

adult success stories



Lorna Garrick

Lorna has used Access to learn new subjects and to improve her academic profile, whilst altering direction at work.



I did well at school, leaving with good 'O' grades and 'Highers' in 1980, but uncertain which career path to take. I followed my brother into the merchant navy, sponsored by BP and studied Marine electrical and electronic engineering. It didn't interest me and I bumbled about in dull jobs, never developing a career, then married and started a family.

When I discovered myself 41, divorced, with two children finally old enough to be left one evening a week, I decided to find out if I could stir up enough grey matter to cope with more than my clerical job, children's homework and remembering to buy cat food.

I'd always found Computer Aided Draughting interesting and registered at Darlington College to do the C&G course. That completed I took a Diploma course in Swedish massage and Indian head massage over the subsequent two years.

I'd always assumed courses at QE 6th Form College were for those adult learners wishing to go to University, but I love the English language and thought I'd apply for the adult Access course to see if I was accepted. Government funding on account of my lone parent status and low income were the deciding factor and I felt I'd be wasting funding if I didn't enrol.

At the same time I was co-opted onto our Union branch committee as Organiser and H&S representative, and started attending courses and conferences so life was pretty hectic. I loved it. Access courses are so well structured that although we had homework and coursework to complete, the deadlines were clearly set out and the tutor support continuous.

The following year I signed up for Access Sociology (without quite knowing what it was), keen to try something new and really enjoyed it, giving me a very real interest in politics in conjunction with my union activities.

My final choice of subject was Psychology. Being my third subject I had to do the Toolbox exercise too. I also managed to fit in a twelve week day release course at Leeds City College to do the 2nd stage of TUC H&S.

I was delighted when my final certificate dropped through the letterbox this summer telling me I had gained Distinctions in every part of each course. I still don't know what I want to be when I grow up, but I do know that when I finally decide, I am quite capable of learning something new, despite my advancing years. I have just signed up to do a Diploma in Occupational Health and Safety at Leeds which will take me a year, and after that I may head back to QE to do Politics and Law, if they'll have me back.

