



Student Case Study



Jan Eedle-Wells
Age 60

Jan is currently studying for a work based learning foundation degree in Community Development at Bucks New University and hopes to complete her studies in December 2008. This will be Jan's first formal qualification.

Due to family circumstances she didn't have the opportunity to take any qualifications at school. From the age of 14 she had taken on the responsibility of running the family farm and had left school at 15. After the farm was sold she went to work as a cashier in a rental shop and then worked in a bookshop.

Jan married at 20 and had two children. She eventually divorced her first husband and had work to support her children. She took on a variety of jobs that 'fitted in' with her child care responsibilities. She was also an active member of a riding club and eventually becoming the chairperson of the club. She taught herself to type and book-keeping and these skills later helped her find work in administration.

Her career extended over many years in administration and she eventually became a PA/manager in the upholstery manufacturing industry for 17 years and a manager in insurance assessment for 5 years until she was made redundant.

Throughout her career she has attained many skills but still lacked confidence because she did not have a formal qualification. Although her parents never went to university her sister did and so eventually did her sons.

For the last 3 years she has worked for the Bucks Association for Blind and Partially Sighted People as the Volunteer Liaison Coordinator and Events Manager. Jan's employer has supported her whilst she studied for the foundation degree. She attends University one half day a week.

She is very proud of the fact that she is studying for a degree and has really enjoyed it. She was so excited when she received 75% for one of her assignments as this was the highest mark in the class. Jan has particularly enjoyed sharing her work experiences and learning from others on her course. It hasn't always been easy though. As this was a new course covering a very diverse area there were some teething issues with the course content and timetable. It has also been difficult to balance studying, work and home life. There have been some funding issues for Jan as well. Although her employer had secured funding for her this was for the first year only and her family had to step in to cover the fees for her second year. In spite of all this, Jan says it has been worth it. It has opened up a new world of work related terminology and skills to her.

Jan is a fine example of it is never too late to go into higher education and her advice to anyone considering higher education would be to "grasp it with both hands".

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