



Take a Little time to Learn how to Learn

When adults return to serious learning, they realise that it involves serious commitment and effort. Part of the task involves learning how to learn.

UCD's Adult Education Centre has spent considerable time on researching the issue of how adults learn. It has developed resource materials to enable tutors in the centre to function better. Professional development opportunities are offered to all staff to help them perform better with workshops offered to tutors, co-ordinators and senior UCD academic staff.

The resource materials developed from these workshops are posted on UCD's adult education website, and they are very well worth looking at.

In one of the first documents, adult students are asked to reflect on how they have learned.

"Think of something you are good at - how did you become competent? Think of an unsuccessful learning experience - what went wrong?"

The questions continue:

'UCD's Adult Education Centre has spent considerable time on researching the issue of how adults learn'

"How did you learn when you were in school? How do you learn now? What are the differences?"

Research has shown that adults learn best in a democratic, participatory, and collaborative environment. Adult students are mature people and prefer to be treated as such. Adults are intrinsically motivated. Learners increase their effort when they are motivated by a need, an interest, or a desire to learn.

Adults are autonomous and self-directed. They are self-reliant learners and pre-

fer to work at their own pace. Adults are practical and problem solvers.

Adults are sometimes tired when they attend classes. They therefore appreciate varied teaching methods that add interest and a sense of liveliness to the class.

Adults sometimes worry about being the oldest person in a class, and are concerned about the impact this may have on their ability to participate with younger students. Adult learners may have insufficient confidence.

Adults have accumulated life experiences. They come to courses with experiences and knowledge in diverse areas. They favour practical learning activities which enable them to draw on prior skills and knowledge.

Adult learners are realistic and have insights about what is likely to work and what is not.

The website, www.ucd.ie/adulted, makes interesting reading for anyone interested in teaching and learning.

UCD (University College Dublin) is the biggest university college in the country. Although it does not claim to have a high percentage of

mature or adult students in its fulltime undergraduate body, UCD offers an extensive adult education programme, ranging from courses which you may take just for interest, to courses leading to credits, NUI certificate or diploma courses, access courses and "return to learning" courses leading to entry to degrees in arts, science, engineering and commerce.

Enrolment for these courses is taking currently place at the Adult Education Centre, UCD, Belfield, Dublin 4; Tel: 01 7167123

Meanwhile, two courses in UCD's CAO listing are of particular interest to mature applicants - one is their Diploma in Foundations of Business, a fulltime two-year programme which is in fact open to mature applicant only.

This course currently appears on CAO's vacant places list. The second is their modular Arts honours degree programme, taught only through part-time evening study, and aimed specifically at adults. It is still possible to apply for this course starting this academic year

Publication: Irish Independent

Date: Thursday, September 1, 2005

Page: 17

Extract: 2 of 2

Circulation: 181.080

Author:

Headline: Take a Little time to Learn how to Learn



UCD (University College Dublin) is the biggest university college in the country