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## Case Studies

**Maria Perez Gonzalez – Adult Learners’ Week 2007 South West Regional Winner**



Maria Perez Gonzalez says learning has been her means of survival. An immigrant from Mexico for whom English was not her first language, she also endured domestic violence and homelessness.

But she persevered and studied hard, and now hopes for a career in medicine or nursing. ‘Learning has shown me a light at the end of the tunnel,’ she says.

When she came to this country she found herself stranded in an abusive marriage. ‘I was in a trap,’ she says.

‘Caught by my lack of formal learning or qualifications, I was also in a home situation where I had no power, where the economics were totally controlled by another.’

Her husband was violently opposed to her studying – eventually he made Maria and her sons homeless, leaving them with nothing.

‘I was very stressed trying to create a new home from nothing for my family as well as continuing my studies... Although this was really challenging, it brought good things as I also escaped from the negative feedback I had from my ex – husband which so held me back.’

Maria began in 2004 by taking Literacy and Numeracy courses, progressing to GCSE the following year.

This year she has been taking AS Level courses in Maths and Chemistry, as well as GCSE English language – she plans to take A – Levels next year and then move on with her career.

‘My learning has shown me that I do have a future – and not only for me but for my children and the people I care about.’