

People and Work Unit

Uned Pobl a Gwaith

What are the true costs of community learning?

**Research Commissioned by
The Community University of the Valleys Partnership**

Structure of the presentation

- Barriers to learning
- Cost for providers
- Cost for learners
- Expectations of value
- Conclusions

Barriers to Learning

- Situational
- Institutional
- Dispositional
- Informational

Costs for providers

Overcoming situational barriers

- Community base
- Childcare
- Free
- Flexible

Overcoming institutional barriers

- Simplicity
- Warm, friendly and welcoming
- Responsive

Overcoming informational barriers

- Advertising
- Advice and guidance
- Community base
- Outreach

Overcoming dispositional barriers

- Status in the community
- Support and encouragement
- Right staff

Costs for learners

Overcoming situational barriers

- Financial costs
- Emotional costs

“I wouldn’t leave my kid down in the crèche”

It’s “hard, have four children and I work”.

My “husband would say, ‘you’re neglecting them’”

Overcoming institutional and dispositional barriers

- Fear of, humiliation, discomfort, insecurity, Exposure....
- Challenging friends and partners

At first I “thought, it’s not for me, [I’ve] made a big mistake”.

“I haven’t got the confidence or ability to do a course”

“if I knew I could get a better job, I wouldn’t give a damn about my partner”

Expectations of the learning
episode shape expectations of its
cost.

Why would people pay the cost?

.....Expectations of value

I “used to hide from education....it was children that catalysed it: they were passing you, the girls doing GCSES – I couldn’t help [them] no more... You’ll do anything for your kids, no matter how humiliating”.

What informs expectations?

- Personal experience
- Community beliefs

*“Memories of school were horrendous, therefore
[it was a] big step”*

*“My husband thought I’d gone clean off...she’s
gone back to school!?! [My] Friends thought I was
mad”.*

Do costs and barriers change as
your experiences and life changes?

*I “passed the computer course, then pulled out as
I got pregnant”*

“best years of my life”

Conclusions

- There are costs for both learners and providers in overcoming barriers to learning:
 - Financial
 - Intangible
 - Emotional