

2014 Section C Q3

3.(a)(i) Describe the provision of education in Ireland today with regard to adult and second chance education.

Universities across the country provide a huge range of courses that are suited to someone who is returning to education. They have full-time and part-time options so a person can decide what would suit them best and in that way they are not tied down by a full time course with many hours each week.

Some secondary schools provide PLC courses to adults interested returning to education. These courses are available in many schools across the country and they are not just in the larger cities. This makes them accessible to people living in all parts of them country.

Distance learning is becoming a big part of education. This means that people can gain qualifications without having to leave their house. In these courses, all lectures, assignments and projects are done online. This can be a very god option to someone who may have a family or work full time and not have enough time to physically go into the college or university.

Many third level institutions provide adult literacy or numeracy courses. These are very beneficial to an adult who may have left school early or may struggle with their reading or writing. These courses help make these people more employable.

(ii) Analyse the considerations that adults may take into account when deciding to return to education.

Cost: the tuition fees for a course will influence someone's decision on whether or not to return to education

Location: the location of the college or university will influence a person's decision to return to education e.g. if there is a very long commute and someone is working full-time, this could make it difficult to return to education.

Family: if a person has children, it will affect their decision on returning to education as they have to consider school runs and childcare costs etc.

Qualifications: when deciding on whether to return to education, a person will take into account the qualifications that they would gain with the course and what types of jobs and opportunities that it could open them up to.

(iii) Name and give details of one contemporary initiative aimed at improving equality of opportunity in education.

DEIS schools: delivering equality of opportunity in schools. These schools aim to enable disadvantaged students to gain the full benefit from the education system. DEIS schools may run breakfast clubs and homework club. They offer a huge amount of support to students who are at risk of social exclusion and helps them to deal with any issues that they may face.

3.(b) Social change has had a major impact on family life in Ireland today. Discuss this statement in relation to: • changing attitudes to marriage • changes in traditional roles within the family • the impact of modern communications technology.

Changing attitudes to marriage

Traditionally people married at a very young age and remained in this marriage for the duration of their life. Marriages were also only between males and females. In recent times, attitudes to marriages have changed. Nowadays, women no longer see marriage as a means of securing their future, as they are more educated and want to establish their own careers. The diminishing influence of the Catholic Church means

that couples are now opting for civil marriage ceremonies instead of religious ceremonies. The introduction of the Marriage Act 2015 enabled same-sex marriages to take place in Ireland.

Changes in traditional roles within the family

In the past, parenting and childcare was mainly the job of the mother, as mothers tended to work as homemakers. Fathers were the breadwinners in households, and they upheld the parenting role of the disciplinarian, implementing a strict discipline regime. Nowadays there has been a move towards equal partnership in the home. This has led to integrated roles being evident in homes, with parents taking joint responsibility for parenting, discipline, childcare and household tasks. Roles are no longer segregated, as many households are dual-income, with both parents working. In some households men are staying at home to mind their children, as women are the breadwinners. This enables children to create closer relationships with fathers than in previous decades. More democracy is evident between parents when decision making, with men no longer being the sole decision makers. As both parents take a more egalitarian approach to childcare and household tasks, children are exposed to gender equality from a young age.

The impact of modern communications technology

This includes the development of email, SMS, video conferencing, chat services and social media. This has led to closer relationships between family members forming as it is easier to keep in contact. It improves children's IT skills, e.g. the ability to send an email. This can help to improve their job prospects in the future. However, family relationships can be affected in a negative way if someone develops an unhealthy desire to spend hours checking social media.

3.(c) Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and local communities. (i) Discuss, giving examples, the role of voluntary work in the community.

Voluntary work can create strong friendships and relationships among volunteers, which can create an increased sense of closeness within a community.

Voluntary work creates a sense of community spirit, as volunteers come together to achieve a common goal, e.g. organising a charity fundraiser.

Voluntary work improves a community, e.g. by restoring and cleaning the local landscape or by alleviating poverty and social poverty.

(ii) Evaluate the benefits to be gained from voluntary work by the volunteer.

Voluntary work improves the mood and self-esteem of volunteers, as they participate in rewarding and fulfilling work that makes a difference.

Volunteers develop key transferable skills, such as communication, patience and teamwork, which will benefit volunteers in paid employment.

It helps to build friendships, improving volunteers' sense of belonging and purpose. This social contact may be important, especially for older people volunteering.