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An Educational Journey

Stories of Adult Learners

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

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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.

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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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