

Facilitating educational growth: the use of learning mentors in the DipFE program

Catherine M. Down
Office of the PVC (Teaching & Learning)
RMIT University
(author & presenter)

Research conducted in the Adult & Community Education (ACE) sector shows that many students enrolled with ACFE providers have difficulty in obtaining places in higher education and TAFE. For example, in 1998, ACFE providers stated that only 4 to 5 per cent of their students gained higher education places and only 11 per cent gained TAFE places (Teese, 1999). Also, 42 per cent of ACE students who applied through VTAC in 1997 for 1998 tertiary education places were rejected, compared with 14 per cent of school students (Teese, 1999).

The release of the Adult, Community and Further Education Board's *Transforming Lives, Transforming Communities* (Bradshaw 1999) encouraged RMIT University to investigate, in conjunction with the ACFE Board, more robust provision for second chance learners. As a result the innovative Diploma of Further Education (DipFE) was developed, trialed and accredited.

This paper reports on the trial conducted and the lessons revealed by its evaluation. It focuses on the use of learning mentors to support the growth of autonomy, independent learning and initiative of learners and explores the possibilities for the use of a similar curriculum structure in other programs.

Contact details:

Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Teaching & Learning)
Building 15, Level 4, Room 8
City Campus
RMIT University
GPO Box 2476V
Melbourne VIC 3001

Ph: 03 99253965

Fax: 03 96390439

Email: cathy.down@rmit.edu.au