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An Educational Journey
Stories of Adult Learners

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Education
in
Adult Education

at Massey University, College of Education, Palmerston North,
New Zealand.

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December 2007
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Abstract

This research tells the stories of a particular student cohort, all of whom are women, studying at The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand in the Diploma of Teaching (Early Childhood Education) programme. These students are adult learners and adult learners are an increasing part of the tertiary sector. They have interesting stories to tell of their learning journeys, for example, stories of how they found their passion later in life or revisited an earlier passion they were unable to fulfil. The researcher has gathered, recorded and analysed the stories of these students, stories of their education experiences; their experiences within their family and society; the communities they lived in; their work histories and most importantly their study histories. Key themes common to the research participants emerged from their stories and these are linked to a variety of literature. The aim of this research is to add to the limited body of information about the learning journeys of an often silent group of people within the tertiary sector, and is an acknowledgment of the success of adult students in their studies later in life.
Acknowledgements

This research would not have been possible without the students from the cohort studied who so willingly gave their time and were open and enthusiastic in their completion of the data gathering tools. Without the administration team at The Open Polytechnic Lower Hutt Campus I would not have been able to gather, collate and analyse the demographic data. Thank you for your patience when I asked for the impossible. Others at the Open Polytechnic who have my gratitude are Axel Laurs and Val Burns who saw the value of this research and gave permission to research within the programme and the access to the data required. My manager Sue Smart assisted me in so many ways; motivating me to continue when I was flagging and being my critical friend throughout my study. Thanks must also go to my lecturing colleagues in the programme for keeping my feet on the ground while allowing my mind to fly. To Annie Oliver, I am grateful for your help in recording and transcribing the interview data.

The advice and guidance of my research supervisor Nick Zepke has been invaluable as, over time, he has built my confidence and worked with me to produce this thesis. Thanks for keeping me going when I got stuck Nick. Correct ethical approval for this research has been obtained from the Massey University Ethics Committee and the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand.

Final acknowledgement must go to my husband Murray for putting up with my study over the years and listening to me when I needed to clarify my thoughts, nodding at just the right time.

This research is dedicated to the students; past, present and future, of The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand Diploma of Teaching (ECE) programme. Without your commitment to early childhood education and continued participation in tertiary education, this research would not have been possible, useful or relevant.
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