Birkbeck
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

FUTURETRACK
PART-TIME STUDENTS

Employability and Part-time students

Part-time, Distance and Flexible Study in Higher Education conference

23 October 2012

Claire Callender
David Wilkinson

National Institute of Economic and Social Research

Birkbeck UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

FUTURETRACK PART-TIME STUDENTS

Outline of talk

- Introduce the survey
- Employment persistence and occupational change
- What do graduates value about their course
- What skills have courses helped to develop
- To what extent have courses contributed to personal development
- Key factors associated with reporting course had an impact on personal development
- Summary

National Institute of Economic and Social Research

Birkbeck UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

FUTURETRACK PART-TIME STUDENTS

HECSU funded survey of part-time students

- Two cohorts
  - Starters: in their first year of study 2007/08
  - Completers: in their final year of study 2007/08
- Students taking
  - First degree;
  - Foundation degree;
  - HNC/HND.
- Studying
  - Engineering / Technology
  - Social sciences
  - Law
  - Business and administration
  - Education
- Two waves of interviewing
  - 2007/08 and 2010/11
  - On-line and telephone
- Sample size
  - Wave 1 – 1,876 starters and 1,829 completers
  - Wave 2 – 341 starters and 940 completers

National Institute of Economic and Social Research

Birkbeck UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

FUTURETRACK PART-TIME STUDENTS

High degree of employment persistence - completers

	Before	During	After
Full-time employee	73	74	76
Part-time employee	16	18	11
Other	11	8	13

- 81% employed before, during and after course
- Of these:
  - 93% continuously employed since wave 1
  - 80% working for same employer at both waves of survey
  - 78% always employed full-time

National Institute of Economic and Social Research

Birkbeck UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

FUTURETRACK PART-TIME STUDENTS

Considerable occupational upgrade - completers

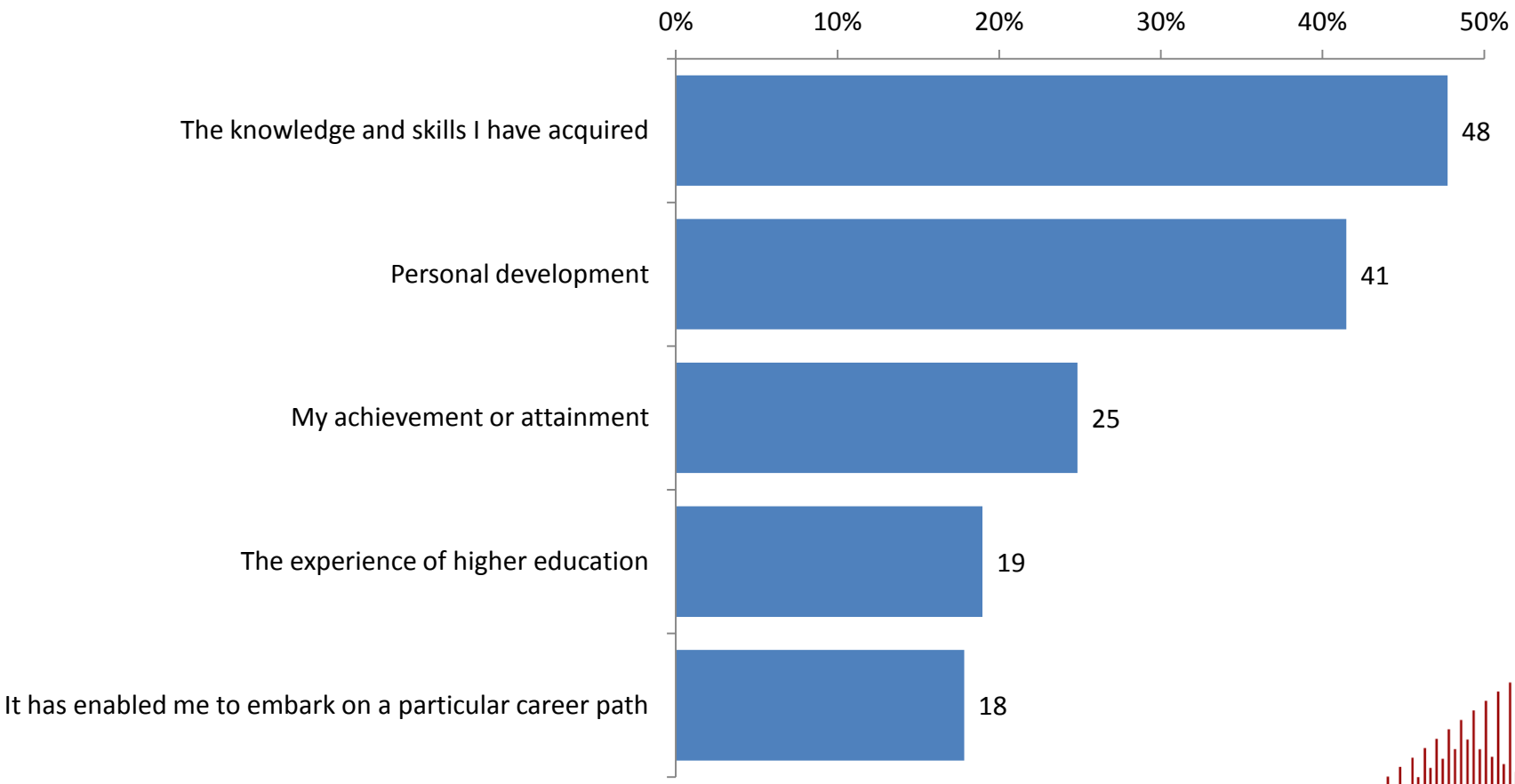
	2007/08	2010/11
Managers and Professionals	33	46
Intermediate	45	50
Routine manual/unemployed	10	4
Don't know	1	4
Not employed in 2007/08		9

National Institute of Economic and Social Research

Birkbeck UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

FUTURETRACK PART-TIME STUDENTS

What graduates most valued about their course



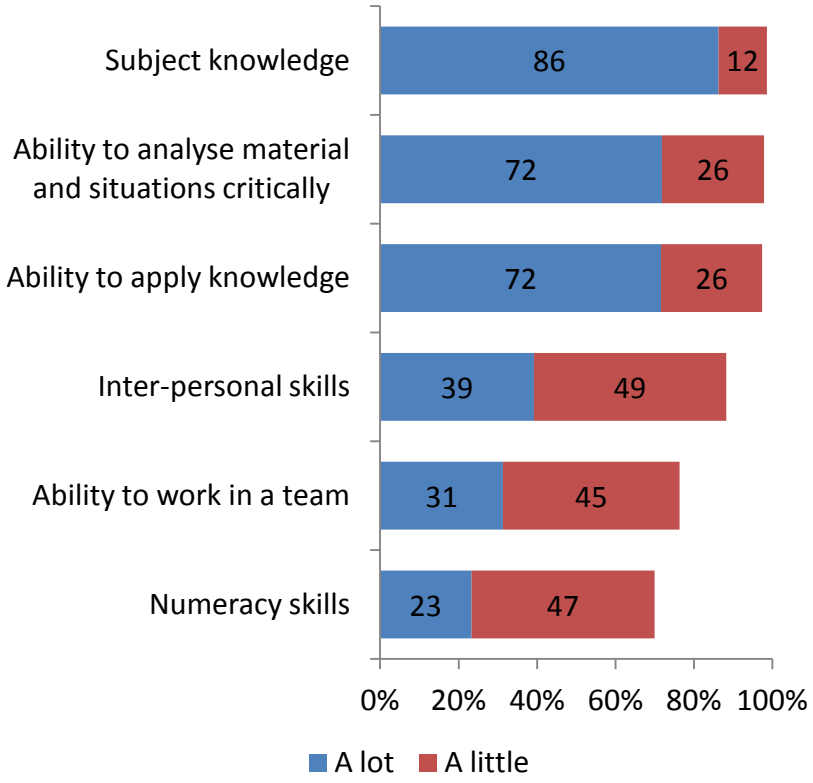
National Institute of Economic and Social Research

Birkbeck UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

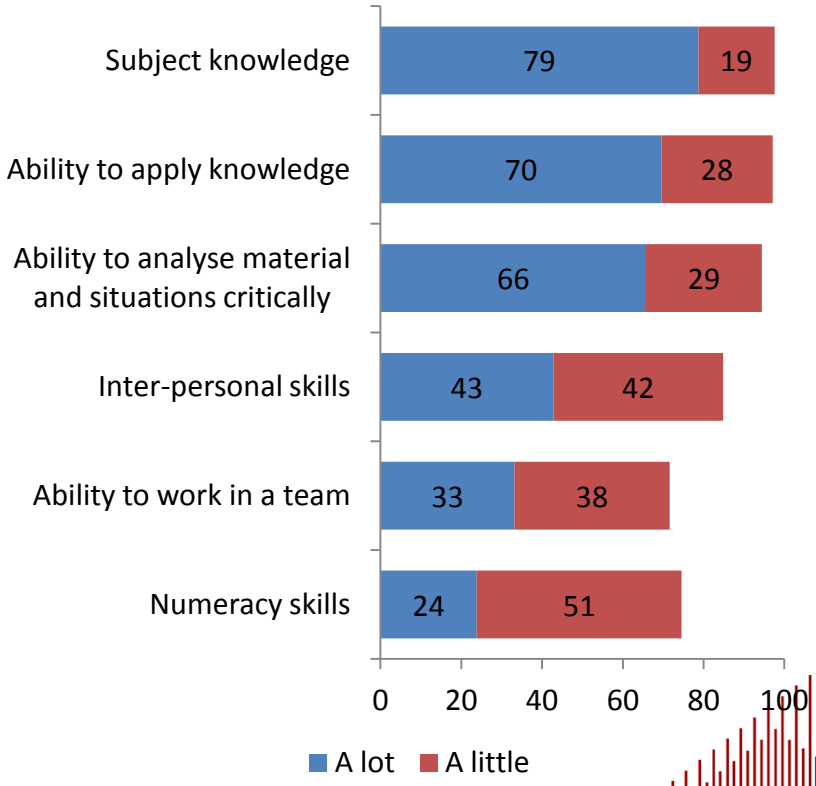
FUTURETRACK PART-TIME STUDENTS

Skills developed by courses and used in current job

Graduates



Students in Year 3



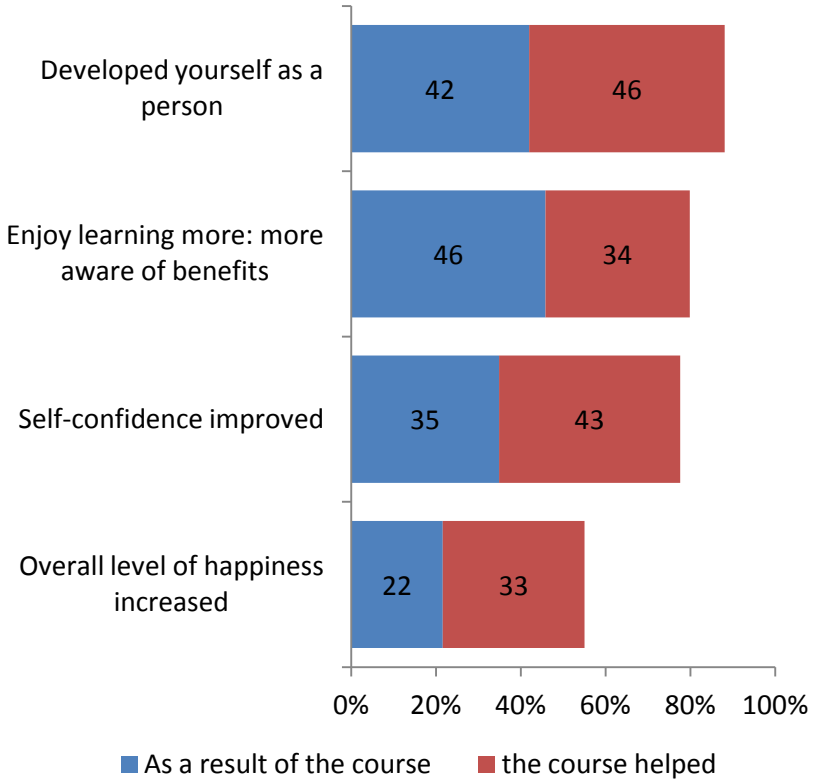
National Institute of Economic and Social Research

Birkbeck UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

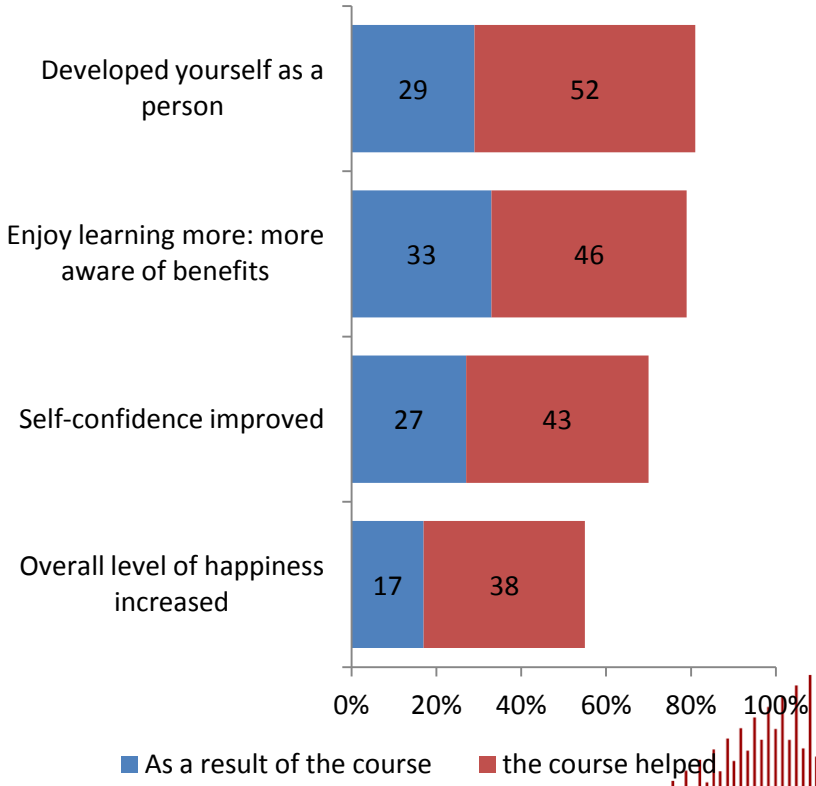
FUTURETRACK PART-TIME STUDENTS

Personal development due to the course

Graduates



Students in Year 3



National Institute of Economic and Social Research

Birkbeck UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

FUTURETRACK PART-TIME STUDENTS

Course impact on personal development also related to work

	Developed as a person	Enjoying learning more	Improved self confidence
Changed job, working for same employer	+	+	+
Changed employer and job			+
Changed occupation level	+		+
Switched from part-time to full-time work		+	
Motivations related to family		+	+
Motivations related to life changes	+		

Institute of Economic and Social Research

Birkbeck UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

FUTURETRACK PART-TIME STUDENTS

Summary

- Graduates valued knowledge and skills acquired as well as personal development
- Courses developed skills used by workers to a large degree
- Particularly subject knowledge, analytical ability and application of knowledge
- Less so inter-personal skills, team working and numeracy skills
- Much of the skill development realised before course completion
- Aspects of personal development less attributable to the course
- But acknowledged more after graduation, and
- Related to aspects of employment

National Institute of Economic and Social Research