

"upgrading really does prepare you"



When Mario walked into Algonquin College's Pembroke Campus after three decades away from the classroom, he admits he felt more than a little nervous.

"I've been out of school for 30 years," he says. "I just retired from the military, and it was intimidating to come back. For an older guy, you don't really know what to expect." But Mario knew he needed a bridge to help him transition into postsecondary studies, and that's exactly what he found in the Academic Upgrading program.

The program, designed to help learners strengthen their foundational skills and prepare for college-level courses, became a critical stepping stone on his path to the Applied Nuclear Science and Radiation Safety program.

"Schooling has changed so much since I was last in a classroom," Mario explains.

"Academic upgrading brought me up to speed with how things work in college today."

Looking back, Mario calls the program invaluable: "It prepared me for college, for my program, and for success. I have no regrets, except maybe wishing I had started sooner."

For others considering the same leap, his advice is straightforward: take the program. "It's really worth it," Mario says. "The teachers are well-experienced, they give good feedback, and they want to see you succeed. Academic upgrading really does prepare you for admission and for your program."

Today, Mario is thriving in his studies. He credits his success to the solid foundation he built in Academic Upgrading, along with the encouragement of instructors who believed in him. His story reflects what many students discover — no matter how long you've been away from the classroom, it's never too late to learn, grow, and pursue new opportunities.

For Mario, the program was more than just an academic refresher — it was a confidence builder, a motivator, and a reminder that the skills of yesterday can be sharpened to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

"I'm glad I came," he says with a smile. "It's an excellent, excellent program."

— Jodi Bucholtz, Algonquin College