

STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

COMPREHENSIVE LEARNING CENTRE

Two years ago when the academic year began at the CLC, many of us, the more matured students, had some apprehension. However, those who braved the studies before us were nudging us on and telling us that we were not too old to learn; but the fact is, that many of us had last been in the formal classroom some 10 plus years ago. Many of us wondered why bother our heads with this 'learning business' instead of leaving it for our children, while others contemplated on the advantages and disadvantages of academically equipping ourselves. Various reasons surfaced as to why our educational paths were impeded but that was history; now was the chance – our second chance.

As we shared our reasons for taking this second chance, one thing grew abundantly clear, hard work, commitment and much sacrifice would have to be the ingredients in the recipe of our new life.

We began in earnest with our studies and it was obvious that from day one, the lecturers meant business. The 200 page books seemed a bit inviting but those thick books with strange names like Sociology Themes and Perspectives by Haralambos and Holborn or CXC Information Technology were as intimidating as a big, bad bull dog. The good thing about the Sociology Themes and Perspectives was that we, the brand new students, were not using it. However, our new found colleagues who had been with the CLC for two years plus were proudly strutting in with these threatening, yet, impressive looking books. Somehow, these students looked ambitious and a few of us felt that yearning springing up within, to reach that level. Even the confidence that these students exuded, the welcoming glitter in their eyes and the assurance in their voices did something for us. We felt like we belonged, we felt reassured.

As we proceeded through the first semester, the class work did not appear too difficult- oh, some of our colleagues in the Math, English and Economics classes may beg to differ, as they were finding a few of the concepts challenging for the brain and soon realized that the home assignments given by the lecturers were a must.

By the time the SBA's were introduced and attempts were made to tackle them, anxiety resurfaced for some of us and we wondered if we should have begun these classes. Our jobs, our children, our spouses, our social lives, all seemed to be competing for our time. Worst of all, the more recent school leavers appeared to be understanding better than some of us, 'late-comers'. Now, in retrospect, we realize that it had everything to do with planning and the building of our self confidence. It wasn't that the work was too much; we just had to restructure our lives. Time, we now recognize, was a scarce resource, because the demand for it was great. We now had to become 'time managers' and efficient ones, at that.

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We stepped up to the plate. We prepared our SBA drafts, submitted to the lecturers and moved on again. Sometimes we felt a bit disappointed when we saw more red than blue ink on the returned drafts, but we soon realized what the lecturers reiterated at the orientation session and beyond- *“The more you submit the drafts to your lecturers the better your chances are of obtaining a high grade.”*

By semester II we were armed for the long haul. We were forewarned that Good Friday and Easter Monday would be our only break and that we needed to organize our selves accordingly. This was the most trying period for so many of us. These SBA's were like leeches in our lives. *“If only I had done a little more a little earlier”* was the thought that kept invading so many minds, even during sleep. That demon of Procrastination! A few students were ready to throw in the towel but those CLC lecturers wouldn't allow you to give up easily at all. We realised that the lecturers at the Comprehensive Learning Centre are tireless in their efforts to ensure success among their students. We quickly recognized that they are an excellent of group of professional, committed men and women. We, the students salute them! Their words of encouragement and their willingness to walk with you through to the bitter end astonished many of us. Did we say “bitter end”? No it should be to the ‘sweetest end’ because there is no sweeter feeling than the feeling of success.

Many students appreciated the power of study groups and we all wish that many more would realize and utilise this effective study tool. The benefits of being part of a study group are remarkable. Along with revising, clarifying and reinforcing the concepts learnt, we also used our CLC Study Tips card as an active instrument during our discourses. We therefore reminded each other of the importance of healthy eating and proper exercise while studying; we reminded each other of creating and adhering to schedules. We also stressed the importance of eliminating all the distractions including unnecessarily long and interruptive telephone, email and text conversations. And this calls for some discipline.

After submission of the SBA, revision for exams and the many, many long nights of studying with a sea of books all around, it was time for the final proof. Could we really go in the examination room to write 2, 3, 4 and 5 subjects after 10+ years of academic dormancy? Was this lurking feeling of fear going to conquer us? Would the younger school children be staring at us scornfully? Could we pull it off?

Well those answers are now history, as we proudly admire our beautifully framed certificates conspicuously hanging on our walls. Now, some of us are enrolled in the CAPE classes working towards the attainment of the CXC Associate Degree in Business Studies.

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So for all of you who are apprehensive about studying, remember, you can choose fear or CONQUER FEAR. Nothing worthwhile is easily achieved! Actually, what can replace that sense of achievement when one has struggled and has attained what one has laboured for?

Comprehensive Learning Centre Students
2011