



Adult learning data  
in two cohort studies:



National Child Development  
Study  
British Cohort Study







# What I'll talk about

1. Introduce the cohort studies
2. Data on adult learning
3. How the information has been used
4. Strengths and limitations





# National Child Development Study

- 1958 cohort
  - Sample size initially 17,000
  - Sweeps at 7, 11, 16, 23, 33, 42
  - Information on physical, educational, social and economic development
  - Information from parents, health visitors, schools, cohort members
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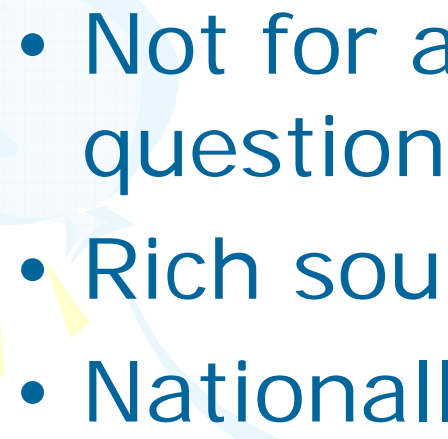
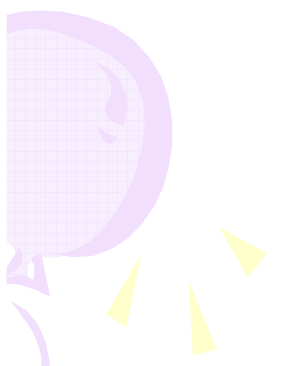



# British Cohort Study

- 1970 cohort
  - Sample size initially 17,000
  - Sweeps at 5, 10, 16, 26, 30 and 21 (10%)
  - Information on physical, educational, social and economic development
  - Information from parents, health visitors, schools, cohort members
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# Purpose of data collection

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- Not for any specific research questions – secondary analysis
  - Rich source of life course data
  - Nationally representative
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## 2. Data on adult learning – relevant sweeps

- NCDS

- 23 in 1981

- 33 in 1991

- 42 in 2000

- BCS

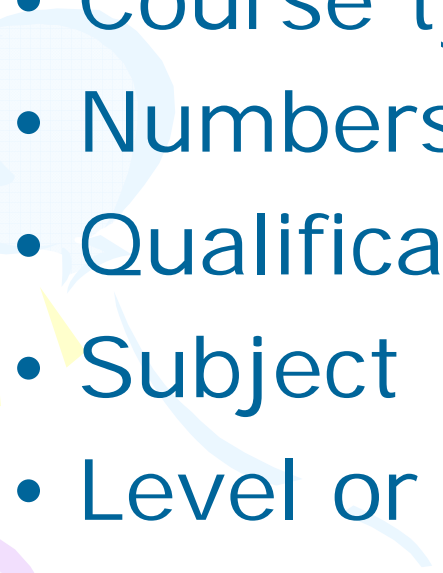
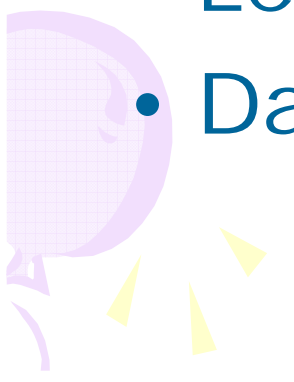
- 26 in 1986

- 30 in 2000



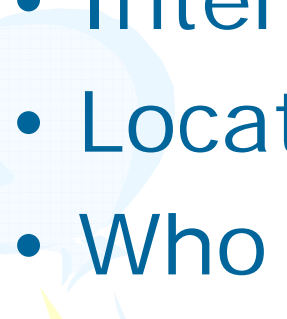



# Data on adult learning

- Running total of qualifications
  - Course types
  - Numbers of each course type taken
  - Qualifications
  - Subject
  - Level or grade
  - Dates
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# Data on adult learning

- Duration
  - Intensity
  - Location
  - Who paid
  - Problems on course
  - Whether completed
  - Why not completed
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# Data on reasons for participation

- Employment related, e.g.
  - New type of work
  - Better and new skills, job performance
  - Promotion
  - Job satisfaction
- Compulsion
- To get on another course
- Self-improvement
- To help child
- Interest, curiosity



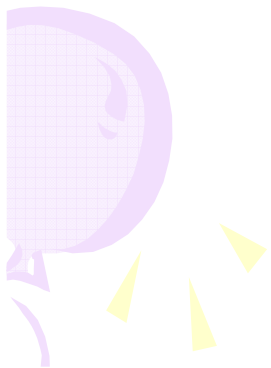
# Data on barriers to participation

- Availability
  - Access
  - Financial
  - Housing
  - Health
  - Family
  - Time
  - Lack of interest
  - Poor literacy or numeracy
  - No need
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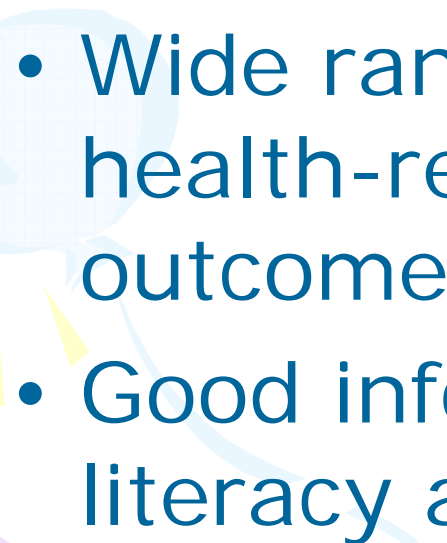
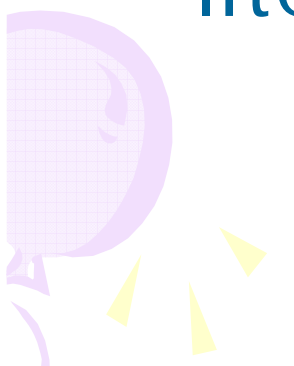
# Data on direct effects of adult learning

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- Job prospects
  - Satisfaction with course






# Controls and outcomes

- Very rich source of contextual information throughout life course
  - Wide range of social, economic, health-related and family adult outcomes
  - Good information about functional literacy and numeracy
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# Forthcoming

- Currently running bio-medical survey on sub-sample
    - 2004
      - BCS full survey
      - NCDS telephone or postal survey
    - 2008
      - NCDS full survey
      - BCS telephone or postal survey
  - Plan for surveys every four years
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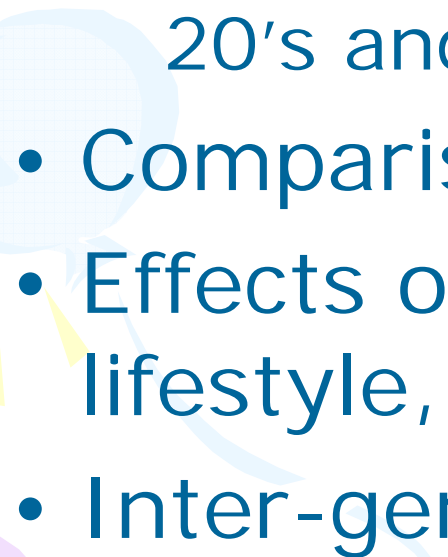
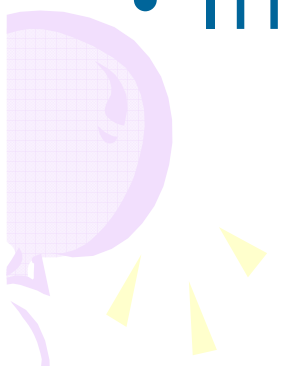


### 3. What analyses have been done using the cohort studies?

- NCDS 33-42 (1991-2000)
  - Contribution to health and social capital (Feinstein et al., 2003)
  - Effects on social attitudes
  - Effects on health
  - Determinants and labour market effects (Jenkins et al., 2003)
- NCDS 23-33 (1981-1991)
  - Work-related and vocational courses and labour market effects, e.g. Blundell et al., 1996; Dearden et al., 1997



# How much more mileage?

- Use full life course information
    - Relative importance of AL during one's 20's and 30's given initial education
  - Comparisons between the cohorts
  - Effects on family relationships, lifestyle, crime
  - Inter-generational effects of AL
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## 4. Strengths of the cohort studies

- Excellent for analyses over whole life course
- Rich contextual information throughout the life course
  - good for outcomes
  - good for controls
- Large sample sizes
- Panel structure – helpful for isolating effects
- Quite a lot on adult learning



# Limitations of the data source

- Not designed to investigate adult learning, so limited detail
  - All the same age
  - Infrequent sweeps
    - Dates for some adult learning (qualifications)
    - Dates for some outcomes
    - Incomplete information, and difficulties with recall
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# What cannot be investigated using the cohort studies

- Can only go so far in making comparisons between different forms of AL
- Can only go so far towards isolating effects of AL
- Cannot investigate relationships between life course transitions, AL, and outcomes