

adult success stories



Jenny Dutton

Jenny, now 27, has created a wide range of new opportunities for herself through studying access courses. She describes this as the best thing she has ever done.



I was never very focused at Secondary School and obtained just 3 GCSEs above a C, which were in Music, Spanish and Art. I got really bad marks in English, Maths and Science which just aren't worth putting on an application form. I've had several jobs since leaving school in all different fields of employment, but I've never felt fulfilled with what I've been doing, career wise. When I was younger I was into drugs and was homeless for a year, so I thought that education would be a no go for me, with my background and my poor exam results from Secondary School.

I then started working for a drug treatment service and coupled with my past experiences I decided to look into training to become a Mental Health Nurse then specialise in Substance Abuse and for this I needed A-levels, but it also meant that I had to complete my GCSEs again to go on to do A-levels. I contacted the college and went in to enquire and was told about the Access Course. I was able to do English Language, Human Biology and Psychology. Doing the Biology and English Language aspects meant I didn't have to do my GCSEs again. This was ideal as I was 27 when returning back to college so time was of the essence.

I was nervous when first starting as I hadn't been in education for 12 years. There was only a few of us "oldies" on the course. Surprisingly there were quite a few 19-20 year olds on the course, which was unexpected. People from all walks of life attended the college. I myself was 27, a single mother of a 2 year old and worked part time at a Drug Service. It was hard going, but so worth it. Doing the Access course is the best thing I have ever done. It gave me confidence in myself and my academic abilities. I thought I was past it, but doing the course has reinforced that it is never too late to go back to education.

When I completed the course and passed I was accepted into York University where I studied Mental Health for 10 months, to find out the job I was training to do wasn't what I thought it would be. But, this didn't defeat me! At college whilst doing the Access course, I had rediscovered my love of English and decided to cut my losses and apply for an English Language and Literature Degree at Northumbria University. I've since been accepted and start in September 2011.

There was a moment when I thought it was all over for me as I realised the course I was on wasn't working out. But, the Access course qualification is valid for 5 years so I made it onto the course. I start in September to pursue my recently realised dream of becoming a writer.

When I left college I've still had contact with my tutors and they have given me immense amounts of assistance with every query I've had. I met a lot of friends on the course and some have developed into life long friendships.

I can't express enough how brilliant a college, Queen Elizabeth is. I had a fantastic time, obtained a life changing qualification and I'm well on my way to doing a job I love and most of all, being fulfilled.

