students had been

disadvantaged at some time. However, it does not follow that disadvantage is necessarily associated with single parenthood or that those whose husbands remain employed are not disadvantaged. But we saw in chapter nine that students with husbands unemployment were likely to have fewer appliances and unlikely to be buying their house. Whether those who had a separation were disadvantaged depends on when it occurred (eg. after a short first marriage) and what had happened after this (eg. not into a second marriage). Most of the students who have been single parents and those whose husbands have experienced unemployment have been poor and are disadvantaged by the criteria adopted by Strathclyde Regional Council. However, even though many are dependent on social security benefits, none of them are homeless, or have their children in care and in this sense perhaps they are not the poorest of the poor.

Compared to households in APTs, the students on average are better off in terms of housing in that a larger proportion are buying houses or flats and car ownership, nonetheless they include around the expected proportion who have unemployed husbands, or are single parents; and a higher percentage with large families. In chapter nine the students in the sample were grouped on the basis of family and economic stability and the better off students are predominantly in the stable group.

Regarding their educational background we saw in chapter four that half had no qualifications from school and only ten had five or more 'O' grades or Highers with a further ten with 1-4 'O' grades, the rest had 3rd Year Leaving Certificates. If leaving school without qualifications is taken as an indicator of educational disadvantage then half the students fall into this category. However, compared to adults in APTs, OU students have on average more professional qualifications (mainly related to nursing).

A further question concerns the proportion of the population in APTs who participate. There are approximately 60,000 women living in Glasgow's APTs aged 21-49 years (estimated from SRC,

1984) and less than one per cent received Certificates for OU courses in 1986. The cumulative number of students gaining one or more Certificates from 1981-87 is just over 2000 which remains a small proportion of the population. Looking at this another way, there are around 10,000 nursery places in Glasgow, as about half the students take courses while their children are at nursery then this is only 2.5% of the total number of mothers with children at nursery. This might extend to perhaps 5% taking into account that some children spend 2 years in nursery and mothers have more than one child.

While these average figures across the city are not high the participation rates in particular localities vary considerably. For example in one small APT the census figures (SRC, 1984: 59) show that there is a population of around 2000 and a total of 190 children under 5. In any year a maximum of roughly a fifth (38) of these would reach the age at which they were eligible for nursery school. In this area there is a very active nursery which only recruits children from the estate and the actual number of new students taking OU courses in the nursery each year for the years 1984-6 was: 19, 14, and 24. If all the children started nursery school and all their mothers began OU courses then this would give a maximum of around 38 students each year. On these assumptions these figures give an extraordinary high rate of participation, being over 60% of this target group in 1986. While these figures fail to take into account that most mothers have more than one child and some stay at the nursery for more than a year, this example nonetheless shows how on a local level that high participation rates are possible. This suggests that student interest exists and in theory rates at this level could be achieved across the city.

Given that there are 10,000 nursery school places in Glasgow, and that children can spend up to two years in nursery school, there are at least 5,000 mothers whose children start each year. If, on the basis of the participation rates above, half of these became involved in courses then this would increase the student total to 2,500. However, only half the students take courses through nursery

schools and there is less evidence of similar high participation rates in particular localities for students who take courses through other centres. Nonetheless it is conceivable that these might be expanded by a similar amount. Thus instead of a total of 500 or so students the potential based on best practice could be as many as 5,000 per year.

There appears to be considerable potential and the question is why are the numbers participating not greater? Limiting factors might include:

1) there is no clear cut policy objectives regarding participation targets.

2) more coordination is needed between agencies and staff involved in the social strategy (eg. community development, health service).

3) the amount of group leading that can be done on the margins of regular work, and the costs of employing additional group leaders.

4) the recurrent expenditure required for purchasing course materials.

5) coordination capacity, including distribution of material, marking of assignments, identification, supervision and support of group leaders.

Regarding the extent of policy integration between the use of the OU courses and other educational programmes and between education generally and the social strategy, the points made in chapter one are reinforced by a recent report (SRC, 1989a). A major consultancy exercise has been undertaken by the Institute of Local Government Studies (INLOGOV) for Strathclyde's Department of Education. Their first recommendation was that the department needs to move from an over-emphasis on detailed administration to an active role in managing the service so that it can work closely with parents and the community, and support elected members in promoting the council's social and economic strategy. To do this the department needs to clarify its values and policy purposes; develop the processes of management; and design an appropriate organisation (SRC, 1989a: 2). The problem of the past is that

'although the education department has a range of policy statements, it has no single document which sets out its fundamental aims and purposes so as to allow the coherent development of policy'. The new director of education proposes that this document should in particular indicate the place of education within the regional council's social and economic strategies (SRC: 1989a: 2). The director believes that 'the community education service should be more closely integrated into the mainline work of the department'. A review of the service has begun and it is likely that major changes will be proposed. Whether this will lead to an expanded and more integrated use of OU courses remains to be seen.

Who benefits

Students with family and economic instability; followed by those with economic instability have more changes and therefore find the courses more helpful than those whose lives are more stable. We have seen in previous chapters that helpfulness in a particular area may depend on the type of instability students have experienced - economic instability is linked to help in getting a job; family and economic instability to help in going on to further education and using what they learnt in community activities.

The small proportion of students who appear not to find the courses helpful are mainly those who are better off and whose lives are stable. Not included in this study are those who may have dropped out because they found the courses unhelpful or because they experienced too many changes. It is surprising that students stay with the course and gain their Certificate if they were not benefiting much. However, they may not have reported much benefit because the interview was sometime after the course and the methodology adopted may have failed to elicit what the courses meant to these students at the time.

People's lives intersect at various stages with educational (and other) opportunities which may or may not be relevant to their current changes. The opportunity to take an OU course may occur at

a time when changes are occurring in their lives and the course may be able to contribute to these changes and provide help in taking up other options. On the other hand, the intersection may occur at a time when little change is happening or is possible and the benefits from the course may be few. There are a number of possibilities:

1) Individuals may be in a period of change (or potential change) and recognise that an OU course might be helpful, and accept or seek out the opportunity.

2) Individuals may not be aware that they are in a period of change (or potential change) or that an OU course might be helpful, and therefore fail to take up or seek out the opportunity.

3) When there are few changes occurring or possible in individuals' lives they may nonetheless take up the opportunity of an OU course which turns out to be of little benefit to them.

4) If few changes are occurring or possible and individuals recognise that an OU course is unlikely to help much, and therefore decide not to take up the opportunity.

In the first group, individuals may need no additional support providing the opportunities are available. The second group may not be aware that they are in or could enter a period of change or that an OU course might be helpful, consequently they take no action. Individuals in the third group may merely take a course for something to do and may become disaffected and dropout, and perhaps should be discouraged from taking courses of this kind. The sample included students like this except that they had completed an OU course and may have taken another as well. They tended to be students whose lives were stable and were better off and they said they enjoyed the courses even though they did not find them very helpful. The fourth group may not wish to participate because they have few changes and do not feel the need to learn.

The target group for recruitment should be the second group. The study has suggested that those whose lives are in or entering a period of change are likely to be women who have undergone a separation or with unemployed husbands. There is the problem with those who may have too many changes or changes of such severity

that they would not be able to give time or attention to a course. However, sensitive outreach and counselling could help reach those who would be most able to benefit.

The way the courses are promoted could emphasise their contribution for those whose lives were changing or going to change. Outreach workers might be trained to help people recognise the changes that are happening and the potential for other changes in their lives. In Glasgow outreach and other workers might be introduced to life course counselling, and priority for course places could be given to women who have had a separation or have husbands with unemployment.

How students benefit

The influence of the courses on students' lives was summarised in an earlier section and in chapter nine the areas of life in which the courses were helpful were reviewed. An important issue regarding the influence is: to what extent are the courses restricted to helping students perform their traditional roles? Top of the list was health and in as far as the courses helped women tolerate or feel better about their position, this might be considered as contributing to their domestication. The next most helpful area was childcare - women's traditional role. However, it appears that many women also see this area in terms of potential employment (eg. in playgroups) and community responsibilities (eg. on Pre-5 Committees). While this is an important contribution it is nonetheless 'women's work' and low paid or is not paid at all.

The development of social networks enables women to support one another although when there are serious problems they usually turn to their family and to their mother in particular. The building of social networks is important for reducing isolation and enabling women to act collectively. Help from the courses is provided to students in their marital relationship and many gain in confidence and assertiveness, and there are examples of students who have involved their husbands more equitably in domestic activities. There are isolated examples of students who claim that the courses

enabled them to break out of failed marriages.

The extent that women are able to exercise political power and command resources for the benefit of the community remains a question. They doubtless contribute to the infrastructure of welfare and support for other mothers, young children and less frequently older people. They are also involved in more political fora such as tenants' groups and community councils but none of the students was involved in mainstream party politics, which may be partly due to the predominance of the Labour party throughout Glasgow.

There are a number of students who have become active in the community in roles which command limited power through channels opened up by the social strategy. Other students have remained in traditional roles in the workplace and community partly because of lack of opportunity and inclination. Education has the potential for personal development which may enable them to move out of traditional roles. Some students continue their education by taking courses which may help them get better jobs, for example in information technology, but this often is limited to keyboard skills for women. Whether the OU courses could do more on their own is questionable, what is important is that the social strategy continues to provide opportunities for participation and power which can be taken up in association with the courses.

The OU courses might give more emphasis to non-traditional roles although there are dangers in being unrealistic or going outside what women themselves want to or are prepared to do. The continued availability of further education courses provided at convenient times and places offering subjects which improve women's choices of jobs in Glasgow, is important. The OU might extend its range of courses to deal with employment related topics and political skills.

Who else benefits

It is not possible to make a realistic estimate of the numbers who benefit indirectly or to make a full assessment of the 'downstream'

affects arising from the courses. While it would be reasonable to include the children of students amongst those benefiting indirectly, the benefits or otherwise to their husbands are more problematic. Students who become more assertive and raise their aspirations can increase the strain on marriages and in the extreme this can lead to separation. This may be beneficial for the student's own development, but whether the husband and children benefit in the long run would be difficult to assess. While making friends and deepening friendships with other students does not extend the number benefiting it is an important outcome of participation. Students also mention using what they learn from the courses when talking to and helping friends and relatives who are not involved in the courses and these might be considered as benefiting indirectly.

Two questions concerning community activities are asked in chapter eight: first, do the courses help students participate in and take responsibility for community activities; second, do the students use what they learn in community activities? We saw that many students go onto community activities and responsibilities but it would be misleading to claim that the courses were entirely responsible for this. On the other hand, it is reasonable to point to students use of what they learn and recognise that this may benefit others.

The extent that the OU courses encourage and help students go onto further education could be claimed as an indirect benefit for others in that the students' participation helps make up the numbers so that courses are viable and therefore continue to be available to other potential students. Also students may use what they go onto learn from further education in the community, either in voluntary or paid activities.

Assessing the indirect benefits to the community poses other problems. Take for example a student who is encouraged by the courses to run a playscheme, and uses what she learnt to help the children in the scheme. It would be unreasonable to count all the children and their parents as indirect beneficiaries from the course

because someone else might have run the scheme if the student had not. Also it would be difficult to evaluate the extent that the courses contribute to the children enjoying a better scheme because the playleader was using ideas from the OU courses.

The help the OU courses provide to students in getting a job may mean that for the student this is a real benefit. However, the point was made in chapter one that getting the job may have been at the expense of someone else, in which case there may be no overall benefit to the community. Except where the job involves services to the community and the course enables the student to do the job better than a non-student.

The criticism has been made that adult education provides a ladder out of deprived communities and an escape route for a small number of working class elite, thus removing selected individuals from their background and siphoning them off into the middle class (Lovett et al, 1983: 37; Finch, 1984: 92). This deprives communities of potential leaders and weakens them. To what extent do the OU courses do this? We have seen that in Glasgow the courses attract people ranging from those who are educationally disadvantaged to those with highers. The main way the courses might offer an escape route is to provide a stepping stone to further education, professional qualifications and a higher income, and the chance to move out to a better area. In chapter four the range of courses that students went onto were examined, these were academic, vocational and practical courses, and most of the academic courses were being taken to improve employment prospects. It was noted that no students went onto higher education and only one went on to professional (nursery nurse) training. In some ways this might be regretted, in others it shows that students have a functional and perhaps realistic approach to further education, and they are not aiming at higher education possibly because of the high (opportunity and real) costs involved. However, there is no evidence of students turning their backs on their communities and as we saw in chapter eight, many take on community responsibilities and go onto further education in connection with these. Not only do they provide

leadership, they are prepared to take further courses to improve what they do for their communities.

The OU courses and the social strategy

In chapter one it was pointed out that community education could focus on a number of levels including individual, family and community and the wider socioeconomic context; and could have an individual pathology, service improvement and a social action orientation. While the OU course objectives might emphasise decision making and collective action there was no guarantee that this would be achieved. This study has shown that the courses do provide help in students' domestic and family lives and in their community participation and responsibilities. Through taking on responsibilities in committees and action groups they are able to work towards securing resources for the community.

The relative emphasis given to changing people's characteristics or their circumstances distinguishes the individual pathology, service improvement, and social action approaches to social policy. Community education needs to operate in a wider context of measures aimed at changing circumstances to avoid a narrow compensatory approach which attempts to alleviate poverty simply by changing individuals' characteristics.

Given that the social strategy aims to involve communities and redistribute resources to APTs then the encouragement and help provided by the courses contributes to fulfilling these aims. A measure of the contribution of the courses to the success of this strategy through more widespread and informed participation is hard to assess. There are impressive examples of students who have become active and have a role in developing services for the community which have attracted financial and other kinds of support. However, they may have been individuals who would have done this anyway and their participation in the courses may have been relatively incidental. On the other hand, the students in this study said that in their view the courses were helpful and supportive. At various stages in their lives and with particular

opportunities in the community many people do become involved and make a contribution which benefits others. The OU courses provide an opportunity in the context of others and we have seen how becoming involved in a community activity can lead to taking an OU course which then leads to other activities and responsibilities. Personal interest in learning about child development can lead to taking on playleading and to involvement in Pre-5 Committees. The courses can help in coping with a separation and lead students to set up a support group for others. The personal need to gain employment can lead to working for the community and applying what has been learnt from the courses. Taking on further training may equip students to provide a service for others.

In all these examples the courses contribute at a variety of levels and help individuals make changes in their lives and take action which benefits others. Much of the action involves creating and securing resources which make a limited contribution to redistribution for the benefit of deprived areas. While this may slightly enrich deprived communities the major determinants of their deprivation remain the lack of jobs and investment. The limited abilities of communities to create resources (through education and self-help) and for local authorities to provide resources is insufficient to counteract wider structural factors. Changes in these factors, which include government policy and private investment, are needed to make a major difference to the resources and life chances of those in deprived areas.

As a concluding assessment of the use of the OU courses in the social strategy, Duke's ten issues to bear in mind when considering policy related to any adult education and development project, can be applied (Duke, 1987: 328). The issues are presented as questions with brief answers:

1) Is the beneficiary likely to be the individual, the group, or the whole social and political system?
This study has identified how individuals have benefited from the courses, and how this has led to strengthened social networks, their

taking on community activities and responsibilities which have benefited others. The courses contribute to the social infrastructure of disadvantaged communities and encourage community participation to improve services and to gain resources for the community. The Regional Council believes that community participation will improve the political process. However, the wider social and political system is little affected by students' participation in the courses.

2) Is a longer-term conscientising dimension included?
Students are encouraged to gain insight into themselves and their circumstances, and to make decisions and take action in the light of this. The groups share experience and discuss problems related to their common circumstances, and students report increases in self-esteem and awareness. In the longer-term they apply what they have learnt to other activities and raise their expectations regarding their options.

3) Is dependency likely to increase or diminish?
Dependency is likely to diminish due to students taking more control over their lives.

4) Will there be some element of mobilisation, or is any gain to ordinary people dependent on 'trickle-down'?
The courses contribute to people taking action collectively and organising committees, action groups and self-help. However, the central government's policies for economic regeneration are largely dependent on 'trickle down' for any benefits to reach ordinary people in disadvantaged areas.

5) Is there any discernible alignment of popular with political will?
There is considerable alignment between the will of the participants and that of local government and its social strategy, and with the Community Education Service and the Open University Community Education programme. However, there is little alignment between the Regional Council and central government.

6) Is the project participative, or imposed from above?
Groups may organise themselves and then seek resources (ie. funds for course materials) so that they can take the courses. Where an initiative is taken by a group leader, the opportunity to join a group is offered to potential students. The demand comes from groups or group leaders, with coordination and facilitation provided by the Community Education Service.

7) Will it be limited to relief, or contribute to remedy?
Community education provides little material relief (but some psychological and social relief from low morale and social isolation). It aims to contribute to remedying the disadvantaged situation of participants in conjunction with other measures which include providing social and economic opportunities.

8) How explicit, and how likely to be effective, is the link with the other, more direct, development functions?
There are supposed to be links between the use of the OU courses and other development functions through the social strategy, but explicit policies are lacking. Indirect links are made through the participants who use what they learn in development oriented activities, particularly childcare services and their management.

9) Is the social and economic role of women recognised, and do education and development projects accurately reflect this in their allocation of resources?
The main participants in the project are women and the courses contribute to their social role in childcare and many find the courses help them get jobs. Compared with the expenditure on schooling and higher education this project involves minute funds, more expenditure is required to enable more women to participate.

10) Is the programme monitored to ensure resources reach the poorer and more needy?
The programme is only offered in Areas of Priority Treatment but no criteria are imposed on those who come forward to participate. This study has shown that around half of the sample are disadvantaged by

the criteria of the social strategy. More targeting might achieve better resource distribution to those who have experienced social and economic instability, however, this would involve a more top-down approach.

The programme scores well on the questions on: conscientising, dependency, participation, orientation to remedy, and women; there are some reservations concerning the questions on: the beneficiaries, mobilisation, alignment of political and popular will, and monitoring resource distribution; and it is weak on explicit links with other development functions.

Strathclyde Regional Council policy issues

Strathclyde Education Department has recently reviewed their work and the report emphasised the need for strategic planning, and to align the service more to the social and economic objectives of the Regional Council. A review of the Community Education Service is currently underway and is likely to make similar recommendations and propose new management structures. It is nearly ten years since the Open University/Strathclyde collaboration was established and the OU courses have become an regular part of the community education provision in Glasgow. It is time that formal liaison with the Open University was re-established, the use of the courses reviewed and consideration given to the future.

This study has shown that limited success in providing community education has been achieved through collaboration between the Open University, Strathclyde Regional Council and other agencies. What has been achieved has been against a background of declining employment and increasing poverty, while the social strategy has expanded educational and community opportunities. The courses have helped students take advantage of the expanding community and social opportunities for their own benefit and for the benefit of others. The courses are successful in attracting disadvantaged students and provide practical help particularly for those who experience family and economic instability. The participation rates achieved in certain areas suggest that there is scope for substantial

expansion. Further policy development is needed involving targets and more effective coordination across community services in Glasgow.

The methodology adopted in this study not only has implications for how research on community and adult education can be carried out but also for the curriculum. The use of life history and life course methodology can give students insights into themselves, their past and help them take stock of their lives. An appreciation of how their lives have been part of community and social history can give meaning to people's experience and a sense of belonging. Involvement in documenting life history and community/social history can enable people to take more control of their lives and their communities. These methods which include oral history, life stories, community surveys, local history, participative research have been used in community education (Lovett et al, 1983: ch 8; Fletcher, 1980b). Further evidence of the increase in interest in these methods comes from a group at the Open University who recently put forward proposals for a series of courses on family and community history (Darlington et al, 1990). Also London University has launched a Diploma on Mid- and Later life Career Planning and Masters in Life Course Development (Blaikie, 1990).

The massive changes in Glasgow and their interaction with people's lives have been touched upon in this thesis. To the people of Glasgow this has been for real, it is their lives and experience, and they have responded to and contributed to these changes. Recognising and documenting this through local studies could give them a greater sense of their part in history and encourage them to create change and make their own history.

Recommendations: Strathclyde Regional Council should:

1) Propose the re-establishment of formal liaison between itself and the Open University.

2) Draw up a strategic plan for the use of the OU courses to contribute to the social strategy and involving target numbers and target groups.

3) Develop collaborative policies and working practices for using the OU courses to contribute to the social strategy objectives of various services, eg. Nursery, Primary, Secondary and Further Education, Social Work, Community Development, Health, Housing, Recreation, and the Voluntary Sector.

4) Develop policies within the Education Department which fit OU courses into a coherent range of educational opportunities and enable students to progress to and from OU courses.

5) Draw up recruitment procedures for OU courses, including admissions counselling (eg. helping individuals assess the scope for changes and how the courses may help), and exit counselling (ie. what to do next).

6) Recruit and train ex-students as group leaders, and allocate resources for payment of group leaders.

7) Systematise record keeping and collect statistics to monitor trends and achievement of targets; carry out evaluation. Continue to encourage research and exploit this for staff training and development, funding and policy evaluation.

8) Set up life history and community/social history workshops, develop guidelines for analytical and action oriented work and publications.

OU policy issues

Not only is there potential for expansion in the use of OU courses in Glasgow, it is likely that potential also exists in other cities in Britain. However, the Open University's failure to achieve similar schemes anywhere else in spite of repeated attempts raises questions about the particular conditions in Glasgow. No other cities in Britain have the same political commitment to tackling deprivation, but neither do they have such enormous problems. Also the organisation of community education in Scotland underwent major changes following the Alexander Report and emerged as a stronger service compared to elsewhere in Britain where this kind of work has been more fragmentary.

Many of the courses being used in the programme are aging and some were written over ten years ago. There is a need to remake the courses and develop new ones to maintain the topicality and vigour of the programme. But the enormous cost of creating new

courses and the lack of funding for Community Education at the OU means that production of these kind of courses has virtually ceased. There could be scope for reviving methods of course development based on the content of group discussions (Farnes et al, 1981) and devolving this work to groups in Glasgow. Also as pointed out above, the methodology of this study suggests that life history and community/social history work could be carried out by local groups and help them take greater control over their lives and their communities. While there has been extensive evaluation of the courses (see bibliography in Farnes et al, 1986), the achievements of the programme is not well known. There is a need for publication, further research and contributions to theory.

Recommendations: The Open University should:

1) Propose the re-establishment of formal liaison between itself and Strathclyde Regional Council.

2) Make learning materials/courses available for work in disadvantaged areas at marginal costs.

3) Devolve an automated marking system for the assignments to release more time for coordination and support.

4) Encourage the recruitment and support the training of ex-students as group leaders in Strathclyde.

5) Provide assistance for monitoring and evaluating the use of OU courses in Strathclyde, carry out further research and theoretical work in Strathclyde, maintain contact with current research.

6) Develop OU Access policy to facilitate transfer from OU Community Education courses to other programmes through special schemes, particularly in Glasgow.

7) Publicise the findings of this study to show how the courses contribute to Strathclyde's social strategy.

8) Identify local authorities with a political will for community education and social development and the potential for collaborative projects, establish contacts with key decision makers.

9) Identify departments in central government where the political will exists for developments to which community education

might contribute (eg. family policy, women's involvement in the labour market).

10) Press for changes in OU and government policy regarding funding for Community Education.

11) Produce a pack of learning materials for analytical and action oriented life history and community/social history workshops, and re-establish methods for generating learning materials from group discussions.

12) Ensure that courses challenge traditional roles and encourage social analysis and action; and recognise multiple exit and varied application of what is learnt.

13) Develop learning skills and return to work courses which build on existing knowledge and skills.

14) Apply social policy analysis, life course methodology and extend the theoretical base in other studies including OU undergraduate programme and overseas educational projects. Build up research links with Glasgow University Department of Adult Education and Warwick University International Centre of Education in Development.

Summary assessment of the contribution to policy

The contribution of the study to policy involves policy analysis and policy evaluation. The thesis began with a policy analysis of the main agencies connected with the use of OU courses in the Regional Council's social strategy. The application of Duke's conditions for success - including the alignment of political will, horizontal integration between agencies and increasing opportunities; together with the philosophical approaches to social problems and community education - enabled the policy framework to be assessed. There were alignments between popular will and the political commitment of the Regional Council and with the OU Community Education programme. Central government policies on the whole are not conducive to the social strategy and the dramatic increases in unemployment restricted the opportunities of people living in APTs. The social strategy led to an increase in community opportunities, including the OU and other courses and pre-5 provision, and the study has shown that OU courses help students take up these opportunities and contribute to the well-being of the community. However, there is a lack of clarity in the role of the

courses in the social strategy and in how they relate to the objectives of other services.

Policy evaluation was carried out by obtaining life histories of a representative sample of students. This revealed that at least half had been socially and economically disadvantaged, and many were educationally disadvantaged. The research showed that the courses were most helpful for those with most changes in their lives and it was the students who had experienced social and economic instability who benefited most. In other words, the OU courses reach people who are the targets for the social strategy and these benefit most from the courses. These results suggest that policy development, including more specific targeting, could result in these groups being reached in larger numbers.

The study provides further understanding of the policies and socioeconomic conditions in which large scale community education can make a contribution to social development. Its methods provide an approach to policy evaluation through the study of people's lives in social and historical context. It has attempted to add to our understanding of personal and social change and of how people can be helped to make their own history.

A final word:

> '... And I think what happened in the city basically was that the women of Glasgow changed the city. The women got together and formed committees, all the committees were 80% female ... So you have got machismo city transformed by women - and that's an interesting thing, maybe the first city in Europe. Maybe that's what we should be celebrating.'
>
> Charlie Gormley, 1990

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Appendices

Appendix A - Synopses of Open University Community Education Courses

Included below are the courses taken by the students in the sample, this is less than the full range of courses. For details see the current edition of Open Opportunities available from the Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA.

First Years of Life **Code P911**

The First Years of Life is intended for parents, parents-to-be and others in looking after small children. The course was produced in collaboration with the Health Education Council and looks in detail at the stages of life from conception to the age of two. *The First Years of Life* examines child development and discusses some of the questions of major concern to mothers and fathers, such as induced and natural birth, breast and bottle feeding, toilet training and returning to work after a baby. The study pack is based on eight booklets. It begins with the conception of the baby and goes on to look at ante-natal care, the birth, the pattern of your baby's development from three months to one year and then from age one to two. It also looks at the developing relationship between you and your child as well as some of the wider problems of growing up. Students receive additional information booklets, leaflets, posters and a cassette about relaxing, talking and singing with your child. The associated television programmes which extend on topics raised in the course are available on video cassette.

The Pre-School Child **Code P912**

The Pre-School Child follows on from *The First Years of Life* and is for parents and others involved with children aged two to five years. It was produced in collaboration with the Health Education Council and the Pre-School Playgroups Association. The study pack is based on a large format full-colour book with eight main chapters. The course looks at both the physical and mental development which takes place during this lively age range. The book examines in detail many topics on which parents may have worries; it looks at how to deal with awkward questions about things like death and sex, as well as focussing on the emotional development that takes place as children grow. A lot of the study time is spent in activities like completing quizzes, observing a child's behaviour or playing simple games with your child or children. The pack includes a cassette, posters and other leaflets linked to the course and there are four television programmes available on video cassette that look in greater detail at topics raised in the text.

Childhood 5-10 **Code P913**

Childhood 5-10 is one of the series of courses for parents and has been developed in collaboration with the Health Education Council. It covers the years from when your child starts school through to early adolescence. This course will help you to understand how your child sees the world, how this affects his/her behaviour and how this might in turn affect yours. It helps you find out more about how children grow and learn, and because children don't do things in isolation, the course also looks at your family, your child's school, and activities in the community where you live. As well as a specially written large format, full-colour book *Childhood 5-10 - a parent's guide*, the study pack includes a cassette tape, booklets, leaflets and other study information. Like the other parenthood courses *Childhood 5-10* involves observing and playing simple games with a child. There are four television programmes available on video cassette.

Parents and Teenagers **Code P914**

Parents and Teenagers is designed to help you understand how your teenager is developing, and how to build up your own confidence, knowledge and skill as a parent. The teenage years are a time of rapid change and both parents and teenagers need to develop new patterns of behaviour. *Parents and Teenagers* does not pretend to have all the answers, not to be able to tell parents what to do in every situation. What it does do is give you a framework for looking at your own life and making decisions about what is best for you and your teenager(s). The course is activity-based and you will be involved in: examining your style of parenting and the way you and your teenager communicate, role play and discussion making about practical planning. There are case studies, and also questionnaires and charts to help you analyse your own experience and ideas. The study pack is made up of: a course book which covers an overview of adolescence, the parent's role and the teenager's life tasks; a separate Life Skills package - two audio cassettes and booklets, which help parents build up communication, decision making and negotiating skills; additional support information. Four programmes which follow the theme of how the teenager's self-image develops through his/her relationship with parents, friends and others are available on video cassette. The course has been produced in collaboration with the Health Education Council and the Scottish Health Education Group.

Health Choices **Code P921**

Health Choices is a course about feeling good about yourself, getting on well with others, keeping in good shape - physically and mentally - eating wisely and well, handling stress, choosing what you want to do and how to change your ways. This course has been produced in collaboration with the Health Education Council and the Scottish Health Education Group. It deals with many aspects of health including diet and nutrition, personal relations, stress and emotions, sex and changing old patterns. *Health Choices* is not about illness or disease. Instead it aims to help you take stock of your lifestyle and make your own decisions about what you want to change and then shows you how. *The Good Health Guide* is a specially written 256 page full colour book which forms the main text for this course. Students will also receive booklets, posters and leaflets and a cassette package. Four programmes are available on video cassette if required.

Healthy Eating **Code P964**

This course discusses the changes that need to be made in the average national diet, as a result of recent health reports, together with the factors that actually influence our choice of food. The course has been produced because of the enormous increase in public interest in nutrition generated by the publishers of the NACNE report (prepared for the National Advisory Committee on Nutrition Education by an *ad hoc* working party under the chairmanship of Professor W P T James). The report breaks new ground in specifying for the first time desirable target intakes for certain categories of food. Information is given on the new nutritional guidelines for health education in Britain and students are helped examine the options and constraints operating in their personal circumstances in order to make their own changes in what they buy and eat. The study pack is in two parts:

Part 1: New Guidelines for Healthy Eating deals with what the food experts are advising - to decrease our intakes of fats, sugar and salt and increase our intake of fibre - and the implications of this advice for everyone. Should you change your diet? Do you want to change your diet? These questions, and many others, are discussed. The activities and case-studies will bring you up-to-date with the new dietary advice; they will help you examine your diet, decide what's best for you to eat, and put these changes into practice.

Part 2: Patterns of Eating shows that taking a whole new approach to food isn't as hard as you may think. It deals with our choice of food and examines a wide range of issues to do with individual patterns of eating, and looks at the possibilities and implications for change. Topic include: changes in national food consumption; different styles of eating; how we absorb ideas on food from other cultures; eating out and entertaining; childhood and food influences; media images of food and eating; vegetarianism; dieting; some of the moral issues connected with food and what's available in the shops. The activities and case studies will help you look at your own patterns of eating and what changes you would like to make.

Two audio-cassettes include discussions which explore many of the ideas further. The pack also contains an introductory guide, resources guide and various leaflets giving information on food and nutrition.

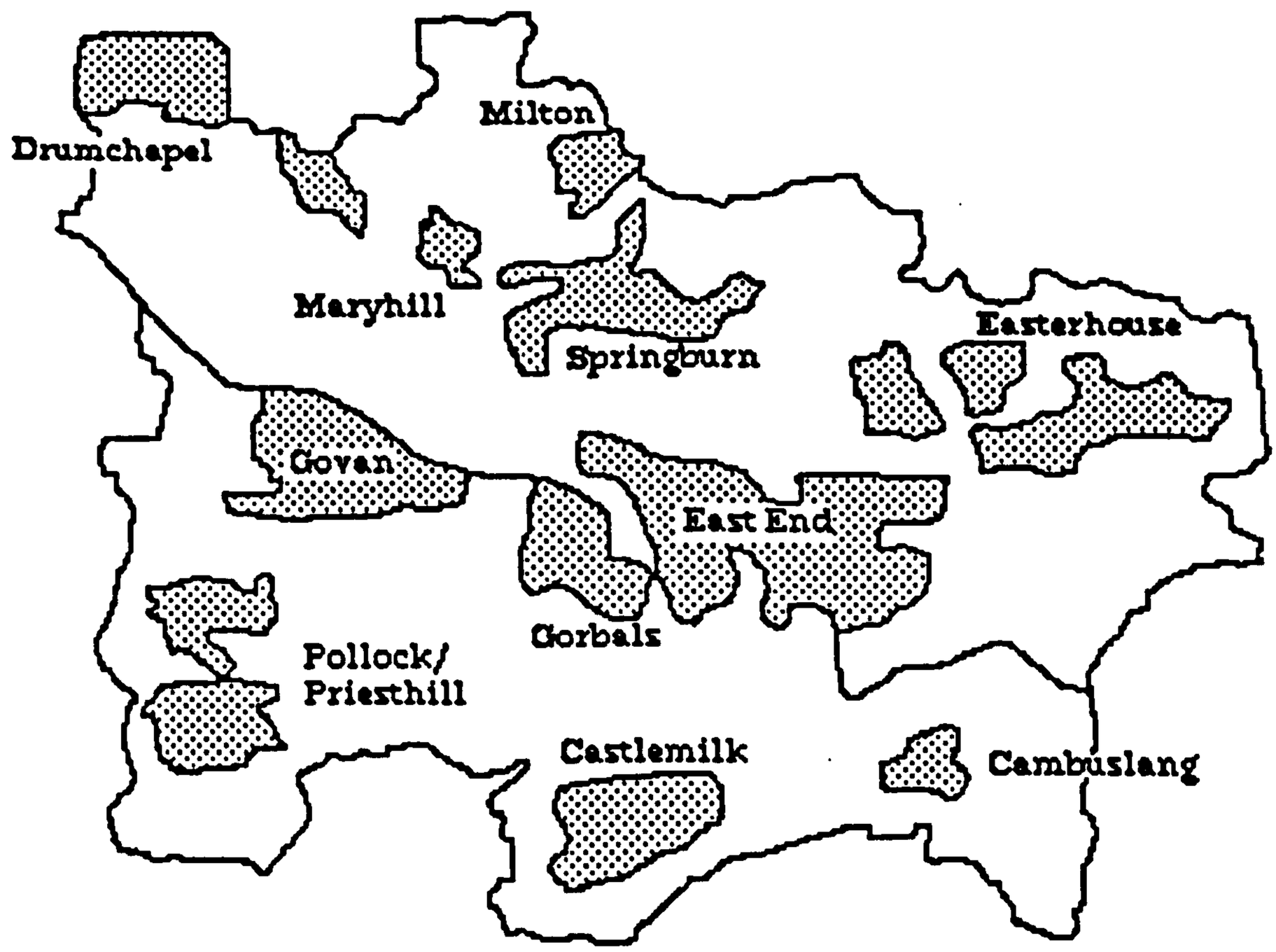
Look After Yourself **Code P595**

Look After Yourself is a pack of twenty topics from the course Health Choices, prepared for use, primarily, by groups interested in discussing health issues, as well as individuals seeking an introduction to health matters. The pack includes comprehensive guidelines for group leaders and an introductory topic for group members. The topics have been selected after discussion with a wide range of workers in health and community education and the pack should prove useful to health education officers, teachers, self-help groups, tutors and leaders of fitness and health discussion groups, youth workers and adult educators. In particular it has been prepared with "Look After Yourself !" courses in mind and has been tested by a number of LAY tutors. The topics cover a wide range of issues concerned with emotional and physical health. Taken together, they could provide the basis for a course, or series of discussions. Individual topics, or groups of topics could be used as a resource in many existing groups. Topic themes include *Personal Relationships, Physical Health, Breaking Old Patterns and Emotional Heath.*

Caring for Older People **Code P650**

Caring for Older People is a series of short, practically based learning materials presented in a popular style. It has been designed for people who are directly involved in the care of older people. It is specifically for the large group of paid sheltered housing wardens and care staff in old people's homes and hospitals, as well as voluntary workers, relatives and neighbours. Topic include: attitudes towards older people; getting help; care by the community; home care and home nursing; mental infirmity; dying and bereavement; health crises; living in homes and hospitals; and rehabilitation. Readings and case histories about older people and their helpers are used throughout. Students receive a set of useful leaflets and a guide to local authority and health services. Five television programmes, which look in detail at topics raised in the text, have been recorded on video and are available on loan.

Appendix B - Map of Glasgow's Areas for Priority Treatment (APTs), and comparisons between Two APTs and a Suburb



Map of Glasgow showing city boundaries and location of main Areas of Priority Treatment

Comparisons between two APTs and a Suburb

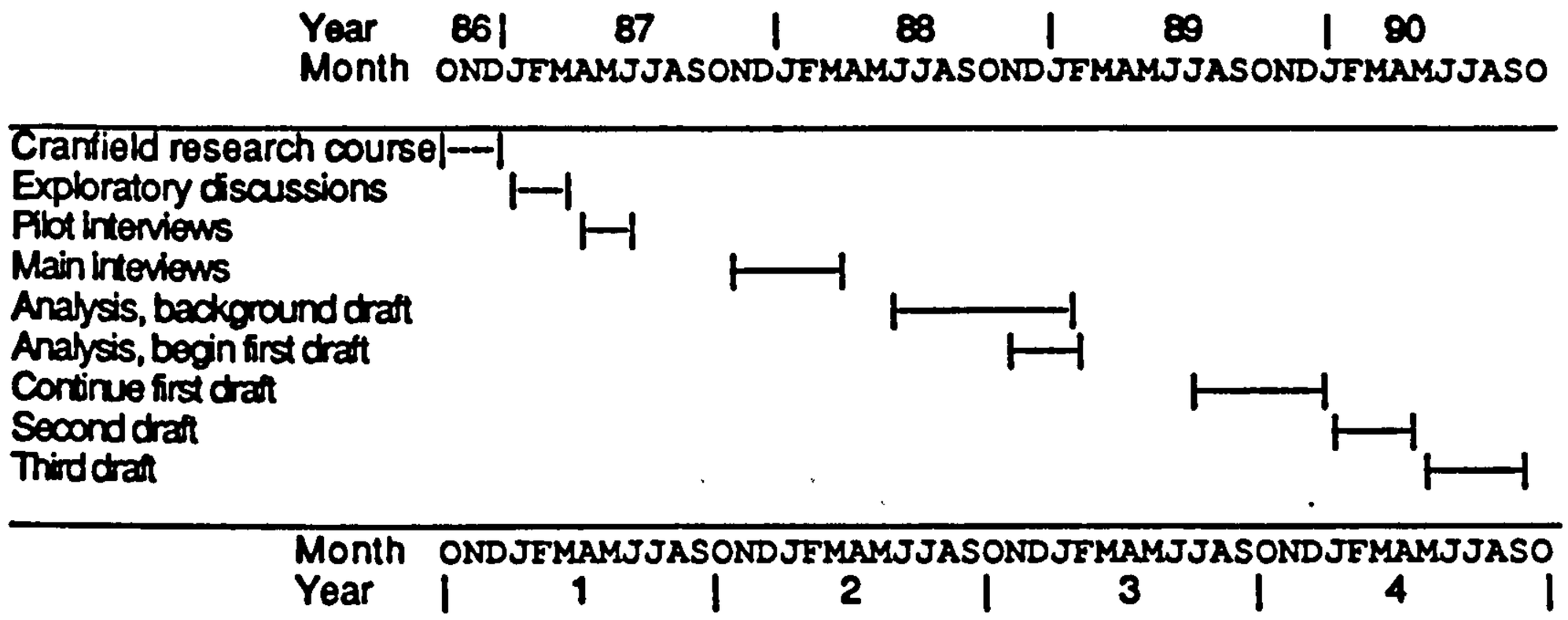
The table below shows illustrative socioeconomic comparisons between two APTs, one a peripheral housing scheme and the other an inner city area, and a non-APT middle-class suburb. Proportionately there are fewer children under four and more people who are over retirement age in the Inner East End compared to Drumchapel reflecting that this is an older community which has undergone selective migration. The social class differences between the APTs and Bearsden are dramatic and reflect the working class character of APTs. The high percentage of single parent families is one of the main indicators of deprivation and the APTs have significant proportions particularly if these are expressed as a proportion of households with children rather than as a proportion of all households. The higher figure for single parent families in Drumchapel compared to Inner GEAR again reflects the younger age profile as does the number of families with four or more children.
Unemployment is a particularly important indicator and the high levels in the APTs are related to the large numbers of families on state benefits. Bearsden has a much higher percentage of adults with educational qualifications. The housing types shows the high incidence of council tenants in APTs and car ownership is low which makes it more difficult to travel for work.

	Peripheral APT: **Drumchapel**	Inner City APT: **Inner East End**[4]	Suburb: **Bearsden**
Age Structure[1] (% of population)			
Children 0-4 years	9.2	6.1	5.6
Adults 60/65+	12.8	19.7	13.5
Social Class[2] (% of household heads)			
Professional and managerial	3.3	2.8	62.2
Single Parent Families[1]			
% of all households	13.9	6.1	1.3
% of households with children	34.6	25.0	3.6
Families with 4 or more children[1]			
% of all households	2.5	1.1	0.9
% of households with children	6.1	4.5	2.6
Unemployment[3] (% of econ. active)			
Men	38.5	40.6	5.9
Women	15.6	17.8	4.6
Total	29.0	30.7	5.4
Education[2] (% adults over 18)			
Degrees, prof and vocational quals	0.8	3.4	33.3
Housing[2] (% of households)			
Council tenants	93.7	81.0	8.0
Owner occupier	2.8	6.6	88.9
Car Ownership[2] (% of households)			
Households with one or more cars	18.5	11.2	84.6

(1) From 1986 Voluntary Population Survey, data provided by Chief Executive's Department, Strathclyde Regional Council.
(2) From 1981 Census, data provided by Chief Executive's Department, Strathclyde Regional Council.
(3) From Strathclyde Economic Trends, No. 19, June 1988, data for March 1988, Chief Executive's Department, Strathclyde Regional Council.
(4) Inner GEAR, APT no. 41 Bridgeton/Dalmarnock.

Table showing socioeconomic comparisons between two APTs and a middle-class suburb.

Appendix C - Timetable for the Study

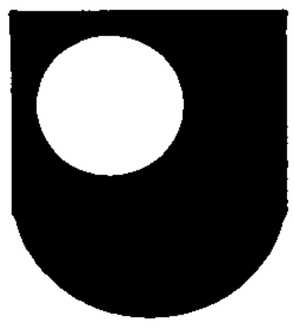


Appendix D - Interview Document

CONFIDENTIAL

Student Number_____

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY



Community Education Impact Study

Interview Document

Community Education
The Open University
Walton Hall
Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA

Sept 1987

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

Community Education Impact Study

Interview Details

Students Name _____ Student Number _____

Interviewers Name _____

Group Leader/Organisers Name _____

Place Interview held _____

Date of Interview _____

Time Interview Started _____

Duration of Interview (Minutes) _____

Comments about the arrangements (eg. difficulty in making appointment, interruptions, privacy)

_____

_____

_____

Comments about student (eg. forthcoming, relaxed, reserved, nervous)

_____

_____

_____

Any other comments

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Notes for Interviewers

* In the main part of the interview the student should be encouraged to tell their story rather than giving short answers to a lot of questions.
* Be an attentive listener rather than a "Robin Day" anxious to shoot your own questions.
* In the 'Changes' theme probe carefully for changes.
* Use the Topic questions as follow-ups, be thorough, but try to maintain a conversational style.
* Get as many dates as possible without pressurising the student.
* Maintain a confident manner, do not be hesitant or apologise for any of the questions.
* Every student's experience is valuable and what they say will be treated seriously.
* Write clearly.
* The sequence through the Interview Document is as follows:

STARTER QUESTIONS (Pink Paper)

TOPIC QUESTIONS (White Paper)

1. CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION STARTER QUESTIONS

A. What was your schooling like?
(Probe: like/dislike, successes, when and why left school, qualifications)

B. Can you tell me about your life as a child?
(Probe: where lived, brothers and sisters, health, parents employment)

C. As a child did you do much housework or caring for other children?
(Probe: tasks carried out, children cared for, how often)

RECORD:

[Extra sheet supplied in original]

8. CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION TOPIC QUESTIONS

1. Date of birth_____ 2. Age last birthday _____

3. What area did you spend most of your childhood? _____

4. About how many moves did you make in your childhood? _____

5. What was your father's main occupation? _____

_____

6. Did your mother work during your childhood?..... *yes...1* *no...2*

Mothers job(s) _____

7. Was there an absence of parents during your childhood?..... *yes...1* *no...2*

If yes give details _____

8. Did you have step-parent(s)/guardians during your childhood?..... *yes...1* *no...2*

If yes give details _____

9. What brothers and sisters did you have (write in number)?
brothers _____ step-brothers _____
sisters _____ step-sisters _____

10. How much housework did you do as a child?
none..... 1
some..... 2
a lot..... 3
Details of childcare _____

11. How much housework did you do as a child?
none..... 1
some..... 2
a lot..... 3
Details of housework _____

12. Did anyone close to you die or separate from you during your childhood?.
yes...1 *no...2*

If yes give details _____

13. Did you have any trouble with your health as a child?..... *yes...1* *no...2*

If yes give details _____

14. How would you describe your family's financial situation during your childhood?
struggling..... 1
adequate..... 2
well-off..... 3

15. What age did you leave school? _____

16. Have you any qualifications from school?..... *yes...1* *no...2*

If yes give details _____

17. Did you like school?..... *yes...1* *no...2*

2. PERSONAL AND FAMILY STARTER QUESTIONS

A. Tell me about your life after you left home?
(Probe: where lived, when married, where met husband)

B. Can you tell me about your children?
(Probe: childrens ages, sex, problems, childcare, upbringing)

C. Could you tell me about your married life?
(Probe: amount of sharing of housework and childcare, emotional support, companionship, money)

D. What has your health been like as a child?
(Probe: major illnesses, hospital treatment, depression)

RECORD:

[Extra sheet supplied in original]

9. PERSONAL AND FAMILY TOPIC QUESTIONS

1. At what age did you stop living with parents/guardians? _____

2. How old were you when you (first) married? _____

3. If your first marriage ended, when was this? _____

4. If you remarried when was this? _____

5. Did you spend any part of your married life living with:
Own parents..... *yes...1* *no...2*
Spouse parents..... *yes...1* *no...2*

6. Where have you lived since leaving home up till now? (Prompt: type of accommodation (eg. flat, house and whether rent or buy) and reasons for moves):

	Location	Date moved in	Accommodation	Rent/Buy	Reason for leaving
1					
2					
3					
4					

7. How many children have you?
Total _____

	Number	Date(s) of Birth
daughters		
sons		
step-daughter		
step-sons		
other children		

8. Has your health ever interfered with your work?..... *yes...1* *no...2*

If yes give dates and details _____

9. As an adult have you experienced grief due to someone close to you dying or leaving?
yes...1 *no...2*
If yes give details _____

10. Have you ever had depression?..... *yes...1* *no...2*

If yes give dates _____

11. Have you ever had treatment for depression?..... *yes...1* *no...2*

If yes give dates and duration of treatment _____

12. Did you plan to start a family when you first became pregnant?..... *yes...1* *no...2*

If yes why at that time? _____

13. Did you plan to have this number of children?..... *yes...1* *no...2*

14. Have you ever smoked?..... *yes...1* *no...2*

If yes give dates and number of cigarettes a day _____

15. How many housework tasks does your husband do on his own?
Most *1*
Some *2*
None *3*
Examples of the household tasks husband does _____

_____

16. How much childcare does your husband do on his own?
Most *1*
Some *2*
None *3*
Examples of childcare that husband does_____

_____

17. How much emotional support does your husband give you?
A lot *1*
Some *2*
A little *3*
None *4*
Examples of emotional support _____

_____

18. Who looks after the money in your family?
Shared (Money pooled) *1*
Split (Husband with his money, student with her money) *2*
Husband (allocates housekeeping to student) *3*
Student allocates money to husband *4*
Other *5*

Give details _____

_____

19. What labour saving appliances do you have now and which have you acquired in the last two years?

Appliance	Have now	Acquired in the last two years
Automatic Washing Machine	*1*	*1*
Vacuum cleaner	*2*	*2*
Refrigerator	*3*	*3*
Freezer	*4*	*4*
Tumble drier	*5*	*5*
Dishwasher	*6*	*6*
Microwave	*7*	*7*
Phone	*8*	*8*
Car	*9*	*9*

20. Do you do any of the following?
Dressmaking *1*
Knitting *2*
Vegetable growing *3*
Gardening *4*
Wine or beer making *5*
Baking *6*
Decorating *7*

3. EMPLOYMENT STARTER QUESTIONS

A. What did you do when you left school?
(Probe: training, job, unemployment)

B. Tell me about the jobs you have had?
(Probe: difficulties in getting jobs, training, job satisfaction, childcare, part-time/full-time)

C. Can you tell me about your husband's work since you were married?
(Probe: unemployment)

D. What has your work meant to you apart from the money?
(Probe: enjoyment, social)

RECORD:

[Extra sheet supplied in original]

10. EMPLOYMENT TOPIC QUESTIONS

1. Have you had any further education or training (up to OU course)? Give details of courses and dates:

_____

_____

2. Did you get any qualifications after leaving school? ..... *yes...1* *no...2*

If yes give details _____

3. What jobs have you done? (Prompt: dates, full/part time, how heard about, reason for leaving)

Date (mth. yr)	Job	Full/part time (no. of hrs)	How heard about	Reason for leaving
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

4. Have you had difficulties in finding a job at any time? ..... *yes...1* *no...2*

If yes give details _____

5. If you worked after having child(ren) what arrangements did (do) you make for the childcare?

_____

_____

_____

6. Have you ever been unemployed? ..... *yes...1* *no ...2*

If yes give dates _____

7. What jobs has your husband had? (Prompt: approx dates, how heard about, reason for leaving)

Date (mth. yr)	Job	How heard about	Reason for leaving
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

8. Has your husband ever been unemployed? ..... *yes...1* *no... 2*

If yes give dates _____

9. If your husband was unemployed how did the family manage? _____

_____

10. Has your husband's health stopped him working? ..... *yes... 1* *no... 2*

If yes give details _____

11. Have you ever been active in a trade union? ..... *yes... 1* *no... 2*

If yes give details _____

12. Have you done any other work eg. homeworking, cash jobs? ..... *yes... 1* *no... 2*

If yes give details _____

13. When you are working what kinds of things do you spend your earnings on?
personal things for self (eg. clothes, make-up, hobbies) 1
things for children (eg. clothes, toys, treats, school things) 2
housekeeping (eg. food bills) 3
going out (eg. meals, trips, bingo) 4
other 5

Details _____

4. COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL STARTER QUESTIONS

A. What did you do in your spare time when you were younger?
(Probe: for differences before and after marriage)

B. Can you tell me about the friends and relatives in your life?
(Probe: about close friends, relations with parents, in-laws, sisters, brothers)

C. Do you and your husband go out much or see friends together?

D. What community activities have you been involved in?
(Probe: playschemes, voluntary work, committee membership)

E. Who has helped you in the past?
(Probe: when ill, childcare, in a crisis)

F. Are there people in the community you have given help to?
(Probe: do favours, messages, look after children)

RECORD:

[Extra sheet supplied in original]

11. COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL TOPIC QUESTIONS

1. What are your spare time activities now? _____

_____

2. What have been the main changes in your spare time activities? _____

_____

3. What community groups/organisations/clubs/church have you belonged to/attended (not including community education group)?
When did you start/stop?
How often did (do) you go?
Were (are) you a member, helper or official?

Group/Association	Date started	Date stopped	How often	Role
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

4. What have been the main changes in community groups/associations/clubs/church? ____

_____

5. What close friends do you have?

How often seen?		How far away?		What do you do?	
Daily	*1*	*Less than 1 mile*	*1*	*Chat*	*1*
A few times a week	*2*	*1-5 miles*	*2*	*Housework*	*2*
Weekly	*3*	*6-20 miles*	*3*	*Childcare*	*3*
Monthly	*4*	*Over 20 miles*	*4*	*Shopping*	*4*
Rarely	*5*			*Go out (Specify)*	*5*

Close friends	(Write in 1-5)	(Write in 1-4)	(Write in 1-5)
1			
2			
3			

Relatives

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

6. What have been the main changes in close friends and relatives?_____

_____

_____

7. How often do you and your husband go out together?:
More than once a week 1
Once a week 2
Every couple of weeks 3
Once a month 4
Less than once a month 5

8. When were there changes in going out together? _____

_____

9. Do you and your husband see friends together? ..... *yes... 1* *no... 2*

10. When were there changes in seeing friends together? _____

_____

11. Who would you turn to for help with? (Prompt: husband, mother, sister, friend, doctor, teacher)

feeling low _____

problems with children _____

problems about money _____

childcare _____

relationship with partner _____

12. When and what changes have there been in where you go for help? _____

_____

_____

13. Is there people in the community who you have given help to?..... *yes... 1* *no... 2*

If yes give dates, persons and help _____

_____

_____

_____

5. SERVICES STARTER QUESTIONS

A. Can you tell me about the local services you have used?
(Prompt: health, social work, housing, recreation, local deliveries, etc)

B. What children's services have you used?
(Prompt: mother and toddler group, playgroup, nursery schools)

C. Have you had any difficulties with the services?
(Prompt: getting what you need, complaints, consultation)

RECORD:

[Extra sheet supplied in original]

12. SERVICES TOPIC QUESTIONS

1. What public services have you used? (Prompt)

Public Service	Used	Date first used	How often	Details
HEALTH				
Doctor	1			
Health Visitor	2			
Midwife	3			
SOCIAL WORK				
Social work	4			
Home maker	5			
Childcare Officer	6			
Community work	7			
Welfare Rights	8			
EDUCATION				
Nursery School	9			
Primary School	10			
Secondary School	11			
Home Link Teacher	12			
Education Welfare	13			
Community Education	14			
Further Education	15			
Housing	16			
Social Security	17			
UTILITIES				
Gas	20			
Electricity	21			
Telephone	22			
Police	23			
Probation	24			
Recreation	25			
Library	26			
Other(s)	27			

2. What voluntary services have you used? (Prompt)

Voluntary service	Used	Date first used	How often	Details
Mothers and Toddlers	1			
Playgroup	2			
Playscheme	3			
Church	4			
Other	5			

3. What commercial services do you use? (Prompt: entertainment, local deliveries, mail order, credit, Xmas club, appliance repairs)

Commercial Service	Date first used	How often	Details
1			
2			
3			

4. Have you had any difficulties with services? ..... *yes... 1* *no... 2*

If yes give details _____

_____

5. Have you ever been to a local meeting about services? ..... *yes... 1* *no... 2*

If yes give approximate date and the subject of the meeting _____

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE

6. This is the end of the questionnaire, is there anything you would like to add?

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. Are there any further points you would like to make?

_____

_____

_____

THANKS

END

Time now _____

6. CHANGES STARTER QUESTIONS

A. Tell me about the OU course(s) you have taken?
(Probe: details of OU course(s) taken)

B. Have you taken any other courses?
(Probe: practical, O and H grades, vocational courses)

RECORD IN TOPIC LIST (PAGE 18):

C. What has doing the course(s) meant to you?

D. Did the course(s) make you feel differently about yourself?

E. Has the course(s) helped you make (or cope with) changes in your life?
(Probe: for changes within the household, changes in relationship with partner and children, changes in community activities, changes in employment)

F. Has the course(s) changed your views about the future?
(Probe: further education, community activities, employment, childrens education)

RECORD:

[Extra sheet supplied in original]

7. CHANGES TOPIC QUESTIONS

Education and Training

1. What OU Community Education courses have you taken? Give details:

	Title	Start Date (m.y)	Duration (mths)	Meeting Place	Group Leader	No. in group	Cert
1							
2							
3							
4							

2. What other courses have you taken (since first OU course)?

	Course Title	Start Date (m.y)	Duration (mths)	Meeting Place	Qualification
1					
2					
3					
4					

3. How did you hear about the (first) OU course?

Details _____

4. Why did you start the (first) OU course? _____

_____

5. Did you know the group leader before the (first) OU course? ..... *yes... 1* *no... 2*

6. Did you know any group members before the (first) OU course?
None 1
Some ... 2
All 3

7. What was you husband's attitude to the (first) OU course? _____

_____

8. What was your children's attitude to the (first) OU course? _____

_____

9. What were your friends and relatives views? _____

_____

10. How did you find time for:
Group meetings? _____

Private study? _____

11. What arrangements were there for childcare? _____

_____

12. How did you get the learning materials for the (first) course?
Provided free *1*
As a sponsored student *2*
By payment *3*
If you had to pay how much was this? _____

13. If you have taken more than one OU course why did you decide to take another OU course(s)?

_____

14. Has the OU course helped you take up a (non-OU) course? ..... *yes... 1* *no... 2*

If yes describe how the course helped _____

Personal and Family
15. Did the course make you feel differently about yourself? ..... *yes... 1* *no... 2*

If yes describe in what way _____

_____

16. Have you changed the way of doing housework? ..... *yes... 1* *no... 2*
(Prompt: changed routine, do different things, changed standards, more help from husband)

If yes describe the changes _____

_____

17. Have you taken some particular action affecting your family? ..... *yes... 1* *no...2*
(Prompt: change meals, change children's diet, take exercise)

If yes describe what you have done _____

_____

18. Have the things you do with your child(ren) changed as a result of the course?.
yes... 1 *no... 2*

If yes describe the changes _____

_____

19. Has the way you relate to your child(ren) changed as a result of the course?
(Prompt: more patience, less punishment, more time)..... *yes... 1* *no... 1*

If yes describe in what way relationship has changed _____

_____

20. Has the course(s) led to changes in your relationship with your husband?
(Prompt: more assertive, he helps more, discuss more)..... *yes... 1* *no... 2*

If yes say in what way relationship has changed _____

_____

Employment

21. If you started a job after the course, did the course help you get the job?
yes 1
no 2
not applicable.. 3

If yes say how the course helped _____

_____

22. Has the OU course helped in your paid work? ..... *yes 1*
no 2
not applicable.... 3

If yes say how _____

_____

23. Since the course have your responsibilities at work changed?..... *yes 1*
(Prompt: promotion, new responsibilities, become active in trade union) *no 2*
not in paid work.. 3

If yes describe change _____

Community and Social

24. Have you made close friends from the OU learning group? ..... *yes... 1* *no... 2*

If yes give details of close friends _____

25. Do you continue to meet people from your OU learning group? .. *yes... 1* *no... 2*

If yes give details _____

_____

26. Since the course has your relationship changed with your other friends?
yes... 1 *no... 2*

If yes give details _____

27. Since the course has your relationship changed with close relatives?*yes... 1* *no... 2*

If yes give details _____

28. Since the course have you become involved in voluntary work/community organisations?
yes... 1 *no... 2*

If yes give details _____

29. Do you use what you have learnt in voluntary work/community organisations?
yes 1
no 2
not applicable....3

If yes give details _____

30. Has the course helped you help other people in the community?. *yes... 1* *no... 2*

If yes please describe how helped _____

_____

31. Do you talk to other people about what you learnt?..... *yes... 1* *no... 2*

If yes who and what sort of things _____

_____

Services
32. Has the courses helped you in using (or gaining an entitlement from) public services?
yes... 1 *no... 2*

If yes give details _____

_____

33. Has the course helped you in using voluntary services?..... *yes... 1* *no... 1*

If yes give details _____

_____

34. Has the course helped you in using commercial services?..... *yes... 1* *no... 2*

If yes give details _____

_____

Looking Ahead
35. Did the course change how you think about the future?..... *yes... 1* *no... 2*

If yes describe in what way _____

_____

36. Have your hopes for your children changed since taking the course?
yes... 1 *no... 2*

If yes describe how hopes changed _____

_____

[GO TO CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION TOPIC QUESTIONS PAGE 4]

Appendix E - Letter to Group Leaders/Organisers

The Open University
Walton Hall
Milton Keynes
MK7 6AA

Aug 1987

Dear Group Leader/Organiser,

Open University/Community Education Service Research

You are probably aware that I have been carrying out research on the use of Open University Community Education courses in Glasgow. I have appreciated the help I have had from the Community Education Service, Nursery Heads, Group Leaders and from Denis Brady who has helped with advice and in making arrangements for me to meet people. I am writing to ask for your help. The students listed on the enclosed sheet have been selected at random and are in group(s) that you were responsible for in 1986. We believe that a sensitive approach from someone who they know through a learning group will be the most appropriate way of encouraging them to take part in an interview.

I am focussing on Glasgow because this is where there has been the most extensive and impressive use of these courses. During this year I have carried out a number of pilot interviews with students and group leaders and have now reached the stage for the main study involving a random sample of students from the whole of Glasgow who gained Certificates in 1986. Rather than carry out the next stage of interviews myself we have recruited local people who are familiar with the courses who will be trained as interviewers.

You will appreciate that it is necessary to ensure that the sample of students is truely random because if there was any bias in those who are interviewed it would not be possible to draw any conclusions about what happens to students generally after taking a couse. For example some of those who are now in paid employment might be more difficult to contact than those who were still taking courses. This means that it is particularly important to make contact with all the students in the sample and to encourage them to participate in the interview.

Your help is vital. Can you contact each student and ask if they will be willing to be interviewed. Please emphasise that the interview will be informal and allow the student to describe how the course(s) fitted in to their lives, there are no difficult or embarassing questions nor is it a test of what they have learnt from the courses. Everything they say will be treated in the strictest confidence and not released to anybody in a way that identifies individuals. I want their views and experience as OU students as this will help the Open University develop its work in Community Education.

I thank you in advance for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Fames
Director of Community Education

Appendix F - Student Numbers and Courses in Glasgow 1982-87

Student Numbers
The total numbers of students receiving Certificates and the number of student/courses (ie. if the same student takes two courses and gains Certificates this counts as two student/courses) at the end of each year are as follows:

	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986*	1987	Total
Students	234	243	365	496	515	632	2485
Student/ courses	235	246	376	591	602	726	2776

* The total number of students gaining Certificates in 1986 in the whole of Strathclyde Region (including Glasgow) were approximately 2500.

Data from Department of Education: Glasgow Division, Community Education Service, lists for the presentation of Certificates, 1982-87.

Table: Student and student/courses in Glasgow from 1982-87.

Courses
The numbers and percentages (in brackets) of Certificates awarded for each course each year in Glasgow is given in the table below:

Course Code and Title	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
911 First Years of Life	31 (13)	10 (41)	36 (10)	55 (9)	35 (6)	10 (1)
912 Pre School Child	108(46)	131(53)	160(43)	196(33)	184(31)	206(28)
913 Childhood 5-10	70 (30)	93 (38)	102(27)	148(25)	158(26)	143(20)
914 Parents & Teenagers	0	0	39 (10)	40 (7)	41 (7)	51 (7)
921 Health Choices	26 (11)	12 (5)	39 (10)	141 (24)	116 (19)	154(21)
964 Healthy Eating	0	0	0	0	8 (1)	36 (5)
941 Planning Retirement	0	0	0	0	4 (1)	10 (1)
650 Caring for Older Ppl	0	0	0	11 (2)	31 (5)	62 (9)
593 Women & Young chld	0	0	0	0	9 (1)	19 (3)
595 Look After Yourself	0	0	0	0	7 (1)	14 (2)
596 Developing Child	0	0	0	0	0	7 (1)
597 Family Relationships	0	0	0	0	1 (0)	4 (1)
599 Health & Retirement	0	0	0	0	8 (1)	0
555 Patterns for Living	0	0	0	0	0	10 (1)
Course Range	4	4	5	6	12	13
Total Students	234	243	365	496	515	632
Total Courses	235	246	376	591	602	726

Table: Numbers of students and percentages (in brackets) gaining Certificates in each course each year.

Appendix G - Notes for Interviewers

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

Community Education Impact Study

Briefing Notes for Interviewers

Introduction
These notes give a brief background to the research and the methods adopted in this survey and provide you with information about how to carry out interviews using the Interview Document. Copies of this will be provided at the training session. The notes, in conjunction with the training and the practice interview will enable you to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to begin interviewing.

Background
The Open University Community Education programme began offering short courses in 1977. As early as 1978 these courses were being used by a variety of organisations in Glasgow. Gradual expansion in the use of the courses occurred and by 1981 there were students in all divisions of the Strathclyde Region. Formal collaboration between the Open University and the Regional Council Departments of Education and Social Work was established in 1981. By 1986 there were over 2500 people studying courses in 400 groups organised through statutory and voluntary agencies. In Glasgow division 520 students received Certificates in 1986. Glasgow provides a unique location for examining the impact of these courses because it has achieved the most extensive and innovative use of the courses in Britain.

Aim of the Research
The aim of the research is to see how Community Education courses fit into people's lives, why at a particular stage of their lives they take the courses, what changes occur after taking the courses and the help provided by the courses. The research is examining the role the courses have in increasing students self-confidence and in helping them make changes at home, participate in and run local activities, become involved in further education, community representation and employment. The results of the research will be used by the Open University to improve its courses and to make them more relevant to peoples' lives. This survey is the main part of the research.

Purpose of the Survey
The purpose of the survey is:
1) To collect detailed life histories of students up to the time of the interview.
2) To obtain student's views on what influence the OU courses have had on their lives.

Research Approach
A life history approach has been adopted because the significance of courses of this kind can only be understood through a full appreciation of students' lives and circumstances. Students reactions to the courses and the changes they can make are dependent on their earlier experiences, current circumstances and their life stage. Life histories are not just a list of facts but include the dramas, joys, difficulties, successes and relationships that the individual sees as being important in her life.

Research Method
The method is based on the technique used by Professor Malcolm Johnson and Dr Silvana di Gregorio to collect life histories of elderly people and information on a Meals-on-Wheels service in Leeds. The Interview Document that you will be using has been adapted and developed for use with women who have taken OU Community Education courses in Glasgow. An earlier version of the document was pilot tested in Glasgow by Nick Farnes in May and June this year.

Students
The names of students in Glasgow who received Certificates in 1986 were, in effect, put into a hat and 60 names were taken out. This means that about one in every eight students has been selected. The reason that particular students have been selected and asked to come for an interview is therefore pure chance. however, it is especially important that those selected are interviewed because with a random sample it will be possible to draw conclusions about all OU students in Glasgow. For example, if we find that a quarter of the 60 now have part-time jobs it is reasonable assumption to say that a quarter of all those who took courses in 1986 now have part-time jobs. But if a large number of those with jobs were not able to be interviewed, those that did come would give us a distorted picture.

Interview Arrangements
The Group Leaders/Organisers who know the students will contact them, tell them about the interview, reassure them and ask them if they will agree to be interviewed. Arrangements will be made so that it is convenient for you and the student to meet and spend about one and a half to two hours on the interview.

Confidentiality
It is vitally important that you treat all the information collected in the interviews in the *strictest confidence*. This means that you should not talk to anyone about details of the interview and not show the completed Interview Document to anyone. Students confidence and willingness to give honest replies will depend on you giving reassurance that nothing they say will be revealed. The results of this work will be written up in a way that makes it impossible to identify students.

Interview Training
Session 1:
The interview training will involve two half-day sessions. In the first session the research study will be briefly described and the purpose of the interviews and the method adopted explained. The Interview Document that you will be using will be introduced and you will be taken through this in detail. You will be shown the overall procedure for the interview and the questions will be explained. You will be told how to record the information provided by the students.

Practice Interview:
In the time between the sessions you should arrange to carry out a full practice interview with a relative or friend of your choice. This is the best way to learn the skills that you will need for the real interviews. Your practice interview will also help you become familiar with the Interview Document.

Session 2:
The second session we will discuss difficulties arising from the practice interview and clarify the procedure and how replies can be recorded. It will be important for interviewers to share their experience and derive a common approach to the interviews. The arrangements for meeting students will be described and the students names for the first interviews allocated. Administrative details for returning the completed Interview Documents and for the payment of training and interview expenses will be dealt with.

The Student Interviews
The interviewer's manner has to put the student at ease and convey confidence and competence. If the interviewer appears hesitant the student may feel uneasy or be unwilling to cooperate. Interviewers will be familiar with the questions and trained for their role in an interview. However, the students are not and they need assistance and reassurance in the unfamiliar task they are being asked to perform. They must be helped to realise that they are not taking part in a job interview, nor an ordinary conversation. If students think they are being tested they will worry about giving the 'wrong' answers or that they are unqualified to answer some questions. If they think the interview is a friendly chat they may stray from the subject and avoid answering questions.

Avoiding Bias

In normal conversation people often slant what they tell another person towards what they think he or she expects or likes to hear. This does a lot to smooth ordinary social relationships, but provides great dangers in an interview. While it is important to establish an easy, pleasant relationship with the students taking part, you must avoid giving clues about your own attitudes and expectations, or say anything about your own background, at least until after the interview. You may be asked about your family or where you live, but your answers to even such simple questions as these may lead the student to change or modify what they say.

Interviewers must ask all questions in a neutral, straightforward way and accept answers in the same manner. A reaction of surprise or disbelief or an over sympathetic reaction may easily affect the students' later answers. Showing no reaction other than polite interest calls for continuous effort. Interviewers have to maintain a detached attitude, but ensure that the interview is relaxed and friendly.

At the Start

At the start you should explain that you have been involved in Community Education and are being employed by the Open University to carry out interviews with students. The results will help the University improve its courses. It is best for you to introduce yourself in your own words covering the points below (see Procedure). Reading out an introduction can sound hollow and have an off-putting effect.

It is important to find out whether the student has to leave at a particular time, for example to collect children or to start work. Remind them that the interview will last about one and a half hours or a little longer and check that they will be free for this time. In the unlikely event that they cannot stay for the required time it may be necessary to arrange another time when they will be able to. If you are unable to finish you may have to arrange another meeting to complete the interview - but this should be avoided if at all possible.

Small details can effect the success of an interview. Remember that many people may feel uneasy at the sight of papers and associate this with unpleasant interviews with officials. It is important to have the Interview Document and pencils in a folder so that you can produce them unobtrusively.

You should try to sit facing students, but not so near that they can start reading the questions rather than listening to them or reading what is being written down rather than thinking about what they are saying. Direct the student to the chair that you want them to sit in. Arrange the Interview Document so that you can refer to the relevant questions and write answers easily and have spare pencils at the ready. If the student has to leave at a certain time, it is useful for you to be able to glance at the time without the student to be put off or worrying.

Pace of the Interview

The interviewer has to ensure that the pace of the interview suits the student. Some people answer quickly and want to get on with the interview as fast as possible. Others need more time to think, they are after all hearing the questions for the first time and may be considering things they have not thought about a lot before.

It is helpful to look at the student often, especially just after asking a question. Too little eye contact can make the interviewer appear uninterested and withdrawn; too much, however, can be embarrassing to the student.

You can add informality to the interview by adding link phrases and comments of your own. But it is important that these phrases have no bearing on the answers given and do not lead to any bias in the replies. Phrases such as 'We can move onto the next section now', 'I'd just like to check' can help the flow of the interview.

During the interview the student may ask why a particular question has been included. Interviewers need to be familiar enough with the purpose of the research to give an adequate explanation. The briefing and instructions should ensure this. If the purpose of each question

is self-evident or can be simply explained, the student will usually give honest and unembarrassed replies.

The Interview Document

The Interview Document is in two parts: the first part consists of open ended Starter questions covering 6 themes: Childhood and Education, Personal and Family, Employment, Community and Social, Services and Changes. There are 3-6 Starter questions for each theme and are printed on coloured paper. The second part consists of a number of more specific 'topic' questions for each theme and appear on white paper.

In the main part of the interview the students should be encouraged to talk freely about their lives and the course(s) and what has been important to them. The Starter questions are provided to help and do not require specific answers. The style of this part of the interview should be for the student to be doing most of the talking to a sympathetic listener. The second part of the interview will be to use the Topic questions to check specific information that may have been covered earlier.

Types of Questions

In the Interview Document there are open ended Starter Questions and four main types of Topic questions:

a) Open Ended

The main part of the interview uses open ended Starter Questions. For example:
A. 'What has your health been like during your life?'
B. 'What has doing the course meant to you?'
Students answers to questions in this style can be any length and written in the unrestricted space provided.

b) Short Answer

The second part of the interview deals with short answer questions such as:
1. 'What area did you spend most of your childhood?'
2. 'How did you hear about the course?'
Answers to these kinds of question can be written on one or two lines.

c) Pre-coded Questions

Also in the second part are pre-coded questions where a number is placed alongside each answer. This number will be keyed into a computer to held with the analysis. For example:

1. Has your health ever interfered with your work?..... *yes... 1* *no... 2*

2. Did you know any group members before the course?
None..... 1
Some..... 2
All..... 3

For this type of question the number alongside the answer should be circled. For example for a student whose health had never interfered with their work, a circle should be drawn around the number 2, ie. 'no'. If you make a mistake and circle the wrong number then draw two diagonal lines though the circle and a circle around the correct number.

d) Combined Questions

Many questions in the second part are combined pre-coded and short answer questions. For example:

1. Did your mother work during your childhood?..... *yes... 1* *no... 2*

If yes state mother's job_____

2. Has the course helped in your paid work?
yes..... 1
no..... 2
not in paid work... 3

If yes say how _____

_____

For questions of this type deal with the pre-coded part first and circle the appropriate number. Then write in the reply (if any) to the short answer question.

e) Compound Questions
This type of question can take a number of forms but usually involves filling in a grid like the examples below:

1. What labour saving appliances do you have now and which have you acquired in the last two year?:

Appliance	Have now	Acquired in the last two years
Automatic Washing Machine	*1*	*1*
Vacuum cleaner	*2*	*2*
Refrigerator	*3*	*3*
Freezer	*4*	*4*
Tumble drier	*5*	*5*
Dishwasher	*6*	*6*
Microwave	*7*	*7*
Phone	*8*	*8*
Car	*9*	*9*

This example the first column should be checked first. That is the appliances that students have now should be indicated by circling the appropriate numbers in the first column. Next a check should be made on which of the appliances have been acquired in the last two years and the numbers in the second column circled.

2. Voluntary Service	Used	Date first used	How often	Details
Mothers and Toddlers....	1			
Playgroup	2			
Playscheme	3			
Church	4			
Other	5			

This example is best worked on across the page. The information for each voluntary organisation should be completed before moving onto the next. Obviously it will only be necessary to provide information if the student has used a particular organisation. If, for example, the student had become a member of a Mother and Toddler group then the number '1' should be circled and the date written under 'first used' eg. Sept 1985. Next the frequency of the meetings should be written eg. every week, and the details might include where the group met. If the student had not been involved in playgroups then there would be no need to write alongside 'playgroup'.

3. What OU Community Education courses have you taken? Give details:

	Title	Start Date (mth. yr)	Duration (mths)	Meeting Place	Group leader	No. in the group	Cert
1							
2							
3							
4							

This type of question can begin by writing down all the courses the student has taken starting with the first followed by the next and so on. Next the dates that these courses were taken can be added. Then for each course the remaining details can be added.

Whether the answers should be dealt with across or down the page is usually a matter of convenience. The interviewer should do whatever is easiest.

Prompts
Some questions include 'prompts', for example:

A. Can you tell me about the children's services you have used?
(Prompt: mother and toddler group, playgroup, nursery, schools)

Prompts suggest answers to the students and those provided should be used if necessary. In this example the first part of the question should be asked, followed by a pause. If the student begins to answer then this should be recorded. If the student appears uncertain as what is meant by 'children's services' then the prompt should be used. If the student mentions one service then the others in the prompt might then be used. Whenever a prompt is used this should be indicated by writing 'P' before recording the response. You should not branch out and add prompts of your own but you should probe (see below) where necessary.

Probes
Probes are included with some questions. For example:

1. Can you tell me about the jobs you have had?
(Probe: difficulties in getting jobs, training, job satisfaction, childcare, part-time/full-time)

2. Has the course helped you make changes in your life?
(Probe, for changes in the household, changes in relationship with partner, children, changes in community activities, changes in employment)

The first part of the question should be asked and the students reply recorded. Further questions can be added to explore the areas listed after probe. For example if the student had not already mentioned it the interviewer might say 'did you have any difficulty in getting jobs?' or 'what arrangements did you make for childcare?' The replies would be recorded in the usual way after writing a 'P'. You should not go outside the areas mentioned and be careful to phrase your questions neutrally, in other words do not ask questions that reveal your opinions or experiences, it is the students' that are wanted.

You can probe questions which do not have probes given but only use phrases such as 'can you tell me more about that?' or 'are there any other reasons?' or gestures such as an expectant glance with an 'umm' or 'uh huh' or 'yes...' followed by an expectant silence giving the student time to think.

It is very easy to fall into the trap of assuming that we know what people mean when they say something, and some people even think it is rude to ask a person to explain what they mean. This is not so; it displays a flattering attention to and interest in what they are saying!

Students may use unclear words such as 'important' or make vague references 'it was because of my health, or age, or because of the welfare'. You may need to clarify what is meant with probes such as:
'Exactly why do you think this is important?'
'How do you mean its because of your health?'
'I don't quite understand what you mean by *important*'
'In what ways does it effect your health?'
'Can you explain a little more fully...?'

Probes to encourage the student to give more information should always be used and should be used several times if necessary especially in the 'Changes' theme until the student positively indicates she has nothing further to add. The form of the probe should be positive: eg 'what else?; which encourages students to think, rather than 'anything else?' or 'nothing else?' which make it easy for the student to give up.

As one purpose is to get as full a life history as possible to construct accurate 'life lines'. Where a number of events are mentioned in different parts of the interview eg. a child starting nursery, moving house, starting work, and taking an OU course it will be necessary to see how these relate in time and whether they are connected. Remembering dates is not easy and it will be helpful to use probes such as:

'was this before your son started nursery?'
'was this after you gave up work?'

Always record dates as accurately as possible. For early dates (up to the birth of the first child) the year will probably be sufficient but for dates after this obtain the month as well as the year if possible. Obviously you should avoid making the student anxious by pressing too hard for forgotten dates.

Do not let the use of probes interfere with or interrupt the students description of their lives in the first part of the interview unless they drift too far off the point. Whatever probes are used, the interviewer's task is clear: to draw out all relevant responses from students; to ensure shy and unforthcoming students have as much chance to give their experience as talkative ones; to be neutral, interested and persuasive.

Recording the Answers
Answers to open ended questions should be recorded in the student's own words, not summarised or paraphrased. The only parts of what students say that can be left out by the interviewer are 'ums', 'ers', and 'you knows', straight repetitions and irrelevant asides or digressions. Accurate recording of answers is not easy and takes practice.

The best way to achieve verbatim recording is to start writing immediately the student starts to talk. If it proves impossible to keep up then make sure to include all main points in the students own phrases. Words abbreviated at the time of the interview will have to be written over in full by you after the interview but never rewrite the replies afterwards.

If the student speaks very fast you may have to slow her down, usually by saying 'uh-huh' or 'yes', or by repeating her words aloud at writing speed. When the student sees you trying to take down what she says word for word she will usually slow down without being asked.

When using the Starter questions you should show in the written answer, where you asked each question with the letter identifying each question. Thus after asking question A write 'A' in the left margin before you begin writing the student's reply. Then when you ask the next question write 'B' and so on for all the questions you use.

Remember to also record where you use prompts or probes with the letter 'P'. With the other types of questions in the Topic lists you should also show where you used prompts and probes.

Procedure

The interview should begin with an introduction in your own words covering the points in this example:

"Hello, Mary Smith (student's name), my name is Margaret Jones (interviewer's name) and I am working for the Open University. I want to learn about your experiences as an Open University student and how this fits into your life. I'd like to hear about your earlier life and your life now so that I can get a full picture of you as a student. Your help in telling about yourself and what you got out of the course(s) will help the University improve the courses. Everything you say will be treated in the strictest confidence and will not be reported or written up in a way that reveals your identity."

"I shall begin by asking you about your life before going onto asking you about your reactions to the course(s). To keep a record I will write down what you say."

"Have you anything you would like to ask me?"

"OK, can I start by asking about your early life and school?"

After your introduction the first Starter question of the first theme 'Childhood and Education' should be asked: *"What was your schooling like?"* The students response should be recorded in writing in the space provided. Other Starter questions can be use as necessary to get the student to cover further areas in this theme. 'Prompts' can be read if the student is not clear what is meant by the question. 'Probe' information is provided for your guidance for further questions if the student does not cover the points in reply t the Starter question. When the theme has been adequately covered the interview can move onto the second them - 'Personal and Family' and the first Starter question asked. This should proceed as for the first theme. Each theme can be dealt with in the same way except for the 'Changes' theme where the responses to the first two Starter questions should be recorded in the Topic questions. When the 'Changes' Starter questions have been completed the interviewer should say:

"Thank you, we have covered a great deal. Can I now make sure that we haven't left anything out by checking over my list? If I can return to your reactions to the course(s) first".

The Topic questions for the 'Changes' theme should be checked first. Where Topic questions have been dealt with earlier the response should be transferred and written down in the space available beneath the Topic question. If the question has not been dealt with earlier of the interviewer is not sure or unclear, the Topic question should be asked and the answer written down. Each Topic question should be answered either from earlier material without asking the question or by asking the question directly.

When the 'Changes' Topic questions have been completed the interviewer should return to the first theme 'Childhood and Education' and say: *"Can I now check details of your early life?"* and proceed as for the previous theme. Each theme's Topic questions should be covered, ending with the 'Services' theme. Finally the student should be thanked for their help and reminded that their experience is important for this research and will be treated confidentially.

Thus the sequence for the Interview and the Interview Document page numbers is as follows:

INTRODUCTION

STARTER QUESTIONS (Pink Sheets)

TOPIC QUESTIONS (White Sheets)

THANKS

Appendix H - Letter to Students

The Open University
Walton Hall
Milton Keynes
MK7 6AA

Dec 1987

Community Education Impact Study

Dear Student,

Thank you very much for giving the time to talk about your experience with Open University Community Education courses and how they fitted into your life. What your have said will be treated with the strictest confidence and your name will not revealed.

From my discussions with students I have been very impressed with the work that is being done in Glasgow and the enthusiasm that students and group leaders bring to the courses. Your help will enable me to carefully build up a picture of how the courses are studied and what they mean to students. This will be used by the Open University to improve the existing courses and to produce better new courses.

I wish you well for the future and for any further courses you go onto study.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Farnes,
Director of Community Education.

Appendix I - Example of a Computer File of Students' Responses Recorded in Interview Document

Interview Details
001 145
002 XXXXXX XXXXXXX
003 00
004 XXXXXX XXXXXXX
005 0
006 St. Mungo's Adult Education Centre
007 02/02/88; 10.15; 115mins
008 Arrangements were fine
009 Student was fairly relaxed and therefore quite forthcoming, although since she only lived with her husband for one and half years she didn't really want to answer questions about him.
010 0

1. Childhood and Education
Starter Questions:
011 I loved school, I was always clever at school. Primary you always got prizes at exam time. I left school when I got the chance of a job, so I had to leave immediately. I was going to sit 7 O levels.
012 I was born and lived in Castlemilk till I was 16. One older brother and one younger sister. I think I was OK, my father always worked, my mother worked when we were older - from about 6yrs of age.
013 Me and my brother always shared housework, I watched my young sister a lot when she came along, she's 11yrs younger than me.
Topic Questions:
101 17/02/63
102 24
103 Castlemilk
104 0
105 Printer
106 1; Quilter in a factory
107 2
108 2
109 3: 1; 1; 0; 0
110 2; Watched neighbours 5 children a lot while she was in hospital after school. My young sister, 11yrs younger, I watched, took and collected from nursery, gave her lunch while mum worked.
111 3; Shopping, cleaning - everything
112 1; Gran died when I was 5
113 2
114 2
115 16
116 2
117 1

2. Personal and Family
Starter Questions:
021 I was married at 17 and I lived in Castlemilk. I met him in a pub in town.
022 I've 2 sons, one's 6 and one's 5. I'm divorced so I find it hard.
023 No sharing, it was a mistake. I was married one and a half years - I did everything.
024 Severe depression quite recently when I had a miscarriage.
Topic Questions:
201 17.5
202 17.5
203 1; Ended when I was 19
204 0

205 1; 2 First month
206 2; Castlemilk; Sept 1980; Flat; Rent; Separated from husband
Parents; for one month
Dalmarnock; Feb 1982; Flat; Rent; Still there
207 2: 0; 2; 0; 0; 0: 24/05/81, 12/07/82
208 2
209 2
210 1; Jan 1988 - due to a miscarriage
211 2
212 2
213 2
214 2
215 3, NA
216 3, NA
217 4, NA
218 5; Student looks after own money
219 4: 2; 3; 4; 8: 2
220 1: 7

3. Employment
Starter Questions:
031 I left school and started in a shop's office doing general office work. Then I got a job with better wages as an Administrative Assistant. Since I left work to have a family I've been unemployed.
032 The two jobs I've had I had no problem getting. Yes - I had job satisfaction, I feel its really important. My mother lives 3 doors away, so she's available during the day.
033 He never worked
034 Independence - self confidence - social life, helps you make new friends.
Topic Questions:
301 No
302 2
303 2;
Jan 79; Clerical Assistant; 40; Job Centre; Better prospects
Jul 79; Admin Assistant; 37; Father worked there; To have a family
Nov 86-Oct 87; Trainee Media Assistant; 30; Radio Clyde; Course was only for 1yr
304 1; Past few months
305 When I worked for Clyde Action, my mother and my close friend Katy looked after the kids.
306 1; March 81-Nov 86; Oct 87-present
307 NA
308 1; All the time we were married
309 With difficulty
310 2
311 1; I was M. O. C. in the NGA Jul 79-March 81
312 2
313 3; Mostly housekeeping since I've been married.

4. Community and Social
Starter Questions:
041 Before I was married I spent 4 nights a week at the dancing, every other night I was at friends visiting. I stopped after I got married.
042 My closest friend is one I went to school with (Liz), Katy I go out with her a lot, we've a lot in common, she's separated. I get on fine with my relations but we're not that close. I'm close to my mother. I get on well with my young sister. My brother and I get on OK although we have different points of view. My father has more or less given up on me because we don't have the same attitudes.
043 We were never in, but we always went out with his friends, not couples, just single guys.

044 Playschemes, Resource Centre, Mothers and Toddlers, Nursery. I did voluntary work for Clyde Action and I helped set up Health Fairs (Scottish Health Education Group) in my own area (Bridgeton). I was in the Link-Up groups, I was a Committee member. I was asked to be a Committee member in the Dalmarnock Centre but I refused, too much bickering going on between members. I was on the Committee for the Health Fair.
045 My friend Liz and my mother
046 I used to do a lot of babysitting (neighbours etc) before my children were school age. I used to get my next door neighbour messages when she wasn't well.
Topic Questions:
401 Job hunting at the moment, at the weekend socialising occasionally.
402 Having to stay in more because of kids and money.
403 3;
Link-Up Group; Aug 1984; Aug 1987; Once a month; Committee member
Festival Committee; Aug 1985; Aug 1987; Once a week; Committee member
I helped set up Health Fairs (Scottish Health Education Group) in my own area (Bridgeton)
404 Didn't belong to anything before marriage now everything's family related.
405 Liz; 2; 2; 1, 5 (socialising)
Katy; 1; 1; 1-5 (socialising)
0
Mother; 1; 1; 1, 2
Sister; 1; 1; 3, 4
406 No change in relatives, met Katy after the kids came.
407 6, NA
408 NA
409 2, NA
410 NA
411 Friend
Mother
Mother
Mother
Friend
412 None
413 1; Since I moved into my flat, I've helped my neighbour regularly, shopping etc. I used to watch friends children 1982-86 about 1-2 times a week.

5. Services
Starter Questions:
051 Used Health Service, Housing Assoc. I use the library, swimming and Crown Point Sports Centre.
052 Mother and Toddlers, Playschemes, Clubs, Nursery and Resource Centres and Schools
053 Nothing that I can think of.
Topic Questions:
501 1; 1980; First used first pregnancy
2; 1981-5; Regular check ups
3; 1981; Twice; Check up
9; 1983; Once; 5 mornings a week
10; 1986; Twice; Both boys
12; 1983; Once a week
16; 1982; Payments and repairs
17; 1982; Help after separation
20; 1982; Payment of bills
21; 1982; Payment of bills
22; 1982; Payment of bills
26; Always used swimming
27; Always used
502 1; 1982; Twice a week; Committee member
2; 1982; Twice a week; Member
3; 1986; Summer hols; Member

4; 1982; Once a week; Member
503 Lounges and dancing; 1980; 4 times a week; Till marriage
504 2
505 1; 1984, play areas for children
506 I think this questionnaire is quite a good idea. It helps refresh your own mind a bit, makes you see for yourself how you've changed.
507 0

6. Changes
Starter Questions:
061 0
062 0
063 It helped me start to get my confidence back - I was getting out the house. It also helped me listen to other peoples points of view, helped me look at things differently. Also helped me meet new people and make new friends.
064 Yes, when you're used to being in on your own with the kids you're used to listening to yourself. Listening to other people helped me realise that I was only human. Helped me understand the children more.
065 Helped me cope with the children getting older, helped me understand them, referring to the course and remembering what it taught me, helped me realise that my kids were normal and so was I. I think it helped because I've got something to fill in in an application form for a job and some of the jobs I'm going for I think it might help with them. I think it helped when I started in the Link-Up group, made me more aware of what I was looking for then, I felt I know more about what I was talking about, I could get my point across more and when I started up the Health Fair it helped me to know more what I was looking for in a Health Fair. It helped me see what was/wasn't needed for children in the Health Fair.
066 It changed me at first, it broke me in, I realised I could do something else other than bring up kids. I feel I can ask for more from the schools now and I know what to expect from school. Because of the course, it made me more able to disagree with school at Parents night. I feel I can take more of an interest because I've done the course and I know whats in front of them.
Topic Questions:
601 1;
913; Sept 85; 9mths; Nursery School; Mrs McKay; 4; Yes
602 2;
English course; Sept 86; 9mths; Nursery School; No
Media and Research course; Nov 86; 12mths; Clyde Action, West Nile St. Certificate
603 The head teacher at kids nursery asked me if I'd be interested in it.
604 Because I didn't know anyone and I thought it'd help me meet people and get me out during the day.
605 1
606 2
607 NA
608 They didn't really bother about it
609 They were glad to see a change in me, all of a sudden I had more confidence.
610 During nursery hours
When the kids were in bed
611 My two sons were at the nursery anyway
612 1
613 NA
614 1; I wouldn't have had the confidence to do the English course otherwise
615 1; I felt I was a more important person to myself, gave me self respect.
616 1; I let my kids do a lot more since the course
617 1; Taking exercise, changed the times of their meals.
618 1; I spend more time sitting with them myself because I can understand them better, I take more of an interest.
619 1; I know how to relate to them better, more patience
620 2; NA

621 1; Because Clyde Action could see I hadn't just been sitting around the house
622 3
623 3
624 1; Katy, we go out a lot
625 1; When we meet, we spend time together, go for a coffee etc.
626 2
627 2
628 1; Link-Up groups, Clyde Action, Health Fairs
629 1; At Link-Up groups and Health Fairs
630 1; In the Link-Up groups I told members about what I had learned on the course
631 1; Anyone who's talking about their kids, I tell them the part of the course that refers to their problem
632 1; Helped me fight for better play areas, creche facilities for our kids and we got them.
633 1; After the course I could speak up for myself so I was able to ask for things
634 1; Gave me more confidence to stand up for my rights, also made me look for better and newer ideas.
635 1; Personally, I felt the future brighter - beforehand I couldn't see a future for myself
636 1; Beforehand I was worried that they weren't coming up to standard, now I know they are.

Appendix J - Example of Student's DateFile

145 Students Identification number
02/02/88 Date of interview
17/02/63 Date of birth
01/01/79 Date left school

1 Marriage
01/08/80 Marriage
01/02/82 Separated and divorced

2 Children
24/05/81 Date of birth for first child
12/07/82 Date of birth for second child

2 Full-time jobs
01/01/79 Clerical Ass
01/07/79 Left
01/07/79 Admin Ass
01/02/81 Pregnant

1 Part-time job
01/11/86 Trainee Media Ass (30hrs)
01/10/87 Finished

1 OU Course
01/09/85 Start 913
01/06/86 End

2 Other Courses
01/09/86 Start English course
01/06/87 End
01/11/86 Start Media and Research course
01/10/87 End

1 Period of Husband's Unemployment
01/08/80 All the time married
01/02/82 Separation

1 Health Problems
01/12/87 Depression due to miscarriage
01/01/88 End

3 Community Activities
01/09/82 M & T
01/06/85 End
01/05/83 Playgroup
01/05/85 End
01/06/86 Summer Playschemes
01/08/86 End

4 Community Responsibilities
01/06/83 M & T Committee
01/06/85 End
01/08/84 Link Up Committee
01/08/87 End
01/08/85 Festival Committee
01/08/87 End
01/11/86 Health Fair Committee
01/10/87 End

Appendix K - Students' Career Types (Profiles)

SNoMChE E CS H HU
101,4,8,4,1,1,2,3,7
102,3,3,3,2,3,3,1,6
103,3,3,1,1,3,2,3,5
104,1,5,1,3,6,3,3,8
105,3,2,1,3,4,3,1,5
106,3,3,3,4,5,2,3,2
107,3,3,4,4,4,4,3,2
108,3,1,2,3,6,2,3,1
109,3,2,5,3,4,2,2,1
110,3,1,5,1,5,3,3,1
111,5,8,1,3,3,3,3,7
112,3,3,1,1,7,2,1,3
113,6,8,1,1,4,4,3,7
114,3,3,5,4,2,4,1,1
115,3,1,5,1,3,2,2,1
116,4,8,3,3,2,4,3,7
117,3,3,3,3,4,2,1,2
118,6,8,3,4,5,2,1,7
119,3,1,5,3,3,2,1,1
120,3,3,1,1,5,1,3,5
121,5,8,3,4,6,3,3,7
122,2,6,6,2,1,2,1,8
123,1,5,3,3,7,4,1,8
124,3,3,3,3,5,3,3,1
125,3,2,4,4,7,3,2,1
126,3,2,3,2,5,2,2,1
127,3,2,3,4,5,3,2,1
128,3,1,1,1,1,1,3,1
129,3,1,3,1,3,3,1,3
130,3,1,2,1,1,2,2,4
131,1,7,6,1,4,2,1,8
132,3,2,3,3,7,2,3,3
133,3,1,5,2,2,3,3,1
134,3,2,5,2,1,1,3,3
135,3,1,5,2,1,2,3,1
136,3,2,4,2,1,2,1,1
137,6,8,3,3,4,3,1,7
138,1,7,6,3,2,4,3,8
139,3,3,3,1,2,3,1,1
140,3,3,1,1,4,3,3,4
141,1,5,5,3,4,3,1,8
142,3,2,4,3,5,2,1,1
143,1,7,6,3,3,3,2,8
144,3,1,5,3,3,3,3,5
145,5,8,3,3,6,3,3,7
146,3,1,1,4,4,1,2,1
147,5,8,4,4,3,3,3,7
148,3,3,1,1,3,3,2,1
149,3,1,1,3,4,3,2,1
150,3,4,1,1,4,3,3,3
151,3,3,2,1,2,2,1,1
152,3,2,2,3,7,3,3,5
153,3,1,5,2,3,3,1,1
154,3,1,1,3,3,3,2,1
155,3,2,3,4,6,2,3,1
156,3,2,3,2,2,1,3,1
157,1,5,2,2,3,3,3,8
158,5,8,5,3,4,3,3,7
159,3,3,1,2,4,3,1,1
160,3,1,5,4,1,2,3,1

Key (from left to right):
SNo=Student number
M=Marriage
Ch=Childcare
E=Employment
E=Education
C=Community activities
S=Social
H=Health
HU=Husbands' unemployment

For key to number codes see appendix L

Appendix L - Students with Each Type of Careers

MARRIAGE
1) NOT MARRIED BEFORE OR AFTER COURSE (7)
104, 123, 141, 157, 131, 138, 143
2) FIRST MARRIAGE STARTS AFTER COURSE (1)
122
3) MARRIED CONTINUOUSLY (42)
108, 109, 110, 114, 115, 119, 124, 125, 126, 127
128, 133, 135, 136, 139, 142, 146, 148, 149, 151
153, 154, 155, 156, 159, 160, 102, 103, 105, 106
107, 112, 117, 120, 129, 130, 132, 134, 140, 144
150, 152
4) FIRST MARRIAGE ENDS AFTER COURSE (2)
101,116
5) FIRST MARRIAGE ENDS BEFORE COURSE (STAY SINGLE) (5)
111, 121, 145, 147, 158
6) SECOND MARRIAGE STARTS BEFORE COURSE (3)
113, 118, 137

CHILDCARE
1) STAGE THREE - FIRST MARRIAGE, YOUNGEST MORE THAN 4 YRS (15)
108, 110, 115, 119, 128, 129, 130, 133, 135, 144
146, 149, 153, 154, 160
2) STAGE 2 - FIRST MARRIAGE, YOUNGEST BETWEEN 1-4 YRS (12)
105, 109, 125, 126, 127, 132, 134, 136, 142, 152
155, 156
3) STAGE 1 - FIRST MARRIAGE, YOUNGEST LESS THAN I YR (14)
102, 103, 106, 107, 112, 114, 117, 120, 124, 139
140, 148, 151, 159
4) ADOPTED FAMILY (1)
150
5) NOT MARRIED WITH CHILD (4)
104, 123, 141, 157
6) FIRST MARRIAGE, NO CHILDREN (1)
122
7) NOT MARRIED NO CHILDREN (3)
131, 138, 143
8) SEPARATION (10)
101, 111, 113, 116, 118, 121, 137, 145, 147, 158

EMPLOYMENT
1) NOT RETURNED/NOT IN PAID WORK/NO RETURN (15)
103, 104, 105, 111, 112, 113, 120, 128, 140, 146
148, 149, 150, 154, 159
2) RETURNED/NOT IN PAID WORK/NO RESTART (5)
108, 130, 151, 152, 157
3) NOT RETURNED/NOT IN PAID WORK/RETURNS (17)
102, 106, 116, 117, 118, 121, 123, 124, 126, 127
129, 132, 137, 139, 145, 155, 156
4) RETURNED/NOT IN PAID WORK/RESTARTS (6)
101, 107, 125, 136, 142, 147
5) RETURNED IN PAID WORK (13)
109, 114, 115, 119, 133, 135, 153, 160, 141, 110
144, 158, 134

6) OTHERS (4)
122, 131, 143, 138

EDUCATION
1) NO COURSES BEFORE, NONE AFTER OU (16)
101, 103, 110, 112, 113, 115, 120, 128, 129, 130
131, 139, 140, 148, 150, 151
2) COURSES AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL, NONE AFTER OU (10)
102, 122, 126, 133, 134, 135, 136, 153, 156, 157
3) NO COURSES BEFORE, COURSES AFTER OU (22)
104, 105, 108, 109, 111, 116, 117, 119, 123, 124
132, 137, 138, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 149, 152, 154, 158
4) COURSES AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL AND AFTER OU (12)
106, 107, 114, 118, 121, 125, 127, 146, 147, 155, 159, 160

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES
1) NO INVOLVEMENT (8)
101, 122, 128, 130, 134, 135, 136, 160
2) START COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AROUND OR AFTER COURSE (7)
138, 151, 156, 114, 133, 139, 116
3) COMMUNITY ACTIVITY ONGOING (13)
143, 147, 148, 153, 154, 102, 103, 111, 115, 119, 129, .144, 157
4) START COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY AFTER COURSE (NO RESP BEFORE) (14)
105, 109, 113, 117, 131, 137, 140, 141, 146, 158, 159
107,149, 150
5) START COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY AROUND COURSE (8)
106, 120, 142, 124, 118, 126, 127, 110
6) COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY ONGOING (5)
145, 108, 155, 121, 104
7) OTHERS (5)
112, 132, 125, 123, 152

SOCIAL
1) KNEW NO ONE/DID NOT MAKE FRIENDS (5)
134, 156, 146, 128, 120
2) KNEW SOME OR ALL/DID NOT MAKE FRIENDS (21)
101, 130, 160, 151, 103, 115, 117, 126, 108, 155
112, 132, 122, 135, 136, 119, 109, 131, 106, 142, 118
3) KNEW SOME OR ALL/MADE FRIENDS (28)
143, 153, 154, 111, 129, 144, 137, 158, 149, 150
127, 145, 125, 133, 139, 147, 148, 102, 157, 105
140, 141, 159, 124, 110, 121, 104, 152
4) KNEW NO ONE/MADE NO FRIENDS (6)
138, 114, 116, 113, 107, 123

HEALTH
1) NO HEALTH PROBLEMS (19)
102, 105, 112, 114, 117, 118, 119, 122, 123, 129
131, 136, 137, 139, 141, 142, 151, 153, 159
2) PROBLEMS MORE THAN 2 YEARS BEFORE COURSES (11)
109, 115, 125, 126, 127, 130, 143, 146, 148, 149, 154
3) PROBLEMS AROUND TIME OF COURSES (30)
101, 103, 104, 106, 107, 108, 110, 111, 113, 116
120, 121, 124, 128, 132, 133, 134, 135, 138, 140
144, 145, 147, 150, 152, 155, 156, 157, 158, 160

HUSBANDS UNEMPLOYMENT
1) NO HUSBANDS UNEMPLOYMENT (26)
108, 109, 110, 114, 115, 119, 124, 125, 126, 127
128, 133, 135, 136, 139, 142, 146, 148, 149, 151
153, 154, 155, 156, 159, 160
2) HUSBAND NOT YET UNEMPLOYED (3)
106, 107, 117
3) HUSBAND DURING FIRST PERIOD OF UNEMPLOYMENT (5)
112, 129, 132, 134, 150
4) AFTER FIRST PERIOD OF UNEMPLOYMENT (2)
130, 140
5) DURING ONE OR MORE PERIODS OF UNEMPLOYMENT (5)
103, 105, 120, 144, 152
6) HUSBAND UNEMEMPLOYED CONTINUOUSLY SINCE MARRIAGE (1)
102
7) SEPARATION (10)
DATA 101,111, 113, 116, 118, 121, 137, 145, 147, 158
8) NO HUSBAND (8)
104, 122, 123, 131, 138, 141, 143, 157

Appendix M - Change Events around the time of the Courses

S No	M	Ch	E	OU	C	CA	HU	H	S
101	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
102	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
103	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
104	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1
105	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1
106	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
107	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
108	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0
109	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
110	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1
111	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0
112	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
113	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1
114	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1
115	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
116	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
117	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
118	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
119	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
120	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
121	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
122	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
123	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
124	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1
125	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
126	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
127	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
128	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
129	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
130	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
131	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
132	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0
133	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1
134	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0
135	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
136	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
137	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
138	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1
139	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1
140	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1
141	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
142	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
143	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
144	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
145	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1
146	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
147	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
148	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
149	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1
150	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1
151	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
152	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1
153	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
154	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
155	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
156	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
157	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1
158	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0
159	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
160	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0

Key (from left to right):
S No=Student Number
M=Marriage
Ch=Childcare
E=Employment
OU=Another OU Course
C=Non-OU Course
CA=Community Activity or Responsibility
HU=Husbands Unemployment
H=Health
S=Social
0=No change
1=Change

Appendix N - Helpfulness of the Courses in Each Area of Life

SNo	M	Ch	E	OU	C	CA	H	S
101	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
102	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
103	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
104	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
105	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
106	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0
107	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
108	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
109	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
110	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
111	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
112	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
113	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1
114	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
115	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
116	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
117	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
118	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
119	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
120	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
121	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
122	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
123	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
124	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1
125	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
126	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
127	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
128	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0
129	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
130	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0
131	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
132	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
133	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
134	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0
135	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
136	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0
137	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
138	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
139	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1
140	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
141	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
142	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
143	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
144	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
145	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
146	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0
147	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
148	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
149	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
150	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
151	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
152	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
153	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
154	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
155	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
156	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0
157	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
158	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
159	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
160	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0

Key (from left to right)
SNo=Student Number
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S=Social
0=No help
1=Helpful

Appendix O - Glossary of Life Course Terms

(see also the tenets of the life course approach, p. 61)

1) A **life history** consists of an individual's description of life events, responses, activities and relationships in all areas of life across their lifetime.

2) A **career** consists of a pattern of events, activities and relationships in a particular area of life though a portion of an individual's lifetime, which can be represented as a lifeline.

3) An **area of life** is a meaningful part of an individual's life in which events, activities and relationships occur as part of a career.

4) An individual's **life course** consists of the careers in all areas of their life and is derived from their life history.

5) A **life event** is an experience or action which affects an individual's life course.

6) An individual's **response** or reaction to a life event is determined by the nature of the event, personal characteristics and socioeconomic circumstances - including resources, social support and opportunities.

7) An individual's **life course** is determined by the interaction between changing personal characteristics and personal and socioeconomic circumstances through time.

   7a) **Personal characteristics** - include the resources of experience, knowledge and skills, health, physique, personality, intelligence - either inherited or acquired during the life course.

   7b) **Personal circumstances** - includes the individual's material resources, money, assets, housing, job, family and social network. Also includes the life courses of immediate others, family members etc.

   7c) **Socioeconomic circumstances** - include personal circumstances, particularly marital status, and the economic opportunities and constraints in the wider context at a particular point in historical time.

8) **Socioeconomic stability** is defined with reference to marital and economic stability and depends on the continuity of marriage and the absence of husbands' unemployment.

9) Progress in a particular **career** is determined by the interaction through time between changing personal characteristics,

socioeconomic circumstances, and what is happening in other careers.

In other words progress in a career is determined by:
- who you are
- what you have got
- what the opportunities/demands are
- what else you are doing

10) **Life course analysis** involves comparing and contrasting the life courses or careers of individuals (inter- or across individuals) or a particular individual's careers (intra- or within an individual) with reference to their socioeconomic and historical context.

11) A **lifeline** is a representation of a career showing when all relevant events and activities occurred in a particular area of life through all or part of an individual's life.

12) A **set of lifelines** represent the life course of an individual and their careers in all areas of life through all or part of their life.

13) A **linkage** exists between events or activities (components) in two areas of life when what happens in one influences what happens in the other area.

14) **Multiple linkages** occur when what happens in one area of life influences what happens in more than one other area.

15) A **network of linkages** or interlinkages consists of the linkages between events and activities (components) in all areas of life around a particular time period.

16) **Types of linkages:** A life event may be linked to past events or activities in the same area of life (longitudinal) and to past (diagonal) and current (systemic or horizontal) events or activities in other areas.

17) A **network diagram** represents relationships between an individual and their immediate family, relatives and friends at a particular point in time.

18) **OU Community Education:**

1) Starting an OU Community Education course is a life event which can enter the educational area of an individual's life

2) Participation in a Community Education course makes up part of an individual's educational career.

3) Life events in other areas of life can be linked to the take up of Community Education.

4) The entry of Community Education into an area of an individual's life requires adaptation in other areas of life.

5) Participation in Community Education can influence the lifelines in other areas of individuals' lives and their life course.