

This story was filmed and recorded during early February 2006 for 'Hear all about it!'

This campaign is a wonderful selection of inspiring adult learning stories told by the learners themselves. The highlights from Ian's interview can be watched and read; this is the transcript of the whole interview. The on-line learning champions would be delighted if his stories were used to promote learning in your organisation, college or charity. You can link your webpage to the West Midlands Learning Directory – Hear all about it! page

www.wmld.org/pages/hear_all_about_it/.



Ian's story -

I'm doing English, Maths and IT. I attended school, had a private tutor for two years, and then I went into work. I worked for 18 years then I retired, I had to retire through ill health. Then two months later I'm not doing anything sitting at home, I want to do something with my life so I went back to college. I was doing bakery work, working in bakeries. When I left work, I was doing nothing really and I found it hard, you know. After being in a job like that, getting up at certain times, your body does the same things. I was nervous when I went back, thinking it would be like school. The tutor gave us all of the work and I knew it would be good for us, so I did three, English, maths and IT. Since I've been here its been brilliant, I love going in.

Well, the environment is really friendly and everyone tries to help each other. And if you are finding it hard, you're stuck, they'll come and help you out and tell you how to do the job. The tutors are brilliant, they are really good, they will give you time. Then and there, they will give you, you know, time. They have time for you. The tutors have enough time for you.

I picked them really because they were three subjects I wanted to learn. My maths was atrocious when I was at school, same with my English, I never knew how to work a computer, but since I've been here I've come on leaps and bounds. I'm on level 2 for my maths and English and now I'm going for level 3.

Computer skills have really helped me because I've now got a computer at home, and now I can go home and do anything on the computer. The Internet is really good though, I love using the Internet at college cause you can find so much information, its much better now than it used to be.

We've been doing a project at college about making our own jobs, our own companies, and using the Internet you can find what kind of companies there are, you know. If you can think of one, your own, and use the Internet to build in to it. I mean, last year, Christmas time, we were able to find out everything about Christmas, and what it meant and everything on the Internet. So it really does help.

Well, dyslexia, I was diagnosed with it when I was 16, so by that time it was just a waste of time, I was there for two years more, it didn't really help much. I thought now that I have the time, why don't I make a change, go back to college and change myself. Build my skills, maybe another job, it depends on

how it went, you know. So going back to college was the best thing I've ever done. I've really picked up, English, maths and IT.

The difference between school and college is, in school if they think you're thick, that's it. They don't do anything. But at college, they understand more about it. If you want help, you get help, at school you wouldn't. At college, they're there all the time. That's the main thing; they'll help when you need a hand.

Someone in my position who has the same problems, if you want to go back to college, do it, it's the best thing you will ever do. As I said, there is help, they're not there to criticise or anything. If you can do it, do it.

When I was at school I was very quiet, very shy, I didn't talk hardly at all. Coming back to college, meeting other people, meeting new people, my confidence has grown now so much, I don't mind, you know, and I talk to everyone now, I'm not shy anymore, I'm more outgoing. I really enjoy college, if I hadn't come to college I don't know what I would be doing now, I wouldn't do anything. College has really helped me out a lot.

This project was managed by jo.knight@niace.org.uk - who can be contacted for more information. She works for NIACE (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education). Birmingham and Solihull Learning and Skills Council funded the project.

