

## **Degree of Success 10 Years of the OU – OU short courses**

**Contributors in clip: Mike Pentz**

**Clip transcript:**

**Narrator:**

No-one taking any of these courses will get a degree. They've been designed to help ordinary people cope with some of their everyday problems. The question at debate is: should the university be involved in this area of basic adult education?

**Mike Pentz:**

If you cast your mind back to the Charter of The Open University, which laid down that we were set up to do two things: to provide undergraduate courses of appropriate university standard; and to contribute to the educational well-being of the community. Now, how does a university do that thing, except through offering certain kinds of courses, which are not undergraduate courses? So we were committed right from the beginning – and so we jolly well ought to have been – to the two-sidedness of our activity. For very good reasons, I think, we concentrated – and have done up to now – on getting the undergraduate programme off the ground, and we are practically there. Now, that was in order to establish the university unmistakably as a genuine university.

Now we're beginning to build the other side, what we call the Continuing Education side, though of course our undergraduate courses are also part of Continuing Education – this is the non-undergraduate Continuing Education. For example, courses which have a strong vocational slant is one example, updating, upgrading and refresher courses, that sort of thing. But also courses which are of general benefit to the community, for example the Energy In The Home course, or what we sometimes call "The Baby Course" which has got very limited aims, it does not lead to qualifications, but is intended to enhance the capacity of the people taking that course to cope with an actual real-life problem.