



## Student Case Study

Lorna Ashton-Scott

Age 43



Lorna has not only progressed through Higher Education via the non-traditional route but is about to qualify as a teacher of Higher Education.

Lorna left school at 16 with no qualifications. She admitted that she was not an ideal student at school but was good at English and always loved to read. However, she felt that she did not receive any encouragement from the teachers and did not apply herself to her studies. Her parents had come to England in the 60's and none of the family had gone to University, but her mother always stressed the importance of education.

Once Lorna had left school she quickly realised that the lack of qualifications would restrict what she could do. She even applied to a local college to do O' levels but was rejected.

Lorna got onto a TOPS (Training Opportunities Programme) and started to work as a classroom assistant. From there she went onto various jobs and worked as a domestic, housekeeper and nursing assistant. She did various work-related courses but again the lack of formal qualifications was holding her back and stopping her from progressing to the next level.

Lorna never lost her love of reading and continued to read extensively and as widely as possible. At the age of 26, unfulfilled by her work, she decided that she needed to go back to education. In 1991, having seen an advertisement in the paper, she applied to go on an Access to Higher Education Course at Bucks Higher Education, Flackwell Heath with the view to eventually becoming a social worker. Lorna needed to work full time and was able to negotiate with her employer to have one day a week to do the course.

Lorna found this course so inspiring. She received excellent advice on progression from her tutor who made her feel that she could do anything. Quickly realising that she didn't really want to do Social Work, Lorna applied to 5 Universities to read

English. She was offered a place at all 5 Universities but choose West London Institute of Higher Education now Brunel University and read English and Religious Studies. She was 26 years old.

To begin with Lorna found University both daunting and exciting. After always receiving a salary it was daunting not to have an income and live on a grant but she had made her decision and her philosophy was “to go for it”. She was considered a mature student and to begin with found it hard to settle in especially when she saw someone who she had babysat for enrolled at the same University! Apart from this she found it exciting to be immersed in the world of academia and was glad she had made the decision.

Lorna graduated with a 2:1 degree. She then went to work for Harrods in a Call Centre for 1 year.

After this she did a course in Further Adult Education Teaching. She taught GCSE English at Amersham and Wycombe College as part of her teaching hours requirement. After this she undertook various teaching assignments working with community projects and groups such as Women Returners to Work inspiring and encouraging them back into education and work.

Lorna still wanting to educate herself went on and attained her MA in English Literature, Language and Culture from Oxford Brookes.

In 1999 Lorna joined Bucks New University as an Administrator and still works at Bucks now as a Senior Programme Administrator in the Faculty of Creativity and Culture. She has achieved her ILM management certificate whilst at Bucks.

Although she has thoroughly enjoyed her career at Bucks Lorna’s real dream is to teach. She is currently doing her Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and hopes to teach English at a University.

Lorna has no regrets entering Higher Education. She feels that her education has “empowered and liberated” her. It has opened doors to her that would never been opened had she not chosen to go into Higher Education. She learnt the skill to question, debate and research and this transformed her life. However, she didn’t enjoy writing essays and coursework.

If Lorna had any advice to someone thinking about going back to education it would be:

“Go for your dream. It will change your life and transform and empower you. It’s worth it. My family are still impressed about what I have achieved and are very proud of me”.

Prepared by Debby Holmes  
9 October 2008