The Nontrad Journal

A Peer-Reviewed Journal for the Association for Nontraditional Students in Higher Education

Volume 16

Just Call Me The Cake Pop Lady!

A Nontraditional Student Experience

Simone Dockery (Entrepreneur, Model, Student & Mom)

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THE ASSOCIATION FOR NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION (ANTSHE)

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From the President

As we approach a New Year, I would like to take this opportunity to tell you how honored I am to be the President of ANTSHE. For many of us, the New Year brings yet another opportunity to start new. In our personal lives, this might mean making new commitments to lose weight, eating healthier, or changing a bad habit and so on. In our professional lives, this could mean finding another job, going back to college, or putting ourselves in a position where we can grow. The cover story for this issue is a great non-traditional student success story. Simone Dockery, entrepreneurial, student, mother, model, and professional, shows us that you can do anything if you just put your mind to it. Her story is an inspirational and motivational one that tells us the different paths that she chose and how she has grown as an individual.

I have experienced a lot of growth both personally and professionally. One of the reasons why I began volunteering at ANTSHE was for growth. My time as President has also allowed me to grow the organization by actively seeking out new partnerships, provide new opportunities for non-traditional students and academic professionals, and build a stronger network. In the process, I have made a lot of great friendships and have had some great opportunities along the way. This year, I invite you to grow with me and other leaders in higher education by attending the 19th Annual ANTSHE Conference. Our conference will focus on connecting the silos of academics and student services. Attend the conference and learn how to bridge the gap between these two vital services. I hope to see you there!

Scholarships & Awards

Scholarships
ANTSHE seeks to promote leadership and campus involvement, academic and personal success, and community engagement by offering scholarships to its student members. Candidates will have contributed to the enrichment of their college and/or local community and demonstrate their continued contribution to their college and community. An active ANTSHE membership is required for the scholarship applicants. ANTSHE will be awarding more academic scholarships than ever this year and in the years to come. Current scholarships:

-Founder's Scholarship for Graduate Students
-Kazimour Scholarships for Undergraduate Students
-The President's Scholarship
-The ANTSHE Board of Directors Scholarship

Awards
ANTSHE recognizes outstanding student members, academic professionals, professors, and student organizations with the “President's Award”, “Brick Award”, “National Treasure Award”, “Annual Student Recognition Award”. Visit www.myantshe.org for more information on ANTSHE Awards.
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COVER STORY

By Simone Dockery

JUST CALL ME THE CAKE POP LADY!

A Nontraditional Student Experience

My story begins on January 30th, 1980 in the little town of Birmingham, England. Ozzy Osbourne was born and raised there and still to this day when I hear his daughter Kelly Osborne talk, I’m reminded of what my accent used to sound like!!

My Dad, Devon or Clive as the family calls him, moved to England with his brother and sisters from Kingston, Jamaica when he was 8 years old. My mom, Carol, moved to England for nursing school when she was 18 from the beautiful island of Nevis located in the Virgin Islands. I was lucky to have been able to grow up as an only child with two amazing parents. People often asked if I ever got lonely, but the benefit of living in an area where family is literally everywhere means there is always someone at the house or you were always over there.

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Overview

The Nontrad Journal © publishes original contributions related to the academic and professional programs and services that aide and support nontraditional student success. The Nontrad Journal’s target audience includes leaders in higher education, academic professionals, faculty, administrators, as well as nontraditional students in higher education.

The Nontrad Journal encourages submissions regarding trends in higher education that have a direct impact on nontraditional students, evaluation of programs that support nontraditional students, studies of model programs, and investigations of effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of programs conducted in "real world" settings, as well as, descriptive studies of "cutting edge" programs, especially those informed by the lived experience of the nontraditional student, are also welcome.

Topics within the purview of The Nontrad Journal include:

• Study of student support services at a historically black university to include the stressors that impact nontraditional students, and the challenges of nontraditional students
• How using Wiki's can improve critical thinking skills in class and online.
• Nontraditional student stories to include the challenges they faced and what it took to overcome them and the determination needed to succeed.
• A study on cultural andragogy and positive psychology: a new pedagogy in higher education. A discussion of how culture relates to andragogy and psychology, including the psychology of teaching adults.
• Learn about what research tells us about achieving success in math including how instructors can address math anxiety and developmental dyscalculia.
• Research on choices through conscious and unconscious habits, including examples and choices and consequences.
• A survey of research and technology education “Basic 15” course offering format preferences at the University of Central Oklahoma.
• A study of parenting alone in undergraduate education to inclue the reflective experiences of single parent adult learners.
• Research on the use of interactive smartboard technology and the impact on adult student engagement and learning.

Journal overview: All articles submitted to this journal are peer-reviewed. ANTSHE has a single blind peer-review process in which the reviewers know who the authors of the manuscript are, but the authors do not have access to the information on who the peer reviewers are.

This journal is devoted to research articles of the highest quality in all areas of higher education as they pertain to the nontraditional student.

Submission information: Information can be found on the journal's information page at http://www.myantshe.org/publications

Digitized archive: ANTSHE maintains a digital archive of the back issues of The Nontrad Journal. Most back issues are freely available electronically with fully searchable content.

Any inquiries concerning a paper that has been accepted for publication should be sent by email: Lori Viar, Communications Officer, communications@antsheboardofdirectors.org.
Serving Nontraditional Students at a Public Historically Black University through Active Departmental Student Support Services

By Dr. Carlos Wilson and Dr. Gloria Smith

"Adult learners have many barriers, stressors, and needs different from the traditional students."

INTRODUCTION

In this time of economic hardship, a large number of nontraditional students will begin to return to college to earn a degree. The changing needs of the labor market, desires to earn promotions, and needs for better paying jobs are factors that will play into this decision. Many of these adult learners will regrettably seek degrees in educational systems built for traditional students. It will be beneficial to these students to choose a nontraditional path because they work, are heads of households, have children, and have responsibilities outside of their commitment to a degree-seeking program.

Institutions of higher education do focus on the matriculation of students; however, the needs of a nontraditional student differ from those of a traditional, 18-22 year-old. Unlike their younger counterparts, the nontraditional student is faced with more pressing life issues that could potentially stifle their college matriculation. Many institutions, especially urban higher education institutions, have students who come from an array of backgrounds. An institution like Jackson State University is a prime example of such university. With Jackson State University existing in a densely populated area, there will be a need to be equipped to better serve the non-traditional populations that reside in the Jackson metropolitan area.

Though programs at institutions such as Jackson State University are convenient, affordability and lack of a full range of academic services may prevent guaranteed success (Lumina, 2007).

This may prove to be a problem for many colleges and universities—deciding whether or not to spend much limited funds for a program that is needed to address the nation’s increasing population of nontraditional students. Knowing the factors which contribute to the success of nontraditional students will aid in the development of appropriate programs and actions, thus improving retention and graduation rates. It is seen that students falling into the nontraditional continuum may have needs and require services that surpass what is required by the traditional student population. In an attempt to address those needs, the School of Lifelong Learning at Jackson State University has worked to provide services at nontraditional times and places that extend a level of convenience to the adult and nontraditional student population.

BACKGROUND

Jackson State University (JSU) is located in the capital city, the cultural, political and geographical center of Mississippi. Because of its close proximity to downtown Jackson, it is known as Mississippi’s urban university. The metropolitan area consists of a growing population presently estimated at 568,000. This institution is a large celebrated Historically Black College/University (HBCU) with a student enrollment of approximately 9,500 traditional and nontraditional students of diverse backgrounds. Nearly one-half of the students attending JSU come from within a 50-mile radius of the institution; however, the population
includes students from nearly every county in the state. A significant number of students also come from outside the state and from more than 50 foreign countries. The majority of the student population is African American. The School of Lifelong Learning (SLL) at Jackson State University started as the College of Lifelong Learning in 2003 which grew out of the Division of Continuing Education. In the summer of 2013, the school was realigned as a unit within the College of Education and Human Development. The SLL is housed at the Universities Center located about a 15 minute drive from the main campus of Jackson State University in northeast Jackson.

The School of Lifelong Learning is made up of three main units: The Center for Professional Development, The Continuing Education Learning Center, and The Department of Professional Interdisciplinary Studies. The Center for Professional Development is our non-academic credit unit in charge of facilitating training, conferences, workshops, and seminars for state and local agencies. The Continuing Education Learning Center provides General Educational Development (GED) exam preparation, basic life skills classes, and English as a second language (ESL) classes. The Department of Professional Interdisciplinary Studies is our degree granting unit. This department offers the Bachelor of Science in Professional Interdisciplinary Studies (PrIS), a 124-hour undergraduate degree designed to accommodate the needs of nontraditional students. The PrIS degree is a flexible degree program that has four concentration areas: Human Resource Development, Commercial Recreation and Resorts, Faith-Based Leadership, and General Interdisciplinary Studies. The degree program is designed like most programs with an undergraduate core to be taken during the first two years. The junior year consists of the interdisciplinary concentration which requires students to take an introductory research course, a course in social change, an organizational management course.

During the junior year students also have the option to choose any courses they like to include one humanities class, three natural science courses, and three social science courses. The senior year gives students the option to take 27 hours in one of the previously stated concentration areas. The program is unique in that students who choose the General Interdisciplinary Studies concentration may transfer those 27 hours into PrIS from another major. This flexibility is what has made the program attractive to the nontraditional student population.

A study was conducted in 2012 as part of a dissertation which examined the key factors that influence students’ choice of the delivery format in which to take courses. The instrument that was utilized for this research study was the 2007 National Study on Nontraditional Students used by the Lumina Foundation of Education and the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia (2007) to identify the factors related to the progress of nontraditional students’ degree attainment. The survey included several questions about students’ characteristics such as enrollment, goals, support, financing, institutional services, and demographics. The findings included some great information on some of the challenges that adult and nontraditional students are faced with when they decide to attend or return to college. The purpose of this article will be to share those findings and discuss some of the strategies that the School of Lifelong Learning is using to address those challenges.
WHAT IS A NONTRADITIONAL STUDENT?  
In order to define nontraditional students, a researcher would need to consider the following characteristics (U.S. Department of Education, 2002):

• Does not enter college immediately following completion of high school
• Takes classes as a part time student
• Attends school while working full time
• Applies for financial aid as an independent
• Has children or other dependents (excluding spouses)
• Is a single parent
• Has a certificate of completion or GED instead of a high school diploma

These students can be described using a continuum identified by the U.S. Department of Education that measures each person by the number of nontraditional characteristics possessed. Students having one characteristic are “minimally nontraditional.” Those possessing two to three characteristics are “moderately nontraditional” and students having four or more characteristics are considered to be “highly nontraditional” (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). In a study conducted in 1999-2002, 17 percent of all undergraduate students were minimally nontraditional. Moderately nontraditional students made up 28 percent of the undergraduate population while another 28 percent were highly nontraditional (Philibert, 2005). This study focused on the students that fall into the moderately to highly nontraditional population, possessing two or more nontraditional characteristics.

There exists a vast population of potential nontraditional students that universities have access to recruit. Nearly 54 million of the nation’s adults lack a college degree with 34 million having never attended college (Lumina, 2007). For this reason, there is a shift in the demographics of institutions of higher education.

The majority of the post secondary student population consists of working nontraditional adults (Ashburn, 2004). These students often attend school part-time, are now more than 50% of the higher education student population, and are increasing in number. In order to serve this population, the necessary support services must be in place. Supporting a nontraditional student leads to his or her successful matriculation in a higher level degree-seeking program. The success of these nontraditional students is important for their communities, families, and even to the health of the nation (Lumina, 2007).

One of the major characteristics of nontraditional students is that they are adult learners. Malcolm Knowles, in his principles of andragogy, addresses adults’ need for facilitation of learning over traditional teaching (Ashburn, 2004). Knowles’ principles include learning from sharing life’s experiences, focuses on need-to-know information, participating in self-directed learning, and being able to immediately apply new knowledge (Ashburn, 2004). In determining the best strategies for serving this population, one may examine gender differences of these nontraditional students. Addressing differences in roles, responsibilities, learning styles, and support needs between genders may improve upon completion rates of these students.

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE PARTICIPANTS  
This study consisted of 92 students enrolled at a four-year institution in a degree program which is largely made up of nontraditional and adult students. The common characteristic of this population was that they are nontraditional students enrolled in a continuing education and lifelong learning unit at a historically African-American, four-year urban university located in the southeast region of the United States. All nontraditional students enrolled in classes offered by the continuing education and lifelong learning unit at an urban university had an opportunity to be included in the study. Students possessing one characteristic are considered
“minimally nontraditional.” Those students having two to three characteristics are
“moderately nontraditional,” and students having more than three characteristics are classified as
“highly nontraditional” (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

This study measured characteristics across the spectrum from “moderately nontraditional” to
“highly nontraditional.” Students must have possessed at least two of the nontraditional
characteristics to be included in the study. The students at this institution were enrolled in
classes offered by the continuing education and lifelong learning unit from January through
August of 2012.

**FINDING**

The following data are related to challenges faced by nontraditional students when returning to
school such as problems, stressors and fears. In
Table 1, a breakdown of the challenges faced
when returning to school is presented. The table
shows that cost of books/material, course
scheduling, educational financing, establishing
priorities, and family financial obligations were
the top five factors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost of books/materials</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course scheduling</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational financing</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing priorities</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family financial obligations</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needing assistance with study skills</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation worries</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in academic subjects</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining employment</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of childcare</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of childcare/dependent care</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application process</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of peer support</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of student services</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classes not available</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict between work and school</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other financial issues</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict with family life</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition and fees too high</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling problems</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to academic counselors</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal/family crisis</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time/time management</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor institutional support</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime and safety on-campus</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel arrangements</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate campus facilities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living arrangements</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next variables to be examined were the problems that make it difficult for nontraditional students to stay in school. The data in Table 2 present the responses of the students concerning these variables. As seen in the table, classes not available, conflict between work and school, other financial issues, conflict with family life, and tuition and fees being too high were the top five problems that make it difficult for students to stay in school.

As seen in Table 3, participants also shared stressors that they have faced since returning to school. The top stressors cited since returning to school are managing course load (33.7%), inability to give 100% to school when job requirements intervene (28.3%), and time away from the family, missed children’s activities (26.1%). Other significant stressors were loss of leisure time, perhaps recreational activities with friends (25.0%), inability to give 100% to school when family requirements intervene (23.9%), and less time spent with significant other, often leading to more stress (20.7%).
The data in Table 4 present a view of the participants’ responses concerning fears nontraditional students have faced about returning to school. As seen in the table, the top fears cited by nontraditional students about returning to school were finances (47.8%), difficulty balancing priorities (44.6%), family demands (30.4%), employment responsibilities (30.4%), being older than other students (28.3%), and ability to obtain satisfactory grades (22.8%).

What are the adult learners’ perceptions of their experiences with the activities associated with the delivery of the registration, advising, counseling, and financial aid services at on-site community learning centers?

Another study was conducted addressing the needs of nontraditional students at a public historically black university through active departmental student support services (SSS). This study is based on data collected as a result of a 2012 dissertation titled, “An Evaluation of a University’s Adult Learners’ Perceptions of their Support Services at Off-Site Community Learning Centers”. The second research question “What are the adult learners’ perceptions of their experiences with the activities associated with the delivery of the registration, advising, counseling, and financial aid services at on-site community learning centers?” is the focus of this study.

This study was conducted to provide administrators and service providers with information about the extent to which student support services offered at a distance, meet students’ needs and achieve the goals of the administrators and service providers. The administrators and service providers used the data to (a) ensure the support services needs of the African American adult learners taking classes at off-site community learning facilities are met, and (b) improve and/or expand on-site student support services to adult learners at all the community learning facilities. Student support services included registration, advising, counseling, and financial aid services at selected off-site community learning centers.
Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fears</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finances</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>47.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty balancing priorities</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family demands</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment responsibilities</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being older than other students</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to obtain satisfactory grades</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty retaining information</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding course material</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course load</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The enrollment of nontraditional students or “adult” learners attending postsecondary institutions has substantially increased (Bauman, Wang, DeLeon, Kefentzis, Zavala-Lopez, Lindsey, 2004). Data from a 1999-2000 survey of the U.S. Department of Education indicated that 73% of all postsecondary undergraduates are “nontraditional” students. In addition, 30% of undergraduates, who are attending postsecondary institutions, are working adults (Berker & Horn, 2003) and first-generation college students who are older than their college peers attending postsecondary institutions.

Research has revealed that adult learners have many barriers, stressors, and needs different from the traditional students. Adult learners want to see more policies and practices put in place by institutions that will address these needs (Lumina, 2009). To address these needs, administrators of institutions must put in place programs and policies to minimize barriers encountered by adult students as well as provide them with a supportive environment (Kasworm, 2002). The majority of adult learners have little or no post secondary experience and they need support services that will ensure they are successful as they attend college.

This study was conducted in the College of Lifelong Learning (C.L.L) at a historically black institution. The C.L.L provides a Student Support Services (SSS) program that includes registration, advising, counseling, and financial aid services for all students taking classes on campus and off campus at various community learning centers. Because of the distance of the community learning centers from the main campus, some adult students were not able to take advantage of the services offered on campus during the evening hours or on weekends. To ensure that adult learners received the necessary SSS at off-site community learning facilities, the program was evaluated and included plans for advisors to visit the community learning centers. These advisors registered students for classes some semesters, advised students, and counseled them about financial aid. In some cases, students faxed their course-request forms to their advisors or travelled to the main campus to register for classes.
In order to accommodate the needs of adult students at the off-campus community learning centers, CLL administrators requested that advisors schedule group registration, advising, counseling, and financial aid sessions. In other instances, because of the large number of community learning centers and the limited number of advisors, registration, academic advising, counseling, and financial aid sessions were scheduled upon request by students. During the visits, advisors evaluated transcripts, discussed the admission process, registered students for classes, and advised, counseled, and assisted students in completing financial aid applications.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**
This study was designed to determine adult learners’ perceptions of student support services (SSS) offered at the CLL’s off-site community learning facilities. The problem as it relates to the area of need is that CLL administrators and staff lack sufficient data to make sound decisions that might improve or expand SSS at selected off-site community learning facilities.

According to the Lumina Foundation National Study on Non-Traditional Students (Lumina Foundation for Education, Inc., 2009), at the institution, 17.8% of student respondents considered financial aid counseling to be very important, and 14.7% indicated that face-to-face academic advising was very important. In order for the CLL’s administrators to make decisions about the extent to which the CLL’s SSS meet students’ needs at off-site community learning facilities, they must have relevant information about the off-site student population.

According to Cullity (2006), institutions should provide programs and ongoing support tailored to adult learners that will help them succeed in college. Institutions of higher learning must take into consideration the needs of mature students, because adult students experience special difficulties and need support services to address their needs (Fairchild, 2003).

**Participants**
A total of 304 students met the selection criteria and were eligible to participate in the study. These students were enrolled in course work at the off-site community center locations. They included both men and women undergraduate adult learners 25 years of age and older, and represented a range of races and ethnicities: 291 (96%) are African American or Blacks, 2 (1%) are Asian-Americans or Pacific Islanders, 10 (3%) are Caucasians or Whites, and 0 (0%) are Native Americans or Alaskan Natives.

**Instruments**
To explore the experiences of adult learners in relation to off-site student support services, an interview protocol for the qualitative data collection in this study was developed.

**Qualitative survey**
According to Creswell (1997), a qualitative data-collection method is appropriate when little is known about a phenomenon and the researcher seeks to gain new information. The qualitative interview protocol was used to engage selected students in conversations about the effectiveness of on-site registration, advising, counseling, and financial aid services at community learning facilities.

**Procedures**
After receiving IRB approval, the director of academic credit programs was contacted for permission to conduct the study. Adult learners presently taking classes through the
CLI at off-site community facilities were invited to participate in this research project. Twelve students were selected by the director of academic credit programs to participate in an interview session. The 12 students selected were scheduled for interviews with the director of academic credit programs at times and places that were convenient for them. The interviews took place between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. at five different locations. The director took notes during the interviews to record participants’ comments. Students were interviewed individually. According to Creswell (2002), open-ended questions allow participants to voice their experiences and to create the options for responding.

Qualitative Findings for Research Question 2 Research Question 2 was, “What are the adult learners’ perceptions of their experiences with the activities associated with the delivery of the registration, advising, counseling, and financial aid services at on-site community learning centers?” This section presents the analysis of qualitative data from interviews with 12 students about the services provided.

Interview Question 1 asked, “What type of student support services (registration, financial aid, and advising and counseling) have you utilized at your off-site community learning site? Describe experiences you have had using each of these services.” Of the 12 students interviewed, registration support services were used most by the students at the off-site community learning center. Approximately half the students stated that they used advising and financial aid SSS. Only 3 of the students interviewed reported using counseling services at their off-site community learning center. Experiences described by students interviewed include the closing of classes; a lack of advising, counseling, and registration services each semester; and an inability to contact their advisor. At least three of the students stated that SSS such as registration and advising have been good.

Four major themes emerged from the analysis of the students’ responses to Interview Question 1. Theme 1 for Interview Question 1 was that SSS (registration, advising, counseling, and financial aid) were selectively offered at some of the sites. Theme 2 for Interview Question 1 was that over half the students interviewed were displeased with the lack of financial aid support at the sites. Theme 3 for Interview Question 1 was that many students expressed a concern that SSS were not offered at the sites each semester. Theme 4 for Interview Question 1 was that a few students were concerned about courses and the class scheduling process.

Theme 1 for Interview Question 1, that SSS were offered at only some of the sites, is reflected in three of the students’ responses to the interview questions. One student said, “Advising and counseling services only have been provided at my site.” Another student stated, “We have had registration and advising services at our off-site facility.” Yet another student reported, “We have registration and financial aid services only.”

Theme 2 for Interview Question 1 concerned the lack of financial aid support at most of the sites. A student commented, “Financial aid counseling needs to be improved. The counselors are not familiar with financial aid and the financial aid services need to be organized better than it is.” Another student stated, “We have advising and registration services, but not financial aid support.” Another student commented, “Some students have an issue with completing the financial aid packet. We need financial support at our site.”
At least three students, according to Theme 3 for Interview Question 1, were concerned that SSS were not offered each semester at their site. A student commented, “We do not receive registration, financial aid, and advising services each semester. These services have been okay, but we do not receive these services each semester. That is something we need each semester especially the registration and advising.” Another student remarked, “We have utilized registration. We have not received any advising at our site because we are too far from the main campus.”

Theme 4 for Interview Question 1 concerned the scheduling of courses and classes at the sites. A student commented, “We have registration services, but by the time we know what classes are offered, the classes are full.” Another student stated, “By the time the advisors come to our site, the classes are closed and we have no other classes to select from other than classes offered at the main campus. It is too far for us to travel to the main campus to take classes.”

These themes led to a set of findings. A student commented, “I have experienced registration, financial aid, and advising at my site. We do not receive these services each semester, and that is something we need each semester especially the registration and advising services.” Another student responded, “Advising and counseling services have been used at my site. Financial aid counseling needs to be improved. The counselors are not familiar with financial aid and the services need to be organized better than it is.” Finding 1 for Interview Question 1 is that three of the students stated that SSS are not offered consistently at sites, and are not offered at some of the sites. Finding 2 for Interview Question 1 is that there is a lack of financial aid support at most of the sites. Finding 3 for Interview Question 1 is that some students were concerned about the lack of SSS offered each semester. Finding 4 for Interview Question 1 is that four of the students interviewed were concerned about the course and scheduling problems at the site.

A student commented, “By the time the advisors come to our site, the classes are closed and we have no other classes to select from because the classes are closed.” Another student stated, “We have registration services, but by the time we know what classes are offered, they are all full. We need to know what classes are offered sooner in order to register for the classes.”

Interview Question 2 said, “Describe your feelings about the delivery of these services. What, if any, support services made you feel good and what services caused you frustration?” Two major themes and one minor theme emerged from an analysis of the responses to this question. Theme 1 for Interview Question 2 was that four students were pleased with the advising services provided at the off-campus site. Theme 2 for Interview Question 2 was that approximately half the students interviewed were concerned about the lack of advisor availability and the advisors’ unresponsiveness to their needs. Theme 3 for Interview Question 2, which emerged from the analysis of at least four students’ responses, was a concern about course- and class-scheduling problems. This theme, also reported above, emerged from students’ responses to Interview Question 1.

Theme 1 for Interview Question 2, that students were pleased with the advising services, is reflected in a few of the students’ responses with respect to their feelings about the delivery of services, support services that made them feel good, and services that caused them frustration. One student said, “Registration, advising, counseling, and financial aid services are all productive services for me.” Another student stated, “It is good that advising and registration services are offered.” A student also commented, “Offering advising, counseling and registration services at the site makes me feel good.” Theme 2 for Interview Question 2 concerned the lack of advisor availability and the advisors’ unresponsiveness to students’ needs.
A student commented, “I can never get my advisor on the phone or have him to return any of my phone calls. This frustrates me.” Another student stated, “My advisor does not return any of my phone calls. I can never get in contact with him and I am referred to another advisor all the time.” A student commented, “It frustrates me when I cannot get in contact with my advisor to set up an appointment to see him or even ask a simple question. I have to call back several times and that costs me money.”

Three students’ comments provided support for or reflected Theme 3 for Interview Question 2, which was concern about the scheduling of courses. For example, a student said, “Many times, the classes are full and we are not able to get the classes we need each semester. Sometimes, we have to take classes we do not need.” Another student stated, “Not being able to get the necessary classes I really need to graduate frustrates me.”

These themes led to a set of findings about the advising services and their effectiveness. Finding 1 for Interview Question 2 is that approximately half the interviewees were pleased and satisfied with off-site advising services. Finding 2 for Interview Question 2 is that despite this support for the services, at least three interviewees were concerned about the lack of advisors’ services (offered once a year rather than each semester), and the advisors’ apparent indifference toward students’ needs. Finding 3 for Interview Question 2 is that four interviewees expressed concerns about the scheduling of courses that did not meet their needs.

Interview Question 3 asked, “What student support services made you feel as though the college really cared about meeting your needs?” Three major themes emerged from an analysis of the students’ responses to this question. Theme 1 for Interview Question 3 was that more than half the interviewees were pleased to have advisors visit the site. Theme 3 for Interview Question 3 was that five of the interviewees were pleased that registration and advising services were offered at the sites.

Theme 1 for Interview Question 3, that students were pleased that classes are offered during the evening hours at the site, is reflected in the following comments. One student stated, “By offering classes help me because I have small children and I could not drive that distance to class each night.” Another student commented, “Offering classes at my site during the evening hours makes me feel like the college cares because I work during the day.”

Themes 2 and 3 for Interview Question 3 concerned the availability of advisors and registration services at the sites. A student commented, “Having the advisors come to the site makes me feel as if the college cares.” Another student stated, “The advising services are very important to us. I think the college cares because it offers this service.” Another commented, “Because my site is a great distance from the college, registration and advising services are provided. This makes me think the college cares about us.” Yet another student commented, “Having the advisors there at my site made me feel as if the college really cares for me. Advisors were at my site and provided registration and advising services.”

These themes led to a set of findings. Finding 1 for Interview Question 3 was that some students were pleased that classes were offered during the evening hours. Finding 2 for Interview Question 3 was that students were pleased to have advisors visit the site to advise them and offer registration services.

Interview Question 4 asked, “What student support services made you feel as though the college was not interested in meeting your needs?” Three major themes emerged from the analysis of
the students’ responses to the question. Theme 1 for Interview Question 4 was that a few students felt that the CLL was meeting their needs by offering classes and support services such as registration and advising. Theme 2 for Interview Question 4 included two subthemes. Subtheme 1 was that some of the students were concerned about closed classes, which prohibited them from registering for these classes. Subtheme 2 was that other students were annoyed that some classes were offered over and over again. Theme 3 for Interview Question 4 reflected students’ concerns that sometimes advisors were not on site to advise students properly.

Theme 1 for Interview Question 4, that students believed that the CLL is meeting their needs by offering classes and support services such as registration and advising, is reflected in some of the students’ responses to the question. One student said, “I think the college cares and is doing all it can do to help us at the sites.” Another student commented, “I think the college is interested in meeting the needs of the students, but because of budget cuts and other things, the college is doing the very best it can to assist the students by offering classes at our sites and offering advising services.”

Theme 2 for Interview Question 4, that some of the students were concerned about the closing of classes and that some classes were offered over and over again, is reflected in some of the comments expressed by students. One student reported, “When all the classes offered at the site are closed and the college does not offer any additional classes for students at the site, I think the college just does not care what classes we take.” Another student commented, “Classes are closed, and if the administrators really cared about us, they would identify specific classes for students taking classes at the sites and make sure those classes are not closed.”

Theme 3 for Interview Question 4 concerned the advisors’ unavailability. A student commented, “I think the college does not care because I cannot get my advisor at all. He does not return calls.” Another student commented, “I think the college does not care when my advisor is not there for me, when classes close, and when services are not provided by the advisors.”

These themes led to three findings about services offered by the advisors and the CLL. Finding 1 for Interview Question 4 is that some of the students felt that the CLL was meeting their needs by offering classes and support services such as registration and advising. Finding 2 for Interview Question 4 is that many students were concerned when classes close and the same classes are offered over and over again. Finding 3 for Interview Question 4 is that some students felt that advisors were not there to advise them properly when needed.

Summary of the Findings
Research Question 2 was, To what extent are the providers of registration, advising, counseling, and financial aid services at on-site community learning centers meeting students’ needs at off-site community learning facilities? The major findings for the second research question that emerged from the initial findings for each interview question are: (a) many students felt that the CLL was meeting their needs by offering classes and support services such as registration and advising during the evening hours at off-site facilities; (b) some students were frustrated by the lack of financial aid support at most of the sites, course/scheduling problems at the sites that included closed classes, the lack of class offerings students needed for their programs or studies, and the repeated offerings of some classes; and (c) at least half the students interviewed were concerned about the lack of service from advisors who appeared indifferent toward their needs.
Addressing the Challenges of Nontraditional Students in the School of Lifelong Learning
When looking at these challenges there were three themes that could be found at or near the top of each area:

• Class scheduling.
• Financing Education (tuition, books, and materials).
• Balancing Priorities (work, family, school work).

These challenges can create barriers to adult and nontraditional student degree attainment. In an effort to provide adequate services for the students facing these challenges, the administration of the School of Lifelong Learning has worked to provide convenient advising times and locations, flexible course delivery options, and student financial support. We have more than 20 Metro Classroom Sites around the state of Mississippi. These sites are located at places such as public high schools, community centers, job corps centers. When we have a significant population of students in a particular region, we can actually set up on-site advisement and registration at one of the classroom sites. This has served as a great recruiting tool for some of the more rural communities outside of the City of Jackson.

The School of Lifelong Learning administrators were not only interested in providing extended services to those students living outside of the Jackson metropolitan areas, but we were also interested in making sure these services were available to those students who attend classes at our center every day. One of the ways that we have worked to provide services after hours is to have an administrator or advisor on duty each night of the week from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. and every Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This person is available to provide advisement services, evaluate transcripts, and register students for classes who cannot come during the daytime hours. Many of our administrator or advisors’ posted office hours are actually 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday. This allows students who may leave work late in the afternoon to come by and receive the help they may need on the way to their evening classes. For those students who have additional needs in the classroom, we have established an Academic Support clinic which is open by appointment from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Students can get assistance with reading skills, writing and document formatting, mathematics, and English Proficiency examination preparation. Many students come in before class to prepare for class or to get assistance with homework. This service is offered to all students in the PrIS program at no charge.

All of the face-to-face courses offered through the School of Lifelong Learning are offered in the Evenings 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This allows our students who work full-time during the day to continue their employment and while not hindering their academic progress. It also allows students who may live long distances from the University and prefer face-to-face courses to come to class on weekends. We also offer face-to-face courses at our metro classroom sites when we have a minimum of 15 students who can take classes in a particular community. A perfect example would be the students who are taking classes as part of our Choctaw Initiative. The School of Lifelong Learning in collaboration with the Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education has offered courses on Thursday and Friday evenings, Saturday mornings and afternoons, and even Sunday afternoons. The courses are being offered to students who live or work on the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians Reservation near Philadelphia, MS.

The School of Lifelong Learning also has an interactive video classroom at the Universities Center where we can broadcast live classes out to our metro classroom sites. These classes have been offered four nights each week during the fall and spring semesters. There are class facilitators at each site who monitor the classes and proctor
exams for instructors. In the past this method has been essential to recruiting those students who do not live in the Jackson Metro Area. However, I will be the first to say we have seen a decrease in the demand for Interactive video courses with the emergence of online course delivery.

Since fall of 2012 the School of Lifelong Learning has offered an average of 18 courses online each semester to Professional Interdisciplinary Studies majors through the on-ground program. Courses are offered through the BlackBoard learning management system and are maintained by the JSU Office of Distance Learning now JSU Online. With the start of JSU Online in the fall 2014 semester, the Professional Interdisciplinary Studies program began its first semester of the fully online track. It is one of four online bachelor degree programs at Jackson State University. Students taking classes through this track are not limited by location, space, or time. All recruitment, admissions, financial aid advisement, academic advisement and registration of students is handled by this office.

The School of Lifelong Learning also assists students with fiscal student support. Many of the students in the PrIS program do receive federal financial aid, however the new restrictions on Pell Grant and Federal Student Loans have disqualified some. Adults who return to college after stepping out 10, 15, or even 20 years ago, many times bring semester hours that can or cannot be used. I’ve even seen students who have exceeded 200 hours without earning a degree.

Once disqualified, some students would not be able to complete their degree programs. The School of Lifelong Learning has made available to PrIS majors the Adult Training for Lifelong Advancement Support Service (ATLASS). Students may apply for the ATLASS only if they can show proof that they are ineligible for federal financial aid. They must submit an application along with a written statement of need, 3 letters of recommendation, and their financial aid award letter. Funding can be used for tuition or book vouchers. Students are awarded based upon need and must apply each semester. This support is funded by non-academic or professional development activities. We found that this is a great way to invest in our students to ensure their progress toward a baccalaureate degree when financial barriers exist.

CONCLUSION
Institutions of higher learning, especially those that are located in urban and metropolitan areas, are expected to provide adequate services to a variety of individuals in the community. With the economic crises in recent years, the entire society has to be transformed and there is a great need for institutions located in urban areas to position themselves to better serve the nontraditional and adult populations. Marketability and ability to provide for family were at the top among the reasons for returning to school. As these students have begun to invest in themselves and institutions of higher learning, institutions will need to invest in services to meet their needs. Lumina (2007) proposed that institutions need to intensify the efforts to provide convenient, affordable academic services that can guarantee the creation of a productive workforce. Since affordability was top in the reasons participants chose their current institution, what better way to attract more students than to provide affordable flexible learning options?

All institutions are faced with the decisions about whether to spend limited funds to create and implement programs that are designed to address the nation’s increasing population of nontraditional students. Some of the top problems participants faced in this study were classes not being available and conflict between work and school. This provides invaluable insight into some of the issues that will need to be addressed as institutions do look to recruit from the nontraditional student population. Since these studies help to make the institution aware of the major concerns of nontraditional students, steps can be taken to boost the development of appropriate programs, actions and support services, thus improving recruitment, retention and graduation rates.
REFERENCES


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ENHANCING STUDENT BREADWINNERS’ CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS IN CLASS AND ONLINE USING A WIKI

By Dr. Sandra Seay

Student breadwinners is a descriptor I use to identify students who are responsible for finding money to take care of themselves and often times many others. The descriptors “nontraditional” and “adult learners” provide many of the demographic characteristics associated with student breadwinners.

Almost two decades ago, Horn (1996) identified three sets of variables that distinguished nontraditional from traditional undergraduate students. The first concerned the time span separating graduation from high school and entrance into academic study. Using this, Horn classified traditional undergraduates as those students who entered academic study immediately following high school graduation and nontraditional undergraduates as those who did not. The financial and family status variables were used to identify students who either were responsible for themselves and others or those who were not. Nontraditional undergraduates were not classified as dependents on financial aid forms, might be married, and were likely to have dependents. Whereas traditional undergraduates were classified as dependents on financial aid forms, were not married and did not have children. Horn also classified nontraditional students as undergraduates who did not have a standard high school diploma, and instead entered higher education using a GED or other equivalent for a high school diploma.

Much of the discussion in the literature concerned with undergraduates labeled as nontraditional or adult students focuses on the work and family responsibilities that have a negative impact on these students obtaining undergraduate degrees (Horn, 1996; Jameson & Fusco, 2014). Horn acknowledged that often “age acts a surrogate variable that captures a large heterogeneous population of adult students who have family and work responsibilities that interfere with successful completion of educational objectives (p. 3). Thus, researchers often use age to indicate students who have or who do not have financial and family responsibilities. This was the situation with Jameson and Fusco who used being less than 25 years old to indicate traditional undergraduates and 25 years or older to identify adult/nontraditional undergraduates.

However, empirical data drawn from my years as a faculty member illustrate that chronological age does not adequately capture the demographic complexity of undergraduates currently enrolled in academic study. Consider the description of nontraditional students as being undergraduate students over the age of 25 who have children. This, however, does not match the student demographics of my undergraduate classrooms where frequently the enrolled students are parents, 19 years and younger, of both genders whose faces reflect multiple ethnicities and who might or might not be married.
For these reasons, I prefer to use the term student breadwinners to identify the students who are primary caretakers for themselves and others. While student breadwinners defy being described by value points along a finite set of demographic scales such as age and family income, they do tend to place high on the stress scale. In fact, performing academic work in the midst of stress is what connects them as a demographic entity. The sources of the stress are evident and can involve the care of children, parents and others. The stress also comes from completing assignments expected of them in their academic classes.

Some of those class assignments are likely to involve critical thinking. Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion (Association of American Colleges and Universities [AACU], n.d.). Critical thinking is a process that involves taking information and running it through a sieve of Who, Why, What, and When questions. The purpose of critically examining information is to make a decision that is likely to yield a more positive than negative consequence. In their personal lives, critical thinking allows student breadwinners to consider alternative solutions to personal problems. This includes how to deal with bill collectors, secure resources for daily living, and diminish the likelihood of being a victim of fraud.

Consistent use of critical thinking in an academic classroom yields short term and long term benefits. In the short term, student breadwinners are likely to score well on assignments. In the long term, the students’ self-confidence strengthens as the ability to scrutinize information grows. Being confident in academic study is important as there are a number of studies that discuss the insecurity felt by four subpopulations of undergraduate students whose academic experiences are often different from that of traditional students. These subpopulations include students labeled as adult learners (Ross-Gordon, 2003); low-income and/or minority undergraduates (Gerardi, 2005), and first-generation students (DeFreitas & Rinn, 2013).

Critical thinking involves a series of steps that always includes the evaluation of information (Lynch & Wolcott, 2001). However, in this article the focus begins with a discussion of strategies that can be used within the classroom to convince student breadwinners that they have the innate capability to do the mental work required in critical thinking. First, I drown out the sounds that prevent student breadwinners from fully engaging in the classroom discussion. Student breadwinners are always on alert mode. This alert mode can come from events that happened prior to the start of class that involve themselves or their dependents.
Leaving a crying child at a daycare center or hearing the sound of a doctor relaying the most recent test results for a loved one are sounds that linger in the mind as a student sits in a classroom. I drown out these sounds with ice breakers that involve YouTube videos and music.

For example, I grab the students’ attention by playing YouTube videos of professional dancers doing the cha cha, samba, and rumba. I then play snippets from musical recordings by performers currently occupying the musical charts and have the students vote on which recording is best suited for performing the cha cha, rumba, or samba. What I am doing is requiring the students to use multiple senses to focus their attention on the classroom and not concerns outside of the classroom.

I also use catchy graphics and quotations to convince student breadwinners that critical thinking is an important skill. One of my favorite sayings is from a folktale entitled The Farmer and the Snake (Dorson, 1956, p. 106-109). The Farmer and the Snake is a cautionary tale about the negative consequences of not using critical thinking to make a decision. In this folktale, an almost frozen snake convinces a farmer to warm him up using the farmer’s body warmth. Once warm, the snake proceeds to bite the farmer and the farmer dies. The snake’s explanation is that he was following his natural predisposition in biting the farmer and is not remorseful after biting the farmer. The purpose of this in class activity is to impress upon student breadwinners the importance of using careful thought in making every day decisions.

I then provide the student breadwinners with practice in evaluating information. False information is too accessible in modern times due to technological devices. The internet has made the spread of information through social media and websites to proceed unfettered in a continuous stream. For student breadwinners this means that access to information is not problematic. What is problematic is evaluating the veracity of information.

I show sections of newspaper columns that offer differing explanations for the cause and consequences of current events. Most of my students are education majors and the newspaper columns often involve actions of local school boards and state legislative bodies. I explain strategies used in determining the veracity of information. These strategies include how to use data base searches and how to distinguish a white paper from a research investigation. And to allow the scrutiny of the information to continue outside of the classroom, I introduce the student breadwinners to wikis. Wikis are interlinked web pages. According to Neumann and Hood (2009) “each page can store information and is easily viewed, edited, and commented on by other people (p. 382). I define wikis as chalkboards in the sky that are available for students to record information and look at information recorded by someone else at any time of the day or night. For student breadwinners, wikis are very useful because they are always available for access by student breadwinners who have restricted times in which they can do academic work. As an example, a student employed at WalMart on the third shift can access the wiki during a lunch break at one o’clock in the morning or at 2 p.m. an hour before leaving for work.

Wikis are used as instructional tools for many purposes. Matthew et al. (2009) write that wikis can help students
understand academic content. Wikis were used by Allwardt (2011) to improve students’ writing skills. Lai and Ng (2011) used wikis to help students identify their epistemological beliefs. Osana and Seymour (2004) used wikis to help students strengthen their critical thinking skills.

I use wikis because they allow student breadwinners to visually inspect information. Wikis as I defined them previously are chalkboards in the sky. A student breadwinner can virtually stand in front of the chalkboard and write on the chalkboard. The student can also look at what another student wrote. The student can determine when another student wrote something. The wikis becomes a map that allows the student breadwinner to evaluate a statement and then make a decision. Each decision moves the student along the decision making process.

I acknowledge the critical thinking activities engaged in by student breadwinners through comments made in class and through posting I put on the wiki. The cycle of continuous practice evaluating information and feedback from me increases the student breadwinners’ self confidence and increases the acceptance by these students that they are scholars doing mental work at a university.

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Meet the Author at the ANTSHE Conference!

The Nontraditional Learners Guide to Success
Dr. R. Lee Viar IV

Through a series of career related occurrences and experiences, I found myself needing to continue my education. At the age of thirty-four with three children, going back to college was not high on my list of goals. Reestablishing my study habits, learning how to take tests again, and working on projects were challenging enough without the added financial burden of tuition and lost income. Even more important was the loss of family time. Nevertheless, a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration and subsequently a MBA in Management and Marketing, and eventually a Ph.D., were seen as an avenue to a better career and future. Consequently, my own journey led me down a path with some twists and turns, but I was always filled with support from my various family members.

This book investigates the influence of an informal support network on the growing population of nontraditional learners and explores the implications of this support network for learner persistence and success. Obviously, the end objective is success for the nontraditional learner. Success can be defined in many different ways and can mean a multitude of different things to each individual. This success can manifest itself in the form of an intrinsic motivational purpose, for career advancement or continuing education. Whatever the reason, education is a precious gift and degree attainment should be encouraged, regardless of the learner’s stage of life.

Who should read this book? Nontraditional learners, instructors of nontraditional learners, the support networks, and the nontraditional learners’ mentors, as well as, counselors who are working with adult learners, will benefit from the insights provided herein. In addition, it is my sincerest hope that this book can act as a guide to assist working adult learners who enter institutions of advanced learning later in life to achieve their goal of earning a degree. A New Book in Series Coming Soon!

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Cover Story

**Just Call Me The Cake Pop Lady!**

Simone Dockery
Entrepreneur, Model, Student, Mom

My story begins on January 30th, 1980 in the little town of Birmingham, England. Ozzy Osbourne was born and raised there and still to this day when I hear his daughter Kelly Osborne talk, I’m reminded of what my accent used to sound like!!

My Dad, Devon or Clive as the family calls him, moved to England with his brother and sisters from Kingston, Jamaica when he was 8 years old. My mom, Carol, moved to England for nursing school when she was 18 from the beautiful island of Nevis located in the Virgin Islands. I was lucky to have been able to grow up as an only child with two amazing parents. People often asked if I ever got lonely, but the benefit of living in an area where family is literally everywhere means there is always someone at the house or you were always over there.
"ANYONE WHO SAYS THEY DO NOT HAVE TIME TO GO TO SCHOOL IS SIMPLY MAKING EXCUSES. DON'T EVEN HAVE TIME TO BREATHE AND I do it."

My grandmother is the heart and soul of our family and has always been the main rock for us. She had it rough though, being that my Dad’s father left when he was two years old and my grandmother had to raise 6 children on her own. She left Kingston and moved to England to provide a better life for her children. Not only did she do it on her own, but she set the foundation that you can be strong and independent without having to have a man do it for you. That foundation made it easy for me to learn that I could do anything that I wanted to and I could do it by myself.

I lived a life where I did not want for anything. By no means were we rich, but we lived comfortably. We had a quaint home in Birmingham that my aunt actually lives in today. It was cute and perfect for our little family. My mom worked nights and my Dad worked during the day so I actually spent more time with my Dad in the evenings which is probably how I became such a Daddy’s girl. If my Dad was around, you were guaranteed to see me. And being the only granddaughter for a while, I was spoiled ROTTEN!!!! Of course I loved every minute of it. My aunts used to treat me like a little dress up doll since they are all designers. I have pictures of me in their designs with makeup on looking too cute, LOL, and it’s because of them where I discovered my love for modeling. But we’ll talk about that later.

Life was good in England, until unfortunately it was not.

In late 1988 my Dad took a job in the United States. It never really dawned on me that we would actually have to move at some point but when the time came the following year, I was actually really excited. My little friends and I thought that America was one huge beach and all my friends were jealous that I was getting out of damp England to go to sunny America. Most kids would cry but I was so excited!!! Prior to that my Dad had been gone for a year and I was so happy to see him and for us all to be in one place together again. Well, reality hit once we arrived.

We moved to Hamden, Connecticut in November 1989 in the middle of a blizzard. Imagine my shock to see snow so high that you couldn’t even walk well. The cold was ridiculous and I kept thinking to myself, Dad couldn’t have moved us in July?!

Well, the shock of everything came to a head when I started Spring Glen Elementary School in January 1990. I was actually excited to meet some new friends and start my new life. Instead, I was faced with mean kids who teased me constantly about my accent and if I was really black. “What do you mean am I really black?” I asked one mean kid. He responded, “Well there aren’t any black people in England so you have to be white. I mean, isn’t your last name White?” I said, “Actually, my last name is spelled W-H-Y-T-E.” The ignorance that I faced was unreal. Kids would tease me on the bus, in the hallways and throughout the day making me the topic of all their jokes. I remember coming home and begging my mom to send me back to England but unfortunately that was not an option.
Things didn’t change much for me in Middle School either. Hamden Middle School was just the same thing but with older people. No one ever really accepted me and I always felt that I was trying too hard to get people to like me. I always felt a constant battle to fit in with people, until I met my best friend Dionne. She was the rock I needed and we kind of just fit like a jigsaw puzzle. For the first time in a long time, I felt like I had a real friend and it was really nice. But the ridicule just kept going. It seemed that everyone would find something wrong with me just so that they could tease me.

Well, Virginia was a nice move but drama was just around the corner. All throughout school I was running track so it was natural for me to join the track team. There I had an outlet to do something I loved to do and make some new friends, hopefully. For once, things were good and I met some great people on that team. I was finally feeling better about myself until I met him.

I met him because he was comforting me because I had just found out my grandfather had passed away. He also came to my defense when a guy at school was telling people that he slept with me when it simply wasn’t true. His knight in shining armor demeanor was so refreshing even though I was warned by countless people to stay away from him. Well, we started dating and being 16 going on 17, he was literally my whole teenage world. I found out later, that he was also a very mean person. The yelling at me and the constant embarrassment started about 2 months into our relationship. He would come to school mad and just immediately take it out on me. I became afraid but also concerned because no one felt that he was doing wrong. In fact, a lot of people laughed when he was embarrassing me and I had to walk around looking and feeling stupid on a daily basis. At one point I found a way to blame myself for the things he was doing, saying that I deserved everything that he was doing to me. I planned to down a bottle of pills so that I could just die. I wanted all the pain to stop. I wanted all the people to stop laughing at me. I just wanted people to like me.

Because of this relationship, I had a hard time connecting and trusting in people. I spent most of my early 20’s going from one bad situation to another. Nothing I did seemed right and without a college degree, I wasn’t living up to my potential at all. I watched all my friends go to school and get their degrees and move on to bigger and
better things while I was just working. This is definitely not the way I saw my life. I thought I would be working some high powered job by now but by 2004 I was still just a customer service agent wondering when my big break would come. I spent a lot of that time very depressed as well. I really thought that I must have done something terribly wrong because the life that I was being handed was nowhere near what I would have ever thought my life would have become. I became extremely hard on myself and even contemplated suicide. I just didn’t see any reason to be here anymore.

In 2004, by accident, I met my husband. My two best friends and I were planning to go to Atlanta for the weekend. Being 24 with no kids it was easy to just jump up and go out of town. The day before we were supposed to leave, I decided that traveling to Atlanta was just not in the budget right now and suggested that we go somewhere closer. We agreed on going to D.C. that night because there was a new club that had opened and we wanted to go. So, we booked our rooms and headed out the next day.

That evening was just like any other night out. Guys trying to sweet talk and buy you drinks in the hopes of getting a dance or a phone number later. My friend was on the other side of the bar from where I was at, so in order to get away from another random guy, I told him I had to go to my friend. As soon as I got around the bar, I see this really, really tall guy moving through the crowd. He had on sunglasses and I said to myself, “I know for sure he can’t see!!” No sooner had I had that thought, I see him pull down his glasses, look me right in the eye, and preceded to do this James Brown slide across the room to me. I was hollering with laughter!!!!!!! From that point, we were pretty much inseparable. Within 4 months, I had moved to Maryland and we were living together. After 10 months,

my husband proposed and I happily accepted. We set our wedding for July 22, 2006; a little over two years of us meeting. By February of that year, my grandmother had already finished my wedding gown and I was all set to get married. But in April of 2006 we received surprising but amazing news. I was pregnant!

At this point, I knew I wanted a baby but didn’t even think I could have children. In 1999, I was told I had a condition called Endometriosis and it made it hard to have children. I had told my husband that I may not be able to give him a child but he always insisted that I would. In September of that year, I found out that my job, Konica Minolta, did not offer maternity leave until you had been at the job for 1 year and a half and even then, you were only offered 1 week of leave.
In January 2009, I applied for a job at Capital One Richmond and got the job. I decided that it would be best for me to move back to Richmond, utilize the help my parents were offering and basically start over. My initial position at Capital One was grueling and my boss was just as horrible as my last boss, if not worse at Capital One. I was thinking that this may have been a sign that I should have just stayed in Maryland, but I decided to stick it out. Plus, I loved the idea of my daughter being able to spend time with her grandparents every day.

I ended up leaving that position and started moving up at Capital One. I saw that they had the school reimbursement program but I just wasn’t interested nor did I feel I had the time to go to school while working with a small child. I also had started modeling again and it was taking up some time. So I continued to work.

In September of 2009, I found out I was pregnant again! Now, remember I mentioned earlier that I was told I probably couldn’t have kids and here I am on baby number two. Michelle was born May 2010 and she was just such a blessing. My pregnancy was very hard with her but it was all worth it in the end. After I had Michelle, I was sitting in my living room while on maternity leave while she was napping, and I just got frustrated out the blue. I looked at my sleeping baby and said, “3 years ago I told Danielle I was going to do better and here I am still doing the same thing.” I decided from that moment that I was going to do better.

Every 6 months of employment after that, an additional week would be given. Because I hadn’t planned on having kids any time soon, I never questioned the maternity leave and just assumed that it was a standard 6-8 weeks of paid leave. Unfortunately that was not the case. We had our first daughter, Danielle, January 3, 2007. I spent the first 2 months of my leave stressing because we had no extra income from me coming in. My car was at the brink of being repossessed, bills were piling up and then I decided to quit my job. Why? Because not only did they not offer maternity leave, but my last paycheck was only for $26 because they were the type of employment that paid in advance, and when I went on leave they took that as me leaving the company temporarily so I had no check. That to me was the last unexpected slap in the face that they were going to get from me.

I figured that I am an intelligent woman and it couldn’t be that hard to find another job. Well, it was that hard. 4 ½ months into searching, I finally found an administrative assistant job and started working in DC. But I found out quickly that it wasn’t all it was cracked up to be. My travel time took 2 ½ hours every day. My boss was really mean. And the job was not something I really wanted to do. The stress of it all was just too much and without a degree to get a better job, I simply had to deal with the stress. I started looking at my daughter and thinking to myself, “I have to do better than this.”
The following month I went online and looked up online schools since I knew a traditional setting was not going to work. I had previously attended University of Phoenix and it simply just didn’t work for me. I came across Strayer and saw that the local campus was not far from my job, so I decided to go on my lunch break and check it out. When I went to visit the recruiter, it was an easy process and seemed like a good fit so I signed up. I started school that October 2010. It was the hardest thing I have ever done. My last time in school was 1998 and now 12 years later, here I am trying to go to school. My first semester I decided to take accounting as my major and I realized that was a HUGE mistake. That semester was so hard and frustrating and I decided that this was not for me. I was ready to just fail out and just take it as a loss and move on. My husband felt otherwise. He told me that going back to school was inspiring to him and if I quit, it would not send the right message to our girls. I decided to stay and continue my education.

After a while, things got even more hectic in my life. I was now working in Disputes at Capital One and being back in customer service I was basically tricked into taking the position with the promise that I would only have to work Saturday hours for one month. The manager that promised that set up left after my first month on the floor. The stress that I had was unreal. My husband had a lot of business in Maryland and DC and he had to go out of town quite often on Saturdays. Finding daycare was a struggle and I never wanted to burden anyone and I never wanted to ask anyone. But, as I always do, I made it work and always figured it out.

After 7 months of working Saturdays, I finally was able to get a Monday through Friday schedule but the stress of the job didn’t help. I was irritated every day but luckily I was able to get a new position in quality assurance and was able to leave a lot of my stress behind. The new job also made it easier for me to work on school work during my down time which made completing school assignment a lot easier. I realized it is possible to have two children, work full time, model and still go to school and maintain good grades.

Right before I got the new position, in August of 2012, my family got hit with an unexpected blow. My husband’s mother suddenly passed away at 51 from kidney failure. I always knew that she had simply just given up. She was tired and sick all the time and had told me two weeks prior to her death that she was just over it. This was such devastation to my husband and he took it extremely hard. So hard, that it put strain on everything that is us. Everything in life became more difficult because he was now this shell and wouldn’t talk to me, laugh with me and love me like I was so used to. It hurt to see him so hurt and I never knew what to do. At this time I had taken on more responsibilities by adding my husband’s scheduling for our Media business on top of everything else I was doing. Everything was just becoming too much all over again. For the next 10 months, everything was just uncomfortable but I was trucking along with school and just using it as a distraction. In August of 2013, my kids went to England with my parents. In order to bring some life back into our lives, my husband and I decided to go to Jamaica. That trip ended up being life altering. I found out a few weeks later that I was pregnant. AGAIN!!!!! But this blessing changed everything. My husband’s slump had ended on our trip and now he was elated. A couple months later I said, “How am I going to do everything I do with now a third child?!” And I started to stress again. So I looked up to the heavens and said, “God. If this is a boy, this is a sign that everything is going to be alright.” I found out January of 2014 that we were having my boy.
I’ve never seen my husband happier. This is a man that had a father that left at 2 and now no mother and as far as he knew, he was the last of the Dockery’s. Well, now he had hope for the future and DJ was that hope.

While on maternity leave, I was in the process of planning baby shower for a really good friend of mine. She texted me and said, “I really want to have cakepops at the shower but I’m just not a baker.” She sent me a YouTube tutorial for cakepops and I said, “Well, I bake pretty well. How hard can it be?” Well, it was hard but I figured it out. At the shower, everyone loved them to my surprise!!!! So that following Monday, I took the leftovers that I had at home and took to the kids at my daughter’s school just to get rid of them. The kids loved them!!!!! So that next day, a few more that I had left, I took them to work and they loved them!!! A lightbulb lit up and I decided that maybe I might be good at this cakepop thing. I spent the next three months trying to perfect my recipe and before I knew it I had a full blown business getting orders on a weekly basis. The business has been so good to me, I got out of debt in 6 months and my credit was finally out of the low 500’s!!!! But, the stress of now adding something else was starting to get to me again.

My story now brings me to today. Currently, my schedule is as follows: every morning I get up at 6:15am and get myself ready. I then wake up my two daughters and get them ready and make their breakfast. I then get the baby up and get him ready. Next we head to the bus stop, drop off the girls, and then head to daycare and drop off my son. Next stop is my full time job at Capital One. While there I fit in time, during down time, to finish homework which I prioritize throughout the week so I can make sure it gets done. After work I head over to pick up all the kids because my husband still works in DC and doesn’t get home until after 6:30. Next, with the amazing help of my husband, he comes home and immediately starts making dinner for the family while both of us are taking turns helping with homework. During chill time from about 7-8, if I have cakepop orders I start setting up my orders by baking cakes or rolling and shaping. Next, it’s bedtime for the kids. After that, I head downstairs, relax for about an hour and then off to start doing cakepop orders. Outside of that normal Monday through Friday routine, I model on the weekends, do choreography and have fashion shows quite often. I also took a job as a Head Model Coordinator with Divas and Gents Modeling agency and I train models on walking and posing. This includes responding to constant emails about becoming a model as well as phone calls and texts. On top of that I handle all the scheduling for Coogi Media which is our photography/videography business. With all that being said, I then decided to add Cheerleading Coach to everything else I do. I now coach the 7-11 year old group with the East End Youth Basketball League in Richmond.
Throughout all of this, the support from my family and husband has been amazing. He insists that I have time to myself and remind me that I need to take a breather. He’ll do his Daddy day care every other weekend just to help and support me with everything I do. And my parents help me all the time with the kids. I am blessed to have parents who are so involved with their grandkids and understand that I have a lot on my plate.

With all of this being said, anyone who says they do not have time to go to school is simply making excuses. I don’t even have time to breathe and I do it. If you really want to be successful you have to show that you can do everything. You have to set the example for your children. Nothing is wrong with just having a high school diploma but where can you realistically go with that? That was the message I had to convince myself of and once I did that I realized that I could be so much better with a Degree. I have worked really hard to do everything that I do and still maintain a 3.3 GPA. No it’s not as high as I want it to be, but I’m happy none the less. I have the opportunity to walk down that aisle and get my Degree in one short year. That will be one of the greatest days of my life and I did it without giving up. I urge everyone to not give up. To remind yourself that there is light at the end of the tunnel. I’m almost there and the inspiration from my kids is why I got there. I’m proud to be a Strayer student and soon to be a Strayer graduate. My hard work will all soon pay off.

"NOTHING IS WRONG WITH JUST HAVING A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA BUT WHERE CAN YOU REALISTICALLY GO WITH that?"
"The stress of it all was just too much and without a degree to get a better job, I simply had to deal with the stress. I started looking at my daughter and thinking to myself, “I have to do better than this.”
Most Americans are painfully aware of the soaring price of higher education. In 1974, the average annual tuition at a four-year private college stood at a reasonable $2,000. Today, tuition at a private university is roughly $31,000. In 1974, the average cost of a public university was $510. Today, it is $9,000. These increases have far outpaced the rate of inflation.

Cost is the number one reason why people do not go to college, and it’s the main reason why they drop out. Many of those who do get a degree are saddled with burdensome debt. Student debt now exceeds consumer debt in the United States. It’s not surprising that a 2013 Huffington Post poll showed that a majority of Americans — 62 percent — believe they cannot afford a public college education.

We face a paradox in the 21st century: We desperately need an educated workforce to fill jobs that are increasingly skilled and technological; yet we are making earning a college degree less attainable. There are millions of people whose potential will remain unrealized because they are denied access to affordable education. They will never have the chance to be moved by an inspiring teacher, or motivated by curious peers, because the price of admission is too high.

There are lots of valuable proposals for trimming university costs: cutting administrative positions, expanding summer classes, and convincing parsimonious state legislators to spend more money on higher education.

Another idea would be to radically transform the way colleges operate. Most universities exercise near monopoly power over their students. They know that, once admitted, students will take most of their classes at their home institution. The challenge today is to empower students by providing them with a more robust menu of online classes that could lead to an open market in transferable college credit.

Colleges should be required to compete for students every semester, and for every class. Expanding online offerings will generate competition — competition that could lead to even better technology, a more engaging learning experience for students, and, most importantly, lower costs. Students could, for example, have the flexibility to take American government from Penn State, introduction to psychology from University of Michigan, and introductory anthropology from Berkeley — and then bundle them together toward a degree at their home institution.
In some ways, the evolution of higher education will follow consumer habits. Two decades ago, if you wanted to buy a new pair of shoes, you were limited to the stores or shopping malls within about a 20-minute drive from home. Today, you can get on Amazon, or other online retailers, and buy your shoes from anywhere in the world. There has emerged a national marketplace that has increased competition, created greater choices, and kept prices low. Why not provide students with a similar menu of choices in education?

Last year I created a class in partnership with The History Channel and the University of Oklahoma (OU) that is designed to push that process along. (The opinions expressed here are my own and have not been approved or endorsed by either OU or The History Channel). The class, which covers the second half of the traditional American history survey, accepts students from around the world. The cost is significantly lower than regular college courses: $449 for three credits. Students can complete the class at OU and then transfer the credit back to their home institution.

Initiatives designed to empower students by creating more online classes face numerous hurdles. The biggest obstacle is the instinctive resistance to change from universities that bristle at the suggestion that are bound by the rules of market competition. To date, Arizona State is the only four-year university in the United States to fully embrace this new market system for college credit.

The fact is that, for better or worse, digital technology has rippled through every major industry in America: music, newspaper, publishing, and television. Education cannot hold off the forces of technological and economic change much longer.

At the depth of the Great Depression, President Franklin Roosevelt promised “bold, persistent experimentation” to offer recovery and relief to the American people. Today, universities will need bold, persistent leadership to confront the biggest problems facing higher education: rising costs and limited access. We need to make sure that new technology is used to provide wider access to greater numbers of people; to empower students by providing more choices and greater opportunities; and to guarantee that a college education remains in reach for all Americans regardless of age, race, gender, income or region.
Cultural Andragogy and Positive Psychology: A New Pedagogy in Higher Education

By Dr. Janet Barber

"Formal learning and study from an institution of higher learning to informal learning from home and community are cultural universals."

The paper was presented at the Association for Non-traditional Students in Higher Education (ANTSHE) Conference in May, 2015. This original cultural andragogy framework for adult instruction was first shared at a science workshop at Morgan State University in January and February, 2015 (Morgan’s Teaching to Increase Diversity and Equity in STEM program - MTIDES). This paper is an introduction to cultural andragogy as it relates to integrating positive psychology into this new higher education teaching pedagogy. Pedagogy is sometimes used in the paper to make a point or to ensure understanding, and the importance of understanding students’ social capital is stressed throughout.

Andragogy is higher learning pedagogy. It is a term and strategy that means the teaching of adults. Psychology is a science that includes the systematic study of human development, learning, and cognitive processes. The two concepts in combination drive the framework of this paper. The use of many positive psychological concepts and theories is naturally utilized and essentially must be used in cultural andragogy.

To reiterate, the focus and purpose of this paper are to present a limited but important view emphasizing and highlighting connections and interactions between the teaching strategy, cultural andragogy, and the social sciences discipline, positive psychology. The paper also briefly addresses research efforts and the effectiveness of this technique to teach adults. Adult learners are generally self-directed (Knowles, 1984; Pappas, 2013). That is, they come to class with a ready body of knowledge and skill sets that can prove useful for learning and classroom discussion (Barber, 2007; Kearsley, 2010). In order for adult students to process what they learn in a meaningful way, the classroom (virtual or face-to-face) must be networked to promote student engagement. The class should be set up to foster a psychological and sociological culture of well-being (Buck, Carr & Robertson, 2008; Seligman, 2002).

An original and workable framework to support the development and implementation of cultural andragogy (higher education pedagogy) and positive psychology in the college and university classroom, and even the workplace, is introduced.
CULTURE AS IT RELATES TO ANDRAGOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY

Culture

Contemporarily, the term andragogy begun as a theory that quickly became grounded into a practice and strategy of teaching adult learners. It was studied, popularized and practiced by educator, Malcolm Knowles. However, the term was first used by early educator, Alexander Kapp in 1833 (Reischmann, 2004). Cultural andragogy is to understand that the adult student is a subculture of traditional students in general, and that they deserve a teaching strategy platform all their own. Hence, cultural andragogy instead of pedagogy which is essentially teaching to a K-12 (younger-aged) population. They are multi-generationally and culturally different regarding learning and learning styles (Barber, 2012; Knowles, 1984).

Culture, understood holistically, is learned, socially shared customs, traditions, knowledge, folklores, material objects, and behaviors of a particular society or community. However, one cultural universal (a common practice) found in every culture is education (Schafer, 2012, pp. 53-54). Formal learning and study from an institution of higher learning to informal learning from home and community are cultural universals. A good professor teaching from a cultural andragogy standpoint can easily bridge the two learning environments. Cultural universals are about belongingness. Students should be able to feel this way in the classroom. It is a way of thinking, decision making, an appreciation of diversity.

Cultural andragogy is a teaching strategy which entails acceptance of diversity, cultural sensitivity, cultural competency, culturally responsive and responsible teaching, cultural competency, and cultural relevancy in teaching one’s discipline. Professors that enjoy these skills help all students connect and interrelate the discipline and course content to the individual student’s cultural context and/or traditions.

Psychology

Psychology is the systematic and scientific study of human and animal behavior and their mental and cognitive processes (Barber, 2007). As humans develop, learning processes may change, and ways of learning, thinking and behaving change as well. Out of this discipline, positive psychology has emerged as an important subfield (Licht, Hull & Ballantyne, 2014) and serves as a theoretical frame to support and surround the emerging cultural andragogical framework herein. Interestingly, Ortega (2003) traced the origins of the current positive psychology movement to a 1930’s paper written by Goodwin Watson, entitled, “Happiness among Adult Students of Education.”

According to Seligman (2002), positive psychology is defined as the systematic and scientific study of the positive to the general negative of psychology in the study of mental health. Positive psychology, according to Seligman, also includes strengths and virtues, and the nurturing of attitudes that help people grow and communities thrive (Allan, 2013; Barber, 2010; Bolt, 2004; Seligman, 2002). Cultural andragogy should be taught with positivity and students’ subjective well-being continuously in mind. This author maintains that students should feel accepted and respected in the classroom, and that professors should seek out students’ strengths but also be prepared to address their challenges. Additionally, there must be meaningful social affiliation. Note this author’s working theoretical frame for positive psychology’s connection to relevant cultural andragogy variables. See figures 1 and 2:
As established, this paper introduces new higher education pedagogy, and is adapted and extended from Martin Seligman’s positive psychology frame. From the positive psychological view, the author’s adult teaching frame extends and encompasses Seligman’s three functional dimensions: 1. Positive emotions 2. Positive individual traits 3. Positive institutions.

**Figure 1.**

The standards motivate change in students as well as the professor. All people and cultures have goals, aspirations, and ambitions. Developing specific attitudes of understanding and acceptance may become necessary as professors teach adult students toward their goals. However, students’ motivation is usually intact; they have made a conscious choice to attend the university or college. Therefore, it is always a good idea to challenge university and college students appropriately and include them in some decision making and lesson planning. Teach the discipline, but also be sure to value the students’ traditions, beliefs, and culture. In essence, teach subject matter adult students value. Doing this, along with being competent, also ensures cultural sensitivity. Always be cognizant of and take advantage of teachable moments.

**A NEW HIGHER EDUCATION PEDAGOGY: CULTURAL ANDRAGOGY FRAME**

In order to aid in successfully predicting what higher learning outcome may arise from your cultural andragogical lesson plan, devise a good theoretical framework. Doing this will help lead you in the right direction toward a workable model for your lesson plans and specific discipline. Obtaining a viable understanding of the framework will help the reader grasp the

ideas and suggestions of teaching strategy offered in this paper. The following is a workable and useful frame for higher education instruction and is introduced here as such (see Figure 3).

**Figure 2**

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**THEORY INTO PRACTICE**

The use of positive psychology in the culturally responsible, sensitive, andragogical classroom is a must. Culturally responsive teaching, as it
relates to andragogy, is a higher education pedagogy grounded in professors’ and teachers’ exhibiting cultural competence by teaching in a multi-dimensional form in cross-cultural and multicultural settings (i.e., our university and college classrooms today). Cultural competence is to possess the ability and skill to teach (or work) effectively and sensitively multi-generationally, cross-culturally and multi-culturally. Having this skill set generally promotes a positive effect on the recipient or learner, e.g., worker or student (Barber, 2007, 2012; Gay, 2000; Knowles, 1984).

Scene:
1. Instructor: A culturally-competent and experienced professor
2. Class: A diversity of university students
3. Subject: A psychology class environment

Story in the Lesson:

Example- Culturally-responsive teaching based on selected standards from the above framework:

It is the middle of the semester, and Professor Chambers wishes to review the important disciplines studied under psychology and perhaps connect these disciplines with recently learned psychological perspectives and research methodology. She plans to utilize this information throughout the semester. She also realizes that some of the students are not psychology majors and may not be as motivated to learn some of this particular information as readily as others.

In taking into consideration the framework requirements, the professor reflects on the goal of the assignment as well as the teaching strategy to be used. Professor Chambers randomly selects small groups for active learning. She encourages the students to reflect on the lessons they have already learned about...
disciplines and perspectives and how anything they have learned might relate to their other studies, their lives, or cultural traditions. (Sharing in this way can promote a pleasant, inclusive, and comfortable learning environment.)

The professor then asks the students if they might want to further their learning by deepening their understanding by researching a discipline, perspective or some aspect of what a classmate might have shared with them. (1. This usually generates a lively discussion, which in turn helps students to learn more about others . . . and themselves. 2. The students get to make choices here, which can also empower and show that their ideas and thoughts matter. 3. The professor is also able to gauge skill sets from these interactions and what students decide they want to do or research.)

The students are then required to write a minimum of three paragraphs about the activity and how it enhanced their understanding of psychological perspectives and/or research. They break into groups again to engage in relaxed conversation about what they wrote, learned, and how the information could be used in real life. Traditions are respected, and open-mindedness and use of critical-thinking skills are encouraged. (This should be a competency skill of the professor; however, the entire learning activity is geared toward retaining the information, student engagement, cultural sensitivity, and culturally-responsive teaching in higher education.)

These types of classroom interactives are teaching theories and techniques, such as active and cooperative learning or flipping the class strategies and lessons. All fit into the educational category of an andragogical environment for adult individualistic and self-directed learning (Barber, 2007; Knowles, 1984; Merriam, 2007).

The above academic scenario is an example of an inclusive, culturally-sensitive classroom and lesson. The scenario used as a paradigm indicates function (f) as the instruction and teaching method. The outcome or output (y) is the learning and assessment. The input (x) is the culturally-relevant lesson taught and can determine student learning and competency as well as teacher skill and competency levels of cultural andragogy. *To teach from a cultural andragogy strategy or philosophy, hone the tenet; study and teach from the standards, and ultimately be sure to understand the condition. Further explanation:

Domain: The function (f) provides an "output" (y) or value for each condition of a domain. This function is the set of "input" (x) or argument values for which the function is determined to ensure student and professor competency levels. The condition is all inclusive (see Figure 4 below).

*Tenet: A principle or belief, especially philosophy.

“Condition” might work best for the cultural andragogy teaching strategy.

Standard (see Figure 3): A level of quality or attainment. Can be used as a measure, norm, or model in comparative evaluation.

Condition: Environments and circumstances affecting the way in which professors teach, students learn, and how we interrelate how we live and work in regard to the academic environment.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF TEACHING ADULTS

Culturally-Responsive and Andragogical Instruction

Studying human behavior, development, and cognitive processes put into practice is essentially to be culturally sensitive and responsive to human’s needs, and certainly can be used in the classroom. These are characteristics of positivity or positive
psychology (Barber, 2007; 2010; Licht, Hull & Ballantyne, 2014). Positive psychology and adult learning literature support the idea that students can succeed in college if the idea of happiness and success in life and academia is reinforced by teaching happiness in, for example, positive psychology classes. Such classes generally include learning various techniques and activities to enhance happiness, as well as learning concepts for more constructive coping, which could in turn enhance academic performance (Barber, 2010; Ben-Shahar, 2007; Horowitz, 2008; Seligman, 2002).

![Figure 4: Inclusive Classroom Lesson Domain](image)

Academic performance for adults is best when it is task oriented, not rote. Adults generally want (and need) to know how and why. This is why it is beneficial to include learned experiences with relevant, real-life like lesson plans and class activities. A teacher can generally tell younger students that psychology is the study of the mind and behavior. With our students becoming more sophisticated, one might ask, “What does this mean?” But with adults the question will surely be asked; therefore, be ready to explain to adults that: Psychology - is a systematic and scientific study of human and animal behavior and their mental and cognitive processes (Barber, 2007; 2010). Dissecting this more comprehensive definition into a learning and logical whole can take an entire semester, as adults explore many avenues of learning strategy and activity from a more complex definition.

**Alternative Teaching Strategies**

Learning-centered, cooperative learning, student-led, and flipped classroom concepts are often used in the study of andragogy and the teaching of adults according to instructional expert, Malcolm Knowles (1984). As adult learners tend to be self-directed (Barber, 2007; Kearsley, 2010; Knowles, 1984; Pappas, 2013), these teaching concepts and strategies are vital for adult learning. These strategies include and stem from what the adult learner already knows, how she or he learns, and the best teaching technique for each individual. For instance, adult students are more likely to decide on tutoring when they feel that the professor understands that they learn differently in certain areas of study and may need additional help. Preparing the lessons, thoroughly explaining the assignment, preparing for conferences (short or long), and preparing for multiple assessments are essential for student success in tutoring and in the general adult classroom.

The author’s philosophy of teaching and facilitating typically derives from the viewpoint that cultural andragogy is student-centered, or for example, come in knowing (flipping the classroom – pre-learned information). Consequently, a learning-centered teaching technique develops, placing the student as teacher and the professor as facilitator. This is usually a very empowering lesson and experience for students (Barber, 2007; Merriam, 2007). This method is framed by a positive
psychological concept that merges education and psychology. It creates positive transformations for learners and engages the professor as teacher and sometimes, as mentioned above, as facilitator (Barber, 2007). What has been gauged and learned from this technique is that single assessment just isn’t going to be effective for the diversity of students that we have in our colleges and universities today. Students must have critical-thinking activities, self-assessment lessons, relevant Prezis/PowerPoints, academic gaming/classroom simulations, videos (visuals), and role-play hands-on learning activities.

In order to be successful with any of the above mentioned practices, strategies, beliefs and philosophies, the subject matter must be understood. The professor must be able to instruct the students on a one-on-one basis as well as in the classroom setting. Teaching requires incorporating diversity of assessments for a diverse group of students. Again see the framework and domain example above (Figures 3 and 4). Ask the students which way they learn best. Give them a list of learning techniques, or have them share what have worked for them in the past. Students are just as diverse in their learning processes as they are in their individual characteristics and personalities.

Though it may be challenging, assessing the multiple intelligences of students is important in order to design lesson plans, create active and collaborative learning and to be able to identify possible solutions when students get stuck on a theory, concept or a question that is being asked of them. For example, a professor can easily explain scientifically the function of an independent and dependent variable in research methodology; however, all students are not going to always understand the science right away. Alternative and various teaching strategies will have to be implemented.

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**Figure 5: Andragogy - Adult Learning Theory, Malcolm Knowles**

[www.monarconsulting.com](http://www.monarconsulting.com) (21 October, 2010)
Another philosophy of teaching is that in order for the students to process what they are to learn, the classroom should be networked to increase adult student engagement (Example: Figure 5). As mentioned, flipped classroom techniques work to improve student motivation and learning (Barber, 2007; Kearsley, 2010). Reminder: when one student understands a certain lesson, it is oftentimes a good idea to allow that student to become teacher. This student-led type practice engages the students and further fosters their understanding that they are an important part of the class, not just student bystanders waiting to be trained; they are being educated and will always have an opportunity to “teach,” as teaching is a form of learning.

Additionally, the classroom should also be set up to promote a psychological and sociological culture of well-being. The above student-led practice and activity is one example of acquiring a sense of well-being and validation. Also ask students what they expect from the learning process even if it is not on the syllabus. They know that their input is important. This is especially important with andragogy (adult learning) in higher education. Assess the students’ thoughts and ideas, and see where their ideas and suggestions might fit into the learning process without compromising the master syllabus. When students understand intellectually or visually, and become aware that the lessons they have learned can be used outside the classroom, they are more likely to make quicker connections to the subject at hand. Moreover, caring about the students and their lives helps them to care about themselves. For example, learning that social capital promotes personal relationships, well-being, and careers helps students become more cognizant of social capital in their lives and encourages them to develop meaningful ways to increase and nurture their social connections, i.e., interpersonal and social capital (Barber, 2009).

**Culturally Responsive Teaching as Validating**

Our United States’ university and college students come from diverse cultural backgrounds and have competencies and skill sets distinguished by different lifestyles and personal life experiences other than those related to academic norms, mainstream cultures, and traditional structures in general (Barber, 2010, p. 130).

Seligman (2002) states that one of the main goals of positive psychology is to support and empower students to awaken their own strengths. This undertaking then strengthens not only the individual, but entire institutions and communities.

Teaching brilliantly is a responsibility of the professor/instructor and doing this responsibly not only validates your teaching, but validates your students as well. As explained earlier, experts in the field contend that students’ social capital, e.g., home and life experiences, in addition to their learning and academic performance styles must always be taken into consideration. (Barber, 2009; Gay, 2000; Pappas, 2013). The professor doesn’t necessarily have to learn about and study all of the ethnic traditions and cultural heritages group by group, or community by community, but the professor or teacher should become more educated in the area and be cognizant of and sensitive to diverse ethnicities and communities of people. “It is inconceivable how educators can recognize and nurture the individuality of students if they do not know them” (Gay, 2000, p. 23). In essence, there should be some professional semblance of cultural knowledge.
Having a positive sociopolitical conscience is not a bad thing. Being a facilitator in the classroom and utilizing students' diversity of prior experiences tends to make learning more meaningful for students. Recognizing students' strengths, skills, creativity, and innovative thinking fosters more retention of information. (Barber, 2007; 2009; 2012; Gay, 2000; Merriam, 2007). This makes for culturally relevant as well as responsive and responsible andragogy. Culturally responsive and relevant teaching and the use of positive psychology in the classroom is having the ability to use alternative teaching strategies competently in an andragogy classroom. In cooperative learning, for example, students also learn to recognize and support their classmates' strengths, skills, and creativity, and this occurs as the professor is embedding multi-generational, multicultural, lesson plan information and resources and ethnicity-sensitive materials into the discipline being taught. This ensures various learning styles will be used in the culturally competent, sensitive, and responsive classroom. Pedagogical literature can be useful in the study of cultural andragogy, as Gay’s (2000) work is applicable. She writes that culturally responsive teaching:

1. ...acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, both as legacies that affect students' dispositions, attitudes, and approaches to learning and as worthy content to be taught in the formal curriculum.
2. It builds bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experiences as well as between academic abstractions and lived sociocultural realities.
3. It uses a wide variety of instructional strategies that are connected to different learning styles.
4. It teaches students to know and praise their own, and others', cultural heritages.
5. It incorporates multicultural information, resources, and materials in all the subjects and skills routinely taught in schools (p. 29).

**Cultural Andragogy**

Andragogy is a term used in adult education utilizing teaching strategies and methods best suited for adult learners. Cultural Andragogy is primarily a theoretical concept, method, strategy and practice used to effectively and actively teach adult students of diverse backgrounds and ages. And a competent and culturally-sensitive professor that utilizes relevant lessons, is responsible and responsive to her or his adult students, and

one that understands how to “speak” to the emotions of students and motivate them is one that is cognizant of and addresses adult students' cultural backgrounds, familial traditions, as well as their ethnic needs. In applying cultural andragogy-type teaching, the adult students' social, emotional, and cognitive needs are respected and taken into consideration in order to ensure comfort and motivation toward learning (Barber, 2007; 2009; 2012; Buck, Carr & Robertson, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Seligman, 2000).

As a professor of any discipline, it should behoove him or her to always ask the question(s): What is my andragogical teaching style? Then:

1. Do I feel it is the professor’s responsibility to determine what students learn and why they learn it?
2. Is “sage on the stage” a major part of how I teach? Or am I the “guide on the side”? Or do both intertwine when appropriate?
3. Do students work on course projects alone with a lot or a little interaction from you?
4. Do students work on course projects and/or activities in groups?
5. I am confident that my classroom exhibits a positive environment for teaching?
6. Am I able to instruct adult students on a one-on-one basis as well as in the classroom setting?  
7. How could this information be used in leadership/workplace environments?  

Cultivate an intellectual and positive answer to each of the above and you are on your way to incredible, meaningful, responsive cultural andragogy instruction. Best practices require and entail incorporating a diversity of teaching strategies and assessments for a diverse group of students. In order to be successful in the teaching delivery of cultural andragogy practices, strategies, beliefs, and philosophies, utilizing the framework introduced in this paper will be helpful.  

CONCLUSION  
This paper describes the basic tenets of the author’s theory of cultural andragogy and integrates those tenets with positive psychology to promote successful teaching and communication across cultures within the higher education classroom. The quantity of books on pedagogy outweighs those on andragogy tremendously. The entirety of our education system has been steeped in a pedagogical strategy, which in essence is not a strategy at all for higher education learning. Adults cannot adequately learn through a pedagogical theory, strategy, nor frame. This teaching strategy is a K-12 philosophy. “Non-traditional” learners are adults, with many (especially in community colleges) being 25 years of age and above. According to Knowles (1984), these adults have a different academic mindset, a different frame of mind, if you will; therefore the teaching frame must be different and varied also. Alternative learning strategies foster well-being and less competitiveness among students. Hardly any one class of students learn at the same level and speed. Research, literature on education, and the adult learning examples offered in this paper have proven positive for learning, as well as for the different learning styles as adult students work toward a common goal. There is nothing like teamwork to prepare students for work outside of the classroom. There is nothing like having a culturally sensitive and responsive andragogy professor either. You must want to be an active participant, an activist professor for positive change in teaching.  

It should be important as professors and academic administrators that adult students learn how to interconnect, i.e., to gain knowledge from classes then be able to build on learned material by taking additional courses with the intention of fostering a sensible whole of all classes taken. This would be quality education. When the students make learning a part of their lives, it allows for a better opportunity to make quality priority in the classroom instead of continuously explaining the importance of education. This way, all students also begin to understand quality outside of the classroom.  

In essence, from a cultural andragogy classroom, college and university students (adult learners) will understand and recognize connections among learning in the classroom and application of these ideas outside of the classroom. The process and progress may take some time, but ultimately the progress and wait will be worth it. Besides disciplines, education, too, is diverse, hence andragogy vs. pedagogy. Ultimately, our actions must become consistent with our rhetoric. In essence, our theory must become practice. Let’s start by referring to the teaching of adult learners of diverse backgrounds: cultural andragogy and not pedagogy. Then secondly, but no less important, let’s begin to earnestly utilize this teaching strategy. We have timidly started. Now let’s go forward with this new pedagogy.
in higher education, called cultural andragogy and grow the field of higher education: Cultural Andragogy and Positive Psychology.

REFERENCES


In April, we began the Adult Learner Program (ALP) Showcase Contest recognizing the services and support for nontraditional students that our Institutional Members' Adult Learner Programs offer.

We asked our Institutional Members to assess their Adult Learning Programs and if they felt that their program was deserving of recognition, they were asked to submit a nomination to be showcased on the ANTSHE website, www.myantshe.org. The winner of the 2015 Adult Learner Program Showcase Contest was California State University-Fullerton and their Adult Reentry Center. As the 2015 ALP Showcase Winner, California State University-Fullerton will be recognized during the ANTSHE Awards Ceremony at the 2016 ANTSHE Conference in Michigan. The winner also receives a feature in The Nontrad Journal.

Congratulations California State University-Fullerton's Adult Reentry Center!

Look for California State University-Fullerton's feature in this issue of The Nontrad Journal!

Visit www.myantshe.org for contest rules and for more information about the ALP Showcase Contest. You could be the next winner of the ALP Showcase Contest and be featured in the 2016 The Nontrad Journal and receive special recognition at an ANTSHE Conference. Nominations will be accepted beginning April 15th!
Success in Math - What does the research tell us?

By Dr. Amanda Lynn Raitano

INTRODUCTION

Although educators and researchers want students to succeed, not all students find academic success. To maximize the potential for student success, the adult classroom should be inclusive, inviting, and cognizant of the challenges adult learners had with previous experiences in the classroom. To meet the educational demands of society, each student needs to be proficient in math, although it is often the most dreaded and feared subject among learners. There are several factors affecting math achievement among students including the instructor, a learner’s self-esteem, math anxiety, and developmental dyscalculia.

THE INSTRUCTOR

The classroom instructor plays a significant role in students’ likes and dislikes in mathematics. Alutu (2006) noted the responsibility of teachers is of primary importance in the teaching and learning process. Alutu posited that it is the teachers’ responsibility to see that the learning process is guided in an effective manner to achieve the optimal educational outcome. In agreement with findings by Schweinle, Meyer and Turner (2006), Alutu (2006) and Moran, Kornhaber, and Gardner (2006) concluded that students need to be offered authentic, rich, meaningful activities that promote learner engagement, rather than rote memorization. Regarding all students, Bushman (2006) claimed:

Connections need to be made to student’s prior experiences and knowledge. These experiences may be academic as well as real-world. Both connections are necessary. Science and math teachers get so caught up in their own subject matter that they forget to bring students into their world through enticement that is of interest to students themselves. (p. 60).
“Teachers should incorporate math instruction on a daily basis but modify the ways the material is presented by the teacher and practiced by the students.”

According to Schweinle, Meyer, and Turner (2006), students’ learning is influenced by their experiences in the classroom. If a student finds his or her learning to be worthwhile and pleasant, the less it will appear to be mundane or anxiety producing; thus, students are more likely to gravitate toward learning for its own sake. Therefore, students’ encounters in classrooms are vital to their attitudes, behaviors, and achievement. Levpusek and Zupancic (2008) found that students who perceive that their teachers consider their fundamental psychological needs of empathy and capability show more positive motivational beliefs and achieve higher grades in math. These results are also consistent with previous findings by Brekelmans, Wubles, and Levy (1993) and Wentzel (1997, 2002) that students are more likely to engage in classroom activities and perform better if they feel supported and valued by their teachers. Urdan and Turner (2005) concur when they suggest that student motivation increases when students are presented with tasks that promote autonomy, are complex in nature, and are relevant to the student’s life. Furthermore, Urdan and Turner (2005) claimed that students who believe they will do well on a task, tend to do well on such tasks, as a result of intrinsic motivation. Thus, when students are intrinsically motivated to understand math concepts, they are better able to work with mathematical concepts and processes (Urdan & Turner, 2005).

SELF-ESTEEM

Although some research exists on this topic, there appears to be a gap in the literature regarding how self-esteem affects mathematics learning in high school. Lee (2009) found that theoretical and empirical research studies comparing the influence of self-concept and self-esteem in relation to academic achievement have taken place; however, no consensus has been reached on this topic. There is even less agreement regarding how mathematics learning is affected by self-esteem. An action research study conducted by Schur (2007) found that confidence in mathematics is influenced by a learning environment that promotes teamwork, sharing, and positive reinforcement. Schur’s study concluded that there are essential parts to building math self-esteem in students. First, teachers need to provide a learning environment that is positive in nature. Next, teachers should incorporate math instruction on a daily basis but modify the ways the material is presented by the teacher and practiced by the students. Finally, teachers should maintain a positive attitude toward the area of mathematics (Schur, 2007).

Schur (2007) claimed that combining these essential parts will increase math self-esteem, which will lead to an increase in math achievement. Awan, Noureen, and Naz (2011) found that teachers of English and math should make every effort to involve students in academic activities.
that promote positive self-concept because there is a direct correlation between self-concept, levels of motivation, and academic achievement. Awan, Noureen, and Naz (2011) also found that programs designed to promote self-esteem and self-concept should be utilized by teachers because positive self-esteem leads to subject mastery and academic achievement.

According to Aryana (2010), the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement is receiving increased attention. Aryana examined the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement among pre-university students and found that individuals with high self-esteem tend to view themselves as competent, capable individuals who set high goals and attempt to learn new things. Aryana asserted that the most effective way for a student to improve his or her academic achievement is to increase self-esteem.

**MATH ANXIETY**

Math anxiety moved to the forefront in research in the 1950s after reports by Gough and Dreger (1954) and Aiken (1957) piqued an interest among researchers and educators. Ashcroft and Moore (2009) discussed two studies, one by Hembree and Dessart (1992) and one by Richardson and Suinn (1972), who examined math anxiety and performance. Ashcroft and Moore (2009) found three major findings. First, they noted that children do not appear to be troubled by math anxiety while in the first two or three years in elementary school. Second, a student’s math anxiety occurs in math class and increases in intensity as the student is asked to perform tasks in front of others, with the anxiety culminating during test-taking activity. Finally, the long-term effects of math anxiety can lead to avoid courses, college majors, and career paths that involve mathematics. Also, earlier research conducted by Ashcroft found that computing math problems that require the use of working memory produce greater feelings of anxiety than math work that requires little use of working memory (Ashcroft, 2002).

Tobias’s (1991) research surrounding math anxiety began in the 1970s and she has remained a leader in the field of math anxiety research. Tobias found that students who suffer from math anxiety feel alone and helpless and these feelings often exacerbate the anxiousness a student feels while learning mathematics. Tobias noted that a student’s ability to concentrate while learning and doing math work is essential to being successful in mathematics. If a student is worried and anxious about the math task, the ability to concentrate is compromised, thus math work becomes difficult to complete (Tobias, 1991).

Tobias (1993) explained why students often have a difficult time learning mathematical concepts. First, math concepts are often taught in pieces with student assessment occurring after each concept is taught, and therefore the students do not have the ability to integrate the pieces.
They often feel anxious when confronted with math work that requires the integration of several math concepts (Tobias, 1993). Next, Tobias addressed the fact that students are often afraid of appearing too smart or too dumb while learning math concepts. Therefore, the student will often avoid asking questions during class for fear of being labeled as dumb or a Geek. Students are often rewarded for correct answers and good grades and fear of giving an incorrect answer leads to avoidance of the situation all together.

Tobias (1993) also discussed the inconsistent terminology and the confusion this produces for students while learning mathematical concepts. According to Tobias, math terms are interchangeable, and when different terms are used for the same concept, students become confused, feel anxious, and lose the ability to concentrate while learning and completing mathematical tasks. In collaboration with this inconsistency of terminology is the fact that mathematical problems result in an exact answer, and if a student cannot explain how he or she obtained the answer, then the instructor will penalize the student. Tobias added that fear of a penalty leads to math anxiety and the vicious circle of fear, anxiety, inability to concentrate, and a deficit in math achievement. With all of these variables contributing to math anxiety and poor math achievement, students often go through school giving up on learning math. Feeling they are not a mathematical person often causes them to make excuses about why they cannot be successful in math. The truth of the matter is that as students develop and grow older, their ability to process mathematical problems becomes easier. This is the result of exposure to mathematical vocabulary, language development, and engagement in real life activity that involves mathematics (Tobias, 1993).

Selkirk, Bouchey, and Eccles (2010) determined that test anxiety correlates with the perceived importance of an academic subject. The more important an academic subject is to the individual, the more anxiety producing the tests in that subject area become. Selkirk, Bouchey, and Eccles also found that students who expect to do poorly in math or English experience the greatest levels of test anxiety; with math testing producing more anxiety than testing in English. When researching math anxiety, it is crucial to identify the causes of this problem.

Mathematics anxiety is more than just a dislike or discomfort with math. When individuals experience severe math anxiety, they worry about the math task at hand, which interferes with processing and working memory (Sparks, 2011). It is believed that math anxiety can interrupt the working memory needed to learn and solve problems. Thus, repeated episodes of math anxiety may influence a student’s decision to drop out of high school or avoid math classes in post-secondary education.

What can instructors do to address math anxiety?
• Give students a math anxiety self-test.
• Have students write a Math Autobiography detailing prior experiences with math courses.
• Have students write in journals before and after lessons.
• Provide lessons that are authentic and relevant.
• Help students become aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Understanding how a person learns best is a big step in achieving academic success and confidence.
• Incorporate the Math Anxiety Bill of Rights into your class.

Math anxiety tests can be found in books and online. The "Math Anxiety Bill of Rights" is printed in the book.
"Overcoming Math Anxiety" by Sheila Tobias, published by W.W. Norton and Company, and is available online through various websites.

DEVELOPMENTAL DYSCALCULIA

According to Shalev and Gross-Tsur (2001), developmental dyscalculia is a brain-based learning disorder with a genetic predisposition that effects the acquisition of arithmetic skills in an otherwise normal child. Individuals with developmental dyscalculia have a severe deficit in their ability to process numerical information that cannot be attributed to sensory difficulties, low IQ, or inadequate education—all of which result in a failure to develop fluent numerical computation skills (Rubinstei & Tannock, 2010). According to Rubinstein and Tannock, when undiagnosed or untreated, individuals with developmental dyscalculia experience difficulty with mathematics beyond elementary school into late adolescence and adulthood.

Affecting 3.5%–6.5% of the school-age population, developmental dyscalculia is believed to be an inheritable disorder, identified as mainly a deficiency in the parietal cortex region of the brain in both children and adults (See Figure 1).

Although there is a plethora of terminologies to describe the problems an individual may have learning math, there is a distinct difference between a general mathematics disorder and developmental dyscalculia.

With developmental dyscalculia, the learning problem is isolated to the realm of arithmetic, particularly in learning and remembering simple arithmetic facts rather than more general problems in computation, is typically defined by very low scores on standardized tests of math achievement, and finally reflects a specific impairment in brain function that provokes unpredicted problems in basic numerical processing (Rubinstei & Tannock, 2010).

Warning Signs for Dyscalculia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Young Children</th>
<th>School-Aged Children</th>
<th>Teenagers and Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty learning to count</td>
<td>Trouble learning math facts (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division)</td>
<td>Difficulty estimating costs like groceries bills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble recognizing printed numbers</td>
<td>Difficulty developing math problem-solving skills</td>
<td>Difficulty learning math concepts beyond the basic math facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty tying together the idea of a number (4) and how it exists in the world (4 horses, 4 cars, 4 children)</td>
<td>Poor long term memory for math functions</td>
<td>Poor ability to budget or balance a checkbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor memory for numbers</td>
<td>Not familiar with math vocabulary</td>
<td>Trouble with concepts of time, such as sticking to a schedule or approximating time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble organizing things in a logical way - putting round objects in one place and square ones in another</td>
<td>Difficulty measuring things</td>
<td>Trouble with mental math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding games that require strategy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Warning Signs for dyscalculia
Rubinstei and Tanock (2010) focused their research on developmental dyscalculia rather than on a general mathematics disorder because they believed that the etiology of developmental dyscalculia is distinct from that of other math difficulties. To support Rubinstei and Tanock’s hypothesis that developmental dyscalculia is strongly associated with math anxiety, Ma and Xu (2003) determined that individuals with developmental dyscalculia may discover that math is a source of tremendous anxiety since they must apply an enormous amount of effort to understand what is evident to their counterparts. Morin (2014), also provided tips for instructors with students who have developmental dyscalculia. Morin suggest that instructors encourage students to:

- use graph paper for students who have difficulty organizing ideas on paper;
- work on finding different ways to approach math facts; i.e., instead of just memorizing the multiplication tables, explain that 8 x 2 = 16, so if 16 is doubled, 8 x 4 must = 32;
- practice estimating as a way to begin solving math problems. Morin also suggests that instructors should:

  - introduce new skills beginning with concrete examples and later moving to the abstract;
  - explain ideas and problems clearly and encourage students to ask questions as they work;
  - provide a place to work with few distractions and have pencils, erasers and other tools on hand as needed.

CONCLUSION

Many elements influence an individual’s success in math courses. Whether one is discussing an elementary level student, a college level student, or a post graduate level student, each learner encounters factors that shape their mathematical experiences over the course of their lifetime. Knowing how these factors promote academic success is essential for educators and students alike. To meet the educational demands of the 21st century, each student needs to be proficient in math. Although math is often the most dreaded and feared subject among learners, educators can help their students overcome the dread and fear associated with math, leading to success in math courses. The 21st century adult classroom should be inclusive, inviting, and cognizant of the challenges adult learners had with previous experiences in the classroom. The resources mentioned within this article provide many suggestions how to begin the process of changing a learner’s outlook on math and success in math courses.

REFERENCES


Amanda Condon

My Nontrad Story

Let me begin by saying that I am very grateful to have such a diverse background. My experiences throughout my 28 years, have awarded me the opportunity to connect with all walks of life. Each one of us has a unique set of circumstances that led us to become non-traditional and each story counts as a testimony of strength and endurance. For me to be where I am today means that I overcame the obstacles that were preventing me from successfully completing my education.

My story begins during my early teenage years and the loss of my parents. I came from a very abusive home and became homeless at the age of fifteen. Despite the circumstances at home, I was an intelligent child academically. Some of the most critical years of my life were spent moving from place to place almost daily, striving to survive in an adult world that was unkind to a youth, and trying to understand how to grow up without any stability or direction. I have always referred to growing up as being raised by 1000 faces. Each person that came into my life, left me with a little portion of wisdom. I have learned how to become less judgmental, a lesson that some people never learn. Sometimes the worst stereotyped individuals are the only ones that will help you survive. I found myself pregnant at the age of 16, homeless, a high school dropout, and absolutely no support system. The child’s father was a drug addict and after careful consideration I decided to go back to my hometown and begin the rest of my life. His addiction led him to his death.

By the age of 20, I had finally become self-sufficient with my own home and two children by this time. I attempted college while working full time and failed miserably. Relationships in my life were still non-existent beyond my only marriage. It was not until the age of 27, a failed marriage, and a third child being born that I decided to finish my education. I had worked all those years to merely survive and never live. It took me getting broken down to nothing and starting over to give me the courage to try something so extreme.
I still have not gone back to work and I am currently a full-time student. Graduating college seemed like a far fetched dream and now I am living the dream.

The next few steps I took were the most important steps to secure my home as well as my future. My theory was that I have lost everything emotionally as well as physically more than once and rebuilt from the ground up. Therefore, the worst possible situation would be that I lose everything and rebuild once more. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Faith is taking the first step, even when you don't see the whole staircase." I began seeking scholarship and grant opportunities locally and nationally. It started with one scholarship and turned into many.

Condon says that she is working to "formulate a strategy that will break the financial and emotional barriers associated with higher education."

"Each person that came into my life, left me with a little portion of wisdom."

AMANDA
It didn’t take long for me to formulate a system that would keep me consistently in the judging process for awards. The most substantial barrier that prevented me from continuing my education, was the matter of trying to provide a home for my children and afford to pay for college at the same time. Truthfully, for me to say that I did not know this system would yield great rewards, would be false. However, I did begin this journey based on curiosity and courage alone. It was not until the end of my second semester that I finally became confident in my efforts. I was awarded several scholarships and with careful money management, I have been able to keep a roof over our heads as well as maintain a high G.P.A. Sometimes you must take a great risk in order to completely shatter the sense of complacency.

I am very thankful for the continuing support of organizations such as: Women’s Independence Scholarship Fund, Single Parent Scholarship Fund of Miller and Bowie County, Arkansas Department of Higher Education, Soroptimist, and the University of Arkansas Hope-Texarkana. I am able to successfully complete my education through your guidance, support, encouragement, resources, and financial awards. I believe in giving back to my community and have begun presenting workshops to teach others how to utilize resources so they too can fulfill their dreams. It is my objective to teach others how to overcome the same challenges. Inspiration is a powerful force that can overtake someone in such a way that they fully transform their life in pursuit of their dreams. Fear was the only thing holding me back from becoming who I was meant to be. Now, I can become a shining example of how to conquer your fears and successfully complete college as a non-traditional student. Thank you for reading my story.
"Inspiration is a powerful force that can overtake someone in such a way that they fully transform their life in pursuit of their dreams."

AMANDA CONDON
STUDENT COACHES PROMOTE STUDENT SUCCESS

I have created a complete series of power point presentations that will assist and teach any student how to successfully complete scholarship and grant applications and to promote their success in obtaining financial aid. My synopsis includes all of the steps it has taken me to achieve scholarship success. This was the inspiration for the title. I enjoy teaching students how to overcome the challenges of seeking financial aid through researching new opportunities, collecting a database of knowledge, and public speaking.

I condensed a considerable amount of hours of research into an easily understood presentation that would impact a broad audience. I was inspired to create the series along with printable brochures and a web page that would encourage and support any aspiring student to pursue their higher education without the pressure of taking out student loans. As a nontraditional student, leaving the workforce and pursuing my education, I encountered several obstacles in addition to financial barriers. For example, where do I find legitimate scholarships to apply for or how do I write a collegiate level essay? I researched every area that I felt was necessary for me to overcome those obstacles and what I found was a compilation of invaluable information that should be readily available for other students. I returned to college without knowing if I would be able to successfully complete my degree while providing the essentials for my three children. However, I am nearing graduation of my A.A. degree and continuing onto my four year university now with full confidence in my ability to utilize the resources and tools that are available for students like me.

I organized all of my research in binders and after careful consideration, I decided to share my knowledge with other students. My desire is not to teach my peers how to win scholarships, but how to formulate a strategy that will break the financial and emotional
barriers associated with higher education. I have realized that a student’s mindset can be the most powerful force behind a student’s success or failure rate. I am living proof of how strong the human mind can be in the midst of uncertainty. My will to succeed was my one way ticket to overcome any struggle associated with continuing my education. Once I became confident in myself, I decided that I should use my lucid ability to publicly speak on this research to further empower the students at my campus and throughout my entire region.

My initial presentations were informative, inspiring, and uplifting. What began as a small presentation for a handful of students has transformed into opened doors for speaking engagements all over the state. After partaking in different volunteer opportunities to see what my strengths are, I finally found something that I am passionate about. My ability to engage into conversations, hold an audience’s attention, and provide them with knowledge that will help them succeed has made me feel paramount. This is my most significant endeavor of my entire community college experience.

"This is my most significant endeavor of my entire community college experience."

AMANDA CONDON
ANTSHE recognizes California State University-Fullerton's Adult Reentry Center for their Support of Non-Traditional Students!

California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) is a large public university serving a diverse student population of approximately 37,000 students. In spring 2015, 24 percent of our student population was over the age of 25 and of that, 60 percent were undergraduates. As we continue to learn more about our non-traditional student population, we are constantly reviewing our program to better service this population.

The Adult Reentry Center at CSUF is dedicated to the academic success of all adult learners. Our mission is to provide support services to prospective and current students who have multiple responsibilities outside the role of a student. We serve as a resource in providing an engaging environment for adult learners to thrive and achieve within the university setting. Currently within our center, we offer pre-admission advising to students who have previously attended CSUF or adult students wanting to finish a degree program. We meet with individuals to discuss their situation, review their transcripts, and figure out the best course of action for them. Monthly, we offer Student Success Workshops with subject matter that is relevant to the non-traditional student population, such as scholarship writing, LinkedIn: How to use, stress relief, and applying for grad school. The latest addition to our center is advocacy for parenting and pregnant students’, in which we have partnered with our Title IX implementation team to create.

We also have two recognized student organizations: the CSUF award-winning Alpha Sigma Lambda (national honor society) and AWARE (Adults Who Are Returning to Education); both of which were started last year and together, have more than 100 members.

To help further student success for those who are in need financially, we facilitate six scholarships created for non-traditional students. The scholarships are funded through endowments, both on and off campus, totaling more than $20,000 annually.

This fall, we will introduce two new programs: “Back to School Night,” where parenting students can bring their children to school for a tour, gather campus information, and attend one of the university's sporting events; and a discussion group for parenting and pregnant students.

Come and meet representatives from California State University-Fullerton's Adult Reentry Center at the 2016 ANTSHE Conference, University of Michigan-Dearborn, April 8-10, 2016.

www.myantshe.org
Thinking about Choices, Living with the Consequences: Is your day made of choices through conscious or unconscious habits?

By John D. Sheuirng

"We must learn to develop a higher level of thinking that will help separate the misguided versus the true conscious decisions we set to achieve a higher level of knowledge."

When each of us wake up, we face making choices immediately. Yes, they are mundane choices: do I get coffee first? Do I check my email first? Do I evaluate the morning before I get up? Do I think about what I am going to do first? Or, do we just react to moving in motion as a means to creating our daily rituals? Each and every day, all people make choices that will affect their lives. Each of these choices have direct and indirect ramifications to what we do, where we go, decisions that will affect others and in many cases, choices that can have a permanent, lasting effect to our lives. When those choices are made, we then are faced with the responsibilities and consequences of those specific and broad choices. Many people “dither and refuse to commit because to make a choice is to enter a realm of uncertainty and missed opportunity” (Rosenfeld 2014). Choice in life is complex and fraught with unknowns and misgivings to what the perception is versus what reality truly is in making choices. This is the nature of choice and with choice, comes the responsibility and consequences to that decision. Many times we fail simply because we are not truly focused on ourselves and our needs, rather we move through life as a means to an end.

Figure 1
LOGICAL VERSUS EMOTIONAL
Choice is based on two specific ideas: logical versus emotional. Each choice decision that we come to determine is vetted through a logical or emotional response. A consideration towards decision making is often influenced by “anticipated emotion, which are generated by considering the potential outcome” (Mellers & McGraw 2001). The idea that anticipated emotions are based on an expected consequences of that very decision is based solely on an emotional versus logical decision process (Pallon, Lauriola & Figner 2013). So what are we stating here? That most decisions are based on emotional response than a logical idea? In most cases, this is true, each of use instinctively respond to a situation through an emotional process. This idea can be support by these examples:

Example 1
The idea of receiving news that you were promoted to an executive position create a positive feeling whereby you then process the benefits to the new position and act on those beliefs and purchase a car that you would not have been able to afford from your previous position. The decision here is that you reacted to a heighten/elated outcome whereby you responded by an impulse purchase of a new car. Is this decisions good or bad?

Example 2
For years, you have wanted to go back to school but have been unable to fund your school. You have just received a letter telling you that you have qualified for a scholarship. You have saved some money and your goals for education is continually being updated as your life moves forward. You set out and gather information on a school of your choice that best suits your needs to increase your knowledge and experience to receive a promotion. Is this good or bad?

Both decisions are based on an emotional need but in case two (2), this person has spent time, planned their future and has saved money. The consequences to this scenario is known and well accepted and planned after the fact. So we could state that there is some logic along with an emotional need that fulfills this case. Whereas in case one (1), this person responds immediately in a purchase, known as an impulse purchase which, the person deems they can afford but the consequences are after the fact that on further analysis, this person is regretting the impulse purchase and has to live with the consequences of his/her actions.

We are all guilty of, at some point, making impulse and rash decisions without thinking what the results or consequences would be for that decision which we made a choice and with that choice comes the responsibility that we must live with and understand that the resultant is a consequence. In an article that discusses the behavior of us as shoppers, the author states that “when it comes time to choose, the impulsive, unreflective parts of our brain dominate the analytic parts” (Rosenfield 2014).
NONTRADITIONAL STUDENT
A nontraditional student is one who has been away from school for a period of time to exceed more than 1 year. Typically, it is thought that a nontraditional student is viewed as a person who, after working in the workforce, whether civilian or military service, decides to return to school. Today, there are more nontraditional students in schools than previous years. The reasons are many; jobs, laid-off, career change, economics or just to increase knowledge. For the largest groups of these, many of them are prior military personal who have served for a time in service and are coming back to the civilian world and find that they need to develop on the skills they have or find themselves in a position where they want to go into a career of choice. Another group of nontraditional students are parents who are finding themselves in need of an advanced degree or career change. In these cases and more the nontraditional student is becoming a major force for schools and the need for schools to develop new programs that welcome these students are needed.

Nontraditional students have challenges that are unique to them which differ from the traditional students. Traditional students move from one school (high school) in the spring to college in the fall. The students then have those that were with them in the high school setting and transition into the college life. The primary difference is that students go from depending on their parents to becoming self-sufficient. Nontraditional students face significantly different issues (Sela & Berger 2011) as previously stated, nontraditional students are in the workforce and need further education, military personnel are introduced into the civilian world again and step back into a school atmosphere (Volokhov 2014). The uniqueness for nontraditional students is simple; the largest student bodies that are part of most universities, especially community colleges are nontraditional students (Hess 2011). The ever increasing student body that is part of many of the universities have originated from many people who over the years have had to change direction in their work, have been laid-off and need to increase their knowledge base or are those individuals who have decided to go back into the workforce but in a different capacity. For these reasons, the increase in demand for services to facilitate the burgeoning nontraditional student body is essential to those higher education establishments if they want to serve the nontraditional students.

Out of all of the higher education outlets for students, two specific entities have risen to the top; online and community colleges. Many universities have found that by establishing an online curriculum they can draw many individuals who would otherwise find it to be a challenge to attend school. Furthermore, many of the colleges and universities offer complete degrees through an online based platform.

In Class, Off-Campus
Only a fraction of the nation’s 18 million undergraduates are traditional students.

- Two-year students (in millions)
- Full-time students at four-year schools
- Of remaining, for-profit students
- Of remaining, those over age 21
- Traditional students

Source: Education Department (Casselman 2013)
CHOICES AND CONSEQUENCES
I am a nontraditional student and with this, I can relate as from previous writings, I have shared my experience with the need to change and develop new goals for myself. I made choices that were needed to focus my attention to what I wanted to do in the future. This has not been an easy task however, the challenges that I was faced is no different than many nontraditional students who have made a choice to completely change course and strike out on a new direction. Notice that as I previously discussed in choices; whether they were based on logical or emotional thoughts, they were made in the thought that I was making the best choices for my future.

There were consequences to those choices. Based on those choices, acting on those choices, the resultant were not always based on the best practices. Most of the choices were emotional or anticipated reward choices and not logically thought out. It wasn’t until I completed my undergraduate degree that I became more focused on my needs and goals. The more time I took to think on, research my options on schools and taking the time to set up my goals.

Figure 3

Many factors have direct and indirect ramifications when we make daily choices. Each of those are factors that must be a part of what we process each day. For each decision, no matter how small, can lead us into a bigger decision that should require more time to divest the information before we react to making a choice. We think little of daily choices because it is a routine that goes without thought. We process on a daily basis many choices, some as mundane as whether we take our shoes off when we get into the house or wait until we have reached our bed and then remove our shoes. Yes, this is a choice but one that is automatic because we create the same regiment every day. Think of when you go to work and the daily ritual you perform without a second thought. Again, we are making choices to what and how we process for each situation. We tend to lump into an overall process that I call packaging.

A work package is one formulated within the work environment. Depending on where our work is located; office environment, shop floor environment or outside location, we arrange our area to our specification, we check our work email, we talk with those that we see every day, we might even get coffee, tea or a soda and breakfast so we can eat and drink these items as we look at our email or deal with the morning plans. For many workers, this can include a setting up process that is needed to be efficient, teacher preparing for class, or police officer ensuring that they have all required equipment on themselves and within the vehicle before leaving the office.

A home package is one that is formulated to what our expectations or accepted pattern for everyone at home. We get groceries, cook, discuss the day’s events, check the news, check the mail, walk the dog, relax for the day and for some delve into our hobbies. Each of these factor at home require minor decisions.
to anticipate a goal to achieve when completed. The difference at home will be based on whether one is single, has a partner/roommate, or has kids. In some cases, parents may be part of the home as well and must be considered when making the choices for the home package.

The home and work package have one similarity and that is that choices are made to support each environment. When each person becomes more in tuned with themselves, they learn fundamental aspects of their behavior and personality pattern. This knowledge of knowing yourself and understanding the choices give a higher level of thought process. In this process, we start to categorize our priorities. We begin to delve into skills that will become a habit and those good habits will help when choices are involved, whether they are minor or major choices.

NONTRADITIONAL STUDENT AND CHOICE
So, you ask yourself; what does choice have to do with nontraditional students? The simple answer is that we are all faced with choices in our lives. But, the answer is not simple because in the broad scope for those students have decided to return back to education, the choices are far larger than the traditional student.

For these reasons, the decisions we make are directly relative to our environment. Each of the eight reasons determine the way we approach a decision. What is crucial at this juncture is that how we look at each situation through emotional or logically process. The school you choose, what you major in, the field you work in after graduating; all affect your likelihood of employment and your future earning (Owen & Sawhill 2014).

Most nontraditional students are faced with more than one obstacle or challenge to step back into the realm of education. The choices that the nontraditional student is faced with is compounded by the goals of their family, work and personal lives. Each of the above factors, if not all will affect the choices that an individual will be faced with when developing a strategic plan for returning to higher education. Choice is fundamental because every decision that is made can and will have a short and long term effect in that person’s life and those around that person.

The motivation for a person is based on the factors previously mentioned. Motivation is the means to finding the drive to follow through by using goals and for the person to follow through with the desire to accomplish tasks. The choices that are involved with determining the direction of a person’s life can be addressed through self-determination (Brooks & Young 2011). This process looks at empowering and motivating a nontraditional student in their education work. This is where the nontraditional student comes into contact with making vital decisions to accomplish goals. Understanding the challenges that the nontraditional student faces will require experienced people who understand the challenges of a nontraditional student. Furthermore, the experienced individual and/or college must develop policy to set up goals for the success of the school and the student.
CONCLUSION
Choices, no matter the size and scope, have some form of consequences. The consequences can be both positive and negative but the idea is to understand the reasoning behind the choices and if the choices are negative, then there needs to be an analysis of those choices and realize that the critical choices must be in line with the goals that needed to satisfy.

Nontraditional students face significant challenges to returning to school. With the many school offerings both seated and online, are large and varied, the decisions or choice for school offerings become a bigger decision. For this reason, a nontraditional student must start their process in looking into schools from the lens of how: does a school respond to the nontraditional student? Can the community college or university accommodate the additional demands of nontraditional students? Can the community college or university meet the accelerated goals of what nontraditional students bring to the school? Finally, what is the attitude to acceptance of a nontraditional student and does the community college or university philosophy match the schools environment? Nontraditional students are faced with larger challenges that require significant choices to be made. And, each of those choices will affect the forward processes. The need for those individuals who can step in and help students become successful through processes that follow the nontraditional students as their journey involves education.

Choice is part of everyone’s life and whether we accept the choice by either conscious or unconscious methods. Each of us must realize the effect of our decisions. Whether to contemplate continued education, change a job, decide to move to a different location or simply decide to turn left instead of right, life is full of choices. The human conditioning must develop further in the understanding that the “cause and effect” of our choices will have direct and indirect consequences to ourselves and to others that come into contact with us. We must be vigilant in remembering that choice is unique and once that choice is made, it can never been taken back. How we manage our day and the choices we continue to make should be priority in life. Unfortunately, in today’s society, choices seem to be made without a concern in the world. In hind sight, it is no excuse we must take the responsibility to our life’s decisions whether they are right or wrong.

REFERENCE

Casselman, B. (2013). Number of the Week: ‘Non-Traditional’ Students Are Majority on College Campuses, Real Time Economics, WSJ Economics, June 6


"Choice is fundamental because every decision that is made can and will have a short and long term effect in that person’s life and those around that person."

JOHN

SHEURING
Using distance learning to meet the needs of adult learners is not a new idea. The history of Career and Technical Education (Career Tech) is rich with non-traditional or alternative approaches for educating and certifying its teachers (Lynch, 1996). As early as the 1900’s, correspondence courses started the trend of using distance education to meet the needs of adult learners. That trend has resulted in more sophisticated methods and technologies whose primary benefit was providing adult learners with the flexibility they needed for more productive educational scheduling. As Galusha stated, “Moving into the next century, the adult student population is expected to be the fastest growing segment of higher education and, in fact, older students will constitute the majority…[thus the need for] research into course development techniques [that] will help learning institutions understand which methods work best in the distance-learning classroom.”

For this study, distance education/learning includes the use of three specific formats that take advantage of information and communication technologies for instruction: Interactive Video (IVE), Online, and Hybrid. The Interactive Video format takes advantage of the capabilities of audio and video equipment to provide two-way interaction among diverse geographic locations allowing for synchronous communication between instructors and students. The Online format allows geographically disperse students to utilize digital medium, such as a computer or cell phone, to learn in either a synchronous or an asynchronous environment. Although the online format permits learning independent of an instructor, only online courses in which an instructor was present were considered for the purposes of this study. The Hybrid format is a blend of online and on-ground instruction and may or may not include the use of interactive video.
According to Zhai and Liu, “Technology, especially the Internet, is an essential component of teaching and learning environments in the online setting.” However, as many of today’s on-ground classrooms take advantage of the Internet as well, the use of Internet in the online classroom is assumed in this study, and only those technologies that further learning via Internet access are of concern in this study.

The primary technology used in online education is a learning management system (LMS), such as Blackboard, D2L, or Moodle, which connects students to course resources, the instructor, and each other. Additional technologies can include streaming video, audio recordings, podcasts (a program delivered in audio or video format), and electronic documents (those available only in electronic format). According to Ya Ni, “social and communicative interactions between student and teacher, and student and student” are important to student achievement in on-ground learning as well as in online courses. Ya Ni also references other researchers’ work (Brown, 1996) that indicates opponents of online learning “are concerned that students in an online environment may feel isolated.” It is, therefore, important that proponents of online learning utilize available technologies to not only support the advantages associated with online learning (flexibility, relevant and current materials, and barrier elimination), but also to reduce the potential for students to feel isolated while enhancing their social and communicative interaction.

As the adult student population continues to grow in both higher education and technical education, faculty and their associated educational institutions need to understand and prepare for the changes that must occur in the delivery and administration of distance courses. Unless educational institutions are ready to meet that demand, those institutions may well see a drop in enrollment that mimics the decline in the percentage of traditional higher education students versus non-traditional adult students enrolling in higher education. If today’s institutions of higher education do not provide learning options that meet the needs of these adult students, enrollment may further decline as private educational institutions offer the adult student population the online learning options they seek. One primary point of focus for developing an understanding of the changes needed to succeed at the delivery and administration of distance education courses is the use of technology. Distance education technologies come in many different formats; an understanding of student preferences is necessary for fine tuning future scheduling of distance education courses.

This research study was conducted online using an electronic survey tool called Survey Monkey. It originally was designed as a pilot to identify the Basic 15 course format preferences of Trade and Industrial (T&I) Education students who were currently or previously enrolled in the University of Central Oklahoma’s (UCO) College of Education and Professional Studies’ Occupational and Technology Education Department (OCTED), Career and Technology Education program. Trade and Industrial Education (T&I) is one of the majors in the program. The other majors are Allied Health, Family and Consumer Sciences, & Business and Information Technologies. Through its use of a broad array of technology, OCTED has gained a reputation of being a campus leader in alternative delivery methods designed to satisfy the unique needs of their adult learners. Because the Basic 15 courses are required by a larger adult audience than just T&I, and because this was the pilot for this
longitudinal trend study, Bogner and Cady chose to expand the population to include the email addresses of OCTED students attending two select, Basic 15 courses and one OCTED course with a high T&I student enrollment for the Spring 2009 semester. Bogner and Cady also believed that expanding the population would improve the survey response rate, and that doing so was necessary to ensure a sufficient response to the pilot study.

In addition, Bogner and Cady collected antiquated evidence on Career and Technology Education (CTE) major students’ course format preferences by reviewing, charting, and analyzing the OCTE Department’s previous two years of student records. Course format choices for those students included:

- Day Courses, which ran from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM Monday through Thursday
- Evening courses, which ran from 4:00 PM to 10:00 PM Monday through Thursday
- Weekend courses, which ran from 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM Friday, and 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM Saturday

Analysis of this information indicated that Weekend and Evening format courses were the most popular with CTE major students. In addition, Bogner and Cady noted a relevant trend. When Weekend and Evening format courses included an IVE (Interactive Video Education) component, the course enrollment size increased by approximately one-third, which is supported by research that reports course scheduling of time and place as one of four significant barriers to learning for adult students (Chao, DeRocco, and Flynn, 2007).

“Adult Learners in Higher Education: Barriers to Success and Strategies to Improve Results,” the U.S. Department of Labor’s March 2007 report, “Postsecondary institutions are increasingly offering more flexible schedules, such as weekend-only classes, accelerated vacation programs, on-line instruction, and critical support services during non-traditional hours” (14). The report further notes that, “Where and when classes are available become critically important criteria for deciding where to enroll” (15). Hence, even though limited research exists specifically related to the learning format preferences of adult educators, it is reasonable to extend the needs of adult non-educators as students to that of adult educators as students.

For education of adult educators to be successful, faculty should know what format adult educators prefer and seek to meet their needs. This study hypothesized that: (1) Weekend and Evening courses would be the adult educator’s time formats of choice, (2) the day/time format would be the least preferred by the population, (3) the IVE and Online Course formats would be more popular than traditional Course formats, and (4) the shorter Intersession and Summer Semester formats would be preferred over the more traditional Full and Block Semester formats.

A three-question survey asked participants to identify which learning methods they have participated in since beginning program courses at the University of Central Oklahoma, and to rank their selections in order of preference. Student demographics were also surveyed along with their relevance to format preference.

Although some research on format preferences for adult learners exists, there is little available on the format preferences of adult educators—those adult learners who currently teach or plan to teach. According to
METHODOLOGY

The Population
Current students and alumni of the University of Central Oklahoma’s (UCO) Occupational and Technology Education Department programs were surveyed to determine their format preferences (time frame, semester, and course). The survey design was that of a longitudinal study and the first in what is designed to be a formal trend study. Participants solicited for this initial study were chosen because of the researchers’ access to enrollment and contact information, as well as the participants’ enrollment in one or more of the Basic 15 courses. The Basic 15 consists of six, 15 semester credit hour courses required for Career Tech educators by the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education for renewal of T&I education state licensure. These 15 hours also are required for the Career and Technology Education (CTE) major. Some of these courses also are required by the Master of Education in General Education and Master of Education in Adult Education programs.

The solicitation to participate (see Appendix A) in the survey was sent electronically to email addresses obtained from Trade and Industrial (T&I) program records, and from students in three CTE courses during the Spring 2009 term. Two additional reminder emails were sent to this list during the 18 days of the survey’s availability.

Originally, 300 names were listed, but 39 were identified as duplicates. Of the 261 remaining candidates, 33 had no email address on file, so the email solicitation was sent to 228 people. However, only 204 of those email addresses could be validated. Valid email addresses were defined as those that did not generate a reply from the receiving email server that indicated the email could not be delivered to the intended recipient, and which were manually verified by the researchers as not being a duplicate of or a secondary address for students enrolled in Career and Technology Education (CTE) courses. Of the 204 valid email addresses, 150 were T&I students; the remaining 54 were not identified as to their area of specialization, but were students enrolled in or graduated from programs housed within the Occupational and Technology Education Department.

The Instrument
The solicitation email contained both the invitation to participate and a link to the Web page where the recipient could access the online survey, which was conducted using an electronic survey tool made available on the Internet through a Website known as Survey Monkey. The online survey was available for only 18 days, after which it was closed and no additional responses were allowed. During those 18 days, the target audience received one invitation to participate and two reminders of the survey’s availability, both of which included a copy of the initial email solicitation.

When the survey opened, students were presented with instructions for completing the survey (see Appendix B).

The survey consisted of seven, closed-ended questions and one open-ended question. Four of the closed-end questions (numbered four through seven) asked basic demographic questions including: gender, age (chosen from a series of four age ranges), highest degree achieved (the emphasis area was not considered significant in and thus not requested for this survey), and distance participant lives from the University of Central Oklahoma campus in Edmond. The three remaining closed-ended questions surveyed the students’ participation in time frame-, semester-, and course-format, their level of satisfaction with each format, and their format preference.
Options for the three formats were:

- Time frame, which included: Day (Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM), Evening (Monday through Thursday, 4:30 PM to 10:15 PM), and Weekend (Fridays from 5:00 PM to 10:00 PM and Saturdays from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM).
- Semester, which included: Full (16 weeks), Block (8 weeks), Summer (4 weeks), and Intersession (3 weeks).
- Course, which include: On campus (face-to-face), Interactive Video Education (IVE, which consists of student course attendance at a distance site that can provide video and audio viewing and interaction with the professor and other students), Online (which consists of courses completed entirely through the university's online Learning Management System—WebCT), and Hybrid (which consists of a combination of online and on-campus coursework).

For each of the three formats (time frame, semester, and course), the participants were asked in question number one to identify whether or not they had ever participated in the format while attending school at UCO (Yes/No). In question two, they also were asked to rank their level of satisfaction with all options for each format. Not applicable (NA) was a choice for those who had not attended a class at UCO that followed the specific format, and 1, 2, 3, or 4, with 1 equaling most satisfied and 4 equaling least satisfied were the choices for those participants who had attended a class at UCO that had followed the specific format. Finally, in question three, participants were asked to rank all format options in order of preference from 1 through 11 with 1 being the most desired format and 11 being the least desired format.

The final question on the survey (question 8) was open-ended and allowed participants to add any comments that they chose, and did not restrict the subject of the respondents’ replies. Fifteen (18.5%) of the respondents chose to supply comments in addition to answering the other survey questions. Of the comments supplied, one stated, “None,” three were related to the survey instrument, two were related to comments about the university rather than anything directly asked about or referred to in the survey, eight were directly related to questions on the survey, and one was a two-part response that related to the survey instrument as well as to the respondent’s experience with returning to college.

DATA ANALYSIS
Surveys were completed online, and the data was reported by the survey software as both actual numbers (n=) and the calculated percentages. The data were categorical and Likert-type.

LIMITATIONS
While every effort was made to ensure that the sample population was an accurate representation of primarily Trade and Industrial Education (T&I) in the OCTED department, the researchers did not include a question on the survey to identify in which major the student was enrolled. Initially the survey was going to be sent to only T&I students. Before sending out the survey, the researchers were given the opportunity to provide pre-notification of the survey to students within current classes that had a large percentage of T&I students, but also which contained non-T&I students. These other students were enrolled in educational programs housed within OCTED.
One weakness of this study is that participant’s major was not requested. Because the initial list of potential participants was heavily T&I, and because there were T&I students in the current classes, the researchers assume that the responses primarily came from T&I students. However, as the participants’ chosen majors were not tracked in this survey, the researchers cannot verify that assumption, but can only generalize the results to the T&I population. In future studies, a question that allows survey participants to identify their major should be included in the research questionnaire.

While the researchers could be assured that 204 of the email addresses were valid, the researchers could not accurately know the number of recipients that read the email, only the number delivered successfully to the email server. Delivery to the email server does not necessarily mean that the recipient actually received the email and read it. This issue is limitation of the use of email to solicit participation in an online survey. However, in future surveys the researchers will attempt to collect data related to whether or not emails were actually received and read.

Of the three format questions asked on the survey, the researchers later determined that, while designed for participants to answer in relationship to their attendance at UCO courses, only the first question specified that answers should relate only to their participation at UCO. Consequently, while the researchers believe the content of the solicitation email and the first question of the survey made it clear that the participants’ experience at UCO was the concentration of the survey and thus its questions should be answered accordingly, there is a possibility that some participants chose to answer one or two of these three questions based on their participation at another college or university. As this survey was designed to be the first in a trend study, consideration will be given to adding “UCO” to the directions for answering survey questions to ensure participants’ answers are reflecting only their experience with UCO.

RESULTS

Of the 204 students and alumni solicited to participate in this survey, 81 (39.7%) persons completed the online survey. According to Dillman (2000), the return rate for surveys where no incentive to complete is supplied averages 28%. The return rate of 39.7% for this survey was significantly higher than the average return rate for surveys without an incentive.

Of the respondents, 46 (56.80%) were male and 35 (43.20%) were female. (See figure 1.) While this finding still represents an increase over the Lynch study (1990) that reported female CTE teachers having 29% females, it represents a small decrease over the Bruening, et.al. (2001) study that reported female CTE teachers as accounting for 46% of the population.

![Figure 1: Gender of Respondents.](image)

Nine respondents (11%) were between the ages of 18 and 29. Twenty-two respondents (27%) were between the ages of 30 and 39. Thirty respondents (37%) were between the ages of 40 and 49, and 19 respondents (23%) were age 50 or greater. Only one respondent (1%) chose not to answer the question of age range. Sixty-one percent of respondents were under the age of 50, while only 23% (n=19) were over the age of 50. (See figure 2.)
The researchers found it interesting that this statistic shows a significant decrease in the average age of CTE teachers when compared to the 2001 national study of, “Characteristics of Teacher Educators in Career and Technical Education.” This study reported the mean age of respondents as being 50 with 42.8% of the respondents reporting their ages as being between 51 and 60 years of age. Although the instrument’s main purpose was not to determine the average age of respondents in comparison to other research that collected age data, the age of participants in relation to technology usage by age may be an area of interest for future research.

![Age Range of Respondents](image)

**Figure 2: Age Range of Respondents**

Twenty-seven of the respondents (33.3%) reported that they hold a High School diploma, 27 (33.3%) hold an Associates degree, 20 (24.8%) hold a Bachelors degree, and 7 (8.6%) hold a Masters degree. (See figure 3.)

Of the 81 respondents, 11 (13.6%) live within 15 miles of UCO, 15 (18.5%) live between 16 and 30 miles from the university, 18 (22.2%) live between 31 and 50 miles, 14 (17.3%) live between 51 and 100 miles, and 23 (28.4%) live 101 or more miles from UCO. (See figure 4.)

![Distance the Participants Live From the UCO Campus](image)

**Figure 4: Distance the Participants Live From the UCO Campus.**

To validate the responses as to actual participant experience at UCO, the first survey question asked the participants to identify the formats in which they previously participated.

Twelve (14.80%) participants reported having taken a Day course (those that run between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM on Monday through Thursday) at UCO, with 69 (85.2%) reporting they had not. Forty-eight (59.3%) of the participants responded that they had taken Evening courses (those that run between 4:30 PM and 10:15 PM on Monday through Thursday), and 34 respondents (42.0%) reported that they had not. The highest response rate, 71 (97.7%) of the participants reported haven taken a Weekend format course (those that begin on Fridays at 5:00 PM and go until 10:00 PM and also run the following Saturday from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM), but 10 respondents (12.3%) had not. (See figure 5.)
mixture of both on campus and online) courses. (See figure 7.) It is important to note that the online and hybrid formats are relatively new options for students taking the Basic 15.

That the online and hybrid formats are relatively new options for students taking the Basic 15.

Figure 5: Time frame of courses taken/not taken at UCO.

Semester format reporting showed that 40 (49.4%) of the participants had taken at least one Full (16 week) course, with the same numbers indicating that they had taken one or more Block (8 week) courses. Of the Summer sessions (4 weeks), only 29.6% (24 students) had taken this format, and only 37% (30 students) had taken an Intersession (3 week) course. (See figure 6.) One of the Basic 15 courses (Introduction to T&I) is offered only during Intersession.

Figure 6: Semester Format Courses Taken/Not Taken.

The most relevant responses were related to the choice of course format. While 51 (63.0%) respondents had taken an on campus course, 64 (79.0%) had taken one or more through Interactive Video Education (IVE) format. In addition, 34 (42.0%) had taken online courses, while only 21 (25.9%) have taken hybrid (a

Figure 7: Course Format Preferences.

Satisfaction with each of the formats was the concentration of the second survey question. Participants who had indicated in the first question that they had not taken a course in a given time, semester, or course format were asked to choose NA. Otherwise, participants were asked to choose the most appropriate number from 1 to 4 with 1 being MOST satisfied. However, there were minor discrepancies between those who indicated they had taken a specific format at UCO and those who chose a satisfaction level of 1 through 4 instead of choosing NA.

Comparing the preference responses for Day, Evening, and Weekend time formats (see Table 1), the highest format ranking was for the Weekend format. The preference for the Weekend format exceeded the combined satisfaction rating of the Day and Evening formats by 12.6 percent.
### Table 1: Day, Evening, and Weekend results comparison with NA responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>NA</th>
<th>Satisfied/Most Satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>76.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>37.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After NA responses are removed, the statistics change to those shown in Table 2. See Appendix C for the full results of survey question 2.

### Table 2: Day, Evening, and Weekend results comparison without NA responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Satisfied/Most Satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percentage of participants who indicated that they had taken one or more Semester format courses and who reported they were Satisfied or MOST Satisfied was roughly the same whether they had taken a Full or Block course with only a 3.1 percentage point difference.

### Table 3: Semester, Summer, and Intersession results comparisons with NA responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>NA</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester-Full</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester-Block</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>65.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intersession</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>60.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4: Semester, Summer, and Intersession results comparisons without NA responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Satisfied/Most Satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester-Full</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester-Block</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intersession</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the Course Formats (see Table 5), more than half of the participants reported they had not participated in either the Online or Hybrid format. Of the Course formats, once the NA responses are removed, 79.6% indicated being MOST Satisfied or Satisfied with the On Campus format, 76.9% indicated being Satisfied or MOST Satisfied with the IVE format, 71.9% indicated being Satisfied or MOST Satisfied with the Online format, and 76.0% reported being MOST Satisfied or Satisfied with the Hybrid format. (See Appendix C for the full results of survey question 2.)

### Table 5: Course Format Results Comparison with NA Responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>NA</th>
<th>Satisfied/Most Satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Campus</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVE</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>68.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The open-ended question allowed the participant to make any comments he or she chose to make, and did not restrict the subject of the respondents’ replies. Fifteen (18.5%) of the respondents chose to supply comments in addition to answering the other survey questions.
questions. However, none of the responses related to course preferences, but rather to their experience at the university as a whole (2) and experience related to returning to college (1). While the other responses were related to survey questions, they did not enhance the researchers' knowledge of student preferences, thus they are noted in this research paper only to ensure full reporting.

CONCLUSION
This pilot study seems to indicate that further research on the four hypotheses posited is likely needed. However, based on this study, Weekend and Evening courses are the T&I adult educator's time formats of choice. Both in satisfaction and preference, the Weekend Time Frame format (Fridays 5:00 PM to 10 PM and Saturdays 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM) was the T&I adult educators' first choice by almost two-to-one. The Day format (between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM Monday through Thursday) was the least preferred by the research population. Very few participants reported having taken Day courses at UCO, and nearly two-thirds of the participants selected Day format as their last choice. The survey results indicated a strong preference for non-traditional course hours when classroom attendance was chosen. The researchers recognize that the survey was distributed to students whose day employment limits their ability to attend Day courses, however, that specific audience is the one for which the survey was intended. Consequently, a greater preference for non-Day courses was anticipated by the researchers.

Determination of preference from the other choices was of more significance to the researchers. The researchers hypothesized that the IVE and Online Course formats would be more popular than the other Course formats among the participants, and therefore were not surprised by the preference choices between Day and the other formats. The researchers were primarily concerned about the preference choices regarding the non-Day format options. Over three quarters of the participants indicated that they had taken a course through IVE, but less than half stated that they had taken a course Online. As participants were not request to explain why they had not taken a course in the Online format, for those participants who indicated that they had not participated in an Online course, the reason for lack of participation cannot be determined. One possibility postulated by the researchers, however, relates to the fact that a limited number of Basic 15 and OCTED Online Course offerings are made available to students. Conversely, all Basic 15 courses have been offered through IVE, and both formats showed high levels of satisfaction.

The results indicate that the participants preferred the shorter Intersession and Summer Semester formats over the more traditional Full and Block Semester formats. The Summer and Intersession formats were ranked highest in the Semester format category. The researchers believe these shorter Semester formats were the most chosen because T&I adult educators prefer to take courses when they are not also teaching.

As a pilot study, the researchers felt comfortable with the return rate of almost 40%, and the success of the free online survey tool used to collect data. However, as the researchers look to continue this trend study, they will be selecting a more-robust online survey tool, and will be adding to the survey instrument to allow for the collection of participants' course majors.

Based on the findings of this research as associated with the researcher's hypotheses,
there is a demonstrated need for OCTED to continue its flexibility of scheduling when offering the Basic 15 courses. Although this study needs to be repeated to collect sufficient responses to support the hypothesis that OCTED should offer more courses using IVE and Online as the educational format, this study provides initial support for the hypotheses.

The researchers further believe there are additional questions that could be addressed in this or other research efforts including the following:

• Are the findings related to Online Course format preference significant enough to warrant additional research?

• Does the research need to address a belief that T&I adult educators prefer to take one subject at a time?

• Is there a correlation between travel distances and IVE and Online course preferences?

• Does the IVE option increase enrollment numbers for T&I?

REFERENCES
Bruening, Thomas H.; Scanlon, Dennis C.; Hodes, Carol; Dhitul, Purandhar; Shao, Xiaorong; and Lie, Shis-Tsen. (2001). Characteristics of Teacher Educators in Career and Technical Education.

Chao, Elaine L., DeRocco, Emily Stover; and Flynn, Maria K. (March 2007). Adult Learners in Higher Education: Barriers to Success and Strategies to Improve Results. Washington, D.C. U. S. Department of Labor.


Galusha, Jill M. (1998). Barriers to Learning in Distance Education. Washington D.C: Education Resources Information Center.


Appendix A – Email soliciting participation in the survey

Following is the email that was sent to all requested participants:

Dear UCO Student/Alumni:

In an effort to improve course scheduling for Career and Technology Education (CTE) students, UCO researchers are conducting an online survey to assess student class schedule preferences. Your participation gives you the opportunity to provide anonymous input to the OTE Department regarding the days and times you prefer to attend distance and on-campus courses. This survey has ten questions, which you should be able to complete by providing only a few minutes of your time.

Your decision to participate in this survey is optional, anonymous, and voluntary, and will not affect or in any way influence your standing in any UCO course or school. The total number of participants will be reported to the researchers along with the cumulative answers to questions and any comments. However, participants’ answer choices, comments, and geographic data will not be identified by participant, nor will the researchers know which invited persons actually participated.

Data from the survey will be collected and reported two weeks from the open date of the survey. Your prompt participation is invited and appreciated.

To complete the survey, please access the following Web address. If you have any trouble opening this link, please copy and paste the link in its entirety into a Web browser.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=GkJi9iaEEnG78CNBxxExVQ_3d_3d

Please be aware that completing and submitting this survey will serve as your acknowledgment of informed consent. If you would like a printed copy of the survey for your records, please submit your request to elsarning@francistuttle.com. Please make certain you keep a copy of this email for your records.

If you have any questions, you can contact me through email at dcady1@gmail.com or the UCO IRB (Research & Grants) office at 405-974-2526.

The researchers wish to thank you in advance for your participation.
Appendix B: Instructions displayed for survey participants when first accessing the online survey

INSTRUCTIONS: Please complete the following survey. It consists of only 8 questions, and should not take you more than a few minutes to complete. Your answers will allow the faculty in the Occupational and Technology Education department at the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) to improve their understanding of how best to schedule the T&I Basic 15 courses in the future.

Your answers are completely anonymous, will not influence or in any way have an effect on your standing or grades at UCO, and will be reported only in combination with all other submissions, so please be honest with your responses.

Thank you for participating and helping us to help you meet your career goals and educational challenges.

Appendix C: Survey Results for Question 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Format</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time Frame: Day (M-F, 8-4)</td>
<td>NA (60)</td>
<td>77% (5)</td>
<td>7.7% (6)</td>
<td>3.8% (3)</td>
<td>3.8% (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Frame: Evening (M-R, 4:30-10:15)</td>
<td>37.2% (29)</td>
<td>37.2% (29)</td>
<td>7.7% (6)</td>
<td>10.3% (8)</td>
<td>9.0% (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Frame: Weekend (F, 5-10, S, 8-6)</td>
<td>12.3% (10)</td>
<td>59.3% (48)</td>
<td>13.6% (11)</td>
<td>1.2% (1)</td>
<td>13.6% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester Format: Full (16 weeks)</td>
<td>45.6% (36)</td>
<td>16.5% (13)</td>
<td>20.3% (16)</td>
<td>10.1% (8)</td>
<td>7.5% (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester Format: Block (8 weeks)</td>
<td>46.2% (36)</td>
<td>28.2% (22)</td>
<td>11.5% (9)</td>
<td>5.1% (4)</td>
<td>9.0% (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester Format: Summer (4 weeks)</td>
<td>65.4% (51)</td>
<td>20.5% (16)</td>
<td>5.1% (4)</td>
<td>3.8% (3)</td>
<td>5.1% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester Format: Intercession (3 weeks)</td>
<td>60.3% (47)</td>
<td>20.5% (16)</td>
<td>7.7% (6)</td>
<td>3.8% (3)</td>
<td>7.7% (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Format: On Campus (Face-to-Face)</td>
<td>32.9% (26)</td>
<td>41.8% (33)</td>
<td>12.7% (10)</td>
<td>7.6% (6)</td>
<td>5.1% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Format: Interactive Video Education (IVE)</td>
<td>16.7% (13)</td>
<td>50.0% (39)</td>
<td>14.1% (11)</td>
<td>6.4% (5)</td>
<td>12.8% (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Format: Online</td>
<td>52.5% (42)</td>
<td>23.8% (19)</td>
<td>11.3% (9)</td>
<td>7.5% (6)</td>
<td>6.3% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Format: Hybrid (On Campus &amp; Online)</td>
<td>68.4% (54)</td>
<td>17.7% (14)</td>
<td>6.3% (5)</td>
<td>2.5% (2)</td>
<td>5.1% (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question: 81

skipped question: 0

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### Appendix D: Survey Results for Question 2

#### 3. Please rank your preferences in numerical order with 1 being the MOST desired and 11 being the LEAST desired format.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Count</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<th>7</th>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>Semester Format: Summer (4 weeks)</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>Semester Format: Intersection (3 weeks)</td>
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<td>Course Format: On Campus (Face-to-Face)</td>
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<td>Course Format: Interactive Video Education (IVE)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*answered question* 81

*skipped question* 0
Parenting Alone in Undergraduate Education: The Reflective Experiences of Single Parent Adult Learners

By Dr. Chaniece Winfield

“Single parent adult learners have developed the ability to have an effective balance between life and education, while meeting new needs and demands that stem from being a single parent adult learner.”

Current research suggested that the face of the higher education student was changing with the adult learner population continuing to grow while the traditional student population decreased (Frazier, Young & Williams, 2012; Kasworm, 2010; Donaldson & Townsend, 2007). Despite current gains, Bosworth (2008) discussed that the “demographic forces that produced this increase have ended” (p. 73). In response to societal changes such as the retirement of baby boomers, ongoing technological advancements, the need for career growth, personal goals and economic need, many adults have returned to or entered the higher education setting (Donaldson & Townsend; Spellman, 2007). The motivation for adult learners to return to the educational setting varied for each student, however common factors included but were not limited to life changes, work related goals and responsibilities, finances, or personal interests (White, 2002). No matter the cause or motivation for entering into the higher education setting, single parents, fulltime and part time workers, widows, divorcees and other categories of adult learners have steadily changed the face and needs of the higher education student (DiMaria, 2007).

ADULT LEARNERS VS. TRADITIONAL STUDENTS

DiMaria (2007) described the adult learner population as a segment of the American population that “just might hold America’s future in its collective hands” (p. 15). DiMaria noted that the adult learner population is a diverse population with different educational needs and expectations when compared to the traditional student. Providing the example of a single mother with limited job skills, or the recently laid-off millworker, DiMaria stated that many adults from different backgrounds can become adult learners. Donaldson and Townsend (2007), defined the traditional student as between the ages of 18 to 22 years old, usually entering higher education immediately from secondary education and often engaged in full time study.

Forbus, Newbold, and Mehta (2011) noted the number of non-traditional students on college and university campuses continued to rise, and as a result, the overall campus and university student population was shifting to reflect non-traditional students. Kasworm (2010) defined non-traditional students or adult learners as students who were age 25 and older, usually desiring to be part-time

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students, often having full-time employment and families, and limited involvement in the collegiate environment. According to Forbus, et al., over 73% of all postsecondary students have some characteristics of the non-traditional student.

**SINGLE PARENT ADULT LEARNERS**

One major characteristic of adult learners presented by DiMaria (2007) was the responsibility of supporting families and being employed full-time. Per DiMaria, as a result of these constraints, very few adult learners took on the 15 credit hours required to maintain full-time enrollment status which is commonly taken by traditional students. Furthermore, because of work and family responsibilities, DiMaria noted that many adult learners were limited in which courses they can enroll in if the university does not offer evening, weekend, accelerated or hybrid courses which were defined as courses that “combine face-to-face and online segments” (p. 16). Kasworm (2008) stated that many adult learners were not able to separate their lives from their collegiate endeavors and were forced to add the role of student into their already complex lives. This was all the more true for single parent adult learners who must balance the aforementioned barrier characteristics of being an adult learner with the role of being a single parent (Goldrick-Rab, & Sorensen, 2010).

Goldrick-Rab, and Sorensen (2010) noted that single parent adult learners were more likely to have delayed college entry, enroll with insufficient academic preparation, begin college without a high school degree, have lower rates of college completion and are more likely to enroll part-time. In the community college setting, White (2002) stated that many women pursue higher education on a part-time basis due to financial and child care concerns. White discussed that many single parent adult learners are impeded in their ability to successfully adapt to the higher education learning environment due to conflict in role demands of “family responsibilities in addition to career or job demands” (p. 19).
METHOD
The methodology chosen for this study was generic inquiry based on the intention to focus on the reflective experience of the phenomena outside of the participants (Cooper & Endacott, 2007). Due to the nature of the study focusing on the external reflective experience of the participants, the generic qualitative approach allowed for the researcher to successfully identify and research the area of interest which would not have been adequately addressed from other qualitative models. Caelli, Ray, and Mill, (2003) describe generic research as exhibiting similar characteristics of other qualitative methodologies, however rather than presenting the topic from a known methodology, the generic approach either combines several aspects of different approaches or “claims no particular methodological viewpoint at all” (p. 3). Qualitative semi-structured interviews were used to explore the experiences of single parent adult learners who successfully completed their undergraduate education within one year of study participation.

SAMPLE
Within this study, single parent adult learners who successfully completed their undergraduate education within one year of study participation were sampled. This one year time frame was chosen to ensure that the participant experiences were reflective in nature and appropriate for the generic inquiry methodology. Criterion sampling (Creswell, 2007) was the sampling strategy of choice for this study. Applying this strategy, included participants met pre-established criteria prior to being included in the study (Creswell, 2007). Ensuring that participants met inclusion criteria, a telephone screening was facilitated prior to study participation.

When screening participants, the following criteria was used: (a) Participant must have been a single parent of one or more children while pursuing an undergraduate education which is defined as either an Associate or Bachelor degree from either a land-based, online, or hybrid institution; (b) participant must currently have earned an undergraduate degree which will be defined as either an Associate or Bachelor degree, (c) must be a minimum of 25-years-old at the time they initiated their undergraduate degree, and (d) must have completed their undergraduate program at least 1 year prior to study participation. Additional requirements for participating in the study were (a) participant’s willingness to provide written consent to participate in study, (b) willingness to participate in an audio-recorded interview, (c) and willingness to review transcribed interview for validation of gathered data.

At the conclusion of the recruitment process and once data saturation was reached, 11 participants were included and successfully completed the study. The 11 participants included in the study were diverse with regards to race and ethnicity and ranged in age from 31 to 50 years of age. The average age for participants was 34-years-old with 45% of participants identifying as African American, 18% as Hispanic, 18% as multiracial, 9% as Asian or Pacific Islander and 9% as White. All participants were located within the United States and the majority of participants were single parents of 2-4 children at the time they pursued their undergraduate education. While many of the participants included in the study were single parents of more than one child at the point of research interest, the majority of these children were between the ages of 0-5 years old.
research questions. According to Merriam (2009),
process begins with inductive reasoning but
becomes primarily deductive as the interviews are
conducted and units, themes, and categories are
identified.

DATA COLLECTION
Once participants were identified as being
appropriate for the study, the researcher
scheduled a day and time that coincided with each
participant’s schedule to facilitate the interviews
at a local public library. The researcher facilitated
a semi-structured interview with each participant
using the IRB-approved guided interview
questions which were audio-recorded. During this
process, field notes were taken with each
participant for the purpose of data analysis at the
conclusion of study participation. To facilitate
data reduction and to determine if there were any
differences among specific demographics, each
participant was asked about their age of and
number of children when they completed their
degree, the type of undergraduate degree they
attained as well as type of college/university
institution attended. It was also during this time
that historical information regarding their single
parent status, future aspirations and life after
completing their undergraduate degree was
volunteered by many participants without
researcher solicitation.

DATA ANALYSIS
Once the data was collected and professionally
transcribed, analytical triangulation (Patton, 2002)
was performed which consisted of the researcher
providing an electronic copy of the transcribed
data to participants via email, and allowing
participants the opportunity to review the
interview transcript for accuracy. It was during
this time that changes and corrections to the data
were done to ensure the accuracy of the data
collected and some participants provided
additional information not disclosed during the
initial interview. After all data was collected, data
analysis was facilitated using Braun and Clarke’s
(2006) six phase method of inductive analysis
which consisted of the following steps: (a)
Familiarizing yourself with your data, (b)
generating initial codes, (c) searching for themes,
(d) reviewing themes, I defining and naming
themes, and finally, (f) producing the report. The
data analysis process concluded with three
developed themes: having a balance, motivation
to succeed, and a healthy support network.

RESULTS
Upon analyzing the data, the researcher was able
to identify common patterns and themes
regarding the reflective experience of single
parent adult learners in undergraduate
education. More specifically, the following
themes of having a balance, motivation to
succeed and a healthy support network were
developed. In order to provide clarity to the
reader and to protect the identity of research
participants, pseudonyms are used when
discussing the result of the study.

HAVING A BALANCE
Single parent adult learners describe the need to
have a balance between life and education which
is developed through effective life management
skills, such as planning and organization,
prioritizing, time management, and addressing
personal needs; this balance is a vital part of
being a single parent adult learner.

Being a single parent adult learner. Single parent
adult learners have developed the ability to have
an effective balance between life and education,
while meeting new needs and demands that stem
from being a single parent adult learner. Many
single parent adult learners are entering the
collegiate environment with life experience but
little to no postsecondary education experience as supported by Josiah who stated “it was tough. I had to relearn what it was like to be a student. It was so long since I actually sat in a classroom.” As a result, single parent adult learners must adjust and transition to the new expectations and responsibilities that the collegiate environment creates as presented by Lilly who stated “it was hard to figure out how to juggle it at first, so that first year was probably the hardest; and then once I got into a groove, it became a little bit easier.”

As a single parent adult learner, role conflicts between work, school, and parental duties manifest, often as the detriment to the duties of one of these roles. Discussing the conflict of work and educational roles, Jasmine stated:

As far as work, my performance on the job had kind of slacked off. I had the “you might want to be glad I came to work, at least” attitude. But eventually, I picked up my performance back at work once I got used to everything.

In order to prevent or to sufficiently manage role conflict, single parent adult learners must develop this balance between life and education. The development of this balance often requires the use of resources such as paid time off and setting time aside to put forth their highest academic effort as shared by Camren who stated:

I’ve had to use some vacation time in order to finish papers. If I had like a really big paper due, I would use my vacation time to do my homework while my child was at school, so that’s when I would kind of… borrow from Peter to pay Paul, in other words.

Life management. As a single parent adult learner, students must have effective time management and organizational skills, creative scheduling abilities as well as the ability to prioritize responsibilities and needs that come from being a single parent adult learner. Discussing the application of these skills in order to address her needs as a single parent adult learner, Taylor stated “if anything, just having to pick classes each semester and see what was being offered, because I needed to know my school schedule in order to plan accordingly for like childcare and just my work schedule.” Without the proper mastery of these skills, single parent adult learners often have difficulty managing the responsibilities of one or both of these areas, as discussed by Camren who stated:

If you are a student also, you have to write papers, so sometimes I would be doing two things at once, helping to write policies and writing a paper at the same time. And then I have my child coming in the room, and now they’re hungry, so now I have to get up and go cook. There’s not enough time in a day.

In order to effectively develop this balance, many single parent adult learners benefit from on campus resources such as childcare support, flexible scheduling, school credit for real life experience, as well as financial assistance which manifested in all of the participants’ interviews.

MOTIVATION TO SUCCEED
Single parent adult learners describe being motivated to succeed by internal and external factors which often manifested in the form of their children, parental influence, self-accomplishments or determination.

External factors. Single parent adult learners are motivated by external and internal factors in order to successfully complete their academic goals. External factors such as their children, the lack of education of their parents for some participants, career to provide a better lifestyle for themselves and their children were prominent in the data. Discussing her child as an external
motivating factor, Mary stated “it is better to work hard now as you are young so that way when you’re older you’re able to witness the growth of your child, going to school and going to school dances and things like that.”

Being motivated to complete their programs often came with feelings of guilt and selfishness as reported by Laura who stated “I felt I was being a little selfish, but then I was like, but I’m doing this because I want them to have a better life as they get older too.” The desire to want to have a better foundation for their children was prominent in all of the participants’ data. While many participants such as Angelo simply stated: “to have a better life for me and my daughter”, other participants, such as Darius were motivated by the ability to assist their children when they reach this academic milestone “I know that later on in life, that when my kids are going to go through it, I can understand and push them to say I’ve done it; now you can go do it, too.” As single parent adult learners have the responsibility of single parenthood in addition to educational goals and expectations, the benefits of having a college education, specifically job opportunities and higher salaries were also external motivators. Per Jasmine, “I received a better job, and I’m able to provide support for me and my child. I can live a decent lifestyle now.”

Internal factors. Single parent adult learners’ motivation not only stems from external factors but also manifests from internal factors such as the feeling of self-accomplishment and determination as described by Harry “I pushed my abilities and went through some difficult times, but I showed myself that I could do it, and I did it.” During their academic programs, single parent adult learners experience moments of achievement and self-accomplishment which motivate them to continue to challenge themselves to reach their academic goals. Participants such as Laura described successfully completing a difficult academic course as a moment of self-accomplishment:

I got a “B” in Chemistry, and I was really surprised. I had a tutor, so I was really surprised about that. But I needed it because I was pursuing a Bachelor’s in Nursing, so I was really proud of myself that I got that “B.”

Other participants, such as Alice and Camren identify obtaining academic achievements such as being on the Dean’s list and obtaining a highly coveted internship as a moment of self-achievement while others such as Angelo, Darius, Mary, and Lilly identify completing their academic programs.

In addition to self-accomplishment, determination and perseverance were also internal motivating factors for single parent adult learners. As described by Josiah “don’t give up. It’s very tough. I could say I did it, working full time, two kids, I say stick with it.” For some single parent adult learners, the determination and perseverance that is learned through the educational process will prepare them for life after graduation as presented by Darius who stated “it was very demanding, it was very demanding to me, but you had to get used to it. I mean, it teaches you not to quit and it prepares you for life.”

HEALTHY SUPPORT NETWORK

Single parent adult learners describe having a network of personal and professional supports which often provided guidance, assistance, and increased their ability to accomplish academic goals.

Professional support system. Single parent adult learners describe the influence a healthy
support network had on their ability to successfully complete their undergraduate education. For single parent adult learners, this network can come from professional school based supports, which were commonly identified as school provided resources, community and campus based childcare, academic relationships with professors and other interest based organizations. Describing her school based support system, Mary stated “I was involved in a summer bridge program for minorities, so I honestly believe if it wasn’t for that program it would’ve been a struggle based off the social as I know it would have affected my academics.”

Other single parent adult learners describe their school based support system as comprising of campus resources, per Taylor:

I never really used the library or anything because I was usually at home with the children, but I could get on the school’s library and get articles or anything of that sort. I didn’t have to go in – I didn’t have to be on campus to do research.

While school based supports were commonly identified as campus resources and financial assistance, school based support for single parent adult learners is also comprised of those organizations that assist with managing the personal lives of student, as was the case with Lilly who stated “my ex-husband made life a little bit difficult during that time, so I did utilize some resources on campus.” Other professional supports beneficial to single parent adult learners came from career and community agencies. According to Camren, “my job offered tuition reimbursement, which wasn’t a lot; it was $400, but that’s $400 that I didn’t have.” Discussing her professional supports in the community, Laura stated “I found a daycare, actually, evening daycare, instead of asking people, would you watch the kids for me?”

**Personal support system.** Support systems for single parent adult learners are not limited to the professional setting, but also comprise personal support such as family, friends and self-support. As described by Laura:

I think just that you have to really be focused and determined. It took me some time to definitely get through it, but I just think as long as you have a really good support system, and then you just – you have to be your own support system and really encourage yourself that you can get through it.

Discussing the benefit of a personal support system, Jasmine stated “I received a lot of support from friends and from other single parents as well. They would help babysit, and if one couldn’t babysit, the other one would offer, while I went to work or school.” Coincidently, Lilly stated: “I would say my parents were a big, big support. They helped me out a lot. They helped with childcare, they helped with finances, they helped with everything, really.”

**DISCUSSION**

Eleven single parent adult learners participated in the research study. Of the eleven participants, seven were female and four were male. Each of the participants resided within in the metropolitan area on the eastern seaboard where the research was facilitated, and all were single parents of at least one child at the time they began their undergraduate education. Each of the participants completed their undergraduate degree within one year of study participation. Each of the participants participated in a semi-structured interview to answer the research question: What are the experiences of single parent adult learners who have completed their undergraduate education?
IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATORS AND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The results of this study provide several implications for both educators as well as higher education institutions in order to increase the success of single parent adult learners in the undergraduate setting. Based on the research findings, single parent adult learners reported benefiting most from a teaching style that reflected “real-work” experience as well as a learning environment where the professor was not the only dispenser of knowledge. The average age of participants in this study was 34-years-old, and they emphasized the wealth of experiential knowledge they brought with them to the learning environment. As a result of this prior experience, implications exist for more institutions to allow for adult learners to receive credit for real-life work experience.

One of the major themes developed from this study was the need to have balance between life and education. As a result, implications exist for institutions to provide more flexible course offerings as well as hybrid or online offerings that increase the ease of access to higher education for single parent adult learners. The final implication relates to the supports that are most beneficial to this population. All of the single parent adult learners in this study reported using personal and professional supports which included financial aid options. As many financial aid options are only available to full-time students, increasing the number of opportunities and availability of scholarships or financial awards for part-time students would also be beneficial as full-time enrollment is not a common characteristic of single parent adult learners.

IMPLICATIONS FOR HELPING PROFESSIONALS AND PRACTITIONERS

Implications also exist for helping professionals and practitioners who are supporting single parent adult learners, education and skills training
in time management and organization are vital for this population. Additionally, as not all single parent adult learners will have a readily available support network, assistance in developing this support whether in the community or through the educational setting would also be beneficial. As all single parent adult learners in this study identified being employed and caring for their children, assistance with accessing childcare supportive resources and/or “education friendly” employment options are vital to the success of this population. Finally, as pursuing higher education as a single parent adult learner is not an easy task, assistance in the development of stress management as well as healthy coping skills would also be beneficial for this population.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY
It is recommended that future research address the aforementioned limitations within this study. One limitation of the study was the age bracket in which all of the participants identified with as well as their locality. As colleges and institutions are ever changing, it is recommended that researchers address this topic from an age bracket different from current study sample. Additionally, sampling participants from outside of a metropolitan area on the eastern seaboard is also recommended. As the point of research interest focused on the historical experience of single parent adult learners who successfully completed their undergraduate education, it is recommended that other populations be explored. Specifically, it is recommended that future research address the research topic from the perspective of current single parent adult learners as well as single parent adult learners on the graduate level.

Furthermore, single parent adult learners who did not successfully complete their undergraduate education should be accessed. Recruitment methods in future study should be more diverse than the current study. As the current study used an online social media site for recruitment, it is recommended that future recruitment be facilitated via other online sources or print form. Within the research, the experience of four males was presented as compared to seven females who participated in the study. It is recommended the future research address the research topic from the perspective of all male sample group in order to add further perspectives to this topic. The research did not differentiate between single parent adult learners who attended rural vs. urban institutions, large or small colleges as well as online versus land based institutions. As a result, it is recommended that future research target single parent adult learners with while controlling for these specific variables in order to add additional knowledge to the field. Finally, it is recommended that the topic be explored through other qualitative methodologies or from a quantitative perspective that could allow for a larger sample size.
REFERENCES


A Constellation of Services Driving Student Success

Summer Sessions

Professional & Continuing Education

Military Services

Graduate & Nontraditional Adult Student Services

Continuing Education
Interactive Smartboard Technology: The Impact on Adult Student Engagement & Learning

By Dr. Darryl Jones

INTRODUCTION

The use of technology within education has grown tremendously in recent years. This growth has included computer-assisted instruction, utilization of the worldwide web, the development and use of smartphones, and most recently the introduction of the Smart Classroom. Evidence exists that adults who use educational technology can acquire greater knowledge and develop active learning skills, problem-solving skills, and critical thinking skills (Hopey, 1999).

The Smart Classroom has been synonymous with a classroom outfitted with the latest technology. That used to be a class that had a computer with internet access, DVD player, VCR, document camera, and a desktop projector (Wong, 208). Today, Smart Classrooms are technology enhanced classrooms that foster opportunities for teaching and learning by integrating various learning technology, such as computers, specialized smart notebook software, audience response technology, assistive listening devices, networking, and audio/visual capabilities. Smart Classrooms can support video projection from a laptop, offer touchscreen control systems via an interactive white board, DVD’s and some rooms contain multiple computers. The use

"Technology ALLOWS TEACHERS AND STUDENTS TO INTERACT IN NOVEL WAYS THAT INCREASE STUDENT PARTICIPATION in the classroom."

of technology offers access to new, dynamic opportunities for interaction among students and between teachers and students (Kern, Ware, & Warschauer, 2004).

The use of interactive technology in the classroom such as the interactive white smart board has been encouraged by the No Child Left Behind Act (2002) and is promoted by researchers to address the learning needs of the Net Generation. According to its proponents, such technology allows teachers and students to interact in ways that increase student participation in the classroom (Stokes-Jones, 2010). The majority of interactive white board studies (typically conducted in schools in the United Kingdom, United States, and Australia), report a significant increase in student excitement and engagement with the technology (Becta, 2006; Beeland, 2002). Stokes-Jones (2010) stated that the “interactive white board increased student motivation, engagement, and interaction…” (p.2). Additional studies reveal that the use of interactive white boards increased student achievement as well (Marzano, 2009). Such technology allows teachers and students to
interact in novel ways that increase student participation in the classroom. Students have the opportunity to get up and move to the front of the classroom and actively participate in the presentation by manipulating images and text; thereby altering the role of a viewer as a passive listener to an active participant (Mott, Sumrall, Rutherford, Sumrall, & Vails, 2010). Additionally, faculty need to be able to adapt curricula so that technology use supports learning goals, and that technology is used as a tool and not as a substitute for instruction (Lam, 2000; Reynard, 2003).

The Smartboard has an enhanced value over older technologies because it offers new and different mediums of engagement that a desktop projector or wall mounted dry eraser/chalk board cannot accomplish. The smartboard can be touched with a finger or interactive pens. These interactive pens or the finger can be used to write on the screen and work can be easily erased or saved. This makes note taking and highlighting simple. The screen can be captured as a still photograph or recorded as a video and media can be uploaded and downloaded using other technologies and accessed outside the classroom. A major distinction between interactive white boards software and other presentation software is the interactive software contains tools allowing students to easily program interactivity. Again, students can get out of their seats, approach the interactive whiteboard, click and drag items on the board and/or click items that play audio, video, or other types of files (Mott, Sumrall, Rutherford, Sumrall, & Vails 2010).

INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY INTO THE CLASSROOM

Higher education institutions should be strategic in how they integrate technology into the learning environment to promote academic success. As an institution, with an adult-centered curriculum, The College of New Rochelle committed to fully introducing Smartboard Technology into the adult learner classroom with the goal of increasing student engagement. The relationship between student engagement and learning has received significant attention in higher education. In fact, student engagement, defined as student commitment to and investment in learning, has been identified as potentially the most significant factor in the learning process (Beeland, 2002; Glanville & Wildhagen, 2007; Smith, Hardman, & Higgans, 2006).

Although the majority of the research on students and technology engagement has focused on school age children there is a great opportunity to explore how technology impacts student engagement specifically the non-traditional adult learner; typically defined as those 25 years and older. Adults return to higher education programs with a diverse range of needs and interest, along with a considerable array of skills, dispositions and experiences. For an adult learner, enrollment may meet a workplace requirement, reflect an interest in learning skills not previously acquired, or be motivated by wanting to be able to support their own children’s education. A key question for institutions is: what is its role in encouraging access and participation and how can it help adult learners achieve their goals?

The integration of technology with the adult learner curriculum is not an easy task. However, Ginsburg (1998) presents a helpful way to think about integrating technology into adult learning by deciphering technology into four approaches: technology as curriculum, as a delivery mechanism, as a complement to instruction, and as an instructional tool.
Technology as Curriculum
The first approach, technology as curriculum, lends itself to both providing opportunities for adult learners to learn content and opportunities to also learn about technology itself. Amen (1998) states that educators have about two minutes to capture an adult learner before they tune you off. Adults are life-centered and as it pertains to education, there has to be a direct connection for the adult learner to persist. As a result of being life-centered, there has been a proliferation of adults age 25 and over who are returning to school to enhance their knowledge base, to get a promotion, or launch a new career. It is not feasible to introduce the full complement of available technologies to the adult learner at one-time, however, the approach to build technology into the curriculum for hands-on use should be applied. This approach could include an introductory level digital literacy or introduction to computer applications courses.

Technology as Delivery Mechanism
A second approach for integrating technology into adult learning is to use it as a means for instruction delivery. Technology used as a delivery mechanism has been around since the late 1970’s but did not gain popularity until the late 1990’s. As technological advances became available, the learning management systems (LMS) software (ANGEL, Canvas, Moodle, Blackboard, EduWave, Litmos, etc.) have evolved. With so many learning systems to select from, the challenge for institutions is to determine which platform best fits the needs of the adult learner.

Technology as a Complement to Instruction
In adult learner settings, technology is often used as a complement to instruction. To effectively incorporate technology into the adult learner classroom, five elements should be included: access, connectivity, resources, integration, and guidance. Once the aforementioned elements are in place; a learning process must then be implemented. Utilizing the ASSURE model for instruction (analyze learners; state standards & objectives; select instructional methods, media, materials; utilize technology, media and materials; require learner participation; and evaluate and revise) and coupling this with the five elements, it is possible to create a condition of learning into practical use (Heinich, Molenda, Russell, & Smaldino, 2002). The use of technology to complement instruction can extend instruction well beyond the knowledge and experience of the teacher and can also provide opportunities for the teacher to learn. This approach can provide students with the opportunity to practice skills in private, and it can promote self-direction by allowing students to supplement instruction in ways that meet their individual needs (Ginsburg, 1998).

Technology as an Instructional Tool
The final approach is technology as an instructional tool. When technology is used as an instructional tool, it is integrated fully into instructional activities. The primary instructional goals are consistent, but technology is utilized primarily to enrich and extend them and it provides an opportunity for learners to learn at their own pace. Educational Insight (2010), states that the use of technology is ideal for supporting the learning process. The medium for the learning technology can refer to a variety of analog technologies (photographs, film, video and audio recordings, etc). Technology has also been used to extend adult literacy curricula in a multi-level classroom by enabling learners to have immediate access to internet-based resources that provide content of interest to their life and allow for teaching of skills in context (Cowles, 1997).
THE VERIZON SMART BOARD INITIATIVE
During the 2012-14 academic year, the College secured several grants from the Verizon Foundation that allowed the School of New Resources to purchase (15) Interactive Smartboards and to train full-time faculty on how to delivery course content via these Smartboards. The Smartboards were in addition to existing computer labs and technology media centers.

Required Outcomes of the Verizon Foundation Grant:
• To serve 900 students over a 3 year period, 300 students per year or 150 students per semester

• Faculty must ensure that at least 50% of the students use the smartboards to present their Life Arts Project (LAPs) The LAP enhances student learning by relating their own life experiences to the key elements of their curriculum. Students conduct research, develop PowerPoint presentations, and present them to their instructors and fellow classmates.

• Achieve a 75% increase in student participation in online discussion forums on ANGEL in courses which are taught in the smartboard equipped classrooms. ANGEL is a web-based course management system that integrates technology into the curriculum, providing students with online access to academic resources and a broad range of digital tools.

Benchmarks for Achieving the Results: Life Arts Project
• Identify and train (5) faculty members (a total of 15 over a three year period) on all facets of the interactive smartboard. Faculty were assigned the responsibility of assuring that at least 50% of their students use the smartboards to deliver their Life Arts Project presentations and securing commitments at the start of the semester from students using the technology. Specific introductory and upper division courses that were a part of the project included: (Studies in Philosophy of Ethics; Abnormal Psychology; The Parent, the Child, the School; Ways of Knowing: Perspectives on the Liberal Arts; Contemporary Social Problems; Experience Learning and Identity; and Urban Community.

• Identify (10) students from each campus that would present their Life Arts Project and demonstrate proficiency of Smart Technology at a future Board of Trustee Meeting. Student Presentations were presented on June 14, 2013.

Online Discussion Forums Using ANGEL
• To achieve the goal of 75% increase in student participation in the online discussion forums on ANGEL, instructors monitored the number of posts per forum at the mid-term mark and compared this data with information from previous semesters, taking such action as necessary to achieve the desired goal. (Over the reporting period there was an increase of 2300%; 432 posts vs 18 posts).

Keeping Students on Target: Mid-Term Analysis
• To track student’s usage of the smartboards, faculty members were charged with submitting bi-weekly reports to the Dean and Director of eLearning Technology on how they are incorporating the Smartboard Technology into classroom session. Additionally, the Director of eLearning generated bi-weekly reports to track student and faculty usage of ANGEL. Specific use of the technology included: use of Dropbox, use of SmartBoard Notebook, conducting on-line research, creation of powerpoint and audio-visual presentations, and in-class viewing of educational websites, blogs, podcasts, and social media sites.
• All faculty members must conduct mid-term evaluations (assigning both a letter and numerical grade) for each student and provide time to review their evaluations with students and discuss progress toward smartboard proficiency.

In order to gauge student progress and use of the smartboards; during the 15 week of the semester, participating students were sent an on-line survey from the Office of the Dean to access progress and familiarity with technology (smartboards, ANGEL, powerpoint). Student feedback was overwhelmingly positive regarding the ease with understanding and using the Smartboard for delivery of final course presentations. Overall student response revealed that 83% of respondents rated the technology learning and delivery experience as ‘positive’.

During a three session training period, project faculty developed skills and proficiency on the use of the smartboard as well as their interface with ANGEL, the college’s learning management system. ANGEL provides a broad range of digital tools, including online discussion forums to enhance communications and collaboration among students and faculty. In initiating the project, it was understood that high quality professional development opportunities are needed for adult education professionals to become confident and competent in mastering the new technology. Teachers who are more familiar with digital technologies are more likely to identify and use existing resources in creative and sophisticated ways. It seems unreasonable to expect teachers to aid adult learners in developing technological efficiency, if they do not have opportunities to develop fluency themselves.

Adult educators frequently feel unprepared to use technology; being unable to fall back on well-developed models from their own learning experiences they have few informal opportunities to learn from each other or to share teaching resources. Many of them – only now becoming technologically literate – are just beginning to explore the myriad of Internet sites that contain lesson plans and technology-rich instructional activities. In addition to the formal workshops for the project faculty, there was also a commitment to equip part-time faculty with awareness of smart technology. Towards this end, over 250 adjuncts received classroom technology training during faculty conferences in the following areas:

• Introductory and Intermediate ANGEL Training

• Effective Use of the Interactive Whiteboard

• Learning through Visual Resources: An Introduction to Tegrity Lecture Capture

• Interactive Multimedia Online Discussion: An Introduction to Voice ThreadThrough implementation of the Verizon Smartboard Project, the performance indicators for students were:

• To ensure that students could construct meaning from information

• Understand basic computer technology concepts to operate a computer and interactive Smartboard

• Design a quality technology-centered product

• Communicate effectively

• Be self-directed and learn independently with adequate support

• Use information responsibly
In designing this project, several theories regarding how adult students learn were considered. The three theories were: Arnone’s Curiosity Theory, Malone’s Motivational Theory, and Ertan’s Theory of Multiple Intelligence.

- **Arnone’s Curiosity Theory** describes how personal, situational, and contextual factors affect a learner’s curiosity. The model also describes how curiosity develops into student interest, which leads to increased student engagement. Three types of engagement are described: cognitive, affective, and participative. Engagement is a critical element that can lead students to develop deeper levels of learning as stated in Blooms Taxonomy model (Arnone, Small, Chauncey, & McKenna, 2011).

- **Malone’s Motivational Theory** identified three factors that influence motivation: challenge, curiosity, and fantasy. Challenge depends upon activities that involve uncertain outcomes due to variable levels, hidden information, or randomness. Fantasy should depend upon skills required for the instruction. Curiosity can be aroused when students believe their knowledge structures are incomplete or inconsistent. According to Malone, intrinsically motivating provide learners with a broad range of challenge, concrete feedback, and clear criteria for performance (Malone, 1981).

- **Ertan’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences** discusses how learners learn in various ways (audio, visual, textural, and kinesthetic) at various speeds. Smart Technology provides a means for teachers to address multiple learning styles and abilities in the same classroom. (Ertan, Yucel, Kara, & Karabiyik, 2010).

When used effectively in the classroom, technology can stimulate curiosity and interest and facilitate and sustain purposeful engagement. Moreover, “technology can play a role in triggering and addressing personal, situational, and contextual factors that support autonomy and competence and enhance active, deep learning” (Arnone, Small, Chauncey, & McKenna, 2011, p. 182). Research shows that students learn best when interacting with others and when technology further promotes those interactions (Wong, 2008). Research also suggests that students learn the fastest through direct instruction from the teacher (Ruutmann & Kipper, 2011). It is important to note that the role of the teacher cannot be replaced by introducing technology but if the technology allows for better transformation of information, it can be argued that learning should still improve (Arnone, Small, Chauncey, & McKenna, 2011). Giles and Shaw (2011) states that smart technologies help bridge the divide between learning styles, abilities, prior knowledge, and interest levels that exist within any group.

**CONCLUSION**

A major component of the Verizon Foundation Smart Board Grant Project was to provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate their level of comfort with the use of the interactive white board. Interactive white board usage greatly enhanced the academic experience for the adult learners of the School of New Resources. The Smart Technology encouraged group learning and interaction and enabled students to develop analytical, research, communication, collaboration, and technical skills. Through a combination of powerpoint presentations, videos, web pages, and other technologies, faculty and adult learners were able to engage one another using multimedia to create richer, more compelling Life Arts Projects. As the adult learner became more technologically proficient, they significantly enhanced their
"SMART TECHNOLOGY IS AN IDEAL MEDIUM TO ENGAGE STUDENTS in meaningful learning."

research and digital literacy skills and potential employment opportunities; thereby achieving Verizon’s goal of using technology to prepare students for success in the 21st century and beyond.

For this project, the integration of technology into the adult-centered curriculum changed the classroom culture. Some faculty and learners found the changes in the roles and power dynamics of the teacher and learner exciting, while others viewed them as challenging. Within this context, students experienced access to a greater variety and depth of information independent of the teacher, who no longer had to specify all classroom activities, but who became a facilitator who questions, encourages, helps, and challenges. Adult learners took more control and responsibility for their own learning.

Smart Technology is an ideal medium to engage students in meaningful learning. Studies show that it improves understanding and attentiveness, enhances overall literacy, and improves motivation. Effective integration and use of Smart Technology enables adult learners to analyze, synthesize, and present information and ideas more clearly and concisely. As educators, we should strive to overcome a digital divide and become advocates for a process of social inclusion; the extent that individuals, families, and communities are able to fully participate in society and control their own destinies. An educational commitment is needed in order to aid all students in acquiring mastery in accessing information, obtaining better jobs, and generally improving the quality of their lives. The integration of SmartBoard Technology can reinforce learner-centered instruction and substantially improve the relationship between teaching, learning, and assessment.

REFERENCES


The 2015 ANTSHE Conference was a great success! We had some great networking and had the opportunity to listen to some excellent speakers. Dr. Mary Ellen Dallman, Director of the University System of Georgia’s Adult Learning Consortium (ALC), and Dr. Ericka Miller, Senior Advisor to the Secretary-Department of Education, were the opening speakers and provided very enlightening and informative talks to kickstart our conference. After a delicious dinner, attendees had the opportunity to enjoy a movie with complimentary popcorn, candy buffet, and drinks! Saturday started with a line up of break-out sessions focusing on various topics. The events of the day included an interactive workshop led by Mary Beth Lakin and the American Council on Education, keynote speaker Dr. Steve Gillon from the University of Oklahoma and the History Channel, keynote speaker Dr. Belle Wheelan from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. Attendees were treated to an evening of relaxation starting with chair massages courtesy of Northern Virginia Massage Center, Jamberry Nails, and a caricaturist. Directly following the relaxation station The Earls of Kent provided an exclusive concert just for ANTSHE conference attendees. Sunday’s main event featured the ANTSHE Awards Ceremony and awarding of the scholarships and the conference closed with the announcement of the location of the 2016 conference.

Sponsors of the 2015 ANTSHE Conference included: The History Channel, ACE, AHEA, Pinnacle Honor Society, and ETS. Thank you for your support of ANTSHE and nontraditional students!

ANTSHE conference attendees had the opportunity to meet and network with other academic professionals and nontraditional students, vendors, and poster presentations. We also had a silent auction and raffle events that included a tablet, FREE History Course through the University of Oklahoma and the History Channel, a Coach purse, Invicta watch, and more, which were a great success. ANTSHE thanks the many supporters who donated baskets and other prizes for this fundraising event. Most of all, we Thank all of you who attended the conference, because without you, our organization would not be the success that it is, and without your support, we would not be able to help nontraditional students across this country succeed in reaching their educational goals.
Join Us for the ANTSHE Conference, hosted by the University of Michigan-Dearborn. Take advantage of the many networking opportunities and all that ANTSHE has to offer! Visit www.myantshe.org for details about the ANTSHE Conference.

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