



DIALOGUE

Centre for Lifelong Learning, University of Strathclyde
in Association with CRADALL, University of Glasgow

'Experiences of studying and learning for adult learners on access course programmes: findings from the research/practice dialogue.'

Tony Anderson, School of Psychological Sciences and Health, Bill Johnston, Centre for Academic Practice and Learning Enhancement and Alix McDonald, Centre for Lifelong Learning

Wednesday 31st October 2012 from 1.00pm-2.00pm

Venue: Lunch in room GH230, Seminar in room GH232,
Centre for Lifelong Learning, Level 7, Graham Hills Building, 40 George St
University of Strathclyde, Glasgow

Previous research on students' approaches to learning has identified a number of study strategies (deep, shallow, and strategic). Students' information literacy skills have also been investigated previously. However, in both areas, studies have concentrated on standard school leaver undergraduates, raising the issue of whether adult returners' capabilities in these areas would differ in any noticeable way. The research project therefore gathered qualitative interview data exploring these themes from a Pre-Entry Certificate course at Strathclyde feeding into degrees within HASS and the Business School. The main areas for investigation were: 1) How do part-time students study and how do they source information? 2) What barriers to learning and participation do they encounter? 3) How independent are access students as learners? and 4) To what extent is the learning experienced on the course transformational? Qualitative analysis of the data allowed the identification of a number of themes that emerged across the interviews. These included ,typically rudimentary study skills involving repeated reading ,a sharp distinction between 'fact' and 'opinion' in reading materials , an expectation of lecture-based delivery coupled with a scepticism about the value of peer-based learning, a preference for seeking study support from relatives rather than peers or the university, much use of recommended texts for study purposes, with rudimentary critical information literacy skills leading to general suspiciousness regarding the worth of internet sources. The study provides an insight into the perceptions of part-time learners, suggests modifications to further strengthen the course for future students, and paves the way for further investigations. This research is especially timeous given the current policy dialogue around part-time study and the importance of providing opportunity for non-traditional students in difficult economic times. A further aspect is the examination of barriers to change within universities.

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Please email to advise if you will be attending the seminar and the lunch at 12.30
All Welcome**

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