

Understanding The Experience of Mature Students Completing A Degree Apprenticeship

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Abstract

Even though there is plethora of research into work-based learning, to date there is little research into how mature students navigate work-based learning. With the current government focus on lifelong learning, we need to understand how mature students can balance their studies and work and how they adjust to higher education. This paper discusses the narratives of mature students completing their CMDA (Chartered Management Business Apprenticeship) alongside a BA in Business Management. The paper draws upon data collected through 1-2-1 supervision sessions with Level 5 mature-aged students through narrative analysis. Prominent themes include the struggles of balancing work, studies and childcare; fitting into a higher education culture which tends to be stereotyped as one for younger students; the difficulties of adjusting to rigorous study many years after leaving school or completing another degree; and being seen as a student while having a job role where they are seen (by themselves and others) as accomplished in their careers. Our paper will argue the importance of understanding the academic abilities and individual needs of mature students; being understanding of personal circumstances; and ensuring they have the necessary means to adjust in a higher education setting which might be geared towards catering for younger people.

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