



SFU NOW student Julia Goodwin took Yvonne Tabin's advice and enlisted study support from her boyfriend and family. She and her boyfriend now devote several 'biz' nights each week to studying and completing assignments.

COMMUNITY

Six back-to-school tips for adult learners

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Children and teens aren't the only students purchasing new notebooks this fall. An increasing number of adults are also going back to school, according to [SFU Continuing Studies](#), which offers professional development and personal growth programs, as well as degree completion for adult learners.

Over the last five years, Continuing Studies' registrations have climbed by 21 per cent to a total of 11,736 in 2014/2015.

Adults return to school for a variety of reasons. Some need a professional development certificate or degree to advance their careers or to switch careers. Some, particularly those who participate in the Adults 55+ Program, are seeking personal growth.

“For many adults, a degree is unfinished business,” says Yvonne Tabin, director of SFU NOW: Nights or Weekends, the University’s degree-completion program for working adults.

“Their studies were interrupted at some point or they didn’t know what they wanted to study or know how university would fit into their lives. They now want to go back and finish what they started.”

Whatever their reasons, adult students do face different challenges than their younger counterparts, largely due to the greater responsibilities they juggle at home and at work.

Continuing Studies’ staff members have helped thousands of working adults fit school into their busy family and work lives. They offer six tips for older learners returning to school this fall:

1. Plan ahead

Make sure to plan your time term-by-term, week-by-week, and day-by-day if need be.

2. Organize and schedule your time

Be aware of how you spend your time. Where might you be more efficient? Is there anything you can spend less time on, such as television, social activities, or housework?

3. Build a support team

Let others know what you are doing and involve them by asking them to support you. Ask your children/partner to help you with household responsibilities and your studies. Your children can quiz you for a test. Your partner can read and respond to a paper.

4. Keep up and keep constant

Keep up with your reading and review. It’s always harder to catch up than stay ahead. Instead of cramming, schedule several short study periods. Also, take things a step at a time. The little steps will get you there.

5. Good enough is excellent

Don’t set unrealistic expectations. You don’t need a single A to graduate.

6. Be an active student

Get to know your professor. Go see him or her during office hours and introduce yourself. Think critically. Voice your thoughts and opinions. You have something to contribute.