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*          UNSUCCESSFUL EDUCATION COURSES                        *  
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## SUMMARY.

During the NCDS IV interview details were collected about post-school education courses which had been unsuccessful and about training courses and apprenticeships which were uncompleted. The focus in this paper is on the former. Results of courses which were taken while still at school are not included here.

Over 1,200 respondents (a tenth of those interviewed and more than a quarter of those undertaking an education course) reported an unsuccessful education course. A few, 120 people, reported more than one. Seventeen per cent of those who had undertaken education courses had only an unsuccessful course, while 10 per cent had undertaken both and unsuccessful courses. Differences between men and women were small throughout, although men were a little more likely to have unsuccessful courses and only unsuccessful courses. Most unsuccessful courses were for GCE qualifications taken in F E Colleges and similar institutions), but almost a fifth were university-level courses.

The broad span of subjects taken on unsuccessful courses was similar to the range of subjects taken on the course for the highest qualification (by definition, a successful one) obtained by respondents. However, unsuccessful courses were less likely than the course for the highest qualification to be taken with a job in mind, and, understandably, were less likely to be thought to have improved the respondent's job prospects.

Considering the lower level of unsuccessful courses, it is not surprising that a smaller proportion were fulltime, and that, of the 54 per cent of unsuccessful courses which were fulltime, fewer attracted a grant as compared with the course for the highest qualification. However, only six per cent of those who left their unsuccessful course before it came to an end gave

financial reasons as the main cause for their departure. Those who had experienced an unsuccessful course were more likely to be unemployed at the time of interview. Also, they were both more likely to have ever experienced unemployment and to have had more spells of unemployment. More of those who had unsuccessful courses were classified as "out of the labour force". They were also more likely to be allocated to a lower social class category according to their current or last job.

People whose experiences of education had to some extent been congruent with their desires (as they were expressed at age 16 and collected in 1974 as part of the NCDS third sweep) were more likely to be successful on education courses. For while almost a quarter of those who, at 16, desired to do fulltime post-school study and who did so had had an unsuccessful course, more than a third of those who had not wished to study but who, in the event had done so, had been unsuccessful on at least one course.

Those who were of lower attainment at age 16 (as measured by a standardised reading test) were, not surprisingly, less likely to take part in post-school education courses. But if they did, their failure rate was higher: nearly two-fifths of those in the bottom fifth of reading attainment at age 16 who had undertaken education courses had had an unsuccessful course, compared with less than a quarter of those in the top fifth.

Parental social class was also related to post-school course success. While a much larger proportion of people from non-manual backgrounds undertook education courses, they also had a higher success rate than those whose fathers had been employed in manual work.



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## Background to Working Papers from the National Child Development Study

1. This Working Paper reports on the analysis of data relating to 12,538 23-year-olds living in Great Britain who have been the subjects of a longitudinal study since their birth in 1958. The data were obtained by means of interview survey during late 1981 and early 1982. This survey and this Working Paper form part of the fourth follow-up of the National Child Development Study which is being sponsored by five Government departments - DHSS, DES, DE, MSC and DOE. Preparation for the survey began in May 1980 and the project is due for completion by December 1984.
2. The National Child Development Study (NCDS) is a longitudinal study which takes as its subjects all those living in Great Britain who were born between 3rd and 9th March, 1958. Since the original birth survey in 1958 the National Children's Bureau has sought to monitor the social, economic, educational and health circumstances of the surviving subjects. To this end, major surveys were carried out in 1965 (NCDS1), 1969 (NCDS2), 1974 (NCDS3) and 1981 (NCDS4). For the purposes of the first three surveys, the birth cohort was augmented by including those new immigrants born in the relevant week and information was obtained with the active co-operation of parents, teachers and the schools' health service as well as members of the NCDS cohort. The 1981 survey differs in that no attempt was made to include new immigrants since 1974 and information was obtained from the subject only.
3. The target sample for the 1981 survey was a total of 16,450 individuals - all those who had participated in NCDS1, NCDS2 or NCDS3, excluding those known to have emigrated or to have died. Following initial tracing by the Bureau, details of names and addresses were passed to NOP Market Research Limited and Social and Community Planning Research who carried out further tracing and subsequent interviews. The 12,538 interviews obtained represent 76 per cent of the original target sample and 93 per cent of those traced and contacted by interviewers.

4. The interview survey was carried out by NOP and SCPR between August 1981 and March 1982. Each interview took approximately 90 minutes and information was obtained on employment, unemployment and periods out of the labour force; apprenticeship and training; post-school education; marriage; family income, savings, investment and inheritance; respondent reported health and health related behaviour; and voluntary activity and leisure.
5. Completed questionnaires were visually checked by NOP and SCPR and the data then transferred by them to computer. Following preliminary computer editing by NOP and SCPR more detailed checks have been carried out by NCB. The majority of open-ended questions were coded by SCPR using coding frames developed by NCB. All open-ended questions related to health states were coded by NCB.
6. The form in which the data were collected has made it necessary to generate a number of derived or recoded variables, i.e. summary measures which combine two or more pre-coded variables. The use of these summary measures has enabled exploration of additional and more complex relationships than would have been possible using only information taken directly from the questionnaire.

INTRODUCTION.

7. This working paper looks at respondents who have been unsuccessful on education courses. It examines the kind of courses on which they were unsuccessful, comparing these to courses undertaken for the highest qualification obtained by members of the study. The overlap between passing and failing courses is examined, and comparisons are made between those who had educational successes as well as failures and those who did not.
  
8. Education courses can be unsuccessful for two sets of reasons: firstly, students may fail to complete courses, either because they are asked to leave or because they drop out. Secondly, students may complete a course, but fail to gain the qualification towards which the course was directed. The proportions of courses failed in these two ways is looked at, and reasons for courses being unsuccessful (as these were reported by the respondents), are examined.
  
9. It is important to find out whether those who failed courses had failed entirely to gain qualifications or whether they had previously or subsequently gained qualifications. This will clarify whether people are "failures" or whether failure is just a part, for some people, of the process of acquiring qualifications. This question is complicated in two ways: firstly by the fact that many of the respondents had gained, or failed in attempts to gain, qualifications whilst still at school. These failures are not included in the definition of failed courses here; for technical reasons relating to the structure of the database they will be dealt with in a further paper. The second complication is that

only failures on what were defined in the questionnaire as "education" courses are included in the definition of, an unsuccessful course, unsuccessful training courses and apprenticeships are not examined in any detail here.

#### THE DATA

10. Respondents were asked about all post-school educational courses for qualifications, whether successful or unsuccessful; if a respondent reported an unsuccessful course, some further details were collected about this course. If there had been more than one unsuccessful course, details were collected only for the earlier one. Because of the way the questionnaire was constructed, information was not collected concerning unsuccessful courses undertaken at school. However, details of failure at school in CSE, 'O' and 'A' level examinations ('O' and 'H' grade in Scotland) were previously collected, and will be included in a later paper.

#### UNSUCCESSFUL COURSES.

11. Table 1 shows that 4,696 people (37 per cent of those interviewed) had undertaken or were currently undertaking education courses for qualifications. Of these, 69 per cent had obtained qualifications and not been unsuccessful on any of their courses: 17 per cent had been unsuccessful and had not obtained any qualifications since leaving school; 10 per cent had both gained qualifications and been unsuccessful on a course; and five per cent were currently on courses but had no previous qualifications or unsuccessful education courses. Women were a little less likely than men to report unsuccessful courses and a little less likely to be currently doing a course, although more women, overall, had undertaken education courses. The Venn diagram (figure one) gives a graphic representation (not to scale) of the position.



12. Table 2 gives details of the number of courses passed and failed; only eight people had had three failures (five of those people had also been successful on at least one course) but 112 people had been unsuccessful on two education courses. Most people who have been unsuccessful on education courses have not successfully completed a course; 63 per cent of those with unsuccessful courses did not have a successful one.
13. Table 3 shows the proportion of people who left a training course before its end or had not completed an apprenticeship. (Included here are people who may have subsequently completed an apprenticeship, but had at least one that was not completed). Failing to complete a training course is rather different from failing to complete an education course, since people on training courses are sometimes likely to be unable to complete a course because their employer prevents them. Also, training courses are in general of shorter duration than education courses and so more likely to be completed. Nevertheless, people who had been unsuccessful on education courses were more likely than other to have failed to complete training courses (including apprenticeships). Only 86 people who had undertaken one or more post-school education courses and had been successful on them all had failed to complete an apprenticeship or other training course. This represents only three per cent of this group. But among those who had undertaken education courses but not been successful on any of them, six per cent had also been unsuccessful on one or more training courses (Table 3).
14. But these overall differences conceal some interesting disparities between the sexes, as Table 4 shows. Men who had undertaken education courses but not been successful were more likely than women to have failed to complete training courses; nine per cent of men in this category (compared to four per cent of women) had started some form

of training, but failed to complete it. This is not simply due to the fact that more men undertake training courses, for although 42 per cent of the men compared with 33 per cent of the women who had unsuccessful education courses had also undertaken training courses, the proportion of men failing to complete is still higher. This sex difference is not found between men and women overall.

Qualifications held.

15. It can be seen from Table 5 that while only 18 per cent of the sample as a whole had qualifications above 'A' level standard, 42 per cent of all those who have attempted post-school educational qualifications have qualifications above this level. But breaking down this group into three categories according to whether or not the respondent has had an unsuccessful course in relation to whether they have completed other education courses, demonstrates that those who have failed a course are less well-qualified than those who have not. For example, just over half (51 per cent) of those who have never failed an education course have qualifications above 'A' level standard, while only 37 per cent of those with an unsuccessful course (and a successful one) have gained qualifications at this level. However, this is perhaps not surprising, since so many unsuccessful courses were for GCE qualifications.

Qualifications aimed for and subject of unsuccessful course

- 16 Table 6 shows the qualifications which were sought by respondents taking unsuccessful courses. The largest group is those taking 'O' levels (18 per cent). A large proportion of unsuccessful courses were for 'A' levels (16 per cent). Since courses taken while at school or sixth-form college are excluded here, the fact that, despite this, GCE courses form the largest group is particularly notable. Sixteen per cent of unsuccessful courses were for first degrees

17. Table 7 shows the subject taken on the course for the highest qualification. The proportions of people taking courses in subject groups are fairly similar, with the exception of education and health, where the proportion of unsuccessful courses in these subjects is low. (But nursing courses are not included here, as the NCDS questionnaire counted these as training courses).

COMPARISONS OF UNSUCCESSFUL COURSE WITH THE COURSE FOR THE HIGHEST QUALIFICATION.

18. Parallel questions were asked about any unsuccessful course that a respondent had undertaken and about the course for the highest qualification obtained. To make comparisons between these two courses is not entirely to compare like with like. Details were collected on the first unsuccessful course undertaken, while the course for the highest qualification is likely to be the latest course. Nevertheless, comparisons between the two courses are enlightening.
19. Fewer people, in retrospect, said that they had taken the unsuccessful course with a job in mind than said they had taken the course for the highest qualification with a job in mind (Table 8). There were striking, but perhaps not surprising differences between the unsuccessful course and the highest qualification course in the extent to which the respondents thought that the course had improved their job prospects, Table 9. Only a quarter of the respondents thought that the unsuccessful course had improved their job prospects compared to over four-fifths of those who thought that their highest qualification course had improved them. But also striking was the proportion who thought they would be better off not having done the course (Table 10). While only two per cent thought that they would have been better off not doing the course for their highest qualification, twelve per cent thought they would have been better off, in terms of their job prospects, if they had not done their

unsuccessful course. Since it is hard to admit that one has wasted one's time in this way, this is quite an interesting figure!

20. Courses which were unsuccessful were more likely to be evening courses. They were less likely to be fulltime (Table 11). They were more likely to have been taken at a further education college or technical college and less likely to be at a University than were highest qualification courses (Table 12).
21. Students on unsuccessful courses who were fulltime or sandwich students were less likely than those on courses for their highest qualification to obtain a grant (Table 13). But students on unsuccessful courses were almost as likely as those on courses for their highest qualification to obtain money from their parents, or just as likely to be working during term time. Few in either group obtained money from their spouse or partner, partly because few were married when undertaking education courses. The source of the grant for those who had one was similar for those on unsuccessful courses or on courses for the highest qualification (Table 14).
22. Table 15 shows that a higher proportion of respondents on unsuccessful courses had financial problems than did respondents on courses for their highest qualification. In fact, as Table 16 shows, only six per cent actually left the course because of financial problems. The most common set of reasons for leaving a course were, as might be expected, related to the course. Personal and family reasons were particularly common reasons for leaving given by women who had left a course before its end. Although only a tenth of the sample gave failure in examinations as a first reason for leaving the course, when they were asked directly if they had failed any examinations, 44 per cent reported they had failed some or all of their examinations.

SEQUENCING OF UNSUCCESSFUL COURSES.

23. Most of those who had had an unsuccessful course (63 per cent, see Table 18) had not had any successful post-school courses. Those who had had an unsuccessful post-school course had taken it prior to the course for their highest qualification (21 per cent) rather than after it (13 per cent, see Table 18). This is not surprising in view of the preponderance of lower level qualifications which were aimed for on the unsuccessful courses, but it does demonstrate the persistence of those who had an early failure - the set-back of an unsuccessful course did not make them give up!
  
24. Thus, 259 people went on to take a successful course, having previously been unsuccessful on one. But did they end up with qualifications at the same level as those they unsuccessfully tried to obtain, or did they set their sights lower? Table 19 gives the highest qualifications obtained by this group. Eighty-two per cent of those who had failed a course of 'A' level standard or above had subsequently obtained a qualification at or above 'A' level standard. Sixteen per cent were unsuccessful on an 'A' level standard course, but subsequently obtained a highest qualification only of 'O' level or equivalent standard. This implies that they set their sights on a lower level qualification when attempting their subsequent course. But, for the majority, those who went on to do a further course achieved a qualification as good or better than the one they had aimed for on their unsuccessful course.
  
25. Seventy-nine people whose highest qualification course came after their unsuccessful course subsequently succeeded in gaining the qualification they had been seeking but had previously failed to obtain. But only 35 people subsequently did their highest qualification course for the same qualification and in the same subject as that of their successful course. Of these 35, 32 had been unsuccessful on a fulltime course and two-thirds of these unsuccessful

fulltime students went on to gain their qualification by means of fulltime study, one of the others did a sandwich course and the rest studied part-time. Fifteen of the 35 people had failed to complete a course in a Polytechnic or University, and only one of these did not go back to Polytechnic or University to gain, eventually, the qualification which they had failed to obtain at the first attempt. As mentioned above, 79 people eventually gained the qualification they had been seeking, but not always in the same subject. Of those people for whom subject information is available, it is interesting to note that among the 11 who were unsuccessful on science courses, only seven subsequently gained a science qualification as their highest qualification at the level they had previously aimed at.

#### BACKGROUND VARIABLES.

##### (i) Parental social class.

26. When the cohort was traced at age 16, the parents of the cohort member were interviewed and details of their employment were collected. In Tables 20 and 21 the Registrar General's (1971) social class of the father when the respondent was 16 is tabulated by the respondent's experiences on education courses. For almost a third of the sample no social class information at 16 is available, either because the respondent's parents were not interviewed or because the father was absent or not working. Those for whom it is not available are a little less likely to have undertaken education courses than the sample as a whole (66 per cent of this group had not undertaken an education course, compared to 64 per cent of the sample as a whole). A much larger proportion of those people whose fathers were in non-manual occupations had undertaken courses, and this group were also more likely to be successful on these courses. The differences can be seen more clearly in Table 22, from which those not taking any education courses have

been omitted. Only 14 per cent of those in the non-manual group who undertook education courses had been completely unsuccessful (and 12 per cent had an unsuccessful course as well as a successful one, making a total of 26 per cent who had at least one unsuccessful course). This compares with those who had fathers in the manual classes; - of those who had attempted education course(s), one fifth had been completely unsuccessful, and a further tenth had unsuccessful as well as successful courses. Women were more likely than men to undertake education courses, and this was true across all social class groupings (Table 21). But, among those undertaking education courses, men were less likely to be successful, and, again, this sex difference held across the social classes (Table 23).

(ii) Aspirations at age 16.

27. Respondents were asked (at age 16) about what they would like to do after leaving school. The precoded options were: continue with fulltime study; do a job that involves part-time study (this option would include training); do a job that requires no further study; or don't know. Eighty-six per cent of those who preferred to do no further study after school had not undertaken any education courses (although some of this group had undertaken training courses or apprenticeships), while only a quarter of those who aspired to continue fulltime study had not done any education courses (Table 24). Table 25 gives figures separately for men and women. Table 26 includes only those who undertook education courses, and shows the differences in success rates in relation to 16-year aspirations for study. While 23 per cent of those desiring to do fulltime study after school who undertook some kind of education course had experienced at least one unsuccessful course, as many as 36 per cent of those who had said they did not wish to study but had undertaken education courses had been, at least partly, unsuccessful. However, there is little difference between those who, at 16, said they wanted to do

part-time study and those who did not want to study at all. But, of course, this table does not take account of training courses and apprenticeships undertaken.

(iii) Reading attainment at 16

28. At age 16, members of NCDS were given a standardised reading test based on the Watts-Vernon test. 9510 people who were interviewed at 23 (76 per cent of the total) took the test at age 16. Table 27 gives the score on the reading test (in fifths of raw score) crosstabulated by success on education courses. The figures at the foot of the table show the proportion of those in each fifth who actually undertook education courses; while 69 per cent of those in the top fifth of reading score had undertaken education courses, only nine per cent of those in the bottom fifth had done so. But even when those of lowest reading attainment at 16 did undertake post-school education courses, they were considerably less likely to be successful than those of highest reading attainment. Thirty-eight per cent of those in the bottom fifth of attainment who undertook education courses had failed at one of them (29 per cent had been unsuccessful in all such courses, nine per cent had been successful but had also had a successful course), but only 24 per cent of those in the top fifth of reading attainment who undertook education courses had any unsuccessful education courses.

29. Male participation rates in post-school education are lower at all levels of reading attainment at 16, as the lower part of Table 28 shows, but they appear to be disproportionately low at the middle and lower end of reading attainment; while 66 per cent of men, compared to 73 per cent of women, in the top fifth of reading attainment undertook post-school education courses, only six per cent of men, compared with 12 per cent of women, in the bottom fifth of reading attainment undertook education courses. Of course, in general men were more likely to have undertaken



apprenticeships and training courses. But despite the smaller proportion of men who undertook education courses, men still had lower success rates than women at each level of reading attainment, and particularly at the lower levels. For example, only 53 per cent of men in the bottom fifth of 16-year reading attainment who undertook education courses had been entirely successful on their courses, compared to 67 per cent of the women.

30. But the reason why some people were unsuccessful on courses could not simply be said to be because they were "less able" in terms of their 16-year reading score. Table 29 compares the 16-year reading score of those who took unsuccessful courses at different levels with the distribution of reading test scores of people whose highest qualification (however obtained) was at these levels. Table 29 shows that the proportions on these two measures falling into each fifth of reading test scores are, at each level, quite close. (Of course, since people of high reading attainment are likely to have higher level qualifications as their highest qualification, the differences that exist are pronounced in the lower left of Table 29). So, although from Table 6 it was seen that courses for lower level qualifications are more likely to be unsuccessful, and although there is a general relationship between reading test score and unsuccessful courses (Table 27), it is not the case that those who fail to complete courses at a particular level are of lower "ability" (as measured by the 16-year reading test) than those who succeed in obtaining qualifications at this level. The comparison made here is a fairly rough and ready one, of course, and the 16-year reading test is not the only possible measure of attainment which could be used. Nevertheless it indicates that other reasons for course failure and dropout must be looked for.

CURRENT SITUATION.

(i) Economic status.

31. Using a recode\* which gives the economic status of the respondent at the time of interview, it is possible to look at the relationship between success on education courses and current situation. The lower half of Table 30 shows that the currently unemployed and the currently "out of the labour force" (the latter mainly women doing housework) were less likely than others to have undertaken education courses. Only 22 per cent of those who were "out of the labour force" had undertaken education courses, compared with 38 per cent of those who were, at the time of the interview, in employment. And amongst those in the "economic status" groups who had undertaken education courses, there were differences in the success of their educational experiences. While 74 per cent of those who had undertaken education courses and were currently in employment had been successful in all their courses, only 65 per cent of those "out of the labour force" and only 62 per cent of those who were currently unemployed had (Table 30). This is to be expected, as those with lower level or no qualifications are at greater risk of unemployment, and people with unsuccessful courses had lower level or no qualifications.
32. Apart from women who were currently "out of the labour force", women in all economic status categories had a higher participation rate in education courses than men (bottom half of Table 31). And among those women undertaking education courses only those who were currently "out of the labour force" or in fulltime education (including TOPs training courses) went against the general sex difference and were less likely than men to have been successful on education courses, Table 31.

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\* Econstat, devised by Joan Payne

As many as 29 per cent of the women who had taken education courses and were currently "out of the labour force" had been unsuccessful on all their courses, compared to a rate of 16 per cent for women overall.

(ii) Experience of unemployment.

33. People with unsuccessful education courses were more likely to have experienced unemployment (Table 32). There was little difference in the experience of unemployment of those who had or had not undertaken an education course (45 per cent of those who had done courses had experienced unemployment, and this was true of the sample as a whole). But those who had had unsuccessful education courses were more likely to have experienced unemployment than those with successful courses. Over half of those with unsuccessful courses, compared to only 42 per cent of those without unsuccessful courses, had experienced unemployment. Amongst those who had undertaken an education course and who had been unemployed, the more periods of unemployment they had experienced, the larger proportion had unsuccessful courses (Table 33).

(iii) Current social class.

34. Current social class is defined here as the Registrar General's 1980 Social Class classification. It is based on the respondent's own current job, or if they were not working when interviewed, on their own last job, if any. It has been collapsed to four categories for ease of presentation. Those in the non-manual classes were much more likely to have undertaken an education course, as the bottom half of Table 34 shows. Two-thirds (66 per cent) of those in the "higher" non-manual group had undertaken courses, compared with only 16 or 17 per cent of the manual groups. But those classed as non-manual who undertook education courses were more likely to be successful on them than those in the manual groups. And semi- and unskilled manual workers had a particularly low success rate. While

eighty-three per cent of those in the "higher" non-manual group who undertook courses succeeded on them all, only 70 per cent of the skilled manual group did so, only 66 per cent of those in the lower-grade non-manual occupation, and as few as 59 per cent of the unskilled manual group had been entirely successful.

35. Apart from the higher proportions of unsuccessful courses for qualifications classed here as "other" taken by those whose current or last job was a manual one, there is not much difference in the level of the unsuccessful course taken by people of different social classes, Table 34. Skilled manual workers were a little less likely than others to have been unsuccessful on a course of 'A' level standard or above; but semi- and unskilled manual workers were, if anything, a little more likely than those in the non-manual group to have been unsuccessful on a course of 'A' level standard or above.

#### FURTHER WORK.

36. An obvious limitation of this paper is that it takes no account of failure in examinations taken while at school. Accessible information is now available on CSEs, O and A levels (O and H grades in Scotland) taken at school, and these data will be analysed and included in a further paper. Further exploration of failure on courses, in particular using the longitudinal data to look at the antecedents of failure and dropout from courses, might prove productive in providing possible explanations for lack of success which are more sophisticated than those which merely suggest a lack of ability or a lack of motivation. Mayer Ghodsian's work for the Department under the current contract may throw some light on this.

Figure 1 Venn diagram of education courses undertaken (not to scale).

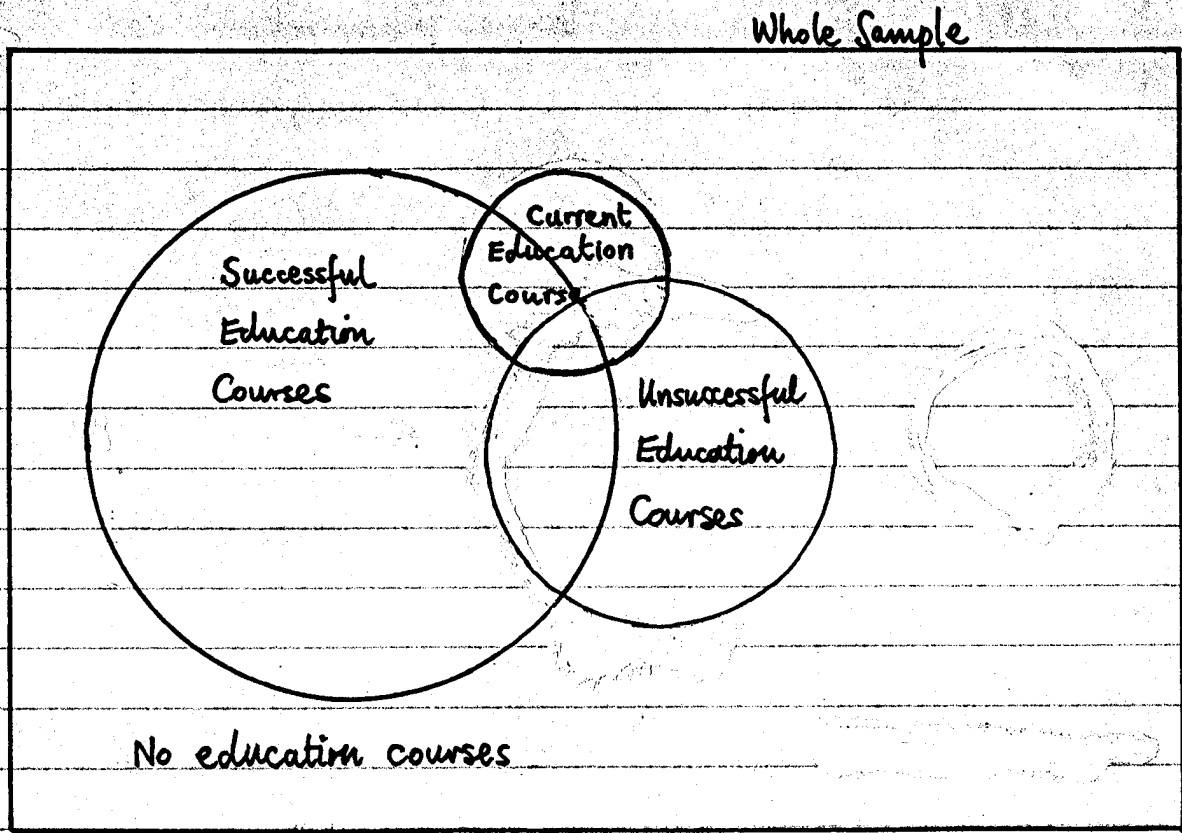


TABLE 1.      Successful and unsuccessful courses by sex.

	Female %      (N)	Male %      (N)	Both sexes %      (N)
Successful only	72    (1825)	66    (1414)	69    (3239)
Unsuccessful only	16    ( 400)	18    ( 382)	17    ( 782)
Successful and unsuccessful	9     ( 234)	10    ( 215)	10    ( 449)
Current course only	4     ( 90)	6     ( 136)	5     ( 226)
All taking education courses	100   (2549)	100   (2147)	100   (4696)

TABLE 2.      Numbers of successful and unsuccessful courses.

	N	%
One unsuccessful and none successful	706	57
Two unsuccessful and none successful	73	6
Three unsuccessful and none successful	3	-
One unsuccessful and some successful	405	33
Two unsuccessful and some successful	39	3
Three unsuccessful and some successful	5	-
All unsuccessful	1231	200

TABLE 3. Uncompleted Training courses and unsuccessful education courses.

Training courses*	No education courses.**	Education courses.			Overall.
		All education courses un- successful.	Successful & unsuccessful education courses	All education courses successful	
No training courses	65	63	73	72	67
All training courses completed	29	31	24	25	28
Some training courses un- completed	7	6	4	3	5
Total (N=100%) 7820		782	449	3239	12290

\* Includes apprenticeships    \*\* Apart from current courses.

TABLE 4. Uncompleted training courses and unsuccessful education courses by sex.

Training courses*	No education courses **	Education courses			Overall
		All education courses un- successful	Successful & unsuccessful education courses	All education courses successful	
No training courses - Female	70	67	79	77	72
" Male	60	58	66	66	61
All training courses completed - Female	25	29	18	21	24
" Male	32	33	31	30	32
Some training courses uncom- pleted - Female	5	4	4	2	4
" Male	8	9	3	3	7
Total (N=100%) Female 3709		400	234	1825	6168
Male 4109		382	215	1414	6120

\* Includes apprenticeships    \*\* Apart from current courses.

TABLE 5. Qualification level and experience of failure on education courses.

	Total (N=100%)	Qualification level.				
		Above 'A' level %	'A' level or equivalent %	'O' level or equivalent %	Below 'O' level %	None %
Whole sample	12536	18	17	32	5	28
All attempting an educational qualification	4468	42	22	29	4	3
<u>of which:</u>						
Those who have <u>not</u> failed a course	3237	51	18	26	5	-
Those who have failed and passed a course	449	37	32	27	4	-
Those who have failed and not passed a course	782	5	32	43	3	18

TABLE 6. Qualification aimed for on unsuccessful course.

Qualification	(N)	%
Post-graduate study	18	1
First degree	201	16
HTEC/BEC, HNC/D	73	6
ONC/D, TEC, BEC	100	8
City & Guilds	57	5
RSA	107	9
A levels, H grades	198	16
O levels, O grades	220	18
Professional qualifications	88	7
Other	171	14
Total	1233.	



**TABLE 7. Subject of unsuccessful course compared with course for highest qualification.**

Subject.	Unsuccessful course %	Course for highest qualification %
Education	3	8
Health	4	8
Engineering	7	8
Technology	3	3
Agriculture	(9)*	2
Science	14	11
Social, admin & business	37	36
Miscellaneous, vocational and professional	5	8
Languages	9	8
Arts	5	7
More than one 'O' level, other, missing	12	4
<b>Total (N = 100%)</b>	<b>1233</b>	<b>3830</b>

\* Figures in brackets refer to actual numbers.

**TABLE 8. Was the course taken with a job in mind?**

	Unsuccessful course.		Course for highest qualification	
	% answering yes	(N = 100%)	% answering yes	(N = 100%)
Female	58	(619)	72	(1328)
Male	58	(576)	66	(848)
Both sexes	58	(1195)	70	(2176)

TABLE 9.      Job prospects "improved" on unsuccessful course and course for the highest qualification.

	Unsuccessful course % whose job prospects were "improved".	(N = 100%)	Course for highest qualification % whose job prospects were "improved".	(N = 100%)
Female	21	( 614)	82	(1834)
Male	29	( 567)	83	(1279)
Both sexes	25	(1181)	82	(3113)

\* Figures in brackets refer to actual numbers.

TABLE 10.      Job prospects on unsuccessful course and course for the highest qualification.

	Job prospects:					Total (N=100%)
	Improved a lot %	Improved a little %	Made no difference %	Better off not doing %	Don't know %	
Unsuccessful course	9	16	62	12	2	1181
Course for the highest qualification	57	24	15	2	1	3113

TABLE 11. Type of unsuccessful course and course for highest qualification.

	Unsuccessful course %	Course for highest qualification %
Fulltime	54	73
Sandwich	2	5
Open University Course	6	0
Correspondence course	3	1
Evening course	29	13
Part-time, weekend	9	5
Others, don't know	3	4
Total (N = 100%)	1232	3153

TABLE 12. Organisation of unsuccessful course and course for highest qualification.

	Unsuccessful course. %	Course for highest qualification %
Further education or technical college	56	44
Inst of Higher Education Coll. of Education		
Tertiary college	5	9
Polytechnic	8	10
University	12	23
School or 6th form college	3	1
Adult education	5	2
Other and don't know	11	12
Total (N = 100%)	1193	3111

TABLE 13.     Getting finance on unsuccessful courses and on the courses for the highest qualification.

Source of finance	Unsuccessful course %	Course for the highest qualification %
Grant*	53	67
Parents	58	60
Spouse or partner.	(4)	(26)
Working during term time.	23	23

\* Asked only of full time and sandwich students.

TABLE 14.     Fulltime and sandwich students: source of grant on unsuccessful course and course for the highest qualification.

Source of grant.	Unsuccessful course %	Course for the highest qualification. %
LEA.	89	89
Central Government (including SED)	6	5
Other	5	6
Total (N = 100%)	363	1654

Table 15. Having financial problems on unsuccessful courses and courses for the highest qualification

	Unsuccessful Course %	Course for the highest qualification %
Female	8	4
Male	11	6
Both sexes	9	5

Table 16. Why unsuccessful course was left before end

	Female %	Male %	Both sexes %
Financial reasons	6(24)	5(21)	6(45)
Personal and family reasons	22(91)	11(42)	17(133)
Job-related reasons	11(47)	18(71)	15(118)
Failed exams	5(19)	16(61)	10(80)
Course related reasons	30(126)	26(101)	29(227)
Other reasons	25(102)	23(89)	24(191)
Total(N=100%)	409	385	794

Base = All those leaving before the end of the course.

Table 17. Proportion failing examinations on the unsuccessful course

	Failed all exams %	Failed some exams, passed others %	Left without taking exams %	No Exams %	Other %	Total (N=100%)
Female	19	21	55	5	(2)	610
Male	19	30	46	4	(2)	565
Both sexes	19	25	51	5	(4)	1175

Table 18. Sequencing of unsuccessful courses in relation to the course for the highest qualification

	Female %	Male %	Both sexes %
Unsuccessful course(s) only	63	64	63
Unsuccessful course <u>before</u> course for highest qualification	20	22	21
Unsuccessful course <u>after</u> course for highest qualification	15	12	13
Both courses at same time	2	1	2
No dates	(4)*	(3)*	(7)*
Total (N=100%)	634	599	1233

\* Actual numbers in brackets.

TABLE 19. Sequencing of unsuccessful courses: those whose unsuccessful course was taken before the course for their highest qualification - tabulation of qualification taken on failed course by highest qualification held.

Qualification on unsuccessful course.	<u>Highest qualification held</u>			Total (N = 100%)
	A level & above %	O level and equivalents %	Below O level %	
'A' Level & above	82	16	2	203
'O' Level and equivalents	57	43	0	49
Below 'O' Level	(1)*	0	(6)*	7
Overall	75	21	4	259

\* Actual numbers in brackets

Base: Those whose unsuccessful course was taken before the course for their highest qualification.

TABLE 20. Successful and unsuccessful courses and 16-year parental social class.

Course success.	<u>Social class of father when respondent was 16.</u>				Overall. %
	Non-manual. %	Skilled manual. %	Semi- & unskilled manual %	No social class information. %	
No education courses	44	72	79	66	64
All education courses unsuccessful	8	6	4	6	6
Successful and unsuccessful education courses	6	3	2	3	4
All education courses successful	42	20	15	25	26
Total (N=100%)	3125	3739	1528	3898	12290

Base: All 23-year interviewees except 226 currently on a course and 22 with missing information on courses.

TABLE 21. Successful and unsuccessful education courses and 16-year parental social class by sex.

Course success.	Sex	Social class of father when respondent was 16.				Overall %
		Non-Manual %	Skilled manual %	Semi & unskilled manual %	No social class information %	
No education courses	Female	39	68	77	63	60
" "	Male	48	76	80	69	67
All education courses were unsuccessful	Female	8	7	4	6	6
"	Male	8	6	4	6	6
Successful and unsuccessful education courses	Female	7	3	2	3	4
"	Male	6	3	2	3	4
All education courses were successful	Female	46	23	16	28	30
"	Male	37	16	14	22	23
Total (N=100%)	Female	1544	1861	757	2006	6168
	Male	1581	1878	771	1890	6120

TABLE 22. Successful and unsuccessful courses and 16-year social class.

	Social class of father when respondent was 16.				Overall %
	Non-manual %	Skilled manual %	Semi- & unskilled manual %	No social class information %	
All education courses unsuccessful	14	21	20	18	17
Successful & unsuccessful education courses	12	9	10	9	10
All education courses successful	74	69	70	73	72
All education courses (N=100%)	1751	1063	325	1331	4470

Base: All those who undertook education courses (excluding those currently taking a course, who had no previous courses)



TABLE 23. Successful and unsuccessful education courses and parental social class by sex.

		<u>Social class of father when respondent was 16.</u>					
Course success.	Sex.	Non-manual %	Skilled manual %	Semi- & unskilled manual %	No social class information. %	Overall %	
All education courses were unsuccessful	Female	13	20	19	17	16	
" "	Male	16	23	20	19	19	
Successful and unsuccessful education courses	Female	11	8	9	8	10	
" "	Male	12	10	12	9	11	
All education courses were successful	Female	76	71	72	75	74	
" "	Male	72	67	68	72	70	
Total (N=100%)	Female	936	604	171	748	2459	
	Male	815	459	154	593	2021	

Base: All those who undertook education courses (excluding those only on current courses).

TABLE 24. Successful and unsuccessful courses by aspirations for study at age 16.

Course success.	<u>Aspirations at age 16.</u>					Overall %
	Fulltime study %	Job with part-time study %	No study %	Don't know %	No information. %	
No education courses	24	72	86	74	69	64
All education courses were unsuccessful	9	7	4	5	5	6
Successful and unsuccessful education courses	8	3	1	2	3	4
All education courses successful	59	19	9	18	22	26
Total (N=100%)	2523	3587	1765	1473	2942	12290

TABLE 25

Successful and unsuccessful courses by aspirations for study at age 16 by sex.

Course success	Sex	Aspirations at age 16.					Overall %
		Fulltime study %	Job with part-time study %	No study %	Don't know %	No information. %	
No education courses:	Female	24	66	85	74	67	60
" "	Male	23	76	86	74	71	67
All education courses were unsuccessful	Female	8	8	4	5	6	6
" "	Male	11	6	4	6	5	6
Successful and unsuccessful education courses	Female	8	3	1	2	4	4
" "	Male	9	2	1	3	3	4
All education courses successful.	Female	60	23	10	19	24	30
" "	Male	58	15	8	17	21	23
Total (N=100%)	Female	1513	1450	968	779	1459	6169
	Male	1010	2137	797	694	1482	6120

TABLE 26.

Successful and unsuccessful courses by aspirations for study at 16.

	Aspirations at 16.					Overall %
	Full-time study %	Job with part-time study %	No Study %	Don't know %	No Info. %	
All education courses were unsuccessful	12	25	27	21	17	17
Successful & unsuccessful education courses	11	9	9	9	11	10
All education courses were successful	77	67	64	70	71	72
Total (N=100%)	1931	995	251	382	911	4470

Base: All those taking education courses (excluding those with only current courses (226) and those with missing information on courses (22)).

Table 27. Reading attainment at 16 and successful and unsuccessful courses

Education course success	Reading ability at 16 (grouped raw scores)				
	Top Fifth	Next Fifth	Middle Fifth	Next Fifth	Bottom Fifth
	%	%	%	%	%
All education courses unsuccessful	14	18	19	22	29
Successful & unsuccessful education courses	10	10	11	9	9
All education courses successful	76	72	71	69	62
TOTAL (N=100%)	1470	879	675	359	153
Total taking education courses as a %age of those in that fifth of reading test score	69	49	34	21	9
(Total in each fifth)	(2122)	(1801)	(2005)	(1710)	(1681)

Table 28. Reading attainment at age 16 and successful and unsuccessful courses by sex

Education course success	Sex	Reading attainment (grouped raw scores)				
		Top Fifth	Next Fifth	Middle Fifth	Next Fifth	Bottom Fifth
		%	%	%	%	%
All education courses unsuccessful	Female	12	17	19	20	24
	Male	17	19	20	26	38
Successful & unsuccessful Education courses	Female	9	9	10	8	9
	Male	11	11	11	12	9
All education courses Successful	Female	80	74	71	72	67
	Male	72	70	69	62	53
Total (N=100%)	Female	714	492	428	237	100
	Male	756	387	247	122	53
Total taking education courses as a %age of these in that fifth	Female	73	54	41	26	12
	Male	66	43	26	15	6
(Total in each fifth)	Female	(982)	(909)	(1056)	(910)	(830)
	Male	(1140)	(892)	(949)	(800)	(851)

TABLE 29. Reading attainment at 16, highest qualification obtained and qualification on unsuccessful course.

<u>Qualification.</u>	Reading attainment (grouped raw scores)						Total information (N=100%)
	Top fifth. %	Next fifth. %	Middle fifth. %	Next fifth. %	Bottom fifth. %	No information %	
<u>Degree:</u>							
Highest qualification obtained	54	19	8	1	(2)*	18	1493
Unsuccessful course qualification.	57	16	8	(2)*	0	18	228
<u>A level and equivalent:</u>							
Highest qualification obtained	27	21	18	10	4	21	2883
Unsuccessful course qualification	24	21	19	9	4	22	608
<u>O level and equivalent:</u>							
Highest qualification obtained	13	19	22	15	8	23	4055
Unsuccessful course qualification	23	22	16	11	5	21	307
<u>Other:</u>							
Highest qualification obtained	3	10	16	24	21	26	622
Unsuccessful course qualification.	6	12	14	26	16	26	900

TABLE 30. Successful & Unsuccessful courses and current economic status

Education Course Success	<u>Current Economic Status</u>					
	Full-time education or TOPS course %	Job %	Unemp- loyment %	"Out of the labour force" %	No Info. %	Over- all %
All courses unsuccessful	12	17	22	27	(1)	17
Successful & unsuccessful education courses	12	10	16	8	0	10
All education courses successful	76	74	62	65	(14)	72
TOTAL (N=100%)	247	3489	324	395	15	4470
Total taking education courses as a %age of those in each category	96	38	28	22	54	36
(Total in each category)	(258)	(9066)	(1155)	(1783)	(28)	12290

TABLE 31. Successful and unsuccessful courses and current economic status by sex

Education Course Success	Sex	Current Economic Status					Overall %
		Full-time education or TOPS course %	Job %	Unemployment %	"Out of the labour force" %	No Info. %	
All courses	Female	14	14	21	29	(0)	16
Unsuccessful	Male	11	20	23	9	(1)	19
Successful & unsuccessful courses	Female	13	9	15	7	(0)	10
	Male	12	10	18	15	(0)	11
All courses successful	Female	73	77	64	64	(6)	74
	Male	77	71	60	77	8	70
Total (N=100%)	Female	84	1868	153	348	6	2459
	Male	163	1621	171	47	9	2011
Total taking education courses as a %age of those in each category	Female	94	47	36	21	46	40
	Male	96	32	24	39	60	33
(Total in each category)							
	Female	(89)	(3976)	(430)	(1660)	(13)	(6168)
	Male	(169)	(5090)	(725)	(121)	(15)	(6120)

TABLE 32. Unsuccessful courses and experience of unemployment.

Course success.	% ever unemployed	Total N = 100%
All education courses unsuccessful	50	782
Successful and unsuccessful education courses	53	449
All education courses successful	42	3239
All taking education courses	45	4470
Whole sample	45	12290

TABLE 33. Unsuccessful courses and number of periods of unemployment.

Course success	<u>No. of times unemployed.</u>		
	One %	Two %	Three or more %
All education courses unsuccessful	18	19	29
Successful and unsuccessful education courses.	11	13	13
All education courses successful	71	68	58
Total taking education courses (N = 100%)	1270	469	253

TABLE 34. Successful and unsuccessful courses by current social class.

Education course success.	Professional, Intermediate. %	Other Non-manual %	Skilled manual %	Semi & unskilled manual. %	Overall %	N
All courses unsuccessful	9	22	24	29	18	( 743)
Successful and unsuccessful courses	8	12	6	11	10	( 418)
All courses successful	83	66	70	59	72	(3060)
Total taking courses (N = 100%)	1659	1674	494	394	100	4221
Total taking courses as a percentage of whole sample	66	42	17	16	36	
Total sample (N=100%)	2500	3973	2918	2394		11785

TABLE 35. Social class of current or last job and qualification level of unsuccessful course.

Qualification on unsuccessful course.	<u>Social class of current or last job.</u>					Missing %	Overall %	(N)
	Professional intermediate %	Other Non-manual %	Skilled manual %	Semi- & unskilled manual %				
'A' level and above	81	65	62	69	77	68	(836)	
'O' level and above	16	27	25	20	17	25	(307)	
Other	3	7	13	11	6	7	( 87)	
Total (N = 100%)	279	571	150	160	70		1230	