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ABSTRACT

A June 1990 survey was used to determine characteristics and aspirations of University of the Third Age (U3A) participants in Australia. The overall response rate was 73 percent. The three parts of the survey questionnaire collected information regarding wider adult education questions such as educational background, extent of activity in leisure and learning, perceptions of health, and educational interests of the older learner. Survey findings were summarized in graphs that contained the percentage of responses for each campus as well as for the entire sample of 771 participants. Tabular responses were also developed for all responses. The following participant characteristics and educational preferences were analyzed: gender; age; persistence; course participation issues, such as perceived benefit, nonparticipation reasons, preferred class format, and willingness to be a tutor; course organizational issues, such as frequency, duration, and preferred time of day; educational attainment; prior participation; future participation; leisure activities; health; finance; and reason for joining U3A. (Twenty-six graphs show data for the Brisbane campus and all U3A; 22 tables reflect percentages for U3A overall. Thirty-one references and the survey instrument are appended.)
 (YLB)

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Characteristics and Aspirations of Older Learners from Twelve U3A Campuses in New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia 1990

U3A Brisbane

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Characteristics and aspirations of older learners from twelve USA campuses in New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia - 1990

Introduction

A number of leading adult educators and gerontologists see education playing a pivotal role in helping to address the special problems faced by older people.

Havighurst's (1976) arguments are posited on the ethical consideration that all people have a basic human right to share in the good things of life, whether or not they have worked to contribute their share to an increase in the gross national product. For many older learners education is one of the good things in life, therefore education must not be denied to those who wish to pursue further knowledge for its intrinsic worth.

In contrast, Groombridge (1982) adopts largely utilitarian arguments in addressing the issue of why politicians, society at large and the elderly themselves should recognize the crucial importance of education in later life. His five major reasons are as follows:

Education can foster the self-reliance and independence of the elderly by enhancing their self-esteem and strengthening their mental and physical health, thereby reducing the increasing demands being made on public and private resources.

Education is a major factor in enabling older people to cope with innumerable practical and psychological problems in a complex, changing and fractured world.

Education for and by older people themselves strengthens their actual or potential contribution to society.

Self-awareness by older people, their self-interpretation and the communication of their experiences to other generations fosters balance, perspective and understanding which is valuable in a rapidly changing world of conflict.

Education is crucial for many older people who strive for expression and learning.

Some of Groombridge's manifesto perhaps might be challenged as being assertion, or extrapolation from research yet to be generally accepted. Nevertheless, he highlights a crucial role which education might play in the future in delaying or minimizing the dependence by increasing numbers of older adults on the public purse.

Gayfer (1985) also highlights the key role that education can play in assisting older persons to become better able to cope with their changed circumstances, provided that both the meaning and social context of education are broadened. In calling for an

attitudinal change amongst some adult education agencies she noted the inappropriateness of patronizing hobby courses and leisure-time 'frill' programs for the aged which fail to recognise the potential that education has for directly addressing the needs that cluster round the realities faced by the aged in society.

Apart from ethical and utilitarian considerations, however, an intriguing new reason for society to consider the liberating influence of education for older adults may be emerging from new research.

A number of recent studies indicate that, in the absence of pathological conditions, no significant loss of intellectual functioning needs to be associated with ageing if the individual is cognitively stimulated throughout the lifespan. The report of the Panel on Behavioral and Social Sciences identified education as a factor which may slow the onset of some of the undesirable consequences of old age;

...adults who have been educationally active suffer less age decline in new learning situations. Apparently, learning skills can be established or re-established in adulthood and old age, although the best methods for doing so have not yet been systematically investigated (Neugarten, 1980, p.20).

In similar vein, the important twenty year longitudinal study of intellectual change in a group of Australians aged 60 to 98 years (Harwood, 1988) showed that the rate of decrement in intelligence scores over 20 years was less than one per cent per annum in all age groups. At the end, no one was under the age of 80 years old. This rate of decline was consistently found throughout the 20 year study, and at all ages from 60 to 98. Some individuals, including nonagenarians, did not decline at all, and these tended to be people who had participated in the disciplined learning experiments. Other studies provide additional substantial evidence to support the idea that aged persons are perfectly capable of continuing with, and deriving benefit from learning (Baltes & Schale, 1982; Brady & Fowler, 1988; Camp, Markely & Kramer, 1983; Falles, 1980; Greenberg & Powers, 1987).

Important as these and similar studies are, the key to determining whether education might have the potential for liberating society from the mindset that old age and increased dependency are necessarily synonymous, lies in discovering whether cognitive challenge can be linked to continued good health in later life. In drawing on results from a large number of studies carried out over the past decade Langer (1989), a social psychologist from Harvard, has been moved to '...make the strong claim that the body begins to die as the mind ceases to deal with novelty' (p.142). Indicative of some of the startling findings uncovered by Langer's considerable research are outcomes from studies of elderly residents in nursing homes. In one study 45 residents of nursing homes were randomly assigned to three groups each of which was similar in terms of social class, alertness and general health. Members of one of the groups (the contingent group) were exposed to increasingly demanding cognitive tasks

over time. Members of a noncontingent group were asked to find out the same information but were provided with no incentives for doing so, while the third group was the no treatment or control group. The initial study revealed that significant improvements occurred in long- and short-term memory amongst members of the contingent group. A follow-up study two and a half years later revealed that, despite the small sample size '...significant differences were found among the groups, providing support for the hypothesis that improvement in health was due to an increase in mindfulness.' (Langer et al, 1984). The study showed that during the two and a half years following the initial study 53 per cent of each of the two comparison groups had died or been discharged to hospital, compared with only 14 per cent of the contingent group.

For educators, policy makers and older learners alike, the emerging evidence linking sound mind and sound body in old age, would appear to suggest the need for a serious rethink on how best to help overcome the view, so rampant in society today, that old age is a defeated stage of life. The dependency model, commonly foisted on the aged may, inadvertently, be quite inimical to our best endeavors to develop a just and caring society.

The need for information about older learners and their programs

Since the introduction of U3A to Melbourne in 1984 the movement has spread rapidly throughout Australia. By mid 1990 there were some 70 independent campuses providing for the learning needs of an estimated 10,000 members. Despite this quite spectacular growth, however, very little is known about the characteristics and aspirations of U3A participants in Australia. In fact, for a movement which is regarded as an international success story in adult education, it is surprising to find that very little appears to be known elsewhere about U3A participants and the successes of various approaches. A recent study of one U3A campus in Queensland appears to have been the first to be reported in an international journal (Swindell, 1990).

The paucity of participation data about older learners in specific adult education programs is seen to be a major impediment to the growth of opportunities for the aged (Peterson, 1985), as well as to the subsequent analysis of those programs which appear to have the greatest potential for best meeting their educational wants and needs. The primary, secondary, and tertiary fields of education regularly mount strong arguments, amply supported by hard data, for their share of resources. In contrast, there are considerable difficulties with obtaining accurate data about all types of adult education activities in Australia. Now that U3A is firmly established throughout Australia it would seem that this would be the logical body to undertake the systematic collection and dissemination of quantitative and qualitative information about the nature and strengths of various educational programs for older learners. The skills and interest needed to undertake such a task lie within the membership of the various U3A campuses as has been well demonstrated recently by

Shoalhaven and Hawthorn U3A campuses, each of which has produced excellent analytical reports about its own organisation. These reports, (and there may be others which have been produced by other U3As) provide substantial information which would be of benefit to all U3As, as well as to bodies concerned with improving the lot of all older Australians. At the macro level substantial information about U3A and other programs involving cognitive challenge for older learners needs to be documented regularly, and disseminated widely. Such information will assist governments and other policy-making bodies to make informed decisions about the importance of education and leisure activities for older adults, and will help to change societal prejudices and misconceptions (often held by older persons themselves) regarding the abilities and capabilities of older people. At the program level the existence of substantial participation data would be welcomed by those who would like to know more about the characteristics and aspirations of aged Australian learners, in order to better meet their evolving wants and needs.

Aims of the study

This study sets out to:

Describe the characteristics and aspirations of U3A members from a number of successfully operating campuses in three States.

Provide Management Committees with data which may assist with program planning decisions.

Record quantitative baseline information against which future program and membership changes might be measured.

Provide a rationale for the regular collection of descriptive data about programs for older learners.

Participating campuses

When the survey was first planned in early 1990 the intention was to confine the study to a random sample of 100 members drawn from each of the three largest U3A campuses in SE Queensland. However, a fortuitous telephone meeting with U3A Management Committee members from Orange resulted in that campus offering support for the survey, and a subsequent invitation to address the newly forming NSW State Management Committee about the aims and likely outcomes of the proposed survey. As a result of this meeting seven other U3A groups from NSW agreed to participate in the survey. U3A Adelaide was later contacted by telephone and letter and also agreed to participate.

The participating campuses were:

Forbes College for Seniors
U3A, The Third Age Institute of Higher Learning
(Northern and Eastern Regions of Sydney)
U3A - South Australia (Adelaide Branch)
U3A Shoalhaven Third Age of Learning Inc
U3A Chifley Chapter
U3A Third Age of Learning - Orange
U3A Third Age of Learning, Wollongong Inc.
U3A Endeavour Campus
U3A Sunshine Coast
U3A Gold Coast
U3A Brisbane

Methodology

A traditional postal survey approach was used to determine a number of characteristics and aspirations of a sample of U3A participants from different campuses. In order to maximise participant confidentiality and to guard against outside bodies gaining access to U3A membership records questionnaires, covering letters, and reply paid envelopes were distributed by the individual Management Committees rather than by the principal investigator. These materials were distributed in June 1990 in the following way.

For larger campuses (those having considerably more than 100 members) 100 participants were randomly chosen.

For smaller campuses a convenience sample was chosen which, in all cases, comprised more than 60 per cent of the membership.

U3A Sunshine Coast, with a membership of more than 1100, distributed survey materials to 200 randomly chosen participants.

Prior to distribution each questionnaire was given a code number by the respective Management Committees. This was intended to assist Management Committees to issue a reminder in the event of a poor response. The excellent overall response rate of 73 per cent made any follow up unnecessary.

Data were analysed using SAS, a computer statistics package for MS DOS microcomputers. Graphs were drawn using Cricket Graph on a Macintosh microcomputer.

The questionnaire

The questionnaire (see appendix A) was sectioned into three parts, each intended to provide different information about Australian U3A participants in 1990. Part A of the questionnaire

comprised questions which, in general, were likely to be of value to specific Management Committees.

Part B addressed wider adult education questions such as the educational background of participants, extent of activity in leisure and learning, and perceptions of health. These issues are likely to be of specific value to adult education theorists who are interested in developing profiles of the type of person who is attracted to education in later life. Overseas studies consistently reveal that participants in continuing education tend to come from higher educational backgrounds, display a pattern of lifelong involvement in adult education and come from higher socio-economic backgrounds. Is this also the case with the egalitarian Australian U3A model?

Part C comprised the 60 item University of Queensland Operation Retirement (UQOR) instrument which was developed specifically to enable the educational interests of the older learner to be determined. This instrument allows interests profiles in 13 different categories (music, art, exercise etc.) to be determined for older learners and may reveal areas not previously considered to be of likely interest to the group. This information is likely to be of greatest immediate benefit to course planners at the individual program level. However, it is possible that profiles developed from an instrument of this kind might have longer term value by acting as 'bench-marks' against which change/stability in membership interests over time can be compared. Bench-marks of this nature would likely be of value to course evaluators, and perhaps, on a wider scale, to policy makers concerned with the educational rights of the older learner.

Data presentation

Separate reports were prepared for each participating campus. Each report comprises:

An introductory section common to every participating campus. This section outlines the background to the survey and methodology.

Results at a glance graphical summary data specific to each participating campus.

Tables of data for the combined sample and discussion of results in general for all participating U3A campuses.

Individual comments made by participants. This information is specific to campuses.

An appendix containing a copy of the survey instrument and covering letter.

Interpreting the data

On pages 9-17 the survey findings are summarised in graphical form for your campus together with findings for all participants. Each of the participating campuses has received a similar graphical summary for its campus and for all participants. Other campuses have not received the specific data for your campus.

The computer package chosen to graph the data imposes limitations on the length of graph title and axes labels. Consequently, these labels might not fully convey the meaning of the data in some cases, and it may be best if readers were to refer to the specific question in the questionnaire (Appendix A) in conjunction with each of the graphs.

Each bar graph contains percentage responses for your members as well as percentage responses for the entire sample of 771 participants (including your members). In some cases this comparative information may suggest organisational amendments which might permit individual Management Committees to more closely meet the needs of its members. It is important to note, however, that campuses vary considerably in membership characteristics. Therefore, individual campus responses on particular questions may quite reasonably differ markedly from the 'All U3A' responses.

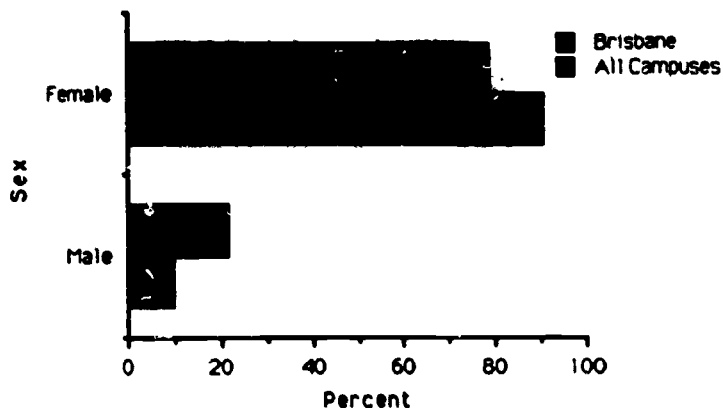
Tabular data for all responses and discussion of overall findings may be found on pages 18-32. Discussion of individual campus results has not been undertaken in the report. However, Management Committees will be able to draw appropriate conclusions for their own campuses from the combination of graphical information presented in the 'results at a glance' section and from the general discussion on all U3A groups.

Some respondents did not answer all questions so total responses to each question (reported as 'n=' in the Tables) usually number fewer than 771. In some cases reported percentages do not add up to exactly 100 due to rounding errors.

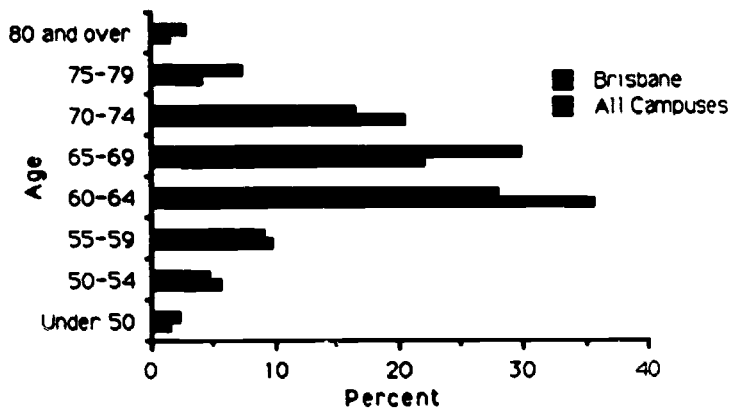
Results at a glance for your campus

On pages 9-17 are graphical summaries for your campus as well as for the total number of participants from all campuses. Each of the participating campuses has received similar information for its campus only. The data specific to your campus has not been included in the other reports.

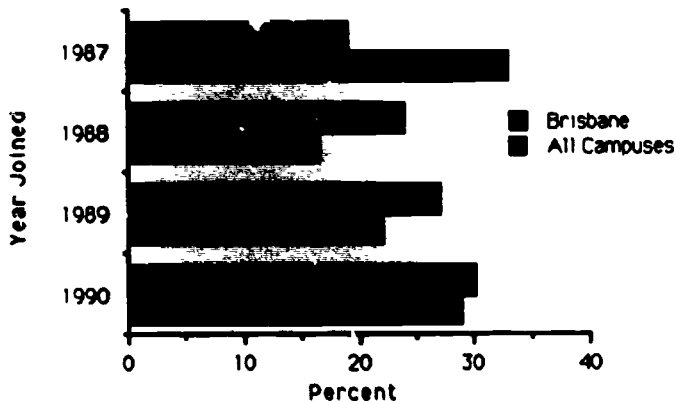
Brisbane USA and All USA Gender Distribution



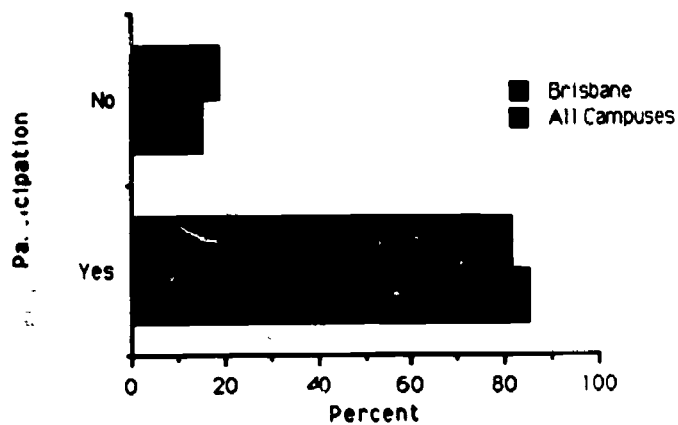
Brisbane USA and All USA Age Ranges



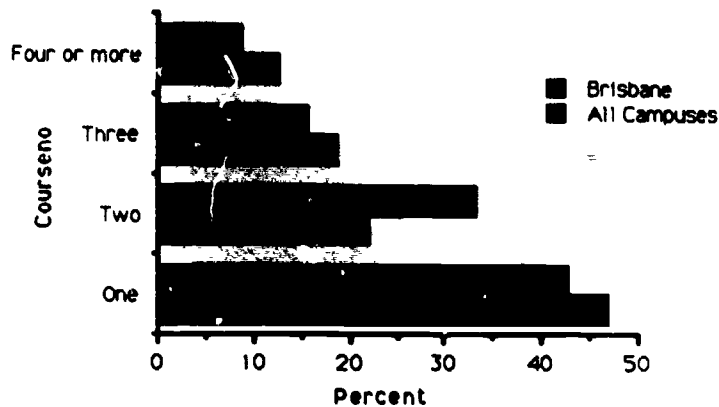
Brisbane USA and All USA Membership Length



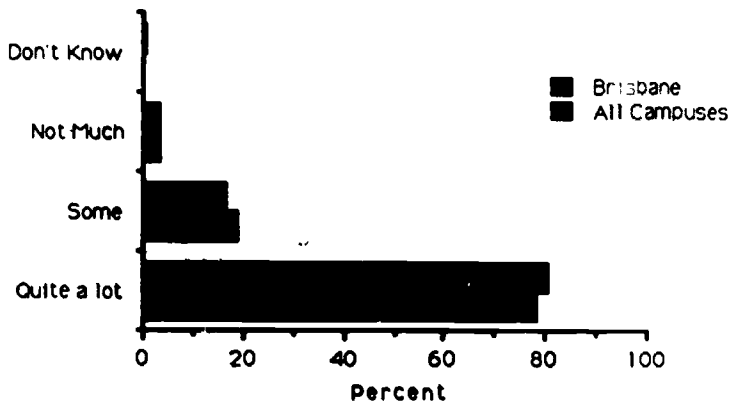
Brisbane USA and All USA Participation



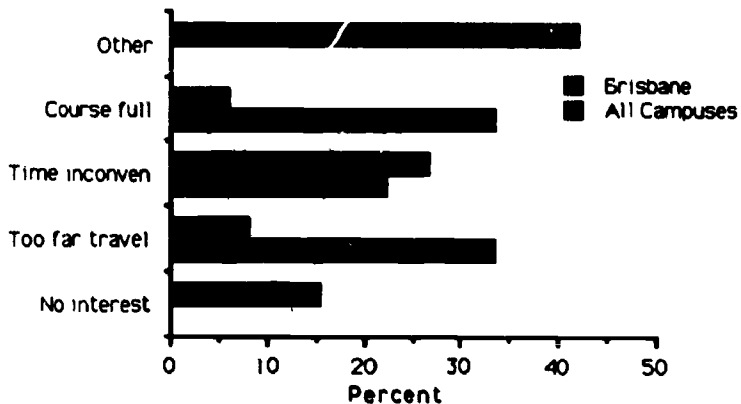
Brisbane USA and All USA Course Participation



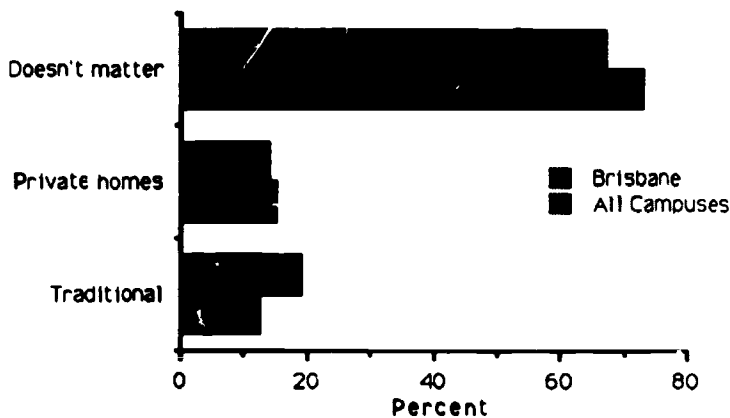
Brisbane USA and All USA Course Benefit



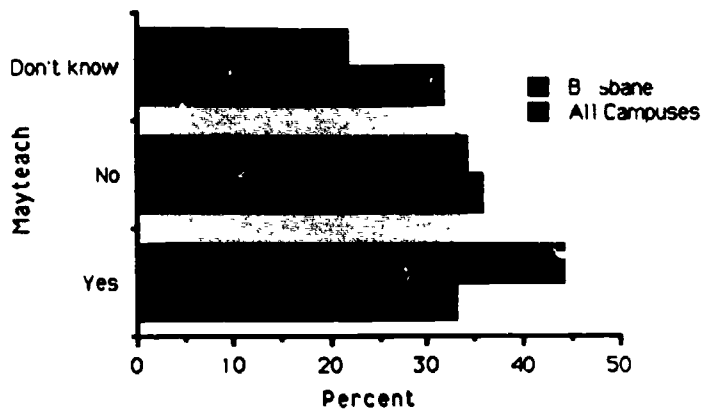
Brisbane USA and All USA Why not participated



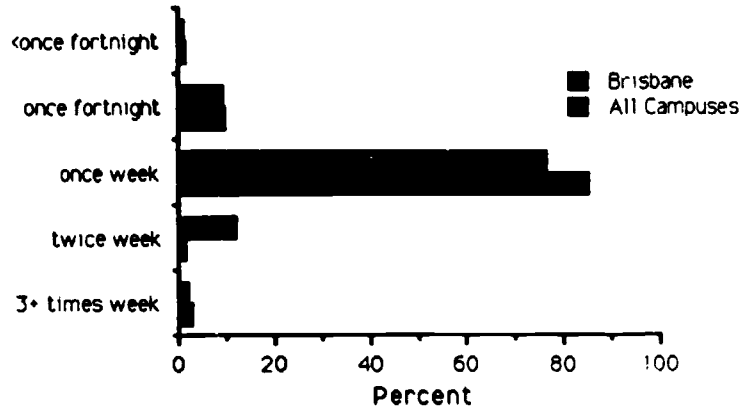
Brisbane USA and All USA Class Format



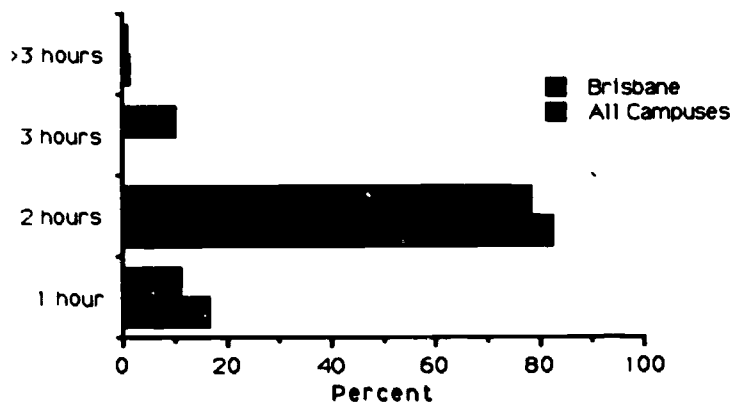
Brisbane USA and All USA Members may teach



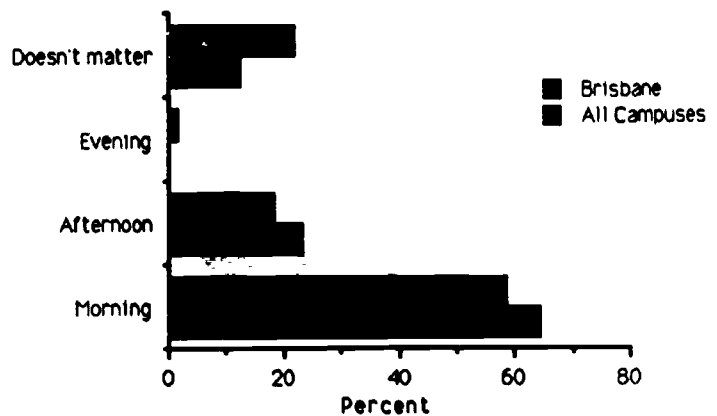
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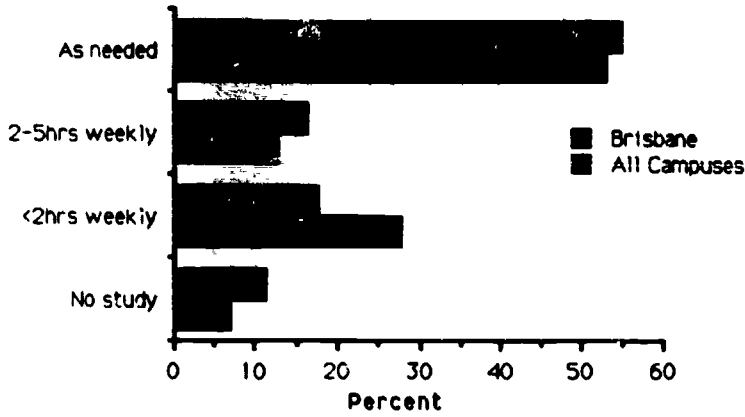
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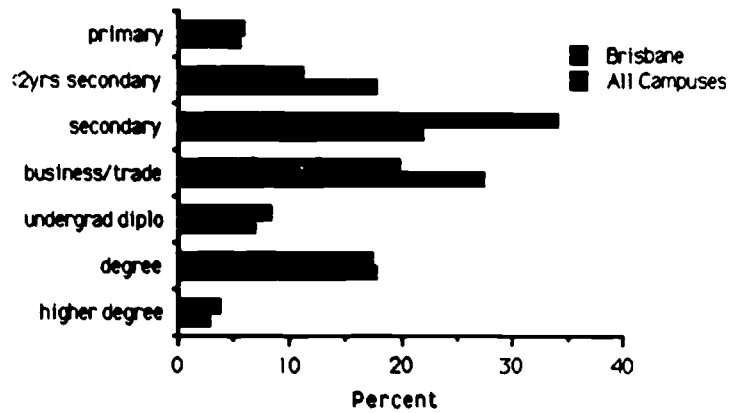
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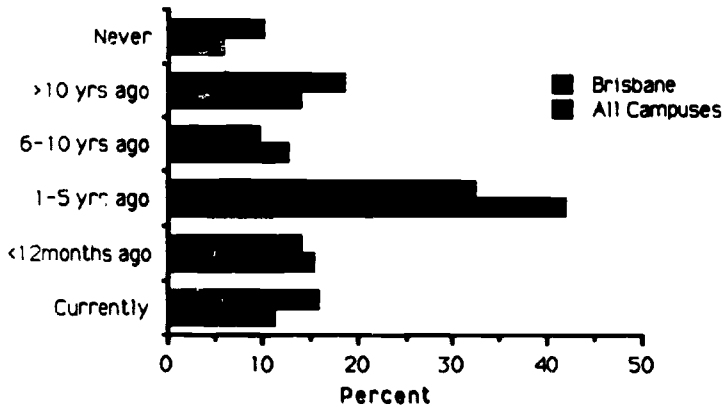
Brisbane USA and All USA Study Requirements



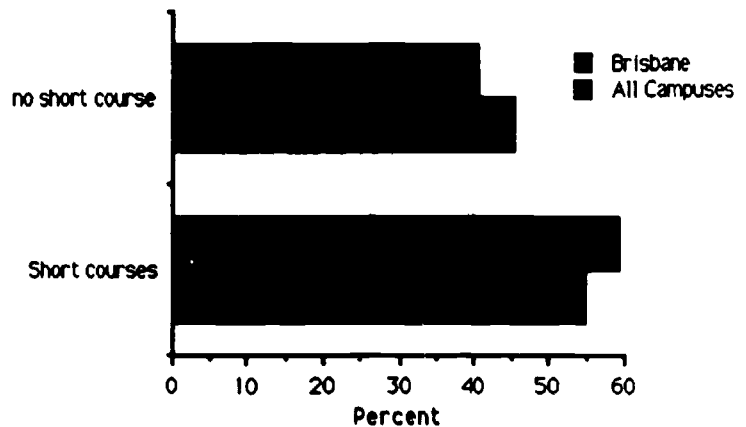
Brisbane USA and All USA Members' Qualifications



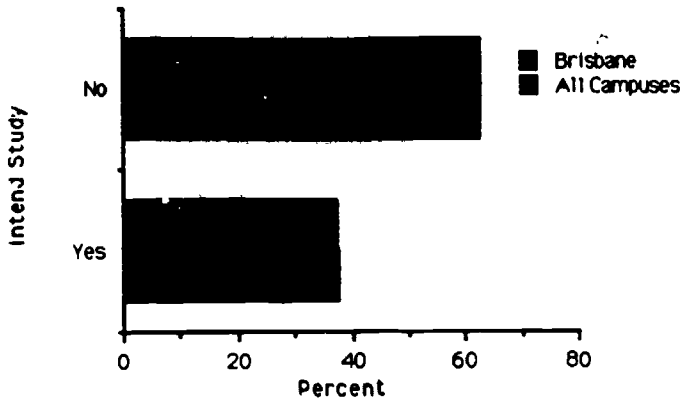
Brisbane USA and All USA Previous Studies



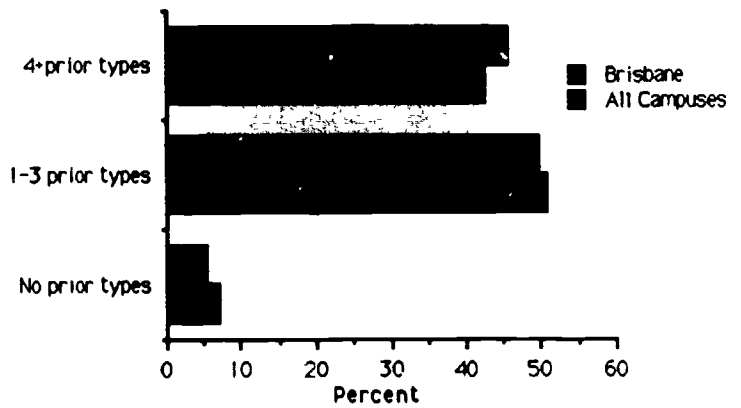
Brisbane USA and All USA Present Studies



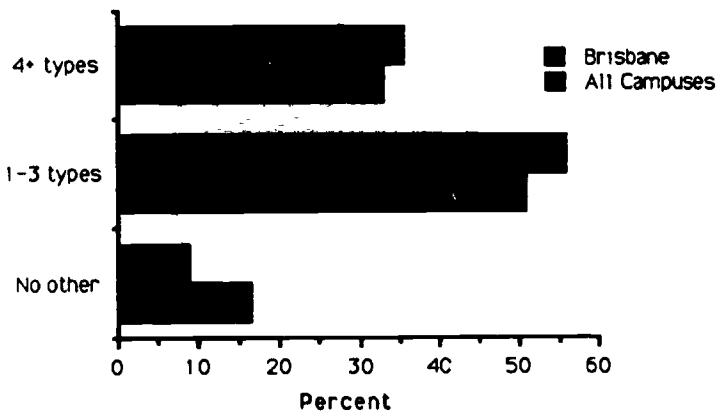
Brisbane USA and All USA Future Study Intentions



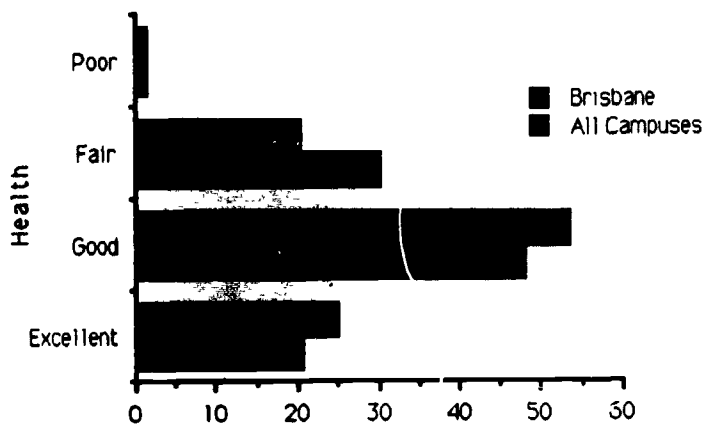
Brisbane USA and All USA Prior Recreation



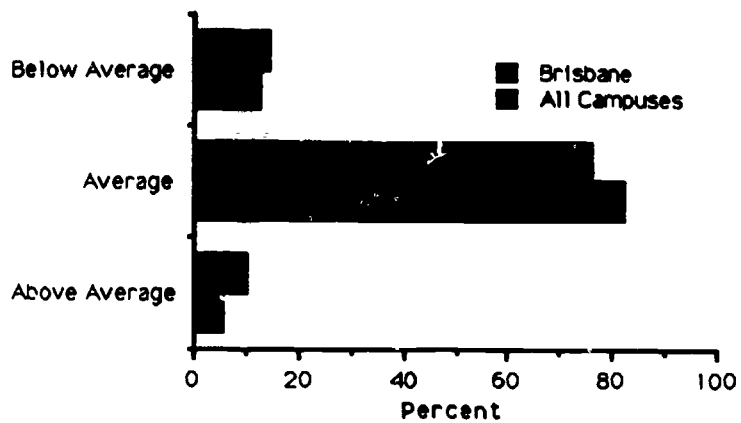
Brisbane USA and All USA Present Recreation



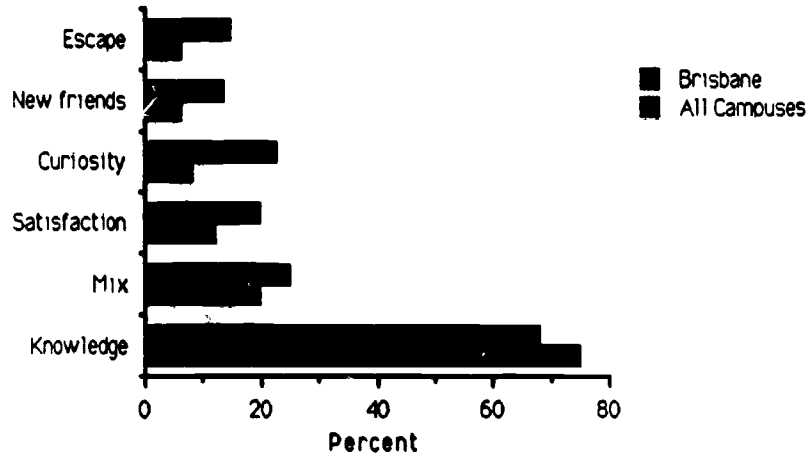
Brisbane USA and All USA Members' Health



Brisbane USA and All USA Members' Finance

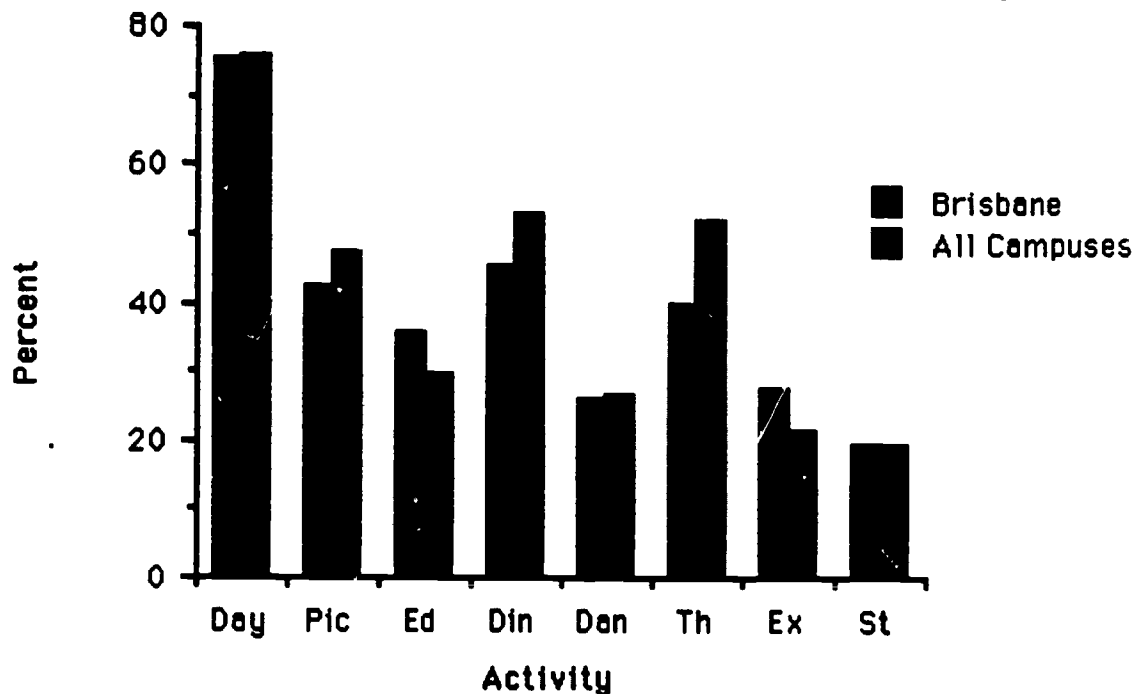


Primary Reason for Joining USA (Brisbane/All USA)



N.B. The percentages exceed 100% because many participants listed more than one category as their first choice.

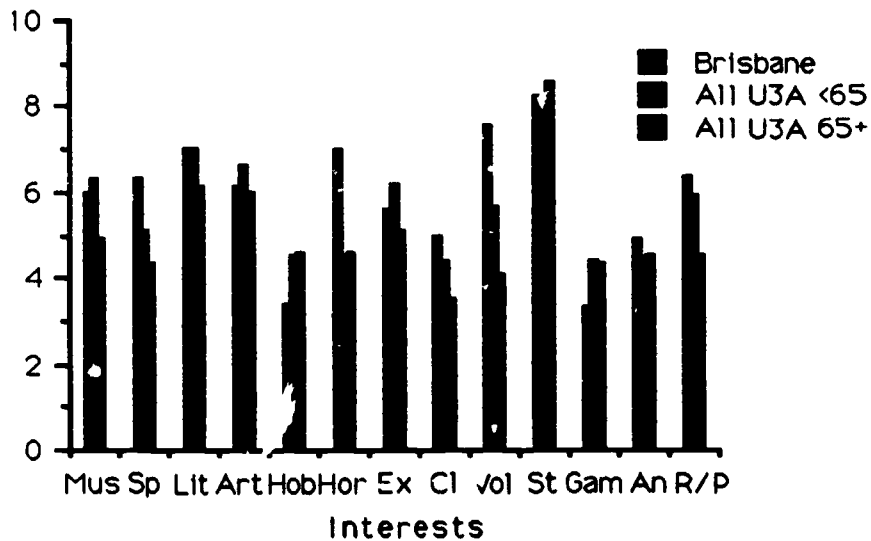
16
Preferred USA Social/Educational Activities (Brisbane/All U3A)



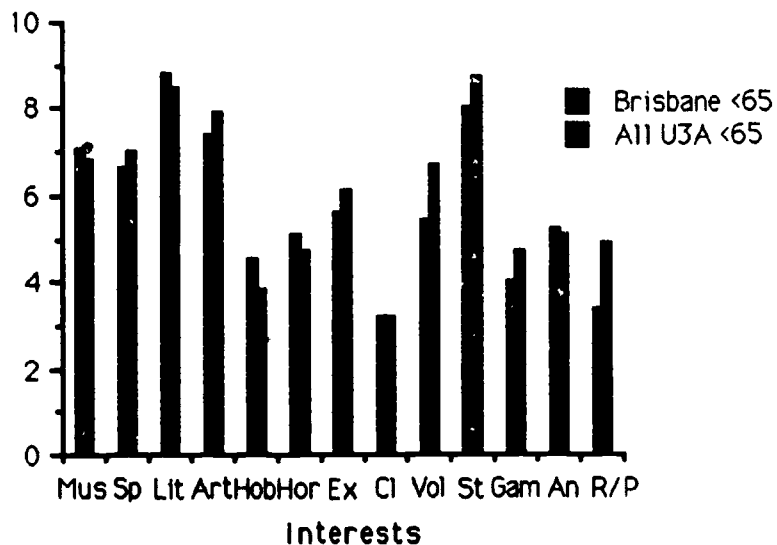
Key:

- Day** Day bus trips
- Pic** Picnics, social activities etc.
- Ed** Two or three week educational/cultural visit to overseas countries
- Din** Annual U3A dinner with prominent speaker
- Dan** Dance/Social evening
- Th** Theatre or play evening
- Ex** Exchange visits to homes of U3A members in other cities
- St** Short story competition

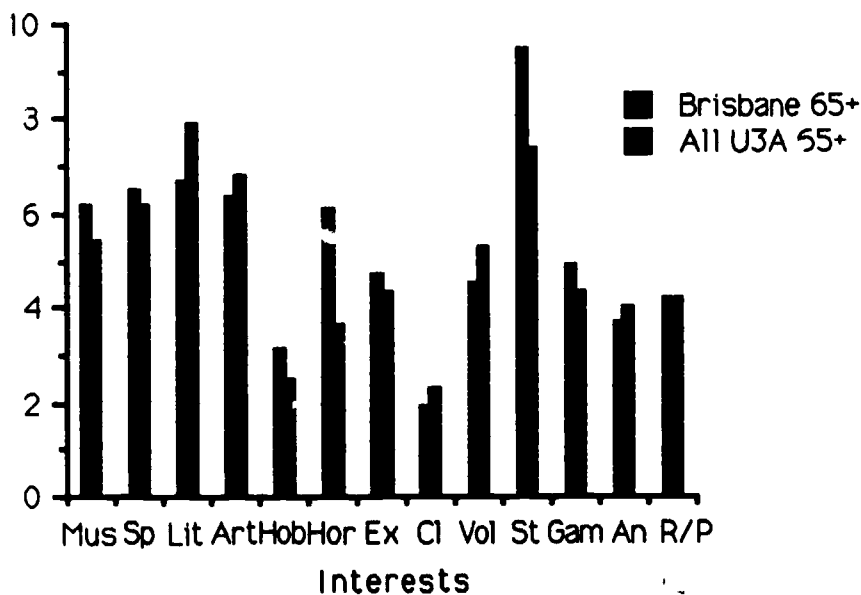
All Male Interests (Brisbane/All USA)



Female Under 65 Interests (Brisbane/All USA)



Female Over 65 Interests (Brisbane/All USA)



PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS AND EDUCATIONAL PREFERENCES

Gender

The ratio of females to males in the general population increases rapidly from around age 65 reaching a ratio of about 2:1 by age 75. Therefore, it seems reasonable to expect a higher ratio of female to male participants in U3A. Table 1 shows that for U3A overall the ratio of females to males is about 3.7:1.

Table 1: Percentage by gender of all U3A members (n=762)

Gender	%
Female	78.5 (n=599)
Male	21.4 (n=163)

Individually, campuses do not show great deviation from these percentages, except for one South-East Queensland campus where the female to male ratio rises to approximately 10:1. In this particular campus there are no obvious gender selection processes operating and it would be interesting to try to determine why this result appears to be anomalously high. Three New South Wales campuses have the lowest ratios at approximately 3:1, a figure not markedly different from that found by Radcliffe (1982) who notes a 'fairly typical' female to male ratio of 70:30 in French U3As.

Age

The "third age" refers to a stage in life when individuals are no longer tied to the responsibilities of regular employment and/or raising a family. As a consequence of this very open definition of age, which is not linked to a chronological concept of age, U3A should be attractive to individuals from a broad range of predominantly older persons. This suggestion is reinforced by Neugarten (1980) in her comments on the growing irrelevance of chronological age as a predictor of the way people live.

Somehow after the first 20 years, age falls away as a predictor...The whole internal clock I used to write about that kept us on time, the clock that tells us whether we're too young or too old to be marrying or going to school or getting a job or retiring, is no longer as powerful or compelling as it used to be (quoted in Merriam & Lumsden, 1985, p.57).

Despite this viewpoint, chronological age will likely remain a key statistic in helping to describe the participants in specific programs. Almost certainly the age of participants will be sought by politicians and policy makers who may ultimately be required to make some difficult decisions relating to the more equitable allocation of resources for the aged. However, there are also important educational reasons why specific data is needed about the ages of participants who are attracted to the growing number of educational programs for the aged. Overseas studies show that the older the person is, the less likely it is that he/she will participate in organised

learning activities (Anderson and Darkenwald, 1979).

In order to assist adult educators to identify those organisations, activities and methodologies, which appear to be most successful in meeting the needs of a wide cross section of the aged, specific data on ages must be one of the known "facts" about participants. In particular, this information will be essential if a greater understanding of approaches which are attractive to the educationally disadvantaged "old old" (Neugarten, 1976) learner, is to occur.

At the individual program level, data on participants' ages may also be useful for cross-referencing against course preferences, location, teaching style, duration, and other organisational matters which could aid program planners in the development and scheduling of activities which best suit the wants of various subgroups amongst the aged learners.

As can be seen in Table 2 the great majority of members are between the ages of 60 and 69. Across all campuses this age group dominates, with no fewer than 50% of all participants falling into this group in any one campus.

Table 2: Age distribution of all respondents (n=771)

Age	%	
Under 50	2.2	(n=17)
50 - 54	4.5	(n=35)
55 - 59	8.9	(n=69)
60 - 64	28.0	(n=216)
65 - 69	29.8	(n=230)
70 - 74	16.5	(n=127)
75 - 79	7.3	(n=56)
80 and over	2.7	(n=21)

A small percentage of members fall into the "Under 50" category. However, a substantial number (approximately 15%) falls in the under 60 category. Perhaps, with the trend in Australian society towards early retirement, both voluntary and enforced, the U3A philosophy may well have increasing appeal for the middle aged learner. Table 2 also reveals that an unexpectedly high 10 per cent of U3A members comes from the age range of 75 and over, an age range which would not normally be expected to be so well represented in an adult education program. This is an important revelation. Apart from the obvious remark that this group in society gets scant attention paid to its educational wants, it is the old-old who are likely to most significantly benefit from some of the advantages attributed to education for the aged, as outlined in pages 1-3 of this report. Management Committees everywhere might consider directing some of their membership recruitment procedures towards attracting greater numbers of this particular age group.

Most campuses are close to the 10% figure for the 75 and over age group. However, one New South Wales campus has 23% of its members in this age group and would appear to have gone out of its way to 'sell' the benefits of U3A to the old-old.

Persistence

One particularly important indicator of a Management Committee's success at meeting the wants and needs of members is the level of membership persistence. If members are prepared to keep paying their annual fees and coming back for more of what U3A is providing the organisation can be assumed to be on the right track. Table 3 indicates a high level of persistence by members.

Table 3a: Membership length for all respondents (n=758)

Year Joined	%
1990	30.1 (n=228)
1989	27.0 (n=205)
1988	23.9 (n=181)
1987	19.0 (n=144)

It should be noted that Table 3a lists data for all participants, many of whom belong to campuses which have been in existence for less than two years. Consequently, the persistence figures for the older campuses in the study might be expected to be higher. This is indeed shown to be the case in Table 3b which shows the combined persistence figures for Adelaide, Brisbane and Sunshine Coast U3As, which began in 1987 or earlier.

Table 3b: Membership length for Adelaide, Brisbane and Sunshine Coast campuses (n=311)

Year Joined	%
1990	27.7 (n=86)
1989	24.8 (n=77)
1988	17.7 (n=55)
1987	29.9 (n=93)

Each Management Committee can determine the level of persistence for its own campus from the 'Results at a glance' graphs.

Course participation issues

Some of the most frustrating barriers faced by older persons wishing to undertake further studies through traditional adult education institutions include constraints such as rigid and inappropriate scheduling of courses, inaccessible buildings and sites, complicated application and registration procedures, prohibitive fee structures, poor public transportation to sites, inappropriate course offerings or teaching methods, and poor dissemination of information about educational opportunities for older learners.

U3A is sufficiently flexible to overcome most of these constraints. One of the great strengths of the U3A movement in Australia is that it can readily become entirely community-based so there is no compelling reason why the

majority of classes cannot be run from a wide variety of appropriate venues, at times which are most acceptable to the participants. Older adults become less mobile with increasing age, and they are frequently dependent on public transportation for movement beyond their immediate environment. As a consequence of this, adult education activities, which can be run from suburban halls and homes near public transportation, should be better suited to the educational wants and needs of older adults than those which are constrained to the "bricks and mortar" of mainstream educational organisations. Moreover, community-based education can be divorced from institutions such as colleges and universities, which are frequently regarded with suspicion by members of the community whose experiences of education may have been limited to unhappy memories of compulsory education in childhood.

Table 4: 1990 Course participation this year for all respondents (n=771)

Course	%
None	18.3 (n=141)
One course	34.8 (n=268)
Two courses	27.1 (n=209)
Three courses	12.7 (n=98)
Four or more courses	7.1 (n=55)

Table 4 shows that 81.7 per cent of respondents had participated in at least one course. As is shown later in Table 21 the acquisition of new knowledge is by far the single most important reason given for joining U3A, therefore, a high course participation rate would be expected. But are the courses meeting participants needs? Table 5 suggests that participants are quite happy with the courses provided by U3A.

Table 5: Benefits from 1990 courses for all respondents (n=639)

Perceived benefit	%
Quite a lot	80.2 (n=513)
Some	16.3 (n=104)
Not much	3.1 (n=20)
Don't know	0.3 (n=2)

As shown in Table 5, 80.2 per cent felt that they had derived quite a lot of benefit from the courses. It is worth noting that a considerable number of written comments accompanying this question suggested that participants would have liked an option such as 'Very considerable benefit' to be included since they felt that 'Quite a lot' did not adequately express their level of satisfaction with the course(s). With fewer than four per cent overall of respondents failing to gain much from the courses tutors and Management Committees can feel quite satisfied that, generally, they are giving their 'students' what they are looking for.

Management Committees appear to have good reason to be pleased

with the data in Tables 4 and 5. However, the fact that 18 per cent of members had not participated in a course in the first half of 1990 could be cause for some concern. The survey was run in June/July, leaving an additional five or six months for member participation. Nevertheless, this non-participation rate might be perceived to be too high for an organisation whose major strength is the provision of courses for older learners. Table 6 lists the main reasons why non-participants had taken no courses in the first half of 1990.

Table 6: 1990 Non-participation reasons for all respondents (n=113)

Reason	%
No courses of interest	15.4 (n=21)
Too far to travel	8.1 (n=11)
Inconvenient time	26.5 (n=36)
No room in course	5.9 (n=8)
Other	44.1 (n=60)

(Main reasons listed as 'Other' were: illness, commitments as course tutor; recently joined; too busy.)

Perhaps U3A's greatest strength lies in the 'do-it-yourself' philosophy, a philosophy which values the lifetime skills and knowledge of members, and depends on the goodwill of unpaid volunteer member-tutors. Although this philosophical position appears to be well understood by most members, Management Committees receive requests from time to time for courses to be run in a more structured way, perhaps using professional teachers. Participants were asked to indicate their preference for classes to be run in a traditional classroom atmosphere as opposed to small informal groups from private homes. Table 7 indicates that the majority are happy with whatever way a course is offered.

Table 7: Preferred class format for all respondents (n=764)

Preferred format	%
Traditional classroom	19.1 (n=146)
Private homes	14.0 (n=107)
Doesn't matter	66.9 (n=511)

Participants were asked whether they would be prepared to act as tutors for a small number of U3A members if advice was offered on how to prepare and run a short course on a topic about which they had some expertise. Table 8 shows that 44 per cent may be prepared to teach.

Table 8: Respondents willing to teach (n=757)

Willing to teach	%
Yes	44.1 (n=334)
No	34.1 (n=258)
Don't know	21.8 (n=165)

This encouraging response appears to indicate that U3A campuses have the potential for considerably increasing the number of courses which could be offered to members. Indeed, if the level of expressed interest could be translated into action most of the reasons given for non-participation (Table 6) would likely be negated. However, prior experience suggests that Management Committees may encounter some difficulties in translating expressions of interest on paper, into action. In 1987 one U3A campus in SE Queensland responded to a positive response from 22 members, to a similar question designed to gauge member interest in tutoring. The Management Committee sponsored a free teaching techniques course which was run by a paid educator. Only four members attended, despite initial registration by 15 members. The reason for this poor attendance was reportedly due to the location of the course at a venue inaccessible by public transportation on weekends. Several months later the Management Committee repeated the course on a weekday, from a central city location, again with only four would-be tutors in attendance.

The failure by survey participants to translate an interest expressed on paper, into corresponding action, has been noted by March, Hooper and Baum (1977). They revealed a marked distinction, between indications on a questionnaire that adults are interested in a particular topic or course, and the reality of subsequent participation in that activity. In some instances it would appear that data generated by a mailed questionnaire may result in a collective response that could have relatively little value for program planners.

This caution should also be borne in mind by the Management Committees when considering responses to possible extension activities summarised in Table 22. The enthusiastic paper support for mooted extension activities does not indicate that such activities will automatically be widely supported by members.

Having made this point, however, it should be borne in mind that there is far more understanding of the U3A ethos in 1990 than there was in 1987 when the first small survey was taken. Management Committees should not be dissuaded from running teaching techniques courses for would-be-tutors. The greater the diversity of courses and teaching styles within a campus the more likely it is that the diverse interests of the older learner will be met.

Course organisational issues

A number of questions were designed to provide advice to Management Committees and tutors on course management matters. Tables 9 to 12 provide clear indications that members prefer to meet once a week for two hours in the morning, and that they are prepared to do the

necessary preparatory study to meet the course objectives.

Table 9: All respondents' class frequency preference (n=759)

Frequency	%
Three or more times a week	1.8 (n=14)
Twice a week	12.1 (n=92)
Once a week	76.2 (n=578)
Once a fortnight	9.2 (n=70)
Less than once a fortnight	0.7 (n=5)

Table 10: All respondents' preferred class duration (n=758)

Duration	%
1 hour	10.8 (n=82)
2 hours	78.0 (n=591)
3 hours	10.2 (n=77)
More than 3 hours	1.1 (n=8)

Table 11: All respondents' preferred time of day for classes (n=761)

Time	%
Morning	58.3 (n=444)
Afternoon	18.3 (n=139)
Evening	1.3 (n=10)
No preference	22.1 (n=168)

Table 12: All respondents' preferred study duration (n=751)

Study	%
No desire to study	11.3 (n=85)
Less than 2 hours a week	17.6 (n=132)
2-5 hours a week	16.2 (n=122)
As needed for the course	54.9 (n=412)

Educational attainment

Population-based participation studies overseas consistently find a high positive correlation between levels of formal education and participation in adult education activities (Clark, 1983). The first Australian

study to provide comparable data, the NSSS study (Evans, 1988), does not appear to reflect such a clear-cut finding. According to highest formal qualifications, Evans reported that of course-takers:

- 2% have completed primary school (or less)
- 28% have incomplete secondary education
- 28% have completed secondary school
- 21% have trade qualifications
- 22% have a diploma or degree

These figures can be compared with overseas findings in at least two contrasting ways according to the point of view of those who might wish to argue the nexus between adult education and formal qualifications. On the one hand it may be argued that a majority (58%) of course takers have only high school level education, or less. On the other hand it may be argued that a greater majority (71%) have completed high school, or better. Evans (1988) makes no comparisons, merely noting that most course takers have only average levels of formal education, with rates of course taking being higher among the highly educated 'but there are not yet many such people' (p. 11).

Table 13 lists the highest level of formal education attained by the U3A survey respondents.

Table 13: Highest level of formal education attained by participants (n= 758)

Qualification	%
Higher degree	3.7 (n=28)
Degree	17.4 (n=132)
Undergraduate diploma	8.2 (n=62)
Business, technical or trade	19.7 (n=149)
Completed secondary	33.9 (n=257)
Less than 2 years secondary	11.2 (n=85)
Primary	5.9 (n=28)

Forty-nine per cent of U3A participants have completed a post-secondary qualification, a figure not unlike the 43 per cent found in the NSSS study. However, the NSSS study reports data for a sample of all Australian adults, not principally older adults as in the U3A survey. Since each successive cohort is, generally, better educated on average than preceding cohorts the U3A survey would appear to show that better educated members are attracted to the movement. Additionally, when considering the highest level of formal education attained by older Australians it is important not to overlook societal conditions which prevailed when the current group of older Australians was of high school age. Table 13 shows the single largest group of survey participants (33.9%) has completed no qualifications beyond high school level.

As shown earlier in Tables 1 and 2 the majority of U3A members are women who fall within the 60-69 years age group. Today's 65 year old U3A member was 12 years old in 1937 and, perhaps, completing primary school. In those days, in order to enter high school, children were required to pass

a rigorous entrance examination, a barrier which effectively excluded more than half the children from progressing to high school. Those who were scholastically able to enter high school may have had to travel considerable distances to attend one of the few high schools as well as facing other rigorous examinations throughout the high school years. For example, in Queensland only some 15 per cent would complete Junior certificate two years after entry, and no more than two per cent ever advanced to the Senior certificate. Further pressure on children to leave school and help become a family breadwinner was created by World War II. Coupled with these daunting problems was the fact that it was unfashionable for teenage girls to progress through high school, and available jobs did not require a high level of secondary education. From this perspective then, completion of high school, particularly for women in the over 60 age group, who comprise the considerable majority of U3A members, should be seen as an educationally unusual event. When the data in Table 13 are considered in historical perspective the information is more like that observed in studies overseas. Members of U3A tend to come from backgrounds which reflect high educational attainment.

Prior participation

Houle (1961) identified a tradition of educational participation as a major factor shared by older learners: those who participate in later life have been habitual learners. To determine whether U3A members displayed a similar interest in prior recent learning, participants were asked to indicate when they last attended a non-U3A course or activity involving more than 10 hours instruction (e.g. a course leading to a qualification, or a course such as dressmaking, involving no qualification). Table 14 shows that more than 61 per cent of respondents had been involved with education programs more recently than five years ago.

Table 14: Last involvement in a non-U3A course involving more than 10 hours instruction (n=764)

Previous Study	%	
Never	10.1	(n=77)
More than 10 years ago	18.6	(n=142)
6 - 10 years ago	9.7	(n=74)
1 - 5 years ago	32.1	(n=245)
Less than 12 months ago	13.9	(n=106)
Currently doing a non-U3A course	15.7	(n=120)

Tough (1978), Hiemstra (1976), and others point to the far greater involvement by older adults in education activities than was previously thought to be the case. This fact had previously remained obscured, largely due to a failure by prior researchers to consider that adult learning could take place at other than traditional educational establishments.

Participants were asked whether they had attended any non-U3A lectures talks or short courses during the last 12 months, which were offered by organisations such as churches, museums, libraries or clubs,

which are not conventionally considered, by many, to be providers of adult education. Table 15 shows that 59.1 per cent of respondents had done so.

Table 15: Participation in short courses during the past 12 months (n=756)

Participation	%	
No short courses	40.9	(n=309)
Short courses	59.1	(n=447)

Possible Future Participation

Participants were asked to think ahead about whether they might become involved with some specific learning activity not offered by U3A. 62.7% indicated that they had no intention of continuing with their learning outside U3A activities. Responses are summarised in Table 16.

Table 16: Future non-U3A studies intended (n=697)

Intention	%	
No	62.7	(n=437)
Yes	37.3	(n=260)

Leisure activities

U3A members tend to be 'doers'. Table 17 shows that in the 12 months prior to their joining U3A participants took part in leisure activities outside the home (social functions, sporting activities, card games etc.)

Table 17: Leisure activities outside the home during the 12 months prior to joining U3A (n=749)

Leisure	%	
No prior types	5.1	(n=38)
1 - 3 prior types	49.5	(n=371)
4 or more prior types	45.4	(n=340)

Table 18 shows that U3A membership is not a substitute for these types of additional leisure activities.

Table 18: Non-U3A leisure activities outside the home carried out this year (n=748)

Leisure	%	
No other leisure	8.8	(n=66)
1 - 3 types this year	55.9	(n=418)
4 or more types this year	35.3	(n=264)

Health

Older adults who participate in formal educational activities usually report that they are in good health (Peterson, 1981; Romaniuk and Romaniuk, 1982; Leptak, 1987). Not surprisingly, Table 19 shows the considerable majority of participants (more than 78 per cent) rate their health to be good or excellent. Of interest, however, is the relatively high percentage of participants who regard their health as fair/poor. An interesting follow-up study would be to focus on members of this particular group in an effort to determine what are the attractions/advantages of U3A for them.

Table 19: Members' Health (n=757)

Health	%	
Excellent	24.8	(n=188)
Good	53.5	(n=405)
Fair	20.2	(n=153)
Poor	1.5	(n=11)

Financially secure older adults are more likely to participate in educational activities (Peterson, 1981; Leptak, 1987). In the case of U3A, however, with its very low membership fees, free access to courses, and cost-recovery-only charges for social/recreational activities, financial hardship would not be expected to be an important deterrent to membership. In terms of financial situation Table 20 would indicate that U3A in Australia is a middle class movement. In future studies it will be of interest to see whether a greater percentage of those in the 'Below Average' financial category can be attracted to the egalitarian Australian U3A movement.

Table 20: Members' Finance (n=748)

Finance	%	
Above Average	10.2	(n=76)
Average	75.8	(n=567)
Below Average	14.0	(n=105)

Principal reason for joining U3A

Participants were asked to prioritise their main reasons for joining U3A from a list of possibilities. Table 21a shows that the acquisition of new knowledge ranks by far the most important reason for joining, a not unexpected result since the organisation's major aim is the provision of educational opportunities for third-agers who wish to pursue learning for its own sake. However, responses given in Table 21b reveal an important social expectation. The frequency of responses which are "person" oriented (to mix with stimulating people, to make new friends) rather than "product" oriented clearly indicates that members rate social interaction as a very high expectation of U3A.

Table 21a: Main reason for joining U3A

Reason	%
New knowledge	68.1
Mix with stimulating people	24.8
Curiosity	22.8
Personal satisfaction	19.6
Escape daily routine	14.7
New friends	13.4

N.B. The percentages exceed 100% because many participants listed more than one category as their first choice.

Table 21b: Second most important reason for joining U3A

Reason	%
New knowledge	19.0
Mix with stimulating people	34.2
Curiosity	11.2
Personal satisfaction	41.9
Escape daily routine	9.7
New friends	19.9

N.B. The percentages exceed 100% because a number of participants listed more than one category as their second choice.

A diversity of reasons for joining U3A is not unexpected. Cross (1979) reviewed thirty studies of educational interests of adults, including the aged, and concluded that content is not the primary motivation for attendance for many people. Advantaged adults indicated that the intrinsic rewards of education were their main concern, with social interaction being a major reason for participation.

Most Management Committees are aware of the importance that members place on social interaction and have established social subcommittees whose principal role is to develop activities which will bring members together in a "getting-to-know-you" environment, such as theatre

evenings and picnic-in-the-park activities.

Additional U3A activities

Participants were asked to nominate additional educational/leisure activities in which they might be interested if these were offered. Responses are summarised in Table 22.

Table 22: Possible extension activities in which members might participate (n = 771)

	Yes
a) Day bus trips to rainforests, historical sites etc. (cost about \$10)	587 (76.1%)
b) Picnics, social activities (no cost)	365 (47.3%)
c) Two or three week cultural/education visits to overseas countries (variable cost)	227 (29.4%)
d) Annual U3A dinner with prominent speaker (cost \$15)	408 (52.9%)
e) Dance/social evening (cost \$3-\$5)	204 (26.5%)
f) Theatre or play evening (variable cost)	401 (52%)
g) Exchange visits to stay with U3A members in other places (variable cost)	166 (21.5%)
h) Short story competition (no cost)	148 (19.2%)

The above preferences indicate that items like a, b, d, and f would likely attract sufficient support from members to warrant their inclusion in future program planning, if these options are not already offered. However, Management Committees should be alert to the earlier discussion related to Table 8 (p.23) in which it was noted that a difference between expressed interest in an activity and subsequent participation in that activity is frequently observed by program planners. The enthusiastic paper support for mooted activities like educational day trips, an annual dinner with guest speaker, and theatre/play evenings, does not indicate that such activities will automatically be widely supported by members.

Interests Profiles

The University of Queensland Operation Retirement Interests Profile questionnaire (Harwood and Naylor, 1980) enables interests over 13 different education/recreation categories to be obtained. These can then be compared with the average extent of interest shown by people of comparable age and sex, by direct inspection, and may reveal previously unrecognised activities which might be successfully developed for groups of retired people. Unlike the majority of other tests and interest sheets,

which frequently have been designed for younger persons in the educational or industrial fields, the UQOR instruments have been specifically prepared for, and standardised on, elderly populations.

Interpretation of the profiles

The UQOR instrument allows profiles to be developed for a number of education/leisure categories by sex and by age range (under 65 years of age, and 65 years and over). Interests profiles are charted at the end of the 'Results at a glance' section. For females there are two profiles for each age grouping, one for the specific campus and the other for all U3A participants in the particular age range. Because the number of male participants in the survey was quite low for most campuses the male responses have not been further divided by age category. Instead, for most campuses a single response for males, by campus, is plotted along with the two age groupings for all males on the same graph.

Two or three letter abbreviations along the horizontal axis represent each of the 13 interest categories. The numbers on the vertical axis designate the extent of interest on each of the 13 categories. The 13 categories of interest each comprised five questions requesting individuals to tick a response on a five point scale (0-4) ranging from little or no interest, through to very much interest. The maximum possible individual score for each of the 13 categories was 20, the minimum was 0. Average responses for each category were calculated, and it is these averages which are plotted to produce the various profiles. The profiles make it possible to identify at a glance those activities which are likely to be of greatest (or least) interest to the group whose interests are being surveyed.

Abbreviations for the thirteen categories represented on the following profiles are:

Mus	Music
Sp	Speech and Drama
Lit	Literature
Art	Art
Hob	Handwork
Hor	Horticulture
Ex	Exercise
Cl	Clerical
Vol	Social Voluntary
St	Study
Gam	Indoor Games
An	Animals
R/P	Religious/Political

The average Australian U3A member in 1990

Although modal descriptions about any group of humans are of questionable utility and, perhaps, even more so for older adults, a thumbnail sketch of the 'average' U3A member provides a convenient way of summarising many of the major findings of this survey.

The average U3A member is aged in her sixties and has an interest in

activities related to study, literature and art. Her formal education is above average for her age group and, in the last few years, she has participated in a course involving more than 10 hours instruction, probably run by TAFE or an equivalent institution. She joined U3A mainly to gain new knowledge, to mix with stimulating people, and for her own personal satisfaction, and she is unlikely to participate in future learning activities outside those provided by U3A.

The morning is the best time for her to attend classes, and these should be run once a week, ideally for two hours, although she is prepared to do any necessary preparation for each class session. She does not mind whether courses are run in an informal manner by member-tutors or in a structured, traditional classroom environment. Overall, she is very satisfied with the U3A courses.

Her general state of health is good, her financial position is about average for her age group, and she is quite busy with activities other than U3A outside the home.

Summary of individual comments for the Brisbane Campus

- need a central location with good transport facilities
- U3A is doing a great job, there is plenty of variety in what is offered
- canvass members. Some with expertise would like to volunteer to assist U3A in different capacities
- provide more language classes, especially French and German at all levels, beginners through to advanced
- need a central venue to assist those who cannot drive
- more market research suggested
- extremely appreciative of the work done by U3A
- short trips of one or two nights to National Parks or vineyards near Stanthorpe as many feel reluctant to leave their homes for any longer than this
- lecturers should be well qualified
- lectures on self-esteem and motivation for the U3A age group
- lectures by the police on Neighbourhood Watch and security
- Open Day at City Hall with participants and tutors promoting U3A to Brisbane
- calligraphy classes
- need a city office, manned by volunteers, for information, enrolments etc as the answering machine is inadequate
- congratulations on a job well done U3A
- newsletter with synopses of all classes and the name of the tutors who will take them
- more publicity and advertising
- send publicity to the Open Heart Patients Club ph. Merv on 3944705
- tutors should be open to feedback
- publicise the great range of courses available as many are intimidated by the highly academic appearance of U3A

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APPENDIX A

The covering letter and questionnaire sent to all participants



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June 1990

Dear U3A colleague,

I would appreciate your devoting 10 minutes or so of your time by responding to the enclosed questionnaire, and returning it to me in the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided.

As you are doubtlessly aware, U3A has become a national success story since it was introduced to Australia in 1985. There are now about 70 independent U3A campuses providing courses and other activities for its members throughout the country.

Recent research into the benefits of intellectual challenge for older adults reveals some intriguing facts. For example, it would now appear that the health and longevity of those who engage in intellectual challenge in later life, is markedly better than that of those who are not similarly challenged. Findings such as these suggest an important role which U3A might play in the future mix of social services provided for sectors of the ageing community.

In the not too distant future U3A may wish to increase the range of services which can be provided to a wider sector of the aged community than at present. However, if U3A is to compete with other agencies for scarce resources it must be able to mount an argument based on "hard data" about the benefits of the movement to the current membership, and must be able to characterise the type of older Australian who currently participates. Merely being able to suggest to Government and other funding and policy-making bodies that U3A is "doing a good job in the community" will not be sufficient.

The accompanying survey is designed to provide statistical data about some characteristics and aspirations of U3A members from a dozen or so campuses in Queensland, NSW and South Australia. (The survey has been limited by financial resources to selected campuses.) There are three parts to the survey and you are requested to respond to every question, even if some appear not to

be relevant to your immediate situation. Part 1 of the questionnaire will be summarised and returned to your own Management Committee to assist them to better meet your needs. Part 2 contains more general questions about members' backgrounds. This information will allow comparisons to be made between Australian participants and the types of participant attracted to overseas programs of adult education. Part 3 is designed to allow a "picture" to be drawn, of the current interests of our members.

Your responses will be totally confidential. I do not, and will not know your name. Your Management Committee has selected your name from its membership list and has distributed the questionnaire, together with this letter, and the reply-paid envelope, to you. When I receive your questionnaire I will enter your responses onto a computer and will later destroy the questionnaire. The code number on the top of the questionnaire is to allow me to identify the campus and, if a member forgets to respond, to allow me to contact the appropriate Management Committee to ask them to remind the individual to respond. I will subsequently send reports which describe the total and specific campus response to each Management Committee, and they may act on general trends, as appropriate.

Thank you in anticipation of your cooperation. Your accurate responses will be of considerable benefit to the entire Australian U3A movement and, hopefully, to older learners everywhere. I would appreciate it greatly if you could return this to me within a week.

Kind regards,


Dr Rick Swindell

U3A SURVEY OF MEMBERS

Management Committee
please insert Code Number



For most questions you will only need to draw a circle around the number next to the answer you choose. If you wish to change an answer cross it out and recircle. For a few questions you are asked to write your own answers in the space provided below the question.

PART A: SPECIFIC INFORMATION TO ASSIST YOUR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1. Sex?
 - Male ----- 1
 - Female ----- 2

2. What is your age?
 - Under 50 ----- 1
 - 50-54 ----- 2
 - 55-59 ----- 3
 - 60-64 ----- 4
 - 65-69 ----- 5
 - 70-74 ----- 6
 - 75-79 ----- 7
 - 80 and over ----- 8

3. How long have you been a U3A member?
(NOTE: some of the dates may not apply to your campus)
 - I joined in 1990 ----- 1
 - I joined in 1989 ----- 2
 - I joined in 1988 ----- 3
 - I joined in 1987 ----- 4

4. Have you participated in any U3A courses this year?
(If you circled 2 go to question 5).
 - Yes ----- 1
 - No ----- 2

- 4(a) How many U3A courses have you participated in this year?
(Count any course you are currently doing).
 - One ----- 1
 - Two ----- 2
 - Three ----- 3
 - Four or more ----- 4

- 4(b) How much do you feel that you have benefited from the course(s) you have enrolled in?
 - Quite a lot ----- 1
 - Some ----- 2
 - Not very much ----- 3
 - Don't know ----- 4

5. What is the main reason you have not yet enrolled in any U3A course?
 - No courses of interest to me ----- 1
 - Too far to travel ----- 2
 - Course at inconvenient time ----- 3
 - No room in course ----- 4
 - Other (please specify) _____

6. Would you prefer your classes to be run in:
 - A traditional classroom atmosphere ----- 1
 - Small informal groups from private homes ----- 2
 - It doesn't really matter ----- 3

7. If advice were provided on how to prepare and run a short course on a topic about which you have some expertise, might you be prepared to offer to share your skills or knowledge with a small number of U3A members?
- Yes ----- 1
 No ----- 2
 Don't know ----- 3
8. How frequently would you like to meet to take part in a course of your choice?
- 3 or more times a week ----- 1
 Twice a week ----- 2
 Once a week ----- 3
 Once a fortnight ----- 4
 Less than once a fortnight ----- 5
9. When attending a course what length of time would seem to be best for your needs?
- 1 hour ----- 1
 2 hours ----- 2
 3 hours ----- 3
 more than 3 hours ----- 4
10. What is your preferred time for attending a course?
- Morning ----- 1
 Afternoon ----- 2
 Evening ----- 3
 Doesn't really matter ----- 4
11. If your course involved some private study such as reading before or after each session how long would you be prepared to devote to such study?
- I do not wish to study ----- 1
 Less than 2 hours per week ----- 2
 2-5 hours per week ----- 3
 As needed for the course ----- 4
12. If U3A were to organise the following education/social activities, the cost of which would be borne by you, might you be interested in participating in; (circle as many as you like).
- Day bus trips to rainforests, historical sites etc. (cost about \$10.00) ----- 1
 Picnics, social activities (no cost) ----- 2
 Two or three week cultural/education visit to overseas countries (variable cost) ----- 3
 Annual U3A dinner with prominent speaker (Cost \$15.00) ----- 4
 Dance/Social evening (Cost \$3.00 - \$5.00) ----- 5
 Theatre or play evening (variable cost) ----- 6
 Exchange visits to stay in homes of U3A members in other cities (variable cost) ----- 7
 Short story competition (no cost) ----- 8
 Other (please specify) _____
-

13. Do you have any other comments or suggestions which might assist the Management Committee to develop U3A?
-
-
-
-

PART B: GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE "AVERAGE" U3A MEMBER

14. Think back to just before you joined U3A. What were your **main** reasons for joining U3A?
 (Number 1 in the box beside the most important reason, 2 beside the next most important etc. Number as many as you like.
- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| Curiosity | ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To gain new knowledge | ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Personal satisfaction | ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To mix with stimulating people | ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To escape daily routine | ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To make new friends | ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please specify) | ----- | <input type="checkbox"/> |
-
-

15. What is the **highest** level of formal education you have completed?
- | | | |
|--|-------|---|
| Primary school | ----- | 1 |
| Less than 2 years high school | ----- | 2 |
| Completed high school | ----- | 3 |
| Business, technical or trade certificate | ----- | 4 |
| Undergraduate diploma | ----- | 5 |
| College or university degree | ----- | 6 |
| Higher university degree | ----- | 7 |

16. Prior to joining U3A when was the last time you voluntarily attended an educational course or activity involving more than 10 hours instruction (e.g. a course leading to a qualification, or a hobby course such as dressmaking or home improvement with no qualification involved)?
- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|---|
| Never | ----- | 1 |
| More than 10 years ago | ----- | 2 |
| 6 to 10 years ago | ----- | 3 |
| 1 to 5 years ago | ----- | 4 |
| Less than 12 months ago | ----- | 5 |
| I am currently doing a non-U3A course | ----- | 6 |

17. Excluding any U3A activities, **during the past 12 months**, have you attended any lectures, talks or other **short** educational activities offered by organisations e.g. museums, libraries, churches or service clubs? If yes, please list the organisation(s)
- | | | |
|-----|-------|---|
| Yes | ----- | 1 |
| No | ----- | 2 |
-
-
-

18. Thinking ahead, do you plan to get involved with some specific learning activity not offered by U3A? If yes please list the activity and the organisation which may offer the activity of interest.

Yes ----- 1
 No ----- 2

19a. Thinking back to the year before you joined U3A, about how many different types of leisure activities outside your home did you undertake in a year? (Think of things like social functions, sporting activities, card games, visits to the theatre, education programmes etc.)

None ----- 1
 1 to 3 different types of activity a year --- 2
 4 or more different types of activity a year --- 3

19b. Apart from U3A activities about how many different types of leisure activities outside your home have you undertaken so far this year? (Think of the types of activity in question 19a.)

None ----- 1
 1 to 3 different types of activity this year --- 2
 4 or more different types of activity this year --- 3

20. I perceive my current state of health to be

Poor ----- 1
 Fair ----- 2
 Good ----- 3
 Excellent ----- 4

21. I would rate my overall financial circumstances as

Lower than most in my age group --- 1
 About average for my age group --- 2
 Higher than most in my age group --- 3

PART C: A PROFILE OF INTERESTS

Please put a cross in the appropriate column opposite each item.

You will probably not have had the opportunity to participate in many of these activities but we would like you nevertheless to indicate in this way how much or how little you think they would be of interest to you. Do not be afraid to draw on your imagination.

		EXTENT OF INTEREST					
		Little or None	Not Much	A Fair Amount	A Good Deal	Very Much	
22.	To sing in a choir or group						A
23.	To recite poetry						B
24.	To study literature in a group						C
25.	To attend art appreciation classes		.				D
26.	To do macrame or basket-work						E
27.	To do indoor or bush-house gardening						F
28.	To play croquet or golf						G
29.	To direct fund-raising						H
30.	To help with meals-on-wheels						I
31.	To study subjects such as history, geography, literature						J
32.	To play billiards or snooker						K
33.	To keep animals or birds as pets						L
34.	To take an active part in the decision-making of organisations (e.g. attend parish meetings, progress meetings etc.)						M

		EXTENT OF INTEREST					
		Little or None	Not Much	A Fair Amount	A Good Deal	Very Much	
35.	To listen to concerts, live or on TV or radio						A
36.	To debate in a social group						B
37.	To read poetry or drama						C
38.	To make pottery						D
39.	To do French Polishing, carving etc.						E
40.	To grow Bonzai (miniatures)						F
41.	To play outdoor bowls						G
42.	To be chairman						H
43.	To visit aged persons "in care" (e.g. in hospitals)						I
44.	To teach other elderly folk the skills you have already attained						J
45.	To do crossword puzzles						K
46.	To keep poultry or farm animals						L
47.	To teach in Sunday School or lead youth groups						M

		EXTENT OF INTEREST					
		Little or None	Not Much	A Fair Amount	A Good Deal	Very Much	
48.	To play a new instrument in a group						A
49.	To act in plays						B
50.	To read history, science or biography						C
51.	To do photography						D
52.	To make toys						E
53.	To grow fruit						F
54.	To do gymnastic exercise						G
55.	To be club secretary (minutes, correspondence, etc.)						H
56.	To undertake regular voluntary aid in a hospital (e.g. flowers, library, visiting, etc.)						I
57.	To take lessons presented on TV, radio, tapes or records						J
58.	To play "Patience"						K
59.	To visit zoos or bird sanctuaries						L
60.	To attend study groups (e.g. religious, political etc.)						M

		EXTENT OF INTEREST					
		Little or None	Not Much	A Fair Amount	A Good Deal	Very Much	
61.	To learn a new instrument by yourself						A
62.	To take part in play readings						B
63.	To read aloud (e.g., to a blind person)						C
64.	To make organised visits to art galleries						D
65.	To repair and renovate antique furniture, clocks, etc.						E
66.	To do landscape gardening						F
67.	To play tennis or squash						G
68.	To be club treasurer looking after account books						H
69.	To visit the aged in their own homes						I
70.	To study foreign languages						J
71.	To play chess, draughts, cards, or scrabble						K
72.	To follow horse or dog racing						L
73.	To help with church maintenance (cleaning, flowers, repairs, embroidery, etc.)						M

		EXTENT OF INTEREST					
		Little or None	Not Much	A Fair Amount	A Good Deal	Very Much	
74.	To play an instrument						A
75.	To listen to verse or drama (e.g. radio)						B
76.	To write short stories, novels, poetry						C
77.	To sketch, draw or paint, watercolours, oils, bark, etc.						D
78.	To do carpentry or cabinet-making						E
79.	To tend lawns or hedges						F
80.	To dance						G
81.	To collect and record historical details						H
82.	To act as writer or reader for the frail/blind elderly						I
83.	To study theoretical subjects (e.g., philosophy, politics, religion)						J
84.	To play darts						K
85.	To study birds and other wildlife						L
86.	To take part in reform movements (e.g., conservation, anti-pollution, environmental, etc.)						M