

The Fabric of our Lives: What ACE means for Women

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- So it's this invisible thing, the fabric of our lives – which actually makes life what it is.

Deana,

Helen-Margaret Centre.

What we'll cover in this workshop



- The Research
- Related Literature
- Themes
- Women's Words
- Implications for ACE

The Government focus of ACE

ACE priorities –

- targeting learners whose initial learning was not successful
- raising foundation skills
- strengthening social cohesion.
- [Tertiary Education Strategy 2010-15.](#)

Your Thoughts?

- Find someone who has the same fabric as you
- Please discuss – what do you think women learn from attending ACE courses?



Research Study



- Women and Learning: Women's perspectives on the impact of their involvement in adult and community education.

Methodology

- Interviews with 40 women in Christchurch
- A range of settings
- Involvement with Adult and Community Education (ACE).



Interview Sites

- Women only
- Men and women
- Mothers of young children
- Refugees and migrants
- Young women

Data Analysis

- Please find someone with the same colour quote as you.
- Gather together and share your quotes.
- Discuss what you think the quotes mean for women learners and record the key points.



Gaining an educational focus

- Often that's what happens, people have a good, positive experience and then people often do go on and pay more and focus more, as they know that's what they want to do.
- Jane, Helen-Margaret Centre

Women's Mental Well-being

- Women tend to put the interests of their family first, their children, their husbands, their relatives and they put themselves last.

And as a result they feel exhausted, wiped out, empty and that leads to a lot of resentment and anger. And in the end it affects their health and their mental well-being and the family pays for it, so everyone loses.

- Madeleine, Helen-Margaret Centre

Family Survival

- *I think, by and large it's just my general equilibrium in the house, with my husband and my kids - if I'm happy, we're all happier. I mean families are so tightly intermeshed....*
- *Jacqui, Millie-Jack Centre*

“A need to learn”

- The courses that I’ve done have all been a need that I’ve had, I mean right from the word go, I’ve wanted to sell my own clothing, it’s cheaper, it’s easy, so I went to a class for that and yes, it’s because I’ve had a need to learn something.
- Mo, Alison Leahy Centre

Self Esteem

- *I think it's starting to change my behaviour, because I feel better about myself and makes my family life more positive.*
- Tracey, Helen-Margaret Centre

Making friends and companionship

- “meeting other people”,
(Annie, Helen Margaret Centre)
- “meeting women that I
wouldn’t normally meet”
(Madeleine, Helen-Margaret
Centre)
- “company and
friendship (Linda, Alison Leahy
Centre)
- “companionship and
learning”. (Claire, Alison Leahy
Centre).

Themes

- Advantages of ACE
- Women and Learning
- Impact on family
- Learn new skills
- Change
- Meeting new people



Discussion

- Does the current policy on ACE recognise any of these themes?
- What do the quotes say about the oppression of women?

Reflection

- Choose a piece of fabric that appeals to you
- Write on your piece of fabric a message that you'll take away from this workshop.
- Then share with someone you haven't spoken to about the implications for you from the workshop.



- *I like to learn. I like to see the sky not only the roof!*
- Jamyang, Caitlyn-Nita Centre

Whakatauki/Proverb



- E-i-a-i-e
- Wahine ma! Wahine ma! Maranga mai, Maranga mai, kia kaha
- E-i-a-i-e All you young women!
- All you young women rise up, rise up, be strong

Useful Literature

- The Adult and Community and Further Education Board (1996)
- National Organisation for Adult Learning. (NIACE, Lavender, 2000)
- “Wider Benefits of Learning Project” (2001)

