

Everyone, whatever their age, can share in the joy and fulfillment of learning, as June Weatherall found out.

§ 1. When I first retired, I thought I'd love spending more time on the gardening, needlework, and other creative activities I'd found so relaxing after my demanding job. But it didn't turn out that way. I found that I didn't want, or need, that kind of relaxation anymore, I wanted to stimulate my mind instead.

§ 2. So, with a couple of friends, I went along to an art appreciation evening class at our local regional college. It was wonderful, but only lasted a year. At the end, I asked my tutor, "What next?" He suggested I attend his history of art access course. "Whatever's that?" I asked. The college had an open evening coming up, so I went along to find out. A full-time access course takes one year and gives you access to university if, like me, you left school without any qualifications, and it's free if you do it full-time. I only wanted to do the art history bit.

§ 3. Lyn, who organises the courses for the college, was enthusiastic. "Why don't you do the whole course? You could start in the spring term with art history, do another module in the summer, then go full-time in the autumn and do all the subjects." It sounded wonderful, but wasn't I a bit old, at 63, to start being a student? A definite 'no'. One of the students that year was 82. That decided it. It must be worth having **a go**.

§ 4. The art history part of the course, which I've just completed, was stimulating. The tutors are enthusiasts and infect us all with their enjoyment of the subjects they teach. "Lively" would be the word to describe the classes. My fellow students, who are also doing subjects like psychology, maths, biology, etc., are good company. They're mainly people in their thirties with children, taking a second bite at the educational cherry.

§ 5. We have homework and have to do an essay each term for each subject, and sit exams. For art history, we had to produce a journal about all the painters we'd learnt about — which was fun, but rather time-consuming. Occasionally, I envy the more typical mature students, who just do courses for fun and don't have to do exams or essays, but really I'm a very happy lady. There are drawbacks, however. The main one is you have to **make a commitment**. During term time, you can't just drop everything and go out for the day if the sun shines — one of the supposed joys of retirement.

§ 6. Will I go on to university if I'm successful? I'll see how next year goes. Meanwhile, exercising my brain cells is working well for me. I feel alive. The garden's getting a bit out of control, but that's the least of my worries!

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But it didn't turn out that way. (§ 1)

- 1) Но это не исключало тот путь. 2) Но она не отключалась таким образом. 3) Но все оказалось совсем не так.