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Title of Thesis — Titre de la thèse

SPRING SESSION FOR SENIORS - AN EVALUATION

University — Université

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Degree for which thesis was presented — Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée

MSc

Year this degree conferred — Année d'obtention de ce grade	Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

SPRING SESSION FOR SENIORS - AN EVALUATION

by

BARBARA A. SYKES

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF SCIENCE

IN

FAMILY STUDIES

FACULTY OF HOME ECONOMICS

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1981

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MASTER OF SCIENCE IN FAMILY STUDIES

1981

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled SPRING SESSION FOR SENIORS - AN EVALUATION submitted by BARBARA A. SYKES in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Family Studies, in the Faculty of Home Economics.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to conduct a comprehensive summative evaluation of the Spring Session for Seniors program at the University of Alberta. The program had been operating for seven years under the sponsorship of the Faculty of Extension and the Office of Special Sessions. The evaluation was requested by the Advisory Committee for the program.

An interactive evaluation model drawing from Stake's concept of responsive evaluation was used to guide the evaluation process. Ongoing negotiations between the evaluator and the evaluation audiences served to identify the concerns and issues which provided the focus of the evaluation. These were translated into the following major research questions:

1. What is the nature of the Spring Session for Seniors program?

2. What have been the impacts of Spring Session for Seniors?

3. What is the nature of participation in Spring Session for Seniors?

The study used a convergent approach to data collection in that information was derived from a number of sources, at different points in time using several techniques. The major data collection techniques used in the study were: a survey of past program participants, focused interviews with current participants, interviews with key informants and document analysis. Analysis of

data sought to describe the program in terms of the process and the impacts and to respond to the research questions. Program strengths and weaknesses were identified and 14 recommendations were presented centering around continuation and expansion of the program, the development of a program philosophy, goals and objectives, the coordination of programming with other institutions and the use of innovative modes of learning. On the whole, the program was judged by the evaluator, the participants and the key informants to have been exceedingly successful and worthwhile.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To my advisor, Dr. Dianne Kieren I would like to extend my sincere appreciation for her continual assistance, encouragement and support throughout the preparation of this thesis. I would also like to thank Dr. Norah Keating and Hayden Roberts for not only serving on my committee but also offering constructive advice and many opportunities for fruitful discussion.

Thanks are also sincerely offered to those who provided special assistance along the way: Dr. Al MacKay, Maryanne Doherty, Linda Fraser, Gloria Strohschein, and most of all my fellow students. I am indebted to Susan Downing for the time and energy spent in typing this thesis and to Olya Bociurkiw for preparation of the diagrams.

Special thanks are extended to the participants in the study, for their time, cooperation and patience in responding to the questionnaire and interviews. I would like to express my appreciation also to the members of the Advisory Committee for their helpful advice and assistance.

Finally, I would like to express my deep appreciation to Jason whose constant encouragement, support and 'constructive listening' I could not have done without.

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CHAPTER 1

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Program evaluation is an important but often neglected component of the program planning process. There has been a tendency among program planners to emphasize the more visible aspects of the process - planning and implementation - to the detriment of such crucial activities as needs assessment and evaluation. For a variety of reasons such as fiscal constraints and lack of trained personnel, many program evaluations have been poorly designed and have neglected to consider the purposes of evaluation research. Furthermore, evaluation has frequently been undertaken as an external activity with little relevance to ongoing program planning.

During the past two decades however, efforts to develop systematic approaches to program evaluation have increased as the benefits of constructive evaluation have been recognized (Attkisson, 1978; Guba and Lincoln, 1981). This trend can be attributed in part to funding constraints on social and educational programs and the resulting demand for increased accountability with regard to program delivery. In order to make informed decisions regarding the future of any program, administrators and managers need to have some indication of the program's worth. Such was the case with the Spring Session for Seniors program.

Background

In 1975, the University of Alberta initiated Spring Session for Seniors to provide a unique learning opportunity for senior citizens. The program was modelled after a similar program at the University of British Columbia instituted the previous year.

Spring Session for Seniors was sponsored jointly by the Department of Extension and the Office of Special Sessions. An Advisory Committee comprising representatives from the community and the university was formed to assist in planning and implementing the sessions and to provide input to policy directions. Funding has been provided each year by the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower of the Alberta government.

The target population for this program included all Alberta residents over 60 years of age and their spouses. Transportation and accomodation were provided for those participants residing outside Edmonton.

While the major focus of Spring Session for Seniors was on general interest courses, participants were encouraged to attend credit courses either as auditors or as credit students. The program also featured various opportunities for social interaction.

Since the program began in 1975, a number of changes have been incorporated; however, for the most part, these changes have been minor and have had little impact on the essential nature of the program.

Statement of Purpose

The Spring Session for Seniors program has now been in operation for seven years. Brief evaluations of the program have been carried out on an annual basis for the purpose of ongoing planning. While these evaluations yield very useful information in terms of demographic data and potential areas for improvement, they do not provide an in-depth view of the program and its impacts. In order to determine the effectiveness of Spring Session for Seniors and to make informed decisions regarding its continuation, termination or future development, the Advisory Committee for the program requested that a more extensive evaluation be undertaken. The purpose of this research was to conduct a comprehensive, summative evaluation of this program, providing the information required by the Committee to guide its future decision-making.

Focus of the Study

There are numerous approaches to conducting evaluation research. Selection of the most appropriate approach depends upon a variety of factors such as the type of program, the purpose of the evaluation, the intended audience of the study and the resources available. The primary audience of this evaluation was the Advisory Committee for the Spring Session for Seniors. To reflect the particular concerns of this committee and other audiences while providing the most valuable information for decision making, the study utilized a broad-based approach addressing the following questions:

1. What is the nature of the Spring Session for Seniors program?
   a) What are the major features?
   b) What changes have taken place in the program since it was initiated?
   c) What were the original goals and objectives and how have these changed?
   d) What resources have gone into the program? (funding, staffing, participants, promotion)
   e) What have the costs of the program been?
   f) Has the program been satisfactory in terms of:
      - fees?
      - admission policies?
      - social activities?
   g) What should the nature of the future offerings be?
2. What have been the impacts of Spring Session for Seniors?
   a) Has the program been successful in meeting its goals and objectives?
   b) Has the program been successful in meeting the needs of participants?
   c) What personal and educational impacts has the

program had on participants?

d) Is there any relationship between personal impacts and specific courses?

3. What is the nature of participation in Spring Session for Seniors?

a) What are the factors which influence participation and non-participation?

b) How adequately has this program reached the target population?

c) Are there barriers to participation in this program and if so, what are they?

Delimitations

In evaluating a program of this magnitude, there is a danger in attempting to deal with too many aspects, thus jeopardizing the quality of the study. While it is the position of this researcher that evaluation should deal with a total program, the importance of delimiting the research must also be acknowledged. The following delimitations reflect the views of the researcher regarding the appropriate foci for evaluation as well as the constraints on the study in terms of time and resources:

1. The study did not evaluate individual courses or instructors in the program.
2. The study did not evaluate individual learning.
3. The study did not duplicate questions included in previous annual evaluations.

4. The study did not deal with instructors as an evaluation audience nor were instructors surveyed as part of the data gathering for the study.
5. The study dealt with individuals' perceptions of the program and their involvement in it rather than with their actual or observed behavior.

Definitions

The following definitions as developed by this researcher will be used in the study:

Audience - refers to the eventual recipients of the evaluation results - those groups or individuals who have a vested interest in the evaluation (these may include administrators, funding sources, staff, students, the general public, etc.)

Intended audience - will be used interchangeably with the term "audience".

Primary audience - refers to the client of the evaluation: the group or individual who requested that the evaluation be undertaken.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

This research is concerned with the evaluation of a continuing education program for older people in a university setting. However, this topic is too specific to have generated its own body of literature. In reviewing the literature related to this study, those areas pertaining directly to the research topic will be addressed. Specifically, the following areas will be reviewed:

1. Evaluation - in this section, evaluation will be considered in terms of its historical development and current status. Several of the issues pertaining to evaluation research will be discussed.
2. Education for Older People - the educational needs of older people and the availability of university programs for older people will be reviewed in this section.
3. Evaluation of Non-Traditional Programs - this final section will discuss evaluation as it pertains to non-traditional education in general and specifically to university programs for older adults.

Evaluation

Historical Development of Evaluation

The concept of formal evaluation has a lengthy history. As early as 2200 B.C., the emperor of China is said to have instituted evaluation procedures to determine the proficiency of his officials (Merwin, 1969). However, little is known about the development and use of evaluation until the late 1800's and early 1900's when standardized testing of school students became widespread. Joseph Rice and Robert Thorndike are widely credited with having initiated the development and use of standardized achievement tests (Worthen and Sanders, 1973; Merwin, 1969). For several decades following their contributions to this area, new techniques of testing proliferated and evaluation became virtually synonymous with the standardized measurement of individual abilities and achievement. Thus was formed an enduring bond between evaluation and measurement which has had a profound impact on evaluation theory and practice until the present time. As noted by Worthen and Sanders, "Historically, formal evaluation has been very closely associated with the measurement tradition in psychology and education. In fact, even today one finds that many writers see little discrimination between the processes of measurement and evaluation" (1973, p.2).

The work of Ralph W. Tyler in the 1930's and 1940's provided the first real impetus for change in evaluation thought. Through evaluation of the Eight-Year Study (Smith and Tyler, 1941) the focus of evaluation was changed from the measurement of individual performance to the appraisal of curricula based on behavioral objectives. The influence of Tyler's contributions on subsequent evaluation cannot be overestimated (for further elaboration of Tyler's approach, see Chapter 3).

The 1960's were characterized by dissent regarding evaluation practice and by demands for new and more effective evaluation approaches (Guba and Lincoln, 1981; Worthen and Sanders, 1973). Cronbach, in 1963, made several important pronouncements regarding the state of evaluation research. He argued that evaluation should provide information which would be ~~of~~ maximum utility to decision-makers. Cronbach further asserted that "evaluation needed to focus on ways in which refinements and improvements could occur while the course was in process of development" (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). Finally, he questioned the use of comparative evaluation studies which had been so popular until that time.

Similarly, Taba and Sawin (1962) pointed out several deficiencies which characterized existing evaluation practice. They particularly objected to the focus of evaluation which had traditionally been on the end product of learning rather than on the process. "Together with Cronbach's work, Taba and Sawin's ideas were a major shift in the focus of evaluation from the outcomes of learning to the process of learning" (MacKay and Maguire, 1971, p. 8).

In 1967, one of the most influential treatises ever to be written on the subject of evaluation was published by Michael Scriven. The major contribution of Scriven was the clarification of a number of controversial issues inherent in evaluation research (Guba and Lincoln, 1981; MacKay and Maguire, 1971). A crucial distinction was made by Scriven between the roles and the goals of evaluation, goals being attempts to answer certain questions about the worth of a program and roles referring to the various purposes of evaluation (Scriven, 1967). Within the concept of roles, Scriven further distinguished between "formative" and "summative" evaluation, a distinction which had far-reaching effects on evaluation research (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of this distinction). Moreover, Scriven argued that effective evaluation required that value judgements be made regarding the worth of the program or curriculum being examined (Scriven, 1967). These ideas and others proposed by Scriven constituted a distinct advance in the field of evaluation research and, according to MacKay and Maguire, had "the greatest single influence on the field of curriculum evaluation" (1971, p. 10).

Faced with the challenges raised by these and other critics, evaluators were forced to consider the state of their art. The response of the evaluation community to these challenges was an abundance of new approaches to evaluation research. Among the models which appeared in the literature in the late 1960's and early 1970's were those proposed by Stake (1967), Stufflebeam (1967), Provus (1969), Hammond (1969), Alkin (1969), Scriven (1972) and Eisner (1975). The discussion of models in Chapter 3 will elaborate on several of these.

Despite the availability of a wide variety of new evaluation models, evaluation research in the 1970's continued to be marked by ambiguity and dissent. Worthen and Sanders indicate that, "the early 1970's saw evaluation problems and needs still far outstripping the solutions which had been developed and disseminated" (1973, p. 8). The Phi Delta Kappa Commission on Evaluation (1971) concluded that evaluation was "seized with a great illnes" (in Worthen and Sanders, 1973, p. 8). Among the deficiencies of evaluation which they listed were:

> a) lack of adequate evaluation theory
> b) lack of specification of the types of evaluative information which are most needed.
> c) lack of appropriate instruments and designs
> d) lack of good systems for organizing, processing, and reporting evaluative information, and
> e) lack of sufficient numbers of well-trained evaluation personnel.
> (in Worthen and Sanders, 1973, p. 8).

Despite these somewhat negative pronouncements regarding the state of evaluation, it should be remembered that there were also many positive elements to be considered. Several important concepts had been clarified and in general, considerable progress had been made toward developing useful evaluation approaches and methods.

The Current Situation

From its tentative beginnings in the late 19th century, formal evaluation has grown into a major field of enquiry. The area is supported by a large and very diverse body of literature. Moreover, several professional journals are published regularly in the area and research centres for the study of evaluation have been established. In keeping with the measurement tradition in evaluation, a large proportion of the available publications on evaluation deal specifically with the purposes, design and use of achievement tests. For the most part, these are aimed directly toward teachers and school administrators.

The literature dealing more generally with evaluation research revolves primarily around the major issues facing evaluation research and the presentation of various evaluation approaches. Clearly reflected in the literature is the uncertainty and lack of consensus which continue to confound the area. Parlett and Hamilton referred to this situation in 1972 when they commented that, "confusion is engendered as rival proposals, models and terminologies are voiced and then rapidly countered" (p. 2). A decade later, the situation seems to have changed little as evidenced by Ricks' statement that, "there are no single salient truths about evaluation; there is confusion about what it is and how to do it;

there is fear for its inevitability; and for many, there is false hope in its promise" (1981, p. 4). The remainder of this section will deal with the following evaluation issues:

a) what is evaluation?
b) why evaluate?
c) how should evaluation be done? and
d) how should evaluation results be used?

What is Evaluation? A review of the literature reveals that there are numerous ways of responding to this question which, in turn, lead to a wide variety of definitions. Some writers answer the question initially in terms of what evaluation is not. Worthen and Sanders (1973) for example emphasize that evaluation and research differ in terms of purpose, the purpose of research being to add something new to existing knowledge and the purpose of evaluation being to determine the effectiveness of something which already exists. Guba and Lincoln (1981) point out that evaluation differs substantially from measurement in that it is much broader in scope.

Another way of viewing evaluation is in terms of its place within the realm of disciplined inquiry. Worthen and Sanders (1973) for example, suggest that educational evaluation belongs primarily in the realm of empiricism with some overlap into historical and philosophical inquiry. More specifically, evaluation may be defined as it relates to a particular paradigm of enquiry such as the classical research paradigm or the anthropological paradigm (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Guba and Lincoln, 1981; Patton, 1980).

While evaluation definitions considered as a whole encompass a remarkably wide range of activities, viewed separately, these definitions tend to be very limited in scope. Such definitions restrict the purpose, the approach and the methods of evaluation and often reflect a particular disciplinary bias. Thus, evaluation may be defined as the determination of cause and effect, as a cost-benefit analysis, as the measurement of learning or as the assessment of goal-achievement depending upon the school of thought from which the definition is derived. An example is provided by Rutman's definition of evaluation which states that "Evaluation research is a process of applying scientific procedures to accumulate reliable and valid evidence on the manner and extent to which specified activities produce particular effects or outcomes" (1977, p. 16). Tyler's definition similarly limits the scope by suggesting that, "The process of evaluation is essentially the process of determining to what extent the educational objectives are actually being realized" (in Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p. 4).

However, there are a few writers who offer broader definitions of evaluation allowing for a more comprehensive approach to evaluation research. Hampton's definition of evaluation, for example, is "to determine the effectiveness of an educational program" (1973, p. 105). Parlett and Hamilton (1972) implicitly define evaluation as the illumination of a program as a whole in terms of its rationale, evolution, achievements, operations and difficulties. Stake (1975) also implies a holistic definition of evaluation when he suggests that an evaluation should focus on the concerns and issues of the audiences.

Why Evaluate? Much of the impetus for evaluation research in the last two decades has come from demands for greater accountability. The rationale is that the effectiveness and efficiency of a program or curriculum can be demonstrated by evaluation. Faced with declining funds and the failure of numerous programs, administrators and program planners have come under increasing pressure to evaluate their programs (Gurel, 1975; Rossi et al., 1979; Attkisson et al., 1978; Worthen and Sanders, 1973). This is particularly true of social programs in which efficiency and fiscal accountability appear to be key objectives (Rossi et al., 1979; Attkisson et al., 1978; Boen, 1975). Kivens and Bolin, in a description of the evaluation process in a community mental health centre, point out that, "Generally, research and evaluation...are seen as tools for obtaining greater efficiency in centre programs" (1976, p. 98).

Within the schools and social agencies however, attempts at program evaluation have not been met with total acquiescence. Weiss (1972) refers to the "remarkable resistance" of organizations to evaluation information and

Attkisson et al. observe that, "evaluation is generally perceived as a critical, subjective and externally imposed requirement" (1978, p. 3). From a somewhat different perspective, however, Rutman points out that "evaluation research is becoming increasingly accepted as a useful input for planning and policy-making" (1977, p. 15).

Depending on the particular definition which it is given, evaluation may have various purposes. Among the major purposes which are mentioned in the literature are:

- to determine program strengths and weaknesses
- to identify reasons for success or failure
- to provide information for decision-making
- to determine the extent to which program objectives are being met
- to justify program funding.

<u>How Should Evaluation Be Done?</u> The majority of literature in the evaluation field deals with the question of how to conduct evaluation research. The question is a complex one and can be viewed as incorporating two levels:

a) the overall strategy or approach of the evaluation

b) the specific design or methodology chosen.

While these two levels are generally dealt with as separate entities, there are some writers who have combined the two into a technical or "cookbook" approach to evaluation in which the process is described in terms of a series of specific steps. Approaches to evaluation research will be discussed in the section on evaluation models in Chapter 3. The remainder of this section will deal with evaluation methodology.

Perhaps the most contentious issue in evaluation research is the selection of appropriate methodological approaches. Evaluation research has traditionally employed the quantitative methods dominant in social science and educational research (Cook and Reichardt, 1979; Morris and Fitz-Gibbon, 1978; Parlett and Hamilton, 1972). The classical experimental design, the quasi-experimental design, objective tests and sample surveys have provided the predominant methodological approaches for evaluation (Cook and Reichardt, 1979). During the last decade, however, controversy has arisen over the exclusive use of these methods in evaluation research. The debate over the relative merits of quantitative and qualitative methods is not, of course, confined to the field of evaluation. The controversy, in fact, originated with the dissatisfaction with quantitative-experimental methods within the social sciences as a whole and subsequently "spilled over into evaluation research" (Campbell, 1979, p. 49).

This debate centering on the methodology of evaluation has generated a number of polarities which are used to define the issue. Some writers place the discussion within the broader perspective of paradigms of inquiry. According to Reichardt and Cook, these writers

"View the debate not merely as a disagreement over the relative advantages and disadvantages of qualitative and quantitative methods but as a fundamental clash between methodological paradigms" (1979, p. 9). Thus, Parlett and Hamilton contrast the "classical" or "Agricultural-botany" paradigm with the "social-anthropology" paradigm. Guba and Lincoln (1981) refer to the "naturalistic" as opposed to the "scientific" paradigm and Reichardt and Cook contrast "qualitative" and "quantitative" paradigms. This view of opposing methodological approaches has led Parlett and Hamilton (1972) to refer to the "dominant" (quantitative) and "alternative" (qualitative) paradigms.

Regardless of the terminology used, the debate essentially comes down to one of a qualitative versus a quantitative methodological stance and this indeed is how most writers refer to it (Cook, Cook and Mark, 1977; Eisner, 1978; Guba and Lincoln, 1981; Patton, 1980; Willis, 1978). The essence of the distinction between these two approaches is extremely complex and can be traced to "the classic argument in philosophy between the schools of realism and idealism, and their subsequent reformulations" (Filstead, 1979, p. 34). While it is far beyond the scope of this research to deal with the philosophical bases of the methodological stances, some of the major points relating to quantitative versus qualitative methodologies will be discussed.

Many evaluators continue to adhere to the view that a quantitative methodological approach, particularly as represented by the controlled experiment, is the only appropriate approach to evaluation research (Cook et al., 1979; Morris and Fitz-Gibbon, 1978; Rossi et al., 1979; Rutman, 1977). Evaluation, according to these writers, should aim for objectivity, reliability and validity, should yield quantitative, replicable data and should be generalizable beyond the particular situation. The proponents of this approach seldom attempt to justify its use or to give credence to an alternative approach. Indeed, the quantitative "scientific" approach to research is so firmly entrenched that justification for its use has never seemed necessary. Many advocates however, do emphasize its superiority. Morris and Fitz-Gibbon for example, suggest that, "the true control group design produces such credible and interpretable results that it should at least be considered an ideal to be approximated when evaluation studies are planned" (1978, p. 18). Rossi and Wright, in 1977, claimed that "there is almost universal agreement among evaluation researchers that the randomized controlled experiment is the ideal model for evaluating the effectiveness of public policy" (in Reichardt and Cook, 1979, p. 8).

"The blanket acceptance of the quantitative paradigm as _the_ model for evaluation research is being seriously questioned by the evaluation research community" (Filstead, 1979, p. 39). Among the proponents of a qualitative methodological stance in evaluation research are Cook and Reichardt (1979), Eisner (1981), Filstead (1979), Guba and Lincoln (1981), Parlett and Hamilton (1972), Patton (1980), Stake (1975) and Willis (1978). These writers and many others have become disenchanted with the conventional, quantitative approaches to evaluation and have come to recognize the benefits of qualitative approaches. Those who embrace a qualitative methodological stance in evaluation research point out the limitations of conventional methods. Such methods are viewed as being narrow, restrictive and "inadequate for elucidating the complex problem areas they confront" (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972, p. 1). They fail to take into account the concerns and issues of intended audiences and, because of their emphasis on "objective truth", they do not recognize the existence of value plurality (Guba and Lincoln, 1981; Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Stake, 1975).

A qualitative approach to evaluation aims for depth and detail. A wide variety of particular methods fit within this approach. Some examples are: case studies, in-depth interviews, observation, participant-observation, open-ended questionnaire items and analysis of documents. The approach is holistic in that, "Researchers using qualitative methods strive to understand phenomena and situations as a whole" (Patton, 1980, p. 40).

There has been a tendency to view qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches as mutually exclusive and entirely incompatible with one another. However, some attempts have been made in recent years to reconcile the two approaches and "highlight some of the potential benefits of using qualitative and quantitative methods together" (Reichardt and Cook, 1979, p. 11). The important point is that the methods chosen should be those which are best suited to the content and context of the program being evaluated. Qualitative and quantitative methods can be used effectively together in one study and in many cases such a combination of methods will enhance the quality of results. Thus, Patton reports that, "The debate and competition between paradigms is being replaced by a new paradigm - a paradigm of choices.../which/ recognizes that different methods are appropriate for different situations" (1980, p. 20).

The Utility of Evaluation Results An issue facing both evaluators and evaluation audiences is the utility of evaluation results. Too often, large-scale evaluations are undertaken only to be subsequently filed and forgotten, having had no impact on the program which was evaluated (Guba and Lincoln, 1981; Perloff, 1979; Schulberg and Jerrell, 1979; Weiss, 1972). Guba and Lincoln claim that, "The failure to use evaluation findings has almost assumed the proportions of a national scandal (1981, p. ix). Boen (1975) suggests that evaluation is still in a "game" stage and that managers and administrators prefer to keep evaluation results inconclusive to be interpreted as they wish. There are probably many factors which contribute to the lack of utility of evaluation findings. One factor implied by Boen relates to the politics of evaluation. Schulberg and Jerrell offer several others including:

- lack of validity in findings
- resistance to negative findings
- administrative deficiencies, and
- lack of recognition of the decision-making process. (1979)

Stake (1979) attributes the problem in part to the fact that few evaluation studies present judgements of a program. Guba and Lincoln feel that the failure to use evaluation findings "illustrates the poverty of traditional evaluations, which are likely to fail precisely because they do not begin with the concerns and issues of their actual audiences and because they produce information that, while perhaps statistically significant, does not generate truly worthwhile knowledge" (1981, p. ix). Weiss (1972) relates the problem to the unrealistic nature of the expectations held by those requesting the evaluation. She points out that "An evaluation study does not generally come up with final and unequivocal findings about the worth of a program (p. 3). It becomes clear that the failure to use evaluation results can be attributed to many factors. There is little that can be done to change some of these factors. The political nature of the decision-making process within organizations is a given, for example. However, it is incumbent upon both evaluators and those requesting evaluations to, as far as possible, ensure that the results are usable and are used. The issues for evaluators the, are:

- producing clear, meaningful results
- ensuring a clear understanding of the concerns and information needs of the various decision-makers
- providing judgements, recommendations and perhaps alternative actions based on the results.
- understanding the decision-making process within the particular organization for which the evaluation is being done.

And managers and administrators for their part might make a greater effort to understand the purposes and process of evaluation and ensure a greater commitment to the use of evaluation results.

Education for Older People

There are two significant developments which, in the last decade, have had an impact on the provision of educational programs for older people. One of these is an increasing concern among academic institutions, governments and social agencies regarding the needs, interests and problems of older people. Paralleling this development is an increased commitment to the concept of lifelong education. While it is not within the scope of this thesis to review comprehensively the literature in these areas, they will be discussed briefly in terms of their implications for the education of older adults.

Both the proportion and the actual numbers of older people in the population are increasing and this trend is expected to continue. Projections indicate that by the year 2001, between 11% and 13% of Canada's population will be 65 years of age or older (Statistics Canada, 1976). This changing population structure is having far-reaching effects on society as a whole, particularly in such areas as housing, health, financial management, education and leisure activities. Increasingly, resources are being directed toward understanding and meeting the needs of older people.

At the same time, educational institutions are demonstrating a greater commitment to lifelong education as an end in itself. Cross and Florio point out that, "the traditional notion that education is a preparation for life is giving way to the realization that learning is an integral part of life itself" (1978, p. vii). Traditionally, lifelong education has refered to basic education (e.g. literacy education) and retraining efforts for adults. More recently, however, a broader view of lifelong education with an emphasis on intrinsic values has emerged.

Educational Needs of Older People

The two developments discussed above have had a substantial impact on education for older people. In addition, the relationship of learning to age has received considerable attention in the literature in recent years and has succeeded in dispelling a number of myths regarding the learning capacities of older people (Cross and Florio, 1978; Glendenning, 1976; Knowles, 1970; March et al., 1977; McClusky, 1973). Research has demonstrated that, "the elderly are as capable of learning as their younger counterparts" (March et al., 1977). In addition, Cross and Florio point out that, "Older adults have demonstrated that they are responsive, well-motivated, steady in their attendance habits, and often outstanding examples for undergraduates" (Cross and Florio, 1978, p. 17). In summary, research has strongly supported the notion that the capacity to learn does not decrease with age and that, in fact, there are many respects in which older people become better equipped to learn.

Having established the abilities of older people to learn, the remainder of this section will deal with the nature of their learning needs. To a great extent, these learning needs reflect the problems, interests, needs and life situations of older people in a general sense. Older people today are faced with two major sources of change, the first being rapid societal changes and the second being the changes related to growing older. This latter type of change is often accompanied by diminishing resources, an increase in health problems and extra leisure time due to loss of the work role (Cross and Florio, 1978; McClusky, 1973; Rich, 1973; Sielski, 1973). As McClusky points out, "changes in the society surrounding the individual compounds [sic] the re-adjustments induced by the age related changes occuring within the individual" (1973, p. 61). The following passage from Rich effectively sums up the life situation of many older people today:

> The special needs of the older person for substitute roles, for coping skills, for adjustment techniques, for means of using at least part of his new leisure for enjoyment and fulfillment, all grow out of his status as an individual who has been removed from his productive role as a worker, and is freed to exercise a number of options, but who finds himself restricted by a greatly reduced income and the necessity of husbanding his energy and his resources. (1973, p. ix)

If educational experiences are to be relevant for older people, educators must become aware of the special needs and life situations of the aged and design their programs accordingly.

Educational needs of older people may be viewed in terms of two major categories:

a) a need for practically-oriented education to respond to the need for survival (e.g. health, financial management, legal matters, housing, family relationships).

b) a need for education to contribute to self-fulfillment and self-actualization. (Cross and Florio, 1978; McClusky, 1973)

Viewing the question somewhat differently, the 1971 White House Conference on Aging identified four principal categories of educational needs of the aged. These are:

1. Adjustment needs: trying to cope with a new and unfamiliar life situation.

2. Identity needs: finding new outlets for skills and interests.

3. **Participation needs: developing appropriate means of pursuing one's role as a significant element in a participatory democracy.**

4. Fulfillment needs: seeking to be of service to feel that one is part of a community and a productive member of society.
(A.E.D., 1974; Edelson, 1978).

University Education for Older People

The extent to which the educational needs of older people are actually being met, is not entirely clear. Certainly there are numerous programs being offered by senior citizen's agencies, senior citizen's residences, community groups and others. Whether or not these programs are meeting all or any of the special needs of older people is not well-documented. The main concern of this thesis is with university education for older people. The provision of university programs for older adults is a recent trend which has not as yet generated very much literature. It is interesting to consider why this trend is now occuring. It can be explained in part by the increasing numbers of older people, the greater interest in the concerns of older people and the new commitment to lifelong education described in the first part of this chapter. Given longer life spans and substantial increases in leisure time, older people are looking for ways to make their lives more interesting, enjoyable, useful and challenging (Cross and Florio, 1978; Glendenning, 1976; McClusky, 1973). One option which has become available to them in recent years is attendance at university either in regular or special programs. The greatest majority of older people never had the opportunity in their youth to attend or to complete university. For many of these people, the chance to attend university at this stage of their lives is viewed as a special and unique opportunity. A large number of universities are now providing programs developed especially for older people and many older people are taking advantage of the opportunities provided.

At the same time, universities, due to decreasing enrolments and cutbacks in funding, are seriously looking to new populations of students. Many colleges and universities "are beginning to realize that the expanding pool of older people represent a significant source of new students, particularly at a time when regular enrollments are dwindling, costs are rising, and the extra classrooms built during the affluent years of the 1960's are no longer being used to their full capacity (Cross and Florio, 1978, p. vii). While such motives on the part of universities appear to be rather self-serving, Florio points out that "it is also apparent that a growing number of educators believe that the process of education has a vital and fundamental role to play in the lives of older adults" (1978, p. 5).

During the 1970's, a large number of universities and colleges in the United States and Canada instituted special educational programs and policies for older adults. The efforts that have been made to encourage older people to participate in university education are essentially of two types:

1. Tuition waiver or tuition reduction policies as applied to regular university courses.
2. Specially designed programs exclusively for older people (usually offered by extension or continuing education departments).

What little information is available regarding these programs is primarily restricted to the situation in the United States. Cross and Florio report that, "as of mid-1977, twenty-eight states had passed legislation or adopted educational policies permitting their older citizens to take courses at public colleges and universities, either without the payment of tuition or for payment of greatly reduced tuition charges" (1978, p. 86). They also reported that more than one-third of American colleges and universities were making some sort of special effort to provide education for older students. In 1979, Chelsvig and Timmerman noted that 28 states had legislation in place or pending to allow for tuition waivers for older people. On the other hand, Long and Rossing reported in the same year that tuition waiver provision had been made in at least 43 states. This substantial difference in numbers may reflect a difference between those states which legislate such policy and those in which tuition waiver policies are instituted independently by universities.

There are no figures available on universities which offer specially designed programs for older adults.

However, there are several descriptions of such programs (A.E.D., 1974; Cross & Florio, 1978; Edelson, 1978; Horacek and Francke, 1978) and the special features (e.g. accomodation, guided tours, speakers, social events) which accompany them. Specially designed programs for older people vary substantially in terms of format, ranging from workshops, seminars and mini-courses to spring and summer sessions to year-round programs operated by older people themselves (A.E.D., 1974; Cross and Florio, 1978; DeCrow, 1978; Florio, 1978).

Universities in Canada which offer special programs for older adults include the University of Alberta, the University of British Columbia, the University of Calgary, the University of New Brunswick, the University of Regina and the University of Toronto.

While the number of university programs for older people may appear impressive, the figures may in fact be misleading. Chelsvig and Timmerman point out that the actual percentage of older people participating in such programs is minimal and they complain that, "the vast majority of these programs are not reaching the older persons in greatest need...generally those who participate in one or more programs...have a higher educational attainment and are at higher economic levels" (1979, p. 156). Moreover, a study conducted by the Academy for Educational Development in 1974 "clearly showed that very few colleges and universities serve older people with the particular education and related services they need" (p. v). It would seem that while universities and colleges have made some important strides in terms of providing educational experiences for older adults, they still have a long way to go in effectively meeting the educational needs of the older segment of our population.

Evaluation of Non-Traditional Programs

The vast majority of research and writing in the field of educational evaluation has applied to formal programs or curricula offered in traditional school settings. Generally speaking, the emphasis has been on formal teaching methods in a controlled environment, conventional students representing a captive population, and instrumental as opposed to intrinsic values of education. However, not all educational experiences fit this mould. Non-traditional education and in particular, adult or continuing education programs, differ along a number of important dimensions. As Gooler (1979) points out, these non-traditional programs employ different forms of education or modes of delivery and involve unconventional students who have different motivations for participation. Olson and Fruin (1979) describe extension programs as "quasi-educational" in that they are more personalized, more intense and often involve several teachers or change agents. Forest (1976) emphasizes the multiple values which are inherent in adult education experiences. Given these fundamental differences between traditional and non-traditional education, what are the implications for the evaluation of continuing education programs?

To begin with, there is little evidence that evaluation has been viewed as a priority in continuing education. Certainly, the literature in this area is very meagre. The literature reviewed for this study suggests that while most writers continue to adhere to traditional approaches to evaluation (Bennett, 1975; Campbell, 1977; Harriman and McKenna, 1978), there are some who have come to recognize the need for alternate approaches which respond to the different nature of continuing education. In discussing the evaluation of distance education programs, Gooler (1979) calls for the use of different evaluation criteria, designs and methods. Forest admonishes evaluators of adult education programs for "too much reliance on and direct imitation of evaluation models developed for other educational systems" (1976, p. 168). She advocates instead, a redefinition of adult education program evaluation based on the idea of informal evaluation "controlled by non-educator decision makers" (p. 175).

Given the paucity of literature dealing with evaluation of non-traditional programs, it is not very surprising to find even fewer references to the evaluation of educational programs for older people.

A report on educational opportunities for older

Americans at postsecondary institutions concluded that, "none of these programs has been evaluated in any great depth" (A.E.D., 1974). A review of the literature since that time suggests that this situation has not improved. In describing a tuition-free program at the University of Toronto, Laurence refers to evaluation of the program; however, the description provided of the evaluation reveals it as being rather superficial. Similarly, evaluations of programs for older people at the University of British Columbia, the University of Regina and the University of Nebraska (Horacek and Francke, 1978) provide little or no in-depth information, concentrating instead on describing the major features of programs and summarizing the preferences of participants. In short, evaluation of continuing education programs and in particular, of university programs for older people, has been sorely neglected both in quantity and comprehensiveness. Conventional evaluation approaches are seen as inadequate to effectively assess the value of these programs and yet few alternative approaches have as yet been developed. The development of such approaches would seem to be a major priority for future research in this area.

CHAPTER 3

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this chapter is to present the conceptual framework used in this research to guide the evaluation process. The first section will set the stage for the study by defining evaluation and discussing the state of the art of evaluation research. The next section will provide an overview of evaluation frameworks or models and will describe several of these in detail. The final section will present the researcher's views of evaluation within the context of program planning and will describe the evaluation model used in this study.

Evaluation - An Overview

The term "evaluate" refers to the process of applying certain criteria to a phenomenon in order to make a judgement about its value or worth. Viewed in this way, evaluation appears as a broad concept encompassing a wide range of activities common to everyday life. "It is a means by which individuals and groups constantly interpret their own experience for the purpose of shaping future experience" (Skager and Dave, 1977).

Because evaluation deals with judgements and values, there is bound to be an element of subjectivity associated with it. It may be useful to view evaluation in terms of a continuum ranging from "objective" to "subjective". The position of a given evaluation on the continuum will depend upon such factors as the criteria applied, the methods used to gather information and the particular values of the individual or group conducting the evaluation.

Suchman distinguishes between "evaluation" and "evaluative research", suggesting that the latter is "restricted to the utilization of scientific research methods and techniques for the purpose of making an evaluation" (1967, p.7). The implication is that the more rigorous the research, the less subjective it will be. While Suchman's distinction is useful, it may be overstated. The idea of evaluation as rigorous scientific research could be misleading in that it suggests the pursuit of conclusive evidence regarding the value or worth of a given program. As House so aptly points out, "evaluation persuades rather than convinces, argues rather than demonstrates, is credible rather than certain, is variably accepted rather than compelling" (1980, p.73). For the purpose of this research, "evaluation" and "evaluation research" will be used interchangeably.

In recent decades, the benefits of evaluation research in contributing to improved services or products have been recognized by many disciplines (for example, the arts, public health, the social services and education). However, it is primarily in the areas of education and social programs that evaluation has become an intrinsic and highly-developed activity. While evaluation research in these two areas has been developing simultaneously, there appears to have been little interchange of ideas between them.[1] Nevertheless, there are many issues, problems and methods which are common to both.

Given the nature of the Spring Session for Seniors program, it can be viewed as fitting into both of these areas. While the program is essentially an educational endeavor, it differs in many respects from formal educational offerings in traditional settings. The role of Spring Session for Seniors as an informal, community education program with a diversity of elements, places it to some extent within the realm of social programs. Accordingly, both educational evaluation and social program evaluation were examined as part of this research and both provided valuable insights into the theories and processes of evaluation. However, in terms of specific approaches, educational evaluation proved to be more applicable to the research problem. Hence, the following discussion, while drawing from the field of social program evaluation will focus primarily on the educational evaluation area.

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[1] This comment is based on conversation with Dr. D. A. MacKay, Dept. of Education Administration, University of Alberta, (Sept. 3, 1981), as well as on the researcher's own observations.

Evaluation Theory - The State of the Art

Historical Context

Educational evaluation as it is practised today has its roots in the formal school system of the late 1800's and the achievement tests developed at this time. Traditionally, the purpose of evaluation has been to assess the development and learning of students. To this end, thousands of tests have been devised over the years to measure the abilities and the progress of students within the school system (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). Until the 1940's, evaluation focused on individual differences and, "had little relationship to school programs and curricula" (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p.2). Tyler's contributions to the field of educational evaluation (1949) represent a major shift in evaluation theory and can be viewed as a starting point for current evaluation practice (MacKay and Maguire, 1971). According to Guba and Lincoln, "Tyler's rationale represented a major step forward in that it focused on the refinement of curricula and programs as the central thrust for evaluation" (1981, p.5). During the decades following the publication of Tyler's model, a broader view of educational evaluation emerged and numerous approaches appeared in the literature (see the discussion of Tyler's model on page 43).

A crucial event in the development of educational evaluation was the Russian launching of Sputnik in 1957 with its resulting impact on American education (MacKay and Maguire, 1971; Guba and Lincoln, 1981). The apparent success of the Russians in the battle for space supremacy was perceived as a blow to American pride and the blame for this "crisis" fell at once upon the educational system. Massive amounts of federal funding were poured into the development of new programs and curricula to upgrade the quality of education. Existing approaches to evaluation were deemed inadequate to determine the merit of these programs and courses and new approaches were thus demanded.

Evaluation Theory

Despite the lengthy history of evaluation research and the numerous contributions of various individuals to this field, there is a conspicuous lack of any unifying theory of evaluation. What does exist as far as educational evaluation is concerned, is "a loose-knit set of models, recipes and practices which are grouped into a technology known as curriculum evaluation" (MacKay and Maguire, 1971, p. 4).[1] This situation may be attributable to the urgent demands which have been placed on evaluators to produce evaluation designs on short notice as a response to educational crises. A review of the literature suggests that few attempts have been made to redress this deficiency

[1] This view was reiterated by Dr. D. A. MacKay in a conversation with the researcher (September 3, 1981).

in evaluation theory. Alkin and Fitzgibbon (1975), propose to deal with theories about the nature of evaluation but proceed to ignore theory and discuss only methods. They conclude that, "In program evaluation, there are a variety of approaches if not theories" (1975, p.3).

Many of the specific approaches to evaluation draw from theory in other areas such as psychology, education, economics, decision-making and organization and management. Thus, while most approaches are based on particular assumptions about the purposes and practice of evaluation research, there is no theoretical underpinning which serves to unify the area. As Parlett and Hamilton point out, "As a developing field of study, evaluation proceeds in the absence of coherent or agreed frames of reference" (1972, p.2).

There are, however, some implicit assumptions regarding the nature of change which appear to underly the practice of evaluation. The basic assumptions are that human beings can change and that education (used very broadly here) can bring about such change. These ideas are basic to educational theory as expressed by Bloom et. al. who suggest that, "Education...is a process which changes the learners...we expect each program, course, and unit of education to bring about some significant change or changes in the students" (1971, p. 8). Evaluation practice further assumes that change can somehow be measured. If, according to the particular evaluation criteria, change is not sufficient, the program or curriculum is judged inadequate and will be discontinued or modified.

These assumptions are supported by the definition of evaluation proposed by Bloom et. al. as "the systematic collection of evidence to determine whether in fact certain changes are taking place in the learners as well as to determine the amount or degree of change in individual students" (1971, p. 8). Those changes which are considered desirable are translated into educational goals which refer to changes in knowledge, attitudes and behavior. Traditionally, educational goals have been instrumental as education has been viewed as preparatory to life.

Evaluation Models

As indicated in the previous section, educational evaluation is essentially a technology consisting of a variety of approaches or models. A model may be described as a particular way of viewing a phenomenon. In other words, it provides a conceptualization or theoretical basis for approaching a particular subject or task. Models consist of basic concepts and underlying assumptions which establish boundaries (although these may not be explicitly stated). An evaluation model, in addition to defining evaluation and outlining the basic assumptions, may define the role of the evaluator and provide a vocabulary with which to make sense of the process and the results. Some models, by their nature, prescribe the methods to be used in data collection while others place no restrictions on methodology.

Selection of a particular evaluation model will depend upon a number of factors such as:

- the nature of the program
- the purpose of the evaluation
- the views of the evaluator
- the resources available
- the audiences for which the evaluation is intended.

As Stake points out, "there are different ways to evaluate programs and no one way is the right way" (1975, p. 13).

Given the large number of evaluation models in existence, it makes sense to impose some structure on them in order to facilitate discussion. There are several criteria which could be used to classify evaluation models but perhaps the most useful one for this discussion is the basic concept or school of thought upon which each model is based. Guba and Lincoln (1981) refer to such concepts as "organizers" and list as examples: effects, objectives, decisions, critical guideposts and concerns and issues.

Table 3.0 presents a variety of available models, categorized according to their basic concepts or organizers. The following discussion will expand upon several of these models. These models were chosen for discussion because they provide a useful overview of evaluation approaches

Table 3.0

Typology of Selected Evaluation Models

Major Concept Organizer Emphasis	Proponents	Model	Typical Question
Objectives	Tyler (1949) Provus (1969) Popham (1975) Hammond (1973) Stake (1967)	Discrepancy Instructional Objectives Hammond Cube Countenance	Has the program been successful in achieving its intended goals?
Decisions*	Stufflebeam (1967) Alkin (1970)	C.I.P.P. C.S.E.	What information is needed at what times and by who for input to what decisions?
Effects	Scriven (1967)	Goal-Free	What have been the effects of the program?
Judgements/ Critical Guideposts	Eisner (1975)	C[illegible]sseur-	Would an expert/critic approve of this program?
Transactions	Rippey (1973) Stake (1975) Parlett & Hamilton (1972)	Transactional Eval. Responsive Eval. Illuminative Eval.	What does the program look like as a whole, taking into account the values of different people?

by illustrating a number of opposing ideas about evaluation and reflecting some of the changes which have occured in evaluation thought.

As mentioned previously, Tyler's model (1949) was instrumental in changing the direction of evaluation research. "Tyler's formulation of the evaluation process is straight forwardly based on the concept of objectives" (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p. 5). The basic assumption of this model is that a curriculum is successful to the extent that it is able to meet its stated objectives. The model also assumes that achievement of objectives will be indicated by "certain desirable changes" in behavior. The actual process of evaluation proposed by Tyler is quite complex, involving a series of steps from deriving and testing the objectives to modifying the curriculum and finally recycling the entire process. There are a number of advantages inherent in this model, not the least of which is its focus on curriculum development and improvement rather than on individual differences. However, there are also problems associated with the Tyler model. A major concern is with the value of the objectives themselves. Despite the screening process mentioned by Tyler, there is no way of evaluating whether the objectives chosen are in themselves worthwhile. Another concern is with the rigidity of the model in stipulating an experimental design to determine the impact of the curriculum in meeting objectives (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). Despite its limitations, Tyler's model represented a great improvement over previous approaches and thus, was widely used in subsequent years. Furthermore, the notion of objectives as the underlying concept of evaluation has been enduring, giving rise to a number of other objectives-based models (Provus, 1971; Popham, 1975).

One of the more frequently-used evaluation models is the countenance model devised by Stake (1967). This model depends upon a number of important concepts and thus, does not fit readily into any predetermined category. That this approach is difficult to classify is indicated by the discrepancies in this regard in the literature. While House allocates it as a decision-based model, Guba and Lincoln use it as a prototype of objectives-based evaluation. The model does rely heavily upon the concept of objectives which, according to Guba and Lincoln (1981), has been expanded to include contextual factors.

An important assumption of the countenance model and one which represents an advance over Tyler's model is that evaluation must focus on understanding the "Whys" of educational outcomes (MacKay and Maguire, 1971). The model consists of two data matrices - a description matrix and a judgement matrix. Each matrix has a common dimension specifying antecedents, transactions and outcomes. In addition, the description matrix is divided into intents and observations and the judgement matrix is divided into standards and judgements. The evaluation process involves filling in the cells created by the data matrices. The descriptive data are then analyzed by identifying the contingencies between antecedents, transactions and outcomes and the congruencies between intents and observations.

The countenance model has many merits such as its focus on the context of learning and its recognition of the importance of judgements. However, the model also has a number of shortcomings. It fails to specify clearly the types of data appropriate for each cell. The model is also quite complex and involves a lengthy and time-consuming process to implement all of the steps involved. MacKay and Maguire suggest that "Both the strengths and the weaknesses of this model lie in its lack of disciplinary blinders" (1971, p. 12). In other words, the techniques appropriate to other disciplines can be readily adapted to this model - clearly an advantage in terms of flexibility. On the other hand, such flexibility could result in decreased quality of evaluation and could also be confusing for consumers of the resulting evaluation reports.

In direct opposition to the objectives-based models is the goal-free approach recommended by Scriven (1974). It is Scriven's contention that to concentrate on objectives results in "tunnel vision" which, in turn, causes the evaluator to overlook unanticipated, but nevertheless important, effects of the program (Worthen and Sanders, 1973). According to Scriven, stated goals may not, in fact, be worth achieving. He points out that many goals are irrelevant, poorly conceived of or in conflict with one another.

The model proposed by Scriven is based on the concept of effects. The process involves the evaluation of actual effects against a profile of demonstrated needs. Those effects which relate to a particular need are evaluated as positive. Scriven's underlying assumption that all effects, whether intended or not, should be evaluated, has had a profound impact on evaluation thought. However, the model itself proved to be difficult to operationalize because Scriven failed to expand on such questions as how to identify needs and how to go about looking for effects. The fact that this approach requires an assessment of needs may also prove problematic if time or funds are lacking.

One of the first concepts which arose to challenge the place of objectives in educational evaluation was that of <u>decisions</u>. The use of the decision as an important organizer for evaluation was strongly advocated by Cronbach in 1963. He pointed out the need for evaluation to provide information which would facilitate the task of decision-making by program developers. Among the proponents of this view was Stufflebeam whose CIPP model (1967) defines evaluation as "the process of acquiring and using information for making decisions associated with planning, programming, implementing and recycling program activities" (MacKay and Maguire, 1971, p. 13). The four types or stages of evaluation proposed by Stufflebeam for dealing with the four decision types are: context evaluation, input evaluation, process evaluation and product evaluation. The basic concept of this model is that decision-makers require different kinds of information at different times in order to make crucial decisions regarding program development. Guba and Lincoln suggest that while Stufflebeam's model is useful for evaluating large projects, it is complex and expensive and makes "what are probably unwarranted assumptions about the rationality of decision-makers, about the openness of the decision-making process, and about the ease with which operational decision-makers can be identified" (1981, p. 16).

In an attempt to render evaluation more useful to its intended audiences, Stake, in 1975, proposed a new approach to evaluation which he termed "responsive". Responsive evaluation is organized around the <u>concerns and issues of stakeholding audiences</u>. This is not to suggest that other evaluation approaches disregard the interests of their audiences but rather that responsive evaluation is the only approach which takes audience concerns as its major focus. According to Stake, "An evaluation is responsive evaluation if it orients more directly to program activities than to program intents; responds to audience requirements for information; and if the different value perspectives present are referred to in reporting the success and failure of the program"

(1975, p. 14).

In expounding his responsive evaluation approach, Stake contrasts it with conventional models which he terms preordinate. Preordinate evaluation plans emphasize "(1) statement of goals, (2) use of objective tests, (3) standards held by program personnel, and (4) research-type reports" (1975, p. 14). Responsive evaluation he sees as less formal and more natural, allowing the evaluator to respond to emerging issues throughout the process.

Stake points out that evaluation has many different purposes and lists as examples: to document events, to record student change, to aid decision-making, to seek out understanding and to facilitate remediation. Each purpose generates a number of evaluation questions which reflect the values of the program and the information needs of different audiences. (Stake, 1975, p. 15).

While conventional evaluation models require that the evaluation design be developed as an initial step in the process, this is not the case with responsive evaluation. It is not until the evaluator has observed the program, conversed with many people involved with the program and identified and verified the relevant concerns and issues that the design is developed. As far as data gathering techniques are concerned, Stake strongly advocates the more natural or qualitative approaches. However, he does not renounce the use of quantitative techniques, suggesting that, "The choice of these instruments in responsive evaluation should be made as a result of observing the program in action" (Stake, 1975, p. 16).

An important aspect of Stake's model is the constant interaction between the evaluator and the intended audiences. As Stake points out "a substantial amount of time may well be spent in learning about the information needs of the persons for whom the evaluation is being done" (Stake, 1975, p. 13). This, of course, has an impact on the role of the evaluator and on the objectivity of results. Stake concedes that the responsive approach is more subjective than most and "trades off some measurement precision in order to increase the usefulness of the findings to persons in and around the program" (1975, p. 13).

In proposing his new responsive model, Stake was not, in fact, rejecting his previous countenance model. He suggests that the data matrix featured in the countenance model continues to be useful in planning the content of the evaluation but that the responsive approach best directs the process. Neither does Stake consider responsive evaluation as the only viable approach to educational evaluation. The model was originally devised to be of service to arts-in-education programs and as Stake points out, "There will continue to be many circumstances needing preordinate evaluation" (Stake, 1975, p. 27). Nevertheless, Stake has provided an appealing new approach to the evaluation of educational programs, one which is flexible and easily adapted to a variety of programs.

Guba and Lincoln strongly support the responsive evaluation approach noting that it "can be interpreted to include all other models" (1981, p. 38). They elaborate on certain concepts such as "issues", "concerns", "merit" and "worth" and argue for the advantages of using naturalistic methods in conjunction with this approach.

Parlett and Hamilton's illuminative evaluation takes a similar approach in that "attempted measurement of 'educational products' is abandoned for intensive study of the program as a whole: its rationale and evolution, its operations, achievements and difficulties" (1972, p. 1).

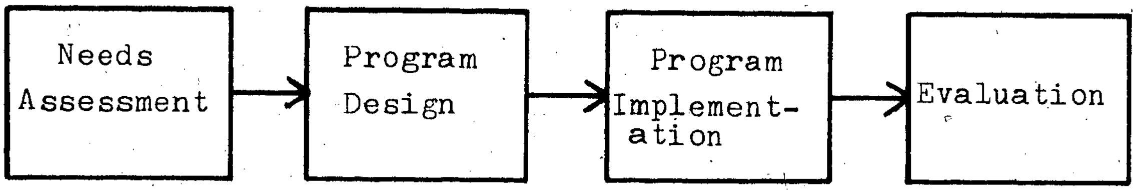
Selection of A Model

The preceding discussion will, among other things, have indicated the diversity of models available for evaluating educational programs. A notion clearly supported by the literature is that different approaches are appropriate for different circumstances. With the unique features and limitations of the Spring Session for Seniors program in mind, the available models were examined and the advantages and disadvantages of each considered. With the exception of Stake's responsive evaluation approach, none of the models were felt to be appropriate for this study. Some approaches were ruled out because of their focus on objectives and others because they appeared better suited to formative than to summative evaluation. Most models were simply deemed inadequate for evaluating a program of this nature. As Gooler points out, "Evaluation theory and procedures have generally been based on traditional instructional settings. Less attention has been given to problems of evaluating programs involving alternate modes of delivery and engaging unconventional learners" (1979, p. 45). Because Spring Session for Seniors is a non-traditional learning experience, broader in scope than formal school programs and directed toward "unconventional" learners, a different approach is required. The model which appears to have greatest merit in terms of both the program being evaluated and the views of this researcher is Stake's responsive evaluation. The underlying concepts and assumptions of responsive evaluation were most influential in the task of conceptualizing an evaluation approach for this study.

The discussion to this point has dealt with evaluation as an isolated activity. However, evaluation is, in fact, an integral part of program planning and thus, must be viewed in the context of the program planning process. Before proceeding to a description of the evaluation model used in this study, the views of the researcher regarding program planning will be presented.

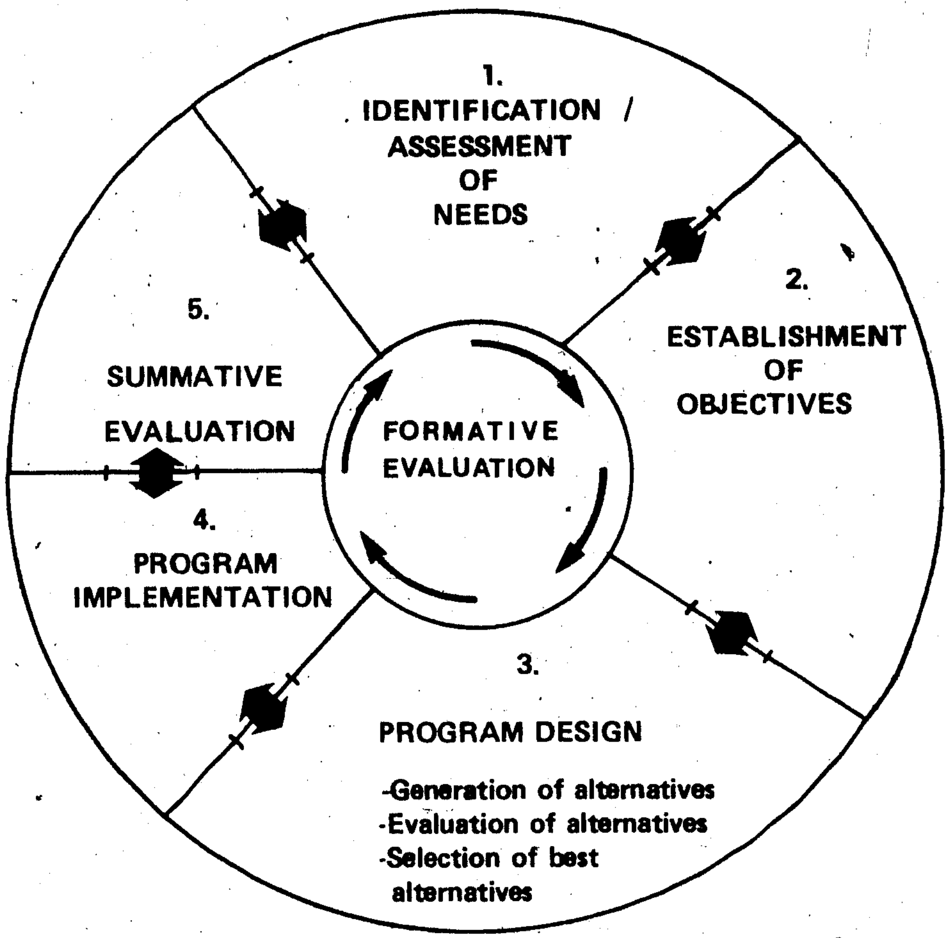
Evaluation in the Context of Program Planning

While the approaches to program planning are many and varied, most of them recognize four basic components: needs assessment, program design, program implementation and evaluation. These elements can be viewed as fitting together in the following manner:



This illustration however, is far too simplistic. The process is generally recognized as being considerably more complex and is rarely conceived of as being linear in nature. Most program planning models reflect the interrelationships among components and the continuous nature of the process. The particular model employed by an educator for the purpose of program development will depend upon the intended use of the model and the philosophy from which it was generated.

The model which best illustrates the approach to program planning reflected in this research is shown in figure 3.1. It should be noted that the model represents an "ideal" and that, in reality, the program planning process may be unable to conform to the model in its entirety.



Adapted from:
Home Economics and 4-H Branch, Alberta Agriculture, 1981

Figure 3.1 Program Planning Model

This model represents program planning as a continuous process in which evaluation plays a dual role. The concepts of formative and summative evaluation as developed by Scriven (1967) are important here for an understanding of how evaluation fits into the model. Formative evaluation is undertaken during program development and initial operation in order to identify problems and discrepancies. It allows for constant adjustment of a program before it becomes fully established. Based on formative evaluation findings, program planners may return to any step of the process to make revisions as indicated. Summative evaluation provides a more comprehensive view of the value of a program once it has been established. The summative evaluator assesses the total program and is in a position to make recommendations about its continuation, expansion and use in other settings.

It is important to note that the terms "formative" and "summative" refer more to the purpose or role of the evaluation than to the process. Even so, the distinction between the two is not entirely clear as the process of program planning is ongoing and summative evaluation is frequently used to feed back into planning and improvement of a program. A summative evaluation may thus become formative if it results in continuation and improvement of a particular program. The purpose of this study was to conduct a summative evaluation of the Spring Session for Seniors program.

An Interactive Model

Concepts and Assumptions As mentioned previously, the evaluation model used in this research was derived from Stake's responsive evaluation approach. The evaluation is organized around the issues and concerns of the intended audiences. A major concept inherent in this model is that of role. The evaluator takes the role of a full partner in the evaluation, identifying issues, interacting with the audiences and making subjective judgements. Another important concept is communication. In contrast to other evaluation approaches, lines of communication between evaluator and audiences remain open throughout the process. Such open communication is essential to identifying and verifying issues effectively. Communication is also important in providing results to the audiences in meaningful ways. Rather than rendering the results entirely in the form of a written final report, the model relies on more natural forms of communication such as verbal presentations and visual portrayals. The concept of values is also essential to this model. Whereas other models are based on the idea of value consensus (Guba and Lincoln, 1981), this approach recognizes the importance of value plurality. As Forest points out, "A program will have multiple values and the concept of evaluation must be broad enough to encompass them" (1976, p. 168).

Rather than focusing on program objectives or intents to determine the worth of a program, this model is concerned with program activities and outcomes as they relate to the intrinsic values of the educational experience.

The underlying assumptions of the model are as follows:

- Evaluation is essentially interactive. It depends upon continuous interactions between the evaluator and the intended audiences to identify and verify purposes and issues.

- Evaluation is an open process allowing new issues and concerns to emerge throughout. Consequently, the evaluation design is continually evolving in an attempt to respond to new issues.
- Evaluation looks at a total program with a view to discovering both its strengths and weaknesses. It is concerned with program activities and intrinsic values of the program rather than with objectives.
- Evaluation responds to the value plurality reflected by different audiences. Unlike many other models which assume concensus on values, this model allows for value conflict in presenting the results.
- Evaluation is a continuous process in that there is no natural end point. An evaluation may raise new issues which could result in a recycling of the entire process.

<u>The Process</u> The concepts and assumptions presented in the previous section reflect the particular views of the researcher regarding evaluation. In order to be useful in conducting evaluation research, the concepts and assumptions must be translated into a process or plan. Such a process is illustrated in figure 3.2.

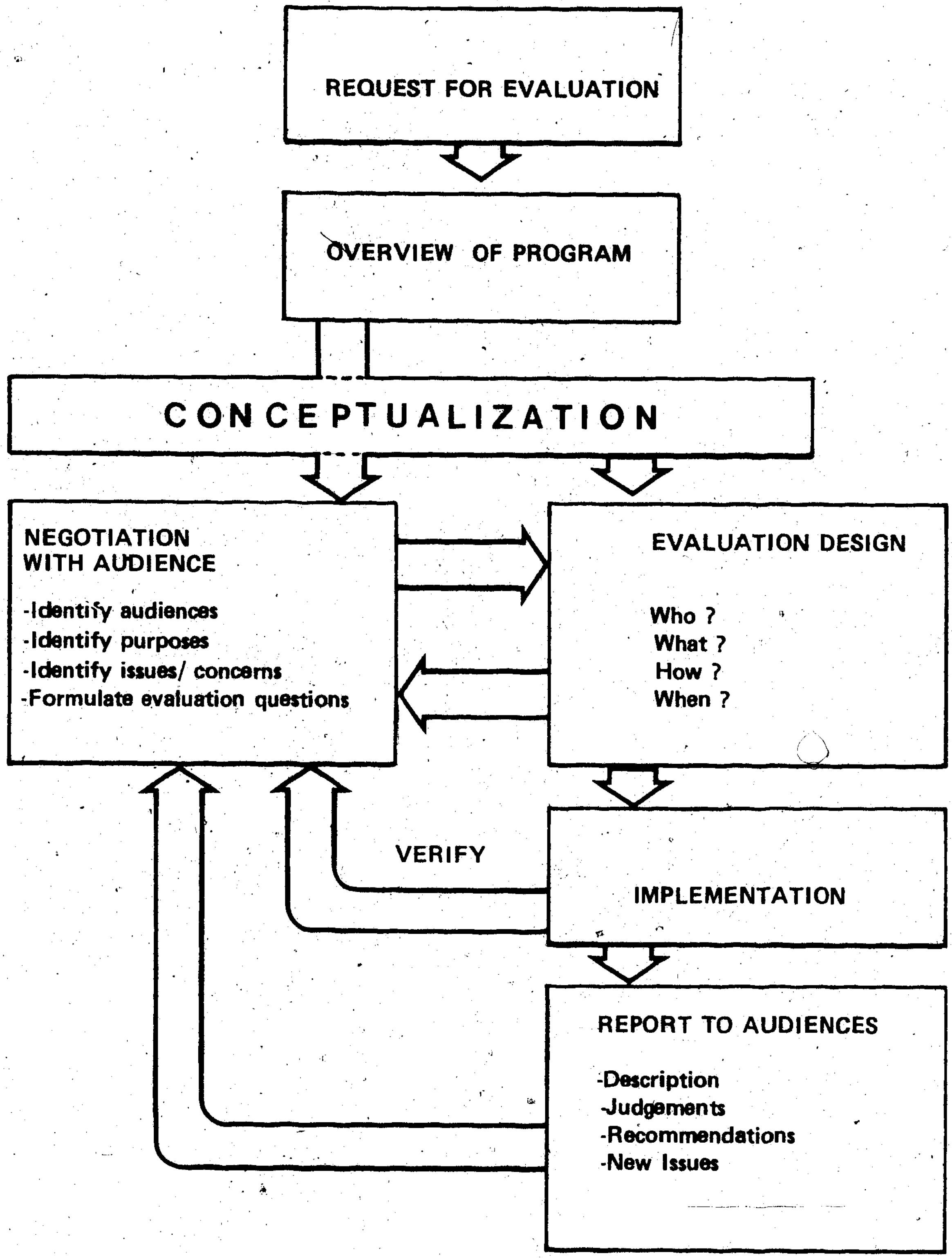


Figure 3.2 An Interactive Evaluation Model

The process begins with the request for evaluation (usually originating with the decision-makers for the program). The immediate response of the evaluator is to familiarize herself with the major features of the program. Such an overview can usually be achieved through conversations with key people and perusal of relevant documents. Stake also recommends early observation of the program in action but this may not always be possible.

Having gained a sense of what the program is about, the evaluator conceptualizes the evaluation in terms of the basic concepts and assumptions which will guide the process.

Next begins the ongoing process of negotiation with the intended audiences. This involves first, identifying all possible audiences of the evaluation (such audiences may include funding sources, program administrators, students, policymakers, program staff and the general public). The evaluator initiates conversations with appropriate representatives of each intended audience to determine the purposes of the evaluation. From the purposes will emerge the concerns and issues which form the basis for the evaluation questions. The continuous nature of this step is a key element of the process. Ongoing interaction between evaluator and audiences, identifying and verifying the important issues, ensures that the evaluation will be "responsive" to the information needs of those people involved with the program.

When most of the issues have been identified, the evaluator may begin to develop the evaluation design. The particular design will depend upon the basic assumptions of the evaluation and the information required to respond to each of the issues. In keeping with the broad view of evaluation reflected in this model, a convergent evaluation design is suggested. A convergent design involves the collection of data from different sources, at different points in time, using various techniques. Such a design will be described in Chapter 4.

Implementation refers to the actual activities involved in collecting and analyzing data. This stage feeds back into the negotiation process as new issues emerge from data collected.

As Stake points out, the end of the evaluation process is not reached because there are no more issues but rather because of limitations of time or resources. Ultimately, a report must be rendered to those who requested the evaluation and to the other audiences involved in the program. These reports should provide a description of the program, judgements regarding the worth and the future of the program, specific recommendations and new issues generated by the evaluation process.

In viewing the evaluation process represented by this model, it is important to remember that the components are not entirely sequential. It is essential in fact that certain of the "steps" be carried out simultaneously.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN

The methodology used in the evaluation of the Spring Session for Seniors program will be presented in this chapter. The first section will describe the implementation of the model which was presented in Chapter 3. Techniques of data collection including sampling, instrumentation and collection procedures will be described in the second part of this chapter. The final section will deal with the analysis of data derived from the study.

Implementation of the Model

The request for an evaluation of Spring Session for Seniors was made by the Advisory Committee for the program. An overview of the program was achieved through initial talks with Committee members, program administrators and the program coordinator as well as through a perusal of relevant documents. It became clear that, as with most programs, there were certain limitations which had to be taken into account in developing an evaluation approach. To begin with, the evaluation would have to be retrospective in that it was not built into the program during the planning and implementation stages. Furthermore, no clearly documented goals and objectives existed to guide the operation of the program. These characteristics as well as the nature of the program as an informal, continuing education endeavor were important in influencing the choice of an evaluation model.

The intended audiences for this evaluation included the Advisory Committee, the Faculty of Extension, the Office of Special Sessions, the President's Committee on Gerontology, the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower (as the funding source), the students and the instructors. With the exception of the instructors, representatives of each of these groups provided input to the identification of concerns and issues. The ongoing negotiation process regarding these issues was facilitated by the fact that the Advisory Committee was comprised of representatives of many of the intended audiences. Numerous discussions took place with the Committee as a whole and with individual Committee members with a view to discovering and verifying the relevant issues.

The study design, which is discussed in this chapter, is based on the issues which were identified. Following collection of the data, the evaluation results and recommendations were presented to the Advisory Committee in the form of a written report and a verbal presentation supported by visual portrayals of some of the findings.

<u>Design</u>

An evaluation design is a plan of action outlining the process of data collection. The design specifies <u>what</u>

data to collect, how to collect it, when to collect it and from whom to collect it. The specific methods chosen for data collection will depend to a great extent upon the questions posed in the evaluation. Traditionally, the methods used in evaluation studies have been derived from the classical research paradigm which has found considerable support within social science and educational research. Evaluation research has sought to produce objective, quantifiable results which reflect the "truth" about a program or curriculum. To this end, "conventional approaches have followed the experimental and psychometric traditions dominant in educational research" (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972, p. 1). While many evaluators continue to advocate a classical experimental approach to evaluation, their views have not gone unchallenged. Guttentag suggests that, "One major source of dissatisfaction with evaluation... stems from the conceptualization and modeling of evaluation research after the classical research paradigm" (1973, p. 60) and Parlett and Hamilton contend that such approaches have "led to studies that are artificial and restricted in scope" (1972, p. 1). As indicated in Chapter 2, the problem of selecting appropriate methodological approaches to evaluation has led to a qualitative versus quantitative debate which has recently become a central issue in evaluation literature.

Critics of the classical scientific approach (e.g. Stake, 1975; Guba and Lincoln, 1981; Parlett and

Hamilton, 1972; Patton, 1980), favor an alternative approach based on the paradigms of anthropology, journalism and phenomenology. This is not to suggest that they rule out entirely the use of conventional quantitative methods but rather that they emphasize the importance of using qualitative techniques in conducting evaluation. Indeed, "There are times when the issues and concerns voiced by audiences require information which is best generated by more conventional methods, especially quantitative methods". (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p. 36). Such was the case with the research design for this study. Based on the nature of the research questions, the study used a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques for data collection.

Data Collection

This research utilized a convergent approach to data collection in that information was derived from a number of sources, at different points in time, using several techniques. While this approach may be more costly and time-consuming than some, it offers a number of important benefits for a study such as this one. A major advantage is that it allows new issues to emerge throughout the process. It also requires that the evaluator take into account the various value perspectives of the people involved in the program. By using a convergent approach, the evaluator obtains a more complete picture of the program and decreases the likelihood of presenting a biased view.

Finally, the data acquired through the use of this approach will be richer for having been derived from a number of different sources. Parlett and Hamilton advocate a similar approach suggesting that, "the problem defines the methods used...no method (with its own built-in limitations) is used exclusively or in isolation: different techniques are combined to throw light on a common problem" (1972, p.p. 15-16).

The four major data collection techniques used in this study were: a survey, focused interviews, document analysis and interviews with key people. Secondary sources of information such as the researcher's attendance at Advisory Committee meetings and at parts of the 1981 Spring Session for Seniors program also provided valuable insights to the program.

Survey

Mail-out questionnaires were administered to two groups - a participant group consisting of people who had attended the program in previous years and a comparison group consisting of people who had never taken the program. However, due to a lengthy postal strike, the number of comparison group questionnaires returned was not sufficient to justify including them in the study. Instead, the comparison questionnaires were analyzed separately and a summary of the responses was provided to the Advisory Committee.

<u>Sample</u> The population for the participant group consisted of all individuals who had participated in Spring Session for Seniors during the two years prior to initiation of this study (i.e. 1979 and 1980). Names of participants were obtained from Department of Extension mailing lists. No other criteria were applied for inclusion in the sample; however, certain criteria were assumed based on the following admission requirements for the program:

a) participants should be retired

b) participants should be 60 years of age or over <u>or</u> should be the spouse of someone who is in this age category and retired.

From the 417 individuals who had participated in the program during 1979 and 1980, a random sample of 250 was drawn. The sample thus obtained consisted of 75% urban and 25% rural participants.

Of the 250 individuals to whom the questionnaire was sent, 151 responded yielding a return rate of 60%. Six questionnaires were returned unopened due to participants having moved to an unknown address or having died. If these individuals are deleted from the sample, the return rate is increased to 62%. For a mail-out questionnaire, this is a particularly good return rate as compared to the average return rate of 10% to 50% reported by Hill and Hansen (1964).

Of the questionnaires returned, five were deemed unusable, two as a result of being inadequately completed and three because respondents had registered for but had not in fact attended the program. The resulting sample of 146 respondents comprises approximately 82% females and 18% males. The sample is described in further detail in Chapter 5.

<u>Procedure</u> The questionnaire initially developed for this study was pre-tested with two groups, one urban and one rural. Based on the responses to questionnaire items and the comments provided by these two groups, substantial changes were made in the questionnaire before it was finalized and administered to the sample group. The questionnaire was also examined by a Human Research Ethical Review Committee and was judged to have met the requirements for ethical research.

Each person in the sample was sent a questionnaire with an explanatory letter and a stamped, self-addressed return envelope. Also enclosed was a stamped, self-addressed card which could be used to request results of the study. Approximately three weeks after the questionnaires had been mailed, reminders were sent to those individuals who had not yet responded.

<u>Instrumentation</u> The research instrument (questionnaire) developed for the survey was seventeen pages in length and consisted of both open-ended and fixed-response questions (see Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire). In preparing the questionnaire, care

was taken to use large type and ample spacing in response to anticipated visual impairment among some respondents. The research instrument comprised the following sections:

1. demographic information
2. educational attitudes and participation
3. involvement in and impacts of the program
4. an educational motivation scale
5. administrative concerns (e.g. fees, admission policies).

While most of the sections are self-explanatory, the educational motivation scale requires some explanation.

Educational Motivation Scale In an attempt to discover the factors which motivated participants to enroll in this program, a revised form of Boshier's Education Participation Scale was used. The original E.P.S. was developed to measure the motivations of adults for engaging in traditional continuing education experiences (Boshier and Riddell, 1978). In order to render the scale valid for use with older adults, Boshier and Riddell deleted those items which, in factor analysis, loaded on the Professional Advancement factor. The revised scale was then tested with a group of older adults involved in continuing education courses. Scores for the 35 items were subjected to factor analysis and four factors emerged: Escape/Stimulation, Social Contact, Social Welfare and

Cognitive Interest. Reliability of the revised scale as determined by a mean item test-retest procedure was .60. Validity was examined by correlating the factor scores derived from the study with scores obtained on three established measures: the Life Satisfaction Index, the Adjustment to Later Life Scale and a Social Participation scale. The mean item X whole-scale correlation coefficients which emerged ranged from .40 to .64. Based on these correlations, Boshier and Riddell concluded that the scale was "sufficiently comprehensive for use with older participants" (1978, p. 174).

On the questionnaire used in this study, participants were asked to rate each item on the 35-item E.P.S. according to whether it had "no influence", "little influence", "moderate influence" or "much influence" on their decision to participate in the program. Boshier and Riddell used the same response categories but systematically varied the scale poles so that "no influence" and "much influence" sometimes appeared at the left of the page and sometimes at the right. In this evaluation study, the response categories were given at the top of each page containing the scale and were not varied. It is possible that such consistency engendered a response set in participants; however, this risk had to be balanced against the possibility of confusing respondents.

An example of a scale item is:

To learn just for the sake of learning	No Influence	Little Influence	Moderate Influence	Much Influence

Following the scale was a question intended to discover the success of the program in meeting participants' expectations. Specifically, the question asked respondents to indicate whether the program "fell below expectations", "met expectations", "exceeded expectations" or whether they had "no expectations" of the program in the following areas:

1. To learn for the sake of learning.
2. To learn about a specific subject or skill.
3. To make new friends.
4. To improve my image of myself.
5. To have the opportunity to associate with others.
6. To get to know more about the university.
7. To enjoy myself.

The use of this question in conjunction with the E.P.S. instrument represented an attempt to link the concepts of needs, motives and expectations as they relate to education for older people. Boshier and Riddell (1978) maintain that motives are manifestations of needs. If this is indeed the case, then the scale is useful in identifying the needs of particular groups to whom it is administered. It could be further argued that needs are expressed by expectations. Thus, by determining people's motives for engaging in continuing education and subsequently finding out whether their expectations for a particular program were met, one could discover whether or not the program was successful in fulfilling some of the educational needs of the participants. For example, if respondents rated as most influential those motives relating to learning (e.g. "to seek knowledge for its own sake"), it could be assumed that they were manifesting cognitive needs. By determining how well the program met their expectations in this sense, the extent to which it fulfilled their cognitive needs can be assessed.

Focused Interviews

Questionnaires are useful in obtaining large amounts of information from large numbers of people with a minimum of time and effort involved. However, the questionnaire is a structured and directive technique which tends to inhibit the expression of unsolicited responses. Even open-ended questions may be ineffective in assessing people's impressions, perceptions and ideas. Because the views of participants were very important in this study, interviews were used to supplement the questionnaires.

The interview technique used was an adaptation of the focused interview devised by Merton, Fiske and Kendall (1956). The focused interview is unstructured and non-directive. It is used with groups of people who are known to have been involved in a particular situation. An important criterion for use of this technique is that the researcher has analyzed the situation prior to conducting the interview. According to Merton et. al., "the interview is focused on the subjective experiences of persons exposed to the...situation in an effort to ascertain their definitions of the situation" (1956, p. 3). In the focused interview, the interviewer plays an active role, continually assessing the interview as it proceeds.

In this study, focused interviews were conducted with four groups of people during Spring Session for Seniors, 1981. All interviewees were participants in the program. Three interviews were conducted at the seniors' drop-in centre during the daily lunch break. The fourth interview took place in a lounge area of the residence for out-of-town participants. One of the groups consisted entirely of Edmonton residents, another consisted of rural residents only and the other two groups comprised both rural and urban participants. The smallest group consisted of three people while the largest had eight members.

On approaching each group, the researcher explained her role and indicated her reasons for wishing to conduct the interview. Invariably, the request met with a positive response from participants who appeared eager to discuss their impressions of the program. The interview guide consisted of two very general questions:

1. What have you liked or disliked about Spring Session for Seniors?
2. What would you like to see happen with the program in the future?

No further direction was given to the interviewees other than to follow up on points which they raised. Each interview took approximately one hour to complete.

Document Analysis

An important part of this particular summative evaluation was the analysis of relevant documents. In this research, all of the available documents relating to the planning and operation of Spring Session for Seniors were analyzed. These included the original proposal for funding, progress reports, correspondence, brochures, newspaper articles, Advisory Committee and Special Sessions Committee minutes and budget information. Analysis of these documents yielded a very complete picture of the program as it has evolved over the years. It also provided valuable insights regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the program as viewed by participants and administrators.

Interviews with Key Informants

The perceptions of key people who had been closely involved with the program were seen as an essential part of this evaluation. The following six people were selected to be interviewed regarding their views of Spring Session for Seniors:

- the program administrator
- the program coordinator
- a previous program coordinator (currently a member of the Advisory Committee)
- the Advisory Committee Chairman
- an Advisory Committee member (a previous participant in the program)
- the initiator of the program (currently a member of the Advisory Committee).

An interview format consisting of six major questions was developed to guide the interview process. The questions were as follows:

1. Describe the Spring Session for Seniors in your own words.

2. (a) What do you think are the goals and objectives of the program?
   (b) How successful do you think the program has been in meeting the goals and objectives?

3. What are your perceptions regarding participants' satisfaction with the program?

4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program as you see them?

5. Has this program had any effects other than those which were intended or anticipated?

6. What would you like to see for the future of this program?

   a) continue or discontinue?
   b) if continue, as is?
      expand?
      incorporate different levels?
      new offerings?

While this format was useful in ensuring consistency, the interviews tended to be relatively unstructured and informal. The respondents frequently raised other issues which were then used as the basis of questions for subsequent interviews. In addition to providing invaluable information, these interviews were important in that they reflected the broad range of value perspectives held by respondents.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data derived from this study was relatively simple and straightforward in that it involved no testing of hypotheses and used no inferential statistics. Instead, the research sought to describe the program in terms of the process and the impacts and to answer the questions posed in the research. The information obtained through using various techniques and sources of data, converged to provide a complete picture of the program. Because the study was descriptive in nature, richness of data was pursued to combine with more quantitative evidence regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

Questionnaire data was coded, keypunched and computer analyzed. A descriptive analysis consisting of frequencies, means and standard deviations was provided for all relevant variables. Responses to open-ended questions on the research instrument, to the focused interviews and to the interviews with key informants were analyzed in terms of content. The major findings which emerged from the convergent analysis of data are discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

This chapter reports the results of the data collection and analysis. Although the research utilized a variety of data gathering sources and techniques, the majority of data was derived from the responses to a questionnaire administered to a random sample of participants. A description of this sample in terms of demographic characteristics will comprise the first section of this chapter. The second section will provide a description of the program, its orig[illegible] major features and the changes which have occurred throughout the operation of the program. Section three will provide the research results as they pertain to the original research questions.

Description of Sample

One hundred and forty-six respondents constituted the sample for this study. Because the program was designed especially for senior citizens, it was expected that most of the respondents would be 60 years of age or older. This in fact was the case, the youngest respondent being 59 and the oldest 94. Both the mean age and the median age were 70. Table 5.1 provides an age breakdown of the sample by 5-year cohorts.

Table 5.1
Description of Sample by Age (n=144)

Age	Number	Percentage (%)
55-59	1	1
60-64	12	7
65-69	54	39
70-74	51	35
75-79	19	13
80-84	5	3
85-89	1	1
90-94	1	1
	144	100

Respondents were asked to indicate where they lived by the name of the place (or nearest place). In categorizing the responses, a question arose as to the appropriate categories for St. Albert and Sherwood Park residents. The primary purpose of this particular variable was to determine the accessibility of the university to respondents. Based on this reasoning, a decision was made to group the two respondents from Sherwood Park and St. Albert with the Edmonton sample because regular public transportation is available from these centres to Edmonton. The resulting sample consisted of 69% Edmonton residents and 31% non-Edmonton or "rural" residents.

The sex distribution of the sample was 81.5% female and 18.5% male. In part, this disparity in terms of sex distribution can be attributed to the imbalance in the sex ratio of the population as a whole. In 1976 in Canada, there were only 777 males to every 1000 females in the 65 and over age groups (Statistics Canada, 1976). It could further be speculated that since a far greater proportion of older women are single (i.e. widowed, separated, divorced or never married), they may have a greater interest in participating in a program of this nature. This, of course, is simply conjecture. In this sample, 37% of respondents were married, 47% widowed, 10% single (never married) and 6% separated or divorced. No breakdown of marital status by sex was done.

Respondents were asked to indicate which of six categories best described their work or retirement status. The category "homemaker and retired" received the largest number of responses at 46% (men as well as women could check this category). Thirty-one percent of respondents were fully retired and another 14% considered themselves homemakers only. The remaining 9% were working full-time, working part-time or homemakers and working part-time. Of those retired, the average length of retirement was eight years.

Although the largest majority of participants were retired, occupational background was considered to be important data. Respondents were asked to indicate their occupation at present or prior to retirement. The responses were grouped into eight categories which are shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2
Description of Sample by Occupation (n=130)

Occupational Category	Number	Percentage
Professional	59	45.4
Semi-professional	5	3.8
Sales and Management	14	10.8
Office/Clerical	18	13.8
Skilled Labor	2	1.5
Unskilled Labor	2	1.5
Homemaking	24	18.5
Farming/Ranching	6	4.6

It is interesting to note that nearly one-half of the sample were in the professional and semi-professional occupational categories. A cursory review of responses suggested that nearly 30% of the sample were or had been school teachers.

Not surprisingly, the sample consisted on the average of highly educated individuals. A total of 44% had attended and/or completed university including several who had obtained graduate degrees. Another 24% had completed or partially completed some other type of post-secondary training (e.g. technical school, community college). Twenty-two percent had completed high school and 10% had received eight years of schooling or less. Statistics Canada figures for 1976 indicated that, of the population 65 years and over, only seven percent had attended university and of these, 2.6% had obtained degrees.

Total family income on an annual basis was divided into seven categories but several of these have been combined for ease of discussion. Ten percent reported incomes of $5,000. or less, 42% reported $5,000. to $13,000., 23% reported $13,000. to $21,000. and 21% reported incomes of $21,000. or over. While the use of open-ended income categories precludes the computation of a mean income, some comparisons can be made with Statistics Canada figures. Their 1976 statistics show an average annual income of $7,489. for all families (including unattached individuals) in which the head was 65 years or older. This suggests that the annual income of this sample was somewhat above average for their age group although caution should be taken in making such comparisons. In this study the income categories were too broad to yield comparable data. Further breakdown of the highest income category ($21,000. and up) appears in retrospect to have been advisable. Moreover, the time gap between this study and the Statistics Canada census renders comparisons difficult.

Description of Spring Session for Seniors

Origin of the Program

The Spring Session for Seniors program at the University of Alberta was implemented in 1975. The program was inspired by and, to some extent, modelled after a similar program instituted the previous year at the University of British Columbia. Following approval of the program in principle by the Special Sessions Committee, a joint funding proposal from the Faculty of Extension and the Office of Special Sessions was submitted to the Alberta Department of Advanced Education. A grant in the amount of $20,000. was received to support the program for the first year as an innovative project. The Department of Advanced Education (now Advanced Education and Manpower) has continued to provide funding for the program on an annual basis.

While no formal needs assessment was undertaken prior to initiation of this program, the Department of Extension did engage in "a number of discussions and conferences with older people, as individuals and as members of the Alberta Council on Aging and the Society for the Retired and Semi-Retired, with a view to discovering their needs and desires for learning" (Application for Grant, 1974).

Goals and Objectives

The original goals and objectives of Spring Session for Seniors are difficult to ascertain as they have never been made explicit. Indeed, the only goal mentioned during the planning stages of the program concerned encouraging senior citizens to avail themselves of the tuition-free credit courses offered by the University to individuals 65 and over.

This is not to suggest that the program has been operating in the absence of any goals or objectives. Rather, it indicates the existence of implicit goals some of which were present at the outset of the program and others which have developed with the program.

A review of program documents, observation of the program and interviews with key people suggest the following implicit goals or objectives:

1. To broaden and enhance the educational opportunities available to older people.
2. To provide older people with the opportunity to experience university life.
3. To increase the accessibility of the university to this age group by breaking down their apprehensions.
4. To respond to the particular educational needs of older people.
5. To encourage the promotion and development of ongoing adult education programs for older people in small rural centres.
6. To increase the participation of seniors in other adult education experiences.
7. To involve participants in planning and implementing the program.

It should be remembered that these are not the agreed-upon goals of the program. They are simply implicit goals as perceived by this researcher.

Major Features of the Program

Spring Session for Seniors at the University of Alberta is a special three-week program which provides a variety of non-credit, special interest courses to older people. The program is offered on the University campus in May of each year and coincides with the regular Spring Session courses on campus. It is sponsored jointly by the

Faculty of Extension and the Office of Special Sessions. The major features of the program are described below.

Advisory Committee A most important feature of the program is the Advisory Committee which was formed during the initial planning stages. It comprises representatives of community organizations, individuals who have been involved in the program as participants and representatives of the University. The Advisory Committee has taken an active role in planning and implementing the sessions and has provided important input to policy decisions concerning curriculum, fees, admission policies and social programs.

Curriculum Courses have been offered in a wide variety of topic areas ranging from music appreciation to molecules, from creative writing to Canadian history. The choice of topics offered in a given year is dependent upon a number of factors such as:

- popularity of existing courses
- demand for new courses
- availability of instructors, and
- availability of space.

Generally speaking, participants have considerable influence on course topics for subsequent years. The number of courses offered has been increased from 10 in 1975 to 16 in 1980 (See Appendix B for a listing of courses). The length of courses varies from one to three weeks and some courses include more than one section. Participants may register for as many courses as will fit into their schedule, assuming that the classes are not already filled.

A consideration in location of classes is the difficulty which some older people have in walking long distances. As much as possible, therefore, classes have been offered in locations close to each other and to the students' Drop-in Centre. Courses are scheduled both for mornings and afternoons but there are no evening classes.

There are no formal requirements for these courses, no examinations and very little homework. While the major focus of Spring Session for Seniors is on general interest courses, participants are also encouraged to register for Spring Session credit courses either as credit students or as auditors.

Accommodation and Transportation From the beginning, efforts were made to ensure that the program was accessible to out-of-town residents. Accommodation and meals were clearly a requirement for these participants. Arrangements were made to provide free room and board in the student residence for out-of-town students. After the first year, participants were required to pay for their own meals. Accommodation continued to be provided at no charge until 1981 when a small charge was instituted. Transportation costs for out-of-town participants were originally reimbursed but this policy has also been changed and transportation costs are now the responsibility of each participant.

__Other Features__. A drop-in centre, located in the Students' Union Building is open daily during the session. It is intended as a place where participants can relax and gather socially. Tea and coffee are available and the centre is staffed by a resource person.

Other features of the program included library passes, free parking, lunch-time speakers, free passes to the Power Plant (graduate students' club) and walking tours of campus. In 1981, an Orientation Day was instituted.

__Participants__

Those who are eligible to attend Spring Session for Seniors are all residents of Alberta who reside north of Red Deer, who are retired and over 60 years of age. The spouses of these people may also attend regardless of age. The program was originally available to all residents of Alberta meeting the age and retirement requirements but since a parallel program became available in the Calgary region, Edmonton's program has been restricted to those living north of Red Deer. The attendance for each year of the program has been as follows:

1975 - 220
1976 - 150
1977 - 199
1978 - 210
1979 - 271
1980 - 251
1981 - 270

A number of applications have been rejected each year, usually for one of three reasons:

a) the application was received too late
b) the applicant could not be accommodated in the courses requested
c) there was insufficient room in the student residence.

The ratio of female to male participants has generally been about three to one. Originally, the urban (Edmonton) rural (non-Edmonton) split was about even. However, since the restriction to the area north of Red Deer, the ratio has changed and levelled off at about 70% urban and 30% rural participants.

Administration/Staff

The program is administered by the Faculty of Extension with input regarding policy being provided by the Advisory Committee and the Office of Special Sessions.

Funding for the operation of the program has been received from the Alberta Department of Advanced Education and Manpower. Until the last year, funds were channeled from the government through the Society for the Retired and Semi-Retired rather than being forwarded directly to the University. The University now receives the funds directly.

The program is coordinated by a Faculty of Extension staff member who is responsible for program planning, implementation of the sessions, promotion of the program, liaison with the Advisory Committee and contracting instructors. Coordination of the program is not expected to be a full-time responsibility although it certainly becomes so in the weeks prior to, during and after the session. A secretary also works part-time on the program and a resource person is hired for the drop-in centre each year. Salaries for these staff are partially covered by overhead costs in the budget.

Fees Originally, the program was offered free of charge. Effective in 1978 however, a registration fee of ten dollars per person was instituted to help to offset costs. Also in 1978 a new policy was adopted to charge a $50 registration fee to those individuals participating in the course for the fourth year or more.

Budget

Revenue for the program has been derived primarily from the grant provided by the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower. In recent years, revenue obtained from fees and accommodation charges has supplemented the grant money. The figures below show the amount of the grant received each year and the annual expenditures. The deficit indicated in the last four years is in fact covered by the fee and accommodation revenues.

Annual Grant ($)		Annual Expenditures ($)
1975	20,000	16,856
1976	17,750	not available
1977	21,000	20,540
1978	22,000	22,359
1979	23,500	26,790
1980	23,500	29,154
1981	25,000	31,453

Advertising and Promotion

The major promotional technique has been the distribution of a large number of program brochures. These have been sent to senior citizens' agencies and organizations across the city and the northern part of the province and also to individuals who have previously participated in the program. A number of press releases have been prepared and disseminated among newspapers and news magazines, radio stations and television stations. Numerous articles describing the program have been carried in local newspapers, both urban and rural.

In summary, the Spring Session for Seniors program has been operating for seven years and throughout that time has met with overwhelming response from participants. Each year, many letters and cards are received by the Faculty of Extension thanking them for provid~~ing such a~~ rewarding experience to the senior citizens who have participated.

Results Relating To Research Questions

This section will present the results which relate directly to the research questions posed in this study. The results bring together the data derived from various sources including questionnaire responses, interviews with key informants, focused interviews, document analysis and observation. Some of the questions have been answered entirely or in part by the previous two sections of this chapter - the description of the sample and the description of the program.

Question 1 What is the nature of Spring Session for Seniors?

The first five sub-questions (a to e) of this section have been answered in the description of the program.

Question 1(f) The payment of a registration fee appears to be satisfactory to participants. Questionnaire responses indicate that 94% are in favor of being charged the current ten dollar registration fee and 40% would be willing to pay more. The following comments seem to reflect the prevailing feeling of participants regarding the fee:

- Paying a small fee gives one the feeling of belonging - having the right to be there.
- We don't want something for nothing.
- To some, what costs nothing is worth nothing.

On the other hand, the fee of $50 for the fourth year or more of the program appears to be an issue of contention among Committee members as well as participants. Several of the people interviewed suggested very strongly that such a fee was too high and would be a hardship on many people. Others however, supported the $50 fee saying that it was needed in order to help offset the costs of the program and thus allow more people to attend.

Questionnaire responses showed an almost even split on this question, 51% being opposed to the fee and 49% being in favor. Of those in favor, the comments suggest that they see the $50 fee as a deterrent. For example:

- If they continue to come, they would be just putting in time.

Those respondents who were opposed to the $50 fee expressed some very strong feelings:

- $50 is outrageous. Get a grant or bursary to cover the deficit. Don't take it from the elderly.

- It gives the impression that having you around for three years is enough.

- It would eliminate a segment of society which, although interested, simply could not afford it.

- I think to jump from $10 to $50 is beyond all reason. The people who take a course for four times are genuinely interested and get something out of it.

- The $50 cost is ridiculous.

Some of the responses would seem to suggest that the reasoning behind the $50 fee is unclear.

The admission policies for the program do not seem to be an issue of great consequence to those involved in the program. Many respondents did not complete these questions on the questionnaire (about 18%) and many others indicated that they had no opinion. The only finding which could be construed as reflecting dissatisfaction with admission policies was the 46% of respondents who disagreed with the policy requiring that participants be retired as opposed to the, 34% who agreed. On the whole, admission policies appear to be satisfactory.

The provision of social programs as a component of Spring Session for Seniors is not a matter on which concensus exists. The Department of Advanced Education and Manpower has expressed concern about a program which includes social events. Some of the key informants interviewed also indicated a reluctance to offer too many social events. Others very strongly supported the social events as an essential feature of the program. Those participants who were surveyed indicated a high level of satisfaction with the social programs. Of those who responded to the question, 77% were either satisfied or very satisfied, whereas 5% were not satisfied. Eighteen percent had no opinion, most of these indicating that they had not attended the events due either to lack of interest or to health problems. The results clearly suggested that social events are of greater importance to out-of-town participants than to Edmonton residents. Some of the comments offered were:

- The social events are an excellent opportunity to get to know each other and to develop new friendships.
- I found them varied, educational and interesting
- Social activities such as opera, theatre and symphony can all be considered educational.
- There was something for all tastes.

Focused interviews with out-of-town participants revealed that many of them felt that too few social activities were available for them. Such activities are viewed as particularly important for rural people because they provide the "opportunity to meet others with different backgrounds" (interviewee). Out-of-town participants also complained that Edmonton participants frequently did not attend the social events and thus, they had little opportunity to meet and socialize.

A concern expressed by a very large proportion of those interviewed as well as many of the questionnaire respondents related to the discontinuation of tours which have been a feature of previous years. There appeared to be strong support for reinstating these tours.

Question 1(g) The question of future offerings in the program elicited a very wide range of responses. Many of these dealt specifically with particular course offerings (e.g. an astronomy course, evening courses, more courses without homework, more practical courses such as first-aid, public speaking and gardening). Other comments concerned expanding social programs, with particular emphasis on tours. Many respondents indicated that they like the program as it ~~is~~ and see no need for changes.

Among participants, there was not a great deal of support for offering courses at different levels thereby allowing people to progress. Exceptions were Art courses and French in which progress was seen as important.

Generally speaking, a few respondents supported the idea of different levels and the others expressed no opinion on this subject. Among the key informants who were interviewed, there was some strong support for different levels but one problem that was pointed out was the length of time between sessions and the difficulty that this would represent in terms of progression.

In the focused interviews and interviews with key people, respondents were asked to share their views regarding year-round university courses for older people. The question met with mixed reaction. Out-of-town participants conceded that it would be a good idea for Edmonton residents but would have little impact on themselves. One respondent pointed out that to institute such a plan "would be very expensive and it would not be used" because of the harsh climate in Edmonton. Other interviewees expressed enthusiasm for the idea. Key informants were also divided on this issue although those in favor appeared to feel more strongly than those who weren't. In general, key informants supported expansion of the program in order to respond to future needs and prevent the program from stagnating.

<u>Question 2 What have the impacts of Spring Session for Seniors been?</u>

<u>Question 2(a)</u> The only program goal made explicit was:

- to encourage older people to take advantage of the University policy of rebating tuition fees for senior citizens in degree courses.

There has been no evidence to indicate that this goal has been attained. In the first year of the program, two students registered for credit courses and this number increased to four the following year. Statistics suggest that the number of students enrolling in credit courses has not increased substantially over the years. The failure of the program to meet this goal has been widely recognized among key informants.

Implicit goals of the program as identified by this researcher, have been listed earlier in this chapter. Determining the success of the program in meeting these goals is difficult, partly because they have never been made explicit but also because they are very broadly stated and therefore difficult to measure. In the subjective views of this researcher, the program has been successful to a great extent in reaching goals number one and two which state:

- to broaden and enhance the educational opportunities available to older people, and
- to provide older people with the opportunity to experience university life.

The program has met with some success in responding to goals number three, four, six and seven which state:

- to increase the accessibility of the university to this age group by breaking down their apprehensions
- to respond to the particular educational needs of older people
- to increase the participation of seniors in other adult education experiences, and

- to involve participants in planning and implementing the program.

These goals will be dealt with in a subsequent part of this chapter. Goal number five which states:

- to encourage the promotion and development of ongoing adult education programs for older people in small rural centres,

is very difficult to measure and no comment will be made regarding its attainment.

Question 2(b) As indicated in Chapter 4, Boshier's Educational Participation Scale was used to determine the motivating factors influencing respondents' decisions to participate in the program. It was assumed that the motives which were most influential would reflect educational needs of the sample group.

For each item on the scale, the percentages responding in the "moderate influence" and "much influence" categories were combined to yield a "high influence" percentage. The 35 items were then grouped into the four factors identified by Boshier and Riddell (1975): Social Contact, Social Welfare, Cognitive Interest and Escape/Stimulation. Within each factor the "high influence" percentages were totalled and the total was then divided by the number of items to obtain an average percentage for the factor.

The highest average percentage was obtained on the Cognitive Interest factor. The items and percentage scores which comprised this factor were:

1.	To seek knowledge for its own sake	92%
6.	To satisfy an enquiring mind	96%
16.	To help me earn a degree, diploma or certificate	6%
21.	To learn just for the joy of learning	97%
32.	To learn just for the sake of learning	88%

With the exception of number 16, the items appear to be consistent. Although item 16 is on the same continuum as are the other items, it appears to be at the opposite end, reflecting instrumental rather than intrinsic values regarding education. Deletion of this item increases the average percentage for the factor to 93%. It should be noted that the low score on item 16 is consistent with the participants' apparent lack of interest in credit courses. With or without item 16 however, the factor is clearly the strongest motivating factor for this group.

The second highest average percentage (60%) was on the Social Contact Scale which consisted of the following items:

12.	To fulfill a need for personal associations and friendships	57%
14.	To participate in group activity	64%
22.	To become acquainted with congenial people	80%
27.	To improve my social relationships	35%
33.	To make new friends	60%

Once again there is one item (number 27) which reduces the average percentage for the factor. The item differs from the others in that it suggests a more negative connotation (i.e. that one's social relationships are lacking and therefore need improving). Removing the item only raises the percentage to 65% but this percentage may more accurately reflect the importance of the factor as a motivator. The other two factors scored below 50% each (48% for Social Welfare and 29% for Escape Stimulation) and therefore will not be discussed.

The question dealing with the success of the program in meeting the expectations of participants was meant to tie in with the E.P.S. scale. It was hypothesized that participants' expectations would reflect their learning needs. However, since the needs of participants were not known prior to administering the questionnaire, the selection of appropriate expectations was difficult.

The needs primarily dealt with in this question are Cognitive Interest and Social Contact. The following three items can be grouped into Cognitive Interest needs:

1. To learn for the sake of learning
2. To learn about a specific subject or skill
3. To get to know more about the university.

The percentage of respondents who felt that their expectations had been met or exceeded in these three areas averaged out to 87%.

Social Contact needs are reflected by the following three expectations:

3. To make new friends
5. To have the opportunity to associate with others
7. To enjoy myself.

The scores for these items yielded an average of 86% whose expectations were met or exceeded. Based on the findings of this question and the E.P.S. scale, one cannot state unequivocally that the program has been successful in meeting the needs of participants. However, the results do seem to indicate that the participants have experienced a high degree of satisfaction with the program and that for the most part, their expectations have been met.

Question 2(c) An expectation of a program of this nature is that it will have some impact, however minor, on the lives of participants. Several items on the questionnaire were directed toward determining the educational and personal impacts which the program may have had on participants.

One intended impact of the program was that participants would subsequently (and consequently) decide to register in credit courses at the university. However, the survey findings showed that only seven percent of respondents (10 persons) had taken credit courses since first attending Spring Session for Seniors. Only one-half of these indicated that their attendance at Spring Session had had any influence on their decision to take credit courses.

Of the 56 respondents who had become involved in other continuing education courses since attending the program, 49% responded that Spring Session for Seniors had influenced their further participation. These findings suggest that the program does have some impact on participants in terms of their interest in continuing education but that this interest does not extend to formal credit courses. The reason for this may be summed up by the comments of one respondent who stated:

- I have written enough exams. The enjoyment of learning is enough. I do not care about "credit".

In response to the question:

"Have there been any changes in your life-style or anything special you have done that you attribute to your participation in Spring Session for Seniors?"

one half of the sample said YES and one-half said NO. All of the respondents who answered YES indicated that the impacts had been positive. Sample comments include:

- It increased my desire to write well and make use of all the precious time left to me.

- A new confidence that going to Spring Session has inspired me with a renewed desire to be a living, active person.

- It has encouraged me to continue to try to improve my education.

- I have had a number of short stories published and also wrote a novel which is now at the publishers.

- Spring Session motivated me. As a result, I became involved in volunteer work and also took a French course. I'm on the look out for other opportunities.

- The art courses have stimulated my interest in becoming an artist and I have continued with instruction at the Art Gallery. I have shown my pictures and sold many and continue to learn and improve! Look out Group of Seven! - here I come in about 10 years!

- I loved the sessions. They gave me a new lease on life. New challenging avenues were opened up.

Question 2(d) Respondents were also asked whether any particular courses or instructors had had any influence on their lives. Fifty-eight percent answered YES and 42% answered NO. Comments indicated that the Creative Writing, Keep-Fit and Contemporary Canadian Issues courses had had the greatest impacts on respondents. Typical comments included:

- Contemporary Issues broadened my views and created a greater interest in world affairs.
- The instructor made me feel I could write. I had always wanted to but had been diffident about trying.
- Since taking Keep-Fit, I have been much more aware of the importance of fitness and health. I have joined a class to keep it up.
- They made me feel good about myself and my retirement.

General Impacts In addition to these specific effects, comments offered by participants and key informants suggest that the program has had a wide range of general impacts. A small proportion of comments were negative and these tended to focus on specifics, for example:

- Some courses have been a waste of time.
- It is frustrating to be limited in choices.

However, the overwhelming majority of comments have reflected satisfaction with the program. Some of these comments include:

- It's a stimulation to our minds.
- It widens our interests.
- It takes us away from everyday, boring activities.
- It's a special opportunity

- It's a privilege.
- It gives us the opportunity to voice our opinions.
- The lecturers go to so much trouble.
- Nobody talks down to us.
- It's the greatest thing done for seniors.
- It gives us a chance to meet others.
- It provides something for everyone.

To this point, discussion has focused on the impacts of the program on participants. While it was not within the scope of this research to determine the impacts on any other groups or individuals, several key informants offered insights into the broader impacts of the program. It was suggested for example, that many instructors had benefitted from their contact with participants in that they increased their level of understanding with regard to teaching older people. Informants also pointed out that the program had resulted in good publicity for both the university and the provincial government. On the other hand, it was felt that the program was not particularly visible within the university community and that it had had little impact on university policy.

Strengths and Weaknesses As with any program, Spring Session for Seniors has its particular strengths and weaknesses. Some of these have been discussed as they relate to the research questions which were posed. To obtain a more complete picture of the program's strengths and weaknesses, the perceptions of key informants were solicited. Their responses are summarized as follows

Strengths

- the input from the Advisory Committee
- the representative nature of the Advisory Committee
- the competence and enthusiasm of the program staff and administration
- the financial support of the provincial government
- the opportunity for seniors to meet and mingle with people of like mind
- the fulfillment of peoples' need for continuing education at a broader level than in the past
- the willingness of people to serve on the Advisory Committee
- the opportunity for people to experience university life
- the ability of the program to respond to the feedback of participants.

Weaknesses

- the lack of involvement of the university as a whole
- the lack of opportunity for progression
- the tendency of some participants to exploit the opportunity by treating it as a holiday
- the lack of involvement of some Edmonton participants
- the short-term nature of the program (i.e. it does not continue year-round)
- the financial restrictions in terms of expanding the program
- the lack of aggressive publicity efforts
- the program's lack of success in appealing to retired university staff.

Question 3 What is the nature of participation in Spring Session for Seniors?

The target population for Spring Session for Seniors consists of all individuals who are 60 years of age or older and retired and who are living north of Red Deer. As with any program, there are reasons why some members of the target population participate and others don't. The purpose of question three was to determine how adequately the program had reached the target population and what factors served as incentives or barriers to participation. As mentioned previously, a lengthy mail-strike precluded the use of comparison group questionnaires administered to non-participants. Much of the data required to respond to this research question was to have been derived from the comparison group. Consequently, the question cannot be answered as adequately as it might have been. There is data, however, from the participant questionnaire which provides some insights into this question.

Participants were asked to indicate where they had first heard about Spring Session for Seniors. Six response categories were provided and respondents checked as many of these as were applicable. The first four responses were coded and the number of responses for each category were summed. Table 5.3 presents the results.

Table 5.3
Sources of Program Information

Source	Number	Percent
Newspaper	22	14
Radio	6	4
Television	2	1
Friend/Relative	65	40
Senior Citizens' Organization	43	26
Brochure	18	11
Other	6	4
	162	100

These results indicate that most respondents had heard about the program from a friend or relative. The second major source was senior citizen's organizations or drop-in centres. Few respondents had heard about the program through television, radio or brochures. The implication seems to be that the program is most accessible to those individuals who are involved in senior citizen organizations or who know somebody who is aware of the program (once again suggesting that the best advertising is word-of-mouth). The conclusion might also be drawn that promotional efforts for the program have not been very effective in apprising people of its existence.

Another concern is whether Spring Session for Seniors appeals primarily to one particular stratum of the population. The description of the sample presented previously in this chapter would suggest that this is the case. Educational level, occupational level and income level all appear to be higher than those of the population as a whole in this particular age group. This raises the question of whether, in general, those of lower socio-economic status are intimidated by the prospect of attending university. Furthermore, if this is the case, what should the university be doing to rectify the situation, if anything?

Another factor which may influence participation in this program is people's attitudes toward continuing education. A six-item question was included on the research instrument in an attempt to ascertain respondents' attitudes toward continuing education. The responses to this question are summarized in Table 5.4. The "strongly agree" and "agree" responses from the questionnaire have been combined to yield the "agree" column and the "disagree" and "strongly disagree" responses have been combined to produce the "disagree" column.

Table 5.4
Attitudes Toward Continuing Education

Item	Agree (%)	No Opinion (%)	Disagree (%)
1. Education is appropriate only when job or career oriented	2.8	4.3	92.9
2. Education is appropriate only for younger people	3.6	.7	95.7
3. Education is and should be a lifelong process	95.1	.7	4.2
4. There are not enough educational opportunities for older people	48.6	13.5	37.9
5. Whether or not adults participate in continuing education should be entirely a matter of personal choice	95.8	.7	3.5
6. There is too much emphasis on education	10.2	11.7	78.1

The percentages underlined appear to indicate highly positive attitudes among respondents toward continuing education. Items four and six appear less conclusive than do the other items possibly because they refer to respondents' perceptions of reality rather than to their attitudes per se. A comparison of these results with those derived from a sample of non-participants would be enlightening with respect to the impacts of attitudes on participation patterns. However, in the absence of such comparison data, the responses are nevertheless valuable in that they reflect the positive attitudes toward education of those who do participate.

There have long been barriers to participation in education for older people. Whether these barriers are real or perceived is irrelevant - they still prevent people from participating in continuing education experiences. Among the barriers mentioned in the literature are age, poor health, lack of time, location and cost (Cross and Florio, 1978; Del Vento Bielby, 1980). While Cross and Florio (1978) point out that these barriers are for the most part diminishing, it appears that they continue to act as deterrents for some individuals.

While age does not seem to be a barrier to participation in this program, several respondents cited age as a reason for not registering in credit courses. It may well be that many older people continue to feel that they are "too old to go back to school". A large number of respondents pointed out, in reference to the $50 fee, that cost is an important factor with regard to participation in the program. It seems reasonable to assume that cost is perceived by some as a deterrent to participation in Spring Session for Seniors. Other factors such as lack of time, location and feelings of apprehension toward the university may be acting as barriers to participation in this program and consequently need to be considered in future planning.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to conduct a comprehensive, summative evaluation of the Spring Session for Seniors program at the University of Alberta. The evaluation was requested by the Advisory Committee for the program to assist them in making decisions regarding continuation, improvement or termination of Spring Session for Seniors.

The model used to guide the evaluation process was an interactive model adapted from Stake's (1975) concept of responsive evaluation. Ongoing negotiation between the evaluator and the evaluation audiences served to identify the major concerns and issues which, translated into research questions, became the focus for the study. To respond to the research questions, the study used a convergent design which combined a variety of techniques and sources of information. The data thus derived provided an in-depth picture of the program with its attendant strengths and weaknesses and, to the greatest extent possible, responded to the research questions posed in the study. The results have been presented and discussed in sufficient detail in Chapter 5.

In this chapter, a brief overview of the program in terms of its successes and failures will be provided. The major purpose of the chapter is to present recommendations regarding the future of Spring Session for Seniors.

New issues arising from the study will be discussed briefly. The final sections will deal with the limitations of the study, suggestions for future research and the implications of the study for the education of older adults.

Overview

In the view of many evaluation experts, it is incumbent upon the evaluator to make a final judgement about a program in terms of its worth or value (Eisner, 1975); Guba and Lincoln, 1981; Scriven, 1974; Stake, 1969, 1975). Scriven feels particularly strongly about this as reflected by his comment that, "evaluation research must produce as a conclusion exactly the kind of statement that social scientists have for years been taught is illegitimate: a judgement of value, worth or merit. This is the great scientific and philosophical significance of evaluation research" (1974, p. 5).

Such a judgement of course, while based primarily on the findings of the evaluation research, cannot help but reflect the subjective views of the researcher. An evaluation of this nature also takes into account the subjective judgements of a wide variety of interested parties including participants administrators and program planners. It is important to recognize that different people place different values on a program according to their own experiences with it. The interactive model used in this evaluation allowed this value plurality to emerge.

Based upon interviews with participants and key informants, observation of the program, perusal of various documents and the numerous comments offered by survey respondents, in the judgement of this researcher, the Spring Session for Seniors program has been an unequivocal success. Participants have expressed exceedingly positive feelings about the program, describing it as "a marvellous opportunity", "a privilege" and "an exciting challenge". The positive impacts of the program have been well-documented, providing persuasive evidence of the program's success. The following comments eloquently reflect the feelings of many of the participants:

- It was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.
- It is like a breath of new life - new thoughts - a stimulation to our minds.

This is not to suggest that the participants perceive of the program as having no faults. Criticisms regarding specific courses and instructors, decreases in the number of social events, timetabling constraints, fees and other aspects of the program were freely offered. These have been recorded and presumably will be considered in future planning. On the whole however, participants have clearly indicated that they regard the program as a great success.

Key informants also expressed considerable enthusiasm about the program, indicating that on the whole, they viewed it as a successful and worthwhile endeavor.

They tended however, to be more aware of the weaknesses and potentials for improvement, possibly because as program planners they have a greater vested interest in the future of the program. Nevertheless, the key informants tended to emphasize the strengths of the program and to recognize its value in terms of the positive impacts.

There is a danger in allowing such obvious success as indicated by the results of this evaluation to obfuscate the shortcomings of the program. It is difficult indeed to point out the faults of a program which appears on the surface to have been an unmitigated success. However; shortcomings do exist and the program can only be improved if these are clearly recognized. Some of the weaknesses of this program have been indicated by the results presented in Chapter 5 and others will emerge as the recommendations are discussed in the following section.

Recommendations

In the terms of reference for this evaluation study, the evaluator was charged with the task of making recommendations for the future operation of the program. The following recommendations are based on the evaluation results and on the researcher's perceptions of the program as it is and as it might be.

1. It is recommended that the Spring Session for Seniors Program be continued.

This recommendation may appear obvious given the tone of the previous discussion. However, a requirement of the evaluation was that a recommendation be made with regard to continuation, improvement or termination and continuation, and improvement appear to be the only rational options.

2. It is recommended that the Advisory Committee, with the assistance of the Department of Extension and the Office of Special Sessions, work toward developing a philosophy, a set of broad goals and specific objectives for Spring Session for Seniors.

One of the greatest weaknesses of the program appears to be the lack of any philosophical underpinnings to guide its operation. There is a need to develop a philosophy for the program, taking into account the philosophy and objectives of the Department of Extension and the role of the University with regard to serving older people. The President's Committee on Gerontology may prove to be a valuable resource in approaching this task. From the philosophy, should follow broad goals of the program and specific objectives as illustrated below:

Philosophy
↓
Broad Goals
↓
Specific Objectives

The development of a philosophy, goals and objectives would facilitate the tasks of program planning and decision-making. Decisions with regard to such issues as the $50 fee and the role of social events would be more readily made in the context of a philosophical basis for the program.

3. It is recommended that the program be expanded to incorporate a broader range of offerings throughout the year.

The evaluation indicated considerable support for the expansion of the program. In its present form, the program addresses the educational needs of the target group for a period of only three weeks each year. It would seem that, for the remaining 49 weeks the educational needs of older people are neglected by the University. The experiences of many American universities (and the University of Regina in Canada) suggest that older adults enthusiastically support a wide variety of educational formats at different times during the year. A year-round program consisting of seminars, mini-courses, workshops, lectures and other offerings would go a long way toward meeting the educational needs of older people.

4. It is recommended that a full-time staff person be hired to deal with programming for older adults.

Even if the program was to continue unchanged, the time and energy demands on part-time staff to plan, implement and coordinate the program appear to be unrealistic. With expansion of the program, it will also be necessary to assess the needs of the target population. The time involved in this task and in planning new programs clearly necessitates the time and energies of a full-time coordinator.

5. It is recommended that the promotional efforts for the program be increased and that particular efforts be made to appeal to a broader range of participants.

Evaluation results clearly indicated that promotional efforts are not having a far-reaching impact in terms of apprising the target population of the program's existence. Comments received from participants revealed that information regarding the program reaches a relatively small proportion of the population of senior citizens. The implication is that alternative or more intensive promotional efforts would be more effective. At the same time, the program does not appear to have effectively reached all strata of the target population. Efforts should be made to identify and, if possible, remove the barriers which prevent large segments of the population, particularly those of lower socio-economic status or particular ethnic groups, from attending the program.

6. It is recommended that additional sources of funding be pursued.

The future of the program need not be determined by funding constraints. It seems likely that funding is available for this program from a variety of sources. Given the unequivocal success of Spring Session for Seniors, the provincial government may be persuaded to increase their funding significantly.

7. It is recommended that attempts be made to establish support services for older adults wishing to attend university either as participants in this program or in credit courses.

The literature suggests that a lack of support services such as counselling and registration assistance is one of the major weaknesses of similar programs in the United

States, and often acts as a barrier to participation (Chelsvig and Timmerman, 1979; Long and Rossing, 1979). Student Counselling Services at the University has expressed an interest in providing these services to older students.

8. It is recommended that attempts be made to make the Spring Session for Seniors program more visible within the University community.

In order to ensure greater commitment to and support for the program on the part of the University, it is important that the visibility of the program be increased. This objective may be accomplished through liaison with the President's Committee on Gerontology.

9. It is recommended that contact be established with other educational institutions in order to coordinate program offerings for older people.

The University is not the only educational institution with a responsibility for providing programs for older adults. Meeting the educational needs of older people requires the cooperative efforts of many educational institutions. Each has a special role to play based on its own particular educational mandate. Community colleges are especially well-suited to offering programs for older adults. As Scanlon points out, "community colleges are by mandate most sensitive and responsive to the needs of the people in their localities" (1978, p. 3). It is important that the University, community colleges and other institutions clarify their unique functions and coordinate their efforts with regard to meeting the educational needs of older adults - each offering programs which are within the scope of its own educational mandate and expertise.

10. It is recommended that the Committee assess the role of the University in offering outreach programs to older adults.

Because of its location, the University is viewed as inaccessible by many older people, particularly those with decreased mobility. This is especially true during the winter months when snow, ice and cold weather become deterrents to travel. Outreach programs in various locations have been instituted for older students in many universities (e.g. the University of Regina) and should be considered as an option here.

11. It is recommended that the eligibility requirement that participants be <u>retired</u> be deleted.

This requirement appears to be confusing to those whose status may be ambiguous (e.g. women who have always been homemakers - are they retired? and those who are semi-retired). It also seems to penalize those who wish to continue working beyond 60 or 65 years of age.

12. It is recommended that the $50 fee for the fourth year or more of attendance be discontinued.

The debate over this fee is not easily resolved as there are persuasive arguments to support both sides of the issue. However, the institution of this fee has clearly generated some negative feelings among participants and program planners alike. The fee also appears to be a deterrent to people who wish to continue participating but feel that they are unable to afford it. It seems that it would be more appropriate to request additional funding to cover any deficit which was to have been dealt with by this fee.

13. It is recommended that the Committee study the possibility of instituting different modes of learning.

Throughout its years of operation, the Spring Session for Seniors program has focused on conventional modes of learning in traditional classroom settings. This is hardly surprising considering that this has been the predominant approach within the University as a whole. While participants do not appear dissatisfied with this approach, its exclusive use would seem to unnecessarily limit the scope of the program. Different modes of learning such as individualized learning, distance learning, mass-media learning, modularized learning and computerized learning are being used with success at other universities and colleges. In this program, tours have been viewed as social events when, in fact, they may be just as educational as classroom learning. In many university programs for older adults, educational tours are viewed as an important component by both planners and participants. The Committee may wish to consider instituting more innovative modes of learning to broaden the scope of this program.

14. It is recommended that the Advisory Committee encourage increased involvement of participants in planning, organizing and implementing social events.

Respondents clearly indicated a desire for an increased number of social events, particularly for out-of-town participants. Social events appear to be an important and appropriate feature of the program but they are also very demanding of staff time and energy. It is suggested therefore, that participants increase their involvement in arranging some of these events.

These recommendations were presented to the Advisory Committee for Spring Session for Seniors to assist them in making decisions regarding the future of the program.

Limitations of the Study

There are certain limitations associated with virtually any piece of research. One limitation of this study is the retrospective nature of the evaluation process. Lacking an assessment of needs, specifically-stated goals and a program planning process in which evaluation was built in, the Spring Session for Seniors program presented several limitations in terms of the evaluation process.

Another limitation was the failure of the evaluation design to include instructors as a source of information. This can be primarily attributed to constraints on time and other resources.

Perhaps the greatest limitation of the study resulted from the loss of comparison information from non-participants due to a lengthy mail strike. The inability to use this information for comparison purposes, precluded the provision of complete responses to some questions, particularly those relating to the nature of participation in the program.

Implications for the Education of Older Adults

As mentioned previously, educational institutions in our society are demonstrating an increased commitment to the notion of learning as a continuous lifelong process. Universities however, as the bastions of "higher education" have found it most difficult to respond to this new focus on lifelong learning. Universities have traditionally been charged with the responsibility of preparing young people for their roles in life and, particularly for their places in the job market. So single-mindedly have universities pursued these goals that the needs of other groups, particularly those in the later years have, for the most part, been ignored (A.E.D., 1974; Glendenning, 1976).

Older people in our society have been excluded not only from educational institutions but from the mainstream of life in general. In recent years however, some attempts are being made by educational institutions to rectify this situation as tuition waiver plans and special-interest courses are being offered for older learners. It has been demonstrated that the capacity to learn does not decrease with age and neither does the desire to continue learning. What then are the needs of older adults with respect to education?

Cross and Florio point out that, "the educational needs of older adults are sufficiently varied and different from those traditionally associated with younger students" to justify providing different programs and services for them (1978, p.39). With the emphasis on degrees, diplomas and credits as associated with educational pursuits, it has been widely assumed that these are also the goals of older adults. However, with some exceptions, this does not appear to be the case. The results of this research clearly indicate that the needs of older students do not revolve around earning a degree or receiving credit.

The needs of older adults for learning opportunities may be viewed in terms of two broad areas:

1. The need for survival in the context of the aging process and sweeping societal changes.
2. The need for self-fulfillment.

Programs for older adults should be addressed to both of these concerns. However, too often, programs are based on planners' perceptions of learning needs rather than on the demonstrated needs of the target population. It is essential that educational institutions make every effort to determine what older adults really need and want in terms of educational experiences. Clearly, an assessment of needs is a crucial step in planning educational programs for older people.

Meeting the learning needs of older adults requires the provision of a broad range of educational services. This raises the question of the role of universities in providing these services. Why should institutions which have traditionally provided opportunities for higher learning for youth be concerned with the needs of older learners who, for the most part, are not interested in earning degrees or credits?

From a strictly practical point of view, the facilities, residences, instructors and support staff are all readily available at universities. Moreover, the university has a mandate to educate and through continuing education and extension divisions this mandate is expanded to include older learners and non-credit courses. For better or worse, universities appear to be giving up their elitist, "ivory-tower" image, in favor of serving the larger community. Finally, if universities are truly committed to the concept of lifelong education, the learning needs of older people must be viewed as a priority. As pointed out by the Academy for Educational Development, "Education is, above all, part of the search for meaning in life, and life should be meaningful as long as there is breath in one's body" (1974, p. 9).

The responsibility for providing educational programs for older adults lies not only with universities but also with other educational institutions in the community. Coordination among institutions is important to ensure effective and appropriate use of educational resources for older learners. Each educational institution should focus on offering those programs for which it is best suited by virtue of its mandate and expertise.

Clearly, the university has a crucial part to play in the provision of educational opportunities for older people. There is no doubt that many older adults view the opportunity to attend university as something especially meaningful. The majority of respondents in this study indicated that they viewed the program as a unique opportunity. Responses to a question asking what was unique about the program included:

- the university atmosphere
- the calibre of the instructors and course content are definitely superior
- expert delivery of the program
- the opportunity to attend university - something I never had the chance to do before
- quality and expertise

Just the fact that a program is a university offering seems to add significantly to its appeal.

There is clearly a demand for university programs for older adults and universities are beginning to move toward meeting this demand. However, the move by universities to offering courses specifically designed for older people raises a number of important issues. For example:

1. Do older students prefer to be segregated from their younger colleagues in learning situations or do they prefer the opportunity to mix with them?

2. Should attempts be made by the university to broaden the base of participation by attracting students from a wide variety of socio-economic and educational backgrounds?

3. What types or modes of learning are best suited to meet the needs of older adults?

4. At what level should universities become involved in this area? (e.g. as leaders, as facilitators, as direct service providers)

These issues will not be dealt with here but they are suggested as important areas for future research.

In summary, the myth that advancing age is accompanied by a loss of interest in life and a decrease in learning ability is being effectively shattered. To a greater extent than ever, older people are becoming involved in continuing education experiences, acquiring new interests, learning new skills and even building new careers. Universities are beginning to recognize the importance of their role in providing these opportunities for older people, in helping them to adjust to the changes they face and to meet new challenges. As yet however, they have taken a minor role. There appears to be tremendous scope for universities and other institutions to increase their services to older adults and to develop more innovative and effective means of meeting their needs. The challenge faced by educational institutions is implied by Jones who states that, "Since learning is so nearly synonymous with life itself, it might be that greater opportunities to learn, and above all, greater expectations about the capacity to do it, could transform the lives of many older people" (1976, p. 10).

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

Covering Letter

Letter of Reminder

SPRING SESSION FOR SENIORS

AN EVALUATION

WE HAVE DEVELOPED THIS QUESTIONNAIRE TO HELP US FIND OUT WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT THE SPRING SESSION FOR SENIORS PROGRAM. WE URGE YOU TO BE FRANK AND OPEN IN EXPRESSING YOUR VIEWS.

PLEASE DO NOT PLACE YOUR NAME ANYWHERE ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE AS WE WISH TO ENSURE THE ANONYMITY OF THOSE PARTICIPATING. UNLESS OTHER INSTRUCTIONS ARE GIVEN IN THE QUESTIONS, PLEASE CHECK (✓) THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE OR FILL IN THE BLANKS PROVIDED. IF YOU WISH TO INCLUDE ANY FURTHER COMMENTS, PLEASE USE THE BACKS OF THE PAGES.

---

1. WHERE DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT THE SPRING SESSION FOR SENIORS PROGRAM?

    _____ LOCAL NEWSPAPER
    _____ RADIO
    _____ TELEVISION
    _____ FROM A FRIEND
    _____ AT A SENIOR CITIZEN'S CENTRE
    _____ RECEIVED A BROCHURE
    _____ OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFIY)

    ____
    ____

2. FROM THE LIST BELOW, PLEASE CHECK ALL OF THE YEARS IN WHICH YOU HAVE PARTICIPATED IN SPRING SESSION FOR SENIORS

    _____ 1975
    _____ 1976
    _____ 1977
    _____ 1978
    _____ 1979
    _____ 1980

Next, we would like to ask some questions to find out a little bit about you. Remember, this information will be completely confidential.

3. IN THE SPACE BELOW, PLEASE FILL IN THE NAME OF THE PLACE WHERE YOU LIVE. (THE CITY, TOWN OR CLOSEST COMMUNITY).

   ____

4. SEX ____MALE ____FEMALE

5. WHAT WAS YOUR AGE AT YOUR LAST BIRTHDAY? ________

6. PLEASE INDICATE WHICH <u>ONE</u> OF THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES <u>BEST DESCRIBES</u> YOUR PRESENT STATUS.

   _____ WORKING AT FULL-TIME PAID EMPLOYMENT
   _____ WORKING AT PART-TIME PAID EMPLOYMENT
   _____ FULLY RETIRED
   _____ FULL-TIME HOMEMAKER (BOTH MALES AND FEMALES MAY CHECK THIS CATEGORY)
   _____ RETIRED <u>AND</u> A HOMEMAKER
   _____ WORKING PART-TIME <u>AND</u> A HOMEMAKER

7. IF YOU ARE RETIRED, FOR HOW LONG HAVE YOU NOW BEEN RETIRED?

   ________ YEARS

8. IN THE SPACE BELOW, PLEASE INDICATE YOUR OCCUPATION (AT PRESENT IF YOU ARE WORKING OR BEFORE YOU RETIRED). DO NOT GIVE THE COMPANY NAME BUT RATHER, THE NAME OF THE JOB.

____

9. WHAT IS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF FORMAL EDUCATION THAT YOU HAVE ATTAINED? (NOT INCLUDING SPRING SESSION FOR SENIORS)

_____ UP TO 8 YEARS
_____ 9 TO 12 YEARS
_____ SOME UNIVERSITY
_____ COMPLETED UNIVERSITY (BACHELORS DEGREE)
_____ GRADUATE DEGREE (MASTERS OR PHD)
_____ SOME OTHER POST-SECONDARY TRAINING (E.G. COURSES AT A TECHNICAL SCHOOL, COMMUNITY COLLEGE OR BUSINESS SCHOOL)
_____ COMPLETED OTHER POST-SECONDARY TRAINING (DIPLOMA RECEIVED)

10. PLEASE INDICATE YOUR PRESENT MARITAL STATUS BY CHECKING ONE OF THE CATEGORIES BELOW.

_____ MARRIED
_____ WIDOWED
_____ SINGLE (NEVER MARRIED)
_____ SEPARATED OR DIVORCED
_____ LIVING TOGETHER (UNMARRIED)

11.A) WHAT IS THE LANGUAGE THAT YOU SPEAK MOST OFTEN?

____

B) DO YOU SPEAK ANY OTHER LANGUAGES FLUENTLY?

_____ YES
_____ NO

IF YES | C) PLEASE SPECIFY ______________________
____
____

12. A) BESIDES BEING CANADIAN, DO YOU SEE YOURSELF AS BELONGING TO ANY PARTICULAR ETHNIC OR CULTURAL GROUP? (FOR EXAMPLE, SWEDISH, IRISH, UKRAINIAN)

_____ YES
_____ NO

IF YES

B) PLEASE SPECIFY
____
____
____

13. PLEASE INDICATE YOUR CURRENT TOTAL FAMILY INCOME (BEFORE TAXES) ON A YEARLY BASIS BY CHECKING ONE OF THE CATEGORIES BELOW.

_____ UNDER $3,000.
_____ $3,000. TO $4,000.
_____ $5,000. TO $8,999.
_____ $9,000. TO $12,999.
_____ $13,000. TO $16,999.
_____ $17,000. TO $20,999.
_____ $21,000, AND OVER
_____ DON'T KNOW

People have differing views about the importance and benefits of continuing education. We are interested in finding out about your views and about your own participation in various learning activities.

14. FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS, PLEASE CIRCLE THE STAR (*) BELOW THE RESPONSE WHICH BEST EXPRESSES YOUR VIEWS. PLEASE RESPOND TO ALL OF THE STATEMENTS.

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
A. EDUCATION IS APPROPRIATE ONLY WHEN JOB OR CAREER ORIENTED	*	*	*	*	*
B. EDUCATION IS APPROPRIATE ONLY FOR YOUNGER PEOPLE	*	*	*	*	*
C. EDUCATION IS AND SHOULD BE A LIFELONG PROCESS	*	*	*	*	*
D. THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER PEOPLE	*	*	*	*	*
E. WHETHER OR NOT ADULTS PARTICIPATE IN CONTINUING EDUCATION SHOULD BE ENTIRELY A MATTER OF PERSONAL CHOICE	*	*	*	*	*
F. THERE IS TOO MUCH EMPHASIS ON EDUCATION IN OUR SOCIETY	*	*	*	*	*

15.A) HAVE YOU TAKEN ANY CREDIT COURSES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA WITHIN THE LAST 5 YEARS?

_____ YES

_____ NO

IF YES

B) PLEASE LIST BELOW THE COURSES THAT YOU HAVE TAKEN WITH THE YEARS THAT YOU TOOK THEM

COURSE	YEAR

C) HOW INFLUENTIAL WAS YOUR ATTENDANCE AT SPRING SESSION FOR SENIORS ON YOUR DECISION TO TAKE A CREDIT COURSE(S)?

_____ NO INFLUENCE

_____ LITTLE INFLUENCE

_____ MODERATE INFLUENCE

_____ MUCH INFLUENCE

_____ DON'T KNOW

IF NO

D) IF YOU HAVE NOT TAKEN A CREDIT COURSE IN THE LAST 5 YEARS, WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN KNOWING WHAT FACTORS HAVE PREVENTED YOU FROM DOING SO. PLEASE CHECK THE RESPONSES WHICH APPLY FROM THE LIST BELOW.

____ A) I LIVE OUTSIDE EDMONTON AND AM UNABLE TO GO IN FOR COURSES

____ B) I LIVE IN EDMONTON BUT I'M TOO FAR FROM THE UNIVERSITY.

____ C) THERE IS TOO MUCH RED TAPE INVOLVED.

____ D) I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE COST.

____ E) IT IS TOO DIFFICULT FOR ME TO GET AROUND CAMPUS.

____ F) I DON'T HAVE THE APPROPRIATE QUALIFICATIONS

____ G) ILLNESS HAS PR[illegible] ME FROM TAKING COURSES.

____ H) I DON'T KNOW HOW TO GO ABOUT REGISTERING.

____ I) I AM TOO OLD.

____ J) I WASN'T AWARE THAT I COULD TAKE COURSES.

____ K) THE CAMPUS IS TOO CONFUSING

____ L) I WOULD FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE IN CLASSES WITH SO MANY YOUNG PEOPLE.

____ M) I HAVE TRIED BUT WAS UNABLE TO GET INTO THE COURSES THAT I WANTED.

____ N) I AM NOT INTERESTED

____ O) I AM TOO BUSY

____ P) OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY) ____________________

____

____

____

16. WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO RECALL YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN OTHER EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND COURSES DURING THE LAST 3 YEARS. FROM THE LIST BELOW, PLEASE CHECK OFF ANY ORGANIZATIONS, INSTITUTIONS OR AGENCIES FROM WHICH YOU HAVE TAKEN COURSES.

_____ A UNIVERSITY (OTHER THAN THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA)
_____ A COMMUNITY COLLEGE (FOR EXAMPLE, GRANT MACEWAN)
_____ UNIVERSITY EXTENSION (OTHER THAN SPRING SESSION FOR SENIORS)
_____ A HIGH SCHOOL
_____ A TECHNICAL SCHOOL
_____ A BUSINESS SCHOOL
_____ A CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL
_____ A COMMUNITY GROUP
_____ A LIBRARY, MUSEUM OR ART GALLERY
_____ A PUBLIC SERVICE ORGANIZATION (E.G. Y.M.C.A., ST. JOHN AMBULANCE)
_____ A CHURCH
_____ A LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD
_____ AN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM
_____ A PRIVATE ORGANIZATION (E.G. A PRIVATE DANCE SCHOOL)
_____ PRIVATE TUTORING (E.G. MUSIC LESSIONS)
_____ A SENIOR CITIZEN'S ORGANIZATION OR DROP-IN CENTRE
_____ OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)

____
____
____

17. IF YOU HAVE TAKEN CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES SINCE FIRST ATTENDING SPRING SESSION FOR SENIORS, HOW MUCH INFLUENCE DID SPRING SESSION HAVE ON YOUR DECISION TO PARTICIPATE IN THESE COURSES?

_____ NO INFLUENCE
_____ LITTLE INFLUENCE
_____ MODERATE INFLUENCE
_____ MUCH INFLUENCE
_____ DON'T KNOW

18. HOW INVOLVED ARE YOU IN ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES IN THE COMMUNITY?

_____ VERY ACTIVELY INVOLVED
_____ MODERATELY INVOLVED
_____ SOMEWHAT INVOLVED
_____ NOT AT ALL INVOLVED

We would like to know about any impacts that the Spring Session for Seniors program may have had on your life.

19.A) HAVE THERE BEEN ANY CHANGES IN YOUR LIFE-STYLE OR ANYTHING SPECIAL YOU HAVE DONE THAT <u>YOU ATTRIBUTE</u> TO YOUR PARTICIPATION IN SPRING SESSION FOR SENIORS?

_____ YES
_____ NO

IF <u>YES</u>

B) WE WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF YOU WOULD SHARE THESE CHANGES WITH US.

____
____
____
____
____
____
____

20.A) WERE THERE ANY COURSES OR INSTRUCTORS IN SPRING SESSION FOR SENIORS THAT HAD ANY PARTICULAR INFLUENCE ON YOUR LIFE?

_____ YES
_____ NO

IF YES

B) PLEASE SPECIFY

____
____
____
____
____

21. HAVE YOU EVER BEEN INVOLVED IN PLANNING, ORGANIZING OR OTHERWISE WORKING ON ANY PART OF THE SPRING SESSION FOR SENIORS PROGRAM?

_____ YES
_____ NO

22.A) IS IT IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING, ORGANIZING OR OTHERWISE WORKING ON THE PROGRAM?

_____ YES
_____ NO

IF YES

B) DO YOU FEEL THAT SUFFICIENT OPPORTUNITY HAS BEEN PROVIDED FOR YOU TO BECOME INVOLVED IN THESE ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM?

_____ YES
_____ NO

23.A) IS IT IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EVALUATE THE COURSES AND INSTRUCTORS IN SPRING SESSION FOR SENIORS?

_____ YES
_____ NO

IF YES

B) DO YOU FEEL THAT SUFFICIENT OPPORTUNITY HAS BEEN PROVIDED FOR YOU TO EVALUATE COURSES AND INSTRUCTORS?

_____ YES
_____ NO

24. CAN YOU SUGGEST ANY WAYS IN WHICH PARTICIPANTS IN SPRING SESSION FOR SENIORS MIGHT BECOME MORE INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAM?

____

____

____

____

____

25. A) IS THERE ANYTHING UNIQUE ABOUT THE SPRING SESSION FOR SENIORS PROGRAM AS COMPARED WITH OTHER COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAM?

_____ YES

_____ NO

IF YES

B) WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT THE PROGRAM?

____

____

____

____

____

There are many factors which influence peoples' participation in continuing education programs. We are interested in knowing about your reasons for participating in Spring Session for Seniors.

26. FOR EACH ITEM LISTED BELOW, PLEASE CIRCLE THE STAR (*) BELOW THE RESPONSE WHICH BEST DESCRIBES HOW MUCH INFLUENCE THE FACTOR HAD ON YOUR DECISION TO ENROLL IN SPRING SESSION FOR SENIORS. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU GIVE AN ANSWER FOR EACH ITEM.

	NO INFLUENCE	LITTLE INFLUENCE	MODERATE INFLUENCE	MUCH INFLUENCE
1. TO SEEK KNOWLEDGE FOR ITS OWN SAKE	*	*	*	*

	NO INFLUENCE	LITTLE INFLUENCE	MODERATE INFLUENCE	MUCH INFLUENCE
2. TO SHARE A COMMON INTEREST WITH MY SPOUSE OR FRIEND	*	*	*	*
3. TO BECOME MORE EFFECTIVE AS A CITIZEN	*	*	*	*
4. TO GET RELIEF FROM BOREDOM	*	*	*	*
5. TO CARRY OUT THE RECOMMENDATION OF SOME AUTHORITY	*	*	*	*
6. TO SATISFY AN INQUIRING MIND	*	*	*	*
7. TO OVERCOME THE FRUSTRATION OF DAY-TO-DAY LIVING	*	*	*	*
8. TO BE ACCEPTED BY OTHERS	*	*	*	*
9. TO SUPPLEMENT A NARROW PREVIOUS EDUCATION	*	*	*	*
10. TO STOP MYSELF FROM BECOMING A "VEGETABLE"	*	*	*	*
11. TO ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE TO HELP WITH OTHER EDUCATIONAL COURSES	*	*	*	*
12. TO FULFILL A NEED FOR PERSONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND FRIENDSHIPS	*	*	*	*
13. TO KEEP UP WITH COMPETITION	*	*	*	*
14. TO PARTICIPATE IN GROUP ACTIVITY	*	*	*	*
15. TO GAIN INSIGHT INTO MY PERSONAL PROBLEMS	*	*	*	*

	NO INFLUENCE	LITTLE INFLUENCE	MODERATE INFLUENCE	MUCH INFLUENCE
16. TO HELP ME EARN A DEGREE, DIPLOMA OR CERTIFICATE	*	*	*	*
17. TO ESCAPE TELEVISION	*	*	*	*
18. TO PREPARE FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE	*	*	*	*
19. TO GAIN INSIGHT INTO HUMAN RELATIONS	*	*	*	*
20. TO HAVE A FEW HOURS AWAY FROM RESPONSIBILITIES	*	*	*	*
21. TO LEARN JUST FOR THE JOY OF LEARNING	*	*	*	*
22. TO BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH CONGENIAL PEOPLE	*	*	*	*
23. TO PROVIDE A CONTRAST TO THE REST OF MY LIFE	*	*	*	*
24. TO GET A BREAK IN THE ROUTINE OF HOME OR WORK	*	*	*	*
25. TO IMPROVE MY ABILITY TO SERVE MANKIND	*	*	*	*
26. TO KEEP UP WITH OTHERS	*	*	*	*
27. TO IMPROVE MY SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS	*	*	*	*
28. TO MAINTAIN OR IMPROVE MY SOCIAL POSITION	*	*	*	*
29. TO ESCAPE AN UNHAPPY RELATIONSHIP	*	*	*	*
30. TO PROVIDE A CONTRAST TO MY PREVIOUS EDUCATION	*	*	*	*

	NO INFLUENCE	LITTLE INFLUENCE	MODERATE INFLUENCE	MUCH INFLUENCE
31. TO COMPLY WITH THE SUGGESTIONS OF SOMEONE ELSE	*	*	*	*
32. TO LEARN JUST FOR THE SAKE OF LEARNING	*	*	*	*
33. TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS	*	*	*	*
34. TO IMPROVE MY ABILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY WORK	*	*	*	*
35. TO COMPLY WITH INSTRUCTION FROM SOMEONE ELSE	*	*	*	*

27. WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT HOW SUCCESSFUL OR UNSUCCESSFUL THE SPRING SESSION FOR SENIORS PROGRAM WAS IN MEETING YOUR EXPECTATIONS. FOR EACH OF THE GENERAL EXPECTATIONS LISTED BELOW, PLEASE CIRCLE THE STAR (*) BELOW THE RESPONSE WHICH BEST REFLECTS YOUR VIEWS.

	FELL BELOW EXPECTATIONS	MET EXPECTATIONS	EXCEEDED EXPECTATIONS	NO EXPECTATIONS
1. TO LEARN FOR THE SAKE OF LEARNING	*	*	*	*
2. TO LEARN ABOUT A SPECIFIC SUBJECT OR SKILL	*	*	*	*
3. TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS	*	*	*	*
4. TO IMPROVE MY IMAGE OF MYSELF	*	*	*	*
5. TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASSOCIATE WITH OTHERS	*	*	*	*
6. TO GET TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY	*	*	*	*
7. TO ENJOY MYSELF	*	*	*	*

Finally, we would like you to share your views on some of the administrative aspects of the program.

28.A) THE UNIVERSITY NOW CHARGES A $10.00 REGISTRATION FEE FOR THIS PROGRAM. DO YOU THINK THAT A FEE SHOULD BE CHARGED?

_____ YES

_____ NO

B) PLEASE GIVE YOUR REASONS FOR AGREEING OR DISAGREEING WITH A REGISTRATION FEE.

____

____

____

____

____

C) IF YOU BELIEVE THAT A FEE <u>SHOULD</u> BE CHARGED, WHAT IS THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT THAT PEOPLE REGISTERING FOR THIS PROGRAM SHOULD BE EXPECTED TO PAY? ____________________

D) PLEASE GIVE YOUR REASONS FOR YOUR ANSWER.

____

____

____

____

____

29.A) THE UNIVERSITY NOW HAS A POLICY OF CHARGING $50.00 TO THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE TAKING THE PROGRAM FOR THE FOURTH TIME (OR MORE). DO YOU AGREE WITH THIS POLICY?

_____ YES

_____ NO

B) PLEASE GIVE YOUR REASON(S) FOR AGREEING OR DISAGREEING.

30.A) HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE SOCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDED IN THE SPRING SESSION FOR SENIORS PROGRAM?

_____ VERY SATISFIED
_____ SATISFIED
_____ DISSATISFIED
_____ VERY DISSATISFIED
_____ NO OPINION

B) PLEASE GIVE YOUR REASONS FOR YOUR SATISFACTION OR DISSATISFACTION.

31. WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW YOUR VIEWS ABOUT ADMISSION POLICIES FOR SPRING SESSION FOR SENIORS. FOR EACH OF THE STATEMENTS BELOW, PLEASE CIRCLE THE STAR (*) BELOW THE RESPONSE WHICH BEST FITS YOUR VIEWS.

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
A) ADMISSION SHOULD BE LIMITED TO PEOPLE WHO ARE <u>RETIRED</u>, NO MATTER WHAT THEIR AGE.	*	*	*	*	*
B) ADMISSION SHOULD BE LIMITED TO PEOPLE WHO ARE <u>60 OR OVER</u> WHETHER WORKING OR RETIRED.	*	*	*	*	*
C) ADMISSION SHOULD BE LIMITED TO PEOPLE WHO ARE BOTH OVER 60 <u>AND</u> RETIRED	*	*	*	*	*
D) ADMISSION SHOULD <u>NOT</u> BE LIMITED BY EITHER AGE OR RETIREMENT STATUS	*	*	*	*	*
E) THE SPOUSE OF A PERSON WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE PROGRAM SHOULD ALSO BE ELIGIBLE REGARDLESS OF AGE OR RETIREMENT STATUS	*	*	*	*	*

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. THE INFORMATION THAT YOU HAVE PROVIDED WILL BE OF GREAT ASSISTANCE TO US IN EVALUATING AND IMPROVING THIS PROGRAM.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA EXTENSION

Dear Participant,

The Spring Session for Seniors program has now been in operation at the University for six years. The program has been evaluated each year to find out what the participants like or dislike about it and to obtain their suggestions for improvement.

We are currently undertaking a much more extensive evaluation of Spring Session for Seniors to help us in deciding on future directions for the program. As a participant you can be of great assistance to us by sharing your views - both positive and negative - about the Session. Your comments and suggestions are very important to us in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the program and in pointing toward more effective approaches. We hope that you will assist us in this evaluation by completing the enclosed questionnaire and returning it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided.

If another member of your household has also received this questionnaire, please do not discuss the answers until after you have both completed it. We would appreciate having all questionnaires returned to us by May 1, 1981, including those which have not been completed.

Please be assured that your answers will be treated in the strictest confidence. Once the study has been completed, a short summary of the findings will be prepared. If you wish to have a copy of this summary sent to you, please fill in the enclosed card and mail it to us. For further information about this study, please contact the Faculty of Extension at 432-3033.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Yours truly,

Barbara Sykes

(Ms.) Barbara Sykes
Program Evaluator

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