

What's Your Perspective?

Our Roles in Serving the Nontraditional Learner

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1. Ourselves as learners
2. Ourselves as educators/guides
3. Our nontraditional students

- (Although not necessarily in this order)

Agenda

- Name, Department, Position, Responsibilities
- When was the last time you learned something?

A little about you

consider yourself to be a learner?

- What does that mean to you?
- What are your experiences?

Do you

- An individual is considered an adult if he or she performs the social roles assigned by the culture as adult roles.
- If an individual perceives himself or herself to be responsible for his or her own life, then he or she may also be considered an adult

(Knowles, 1984)

A Formal Definition

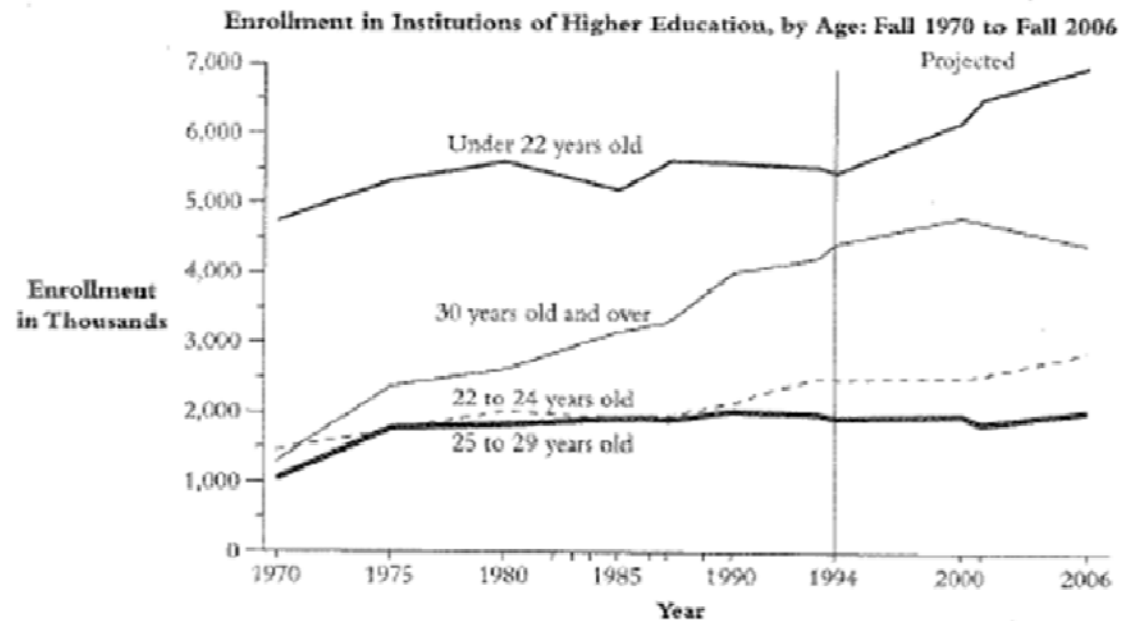
1. Delayed Enrollment
2. Attends School Part-time
3. Financially Independent
4. Works Full-Time
5. Has Dependents
6. Single Parent
7. Veteran
8. 24 years or older
or
9. Individual whose major role in life is something other than full-time student

GVSU Definition

(Nontraditional Student Committee
definition in report to EDPAC)

The Dramatic Increase in Adult Students

The following graph, prepared by the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, documents the dramatic increase in the number of adult students—in particular, students over thirty years old—on our campuses over the last twenty years.



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "Fall Enrollment in Institutions of Higher Education" surveys; Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), "Fall Enrollment" surveys; Projections of Education Statistics to 2006; and U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, "Social and Economic Characteristics of Students," various years.

National View (NCES)

- 13.3 to 16% Non-traditional students enrolled at Grand Valley
 - *Only* those identified as 24 years or older
- Grand Valley does not identify NTS on admission application

GVSU Statistics

1-2 word descriptors

Adults who return to college

1. want.....

2. are.....

3. may have.....

4. need.....

5. may lack.....

Exercise

- What do we already know about the nontraditional learner?
- What would you like to know?

Where are we?

- The older we get, the more experience we bring with us
- With that comes fewer opportunities to stereotype
- We are not a homogenous group

Diverse

- Adults have other priorities
- Education is *secondary* compared to work, family, and sometimes community obligations
- Adults return for varied reasons
 - work, social, recreational
 - and with varied attitudes towards learning

Life Circumstances

- Adults have a lot of life
- We like to use our experience and prior knowledge
- We learn best when we can apply what we are learning to our life

Experience Counts

- Look like traditional students, or may look older
- Have different life experience, and are used to taking orders
- Some veterans have seen overseas combat, but not all veteran students have been in combat situations or have been overseas.

Returning Veterans...

- Some veterans have experienced war, death, horror, shock, fear, etc., and some may still be experiencing the physical and/or mental after-effects of deployment.
- Veterans are, in general, very motivated and self-disciplined students, and can contribute to the classroom and campus life.

Returning Veterans...

- We want to know that what we are learning is useful
- Do not waste time – it's too precious

Time Matters!

- Adults prefer some degree of control over their learning
- We like to have input – although sometimes there is a learning curve for it
- Self-directed learning

Self-Directed

Often, as nontraditional students, we feel as though we are pretenders in the classroom and will be "discovered" at any moment.

(Stephen Brookfield)

Impostership

Fear of

- failure
- being made to look foolish
- the technology

Concern about

- being the oldest member of the group
- ability to contribute and make intelligent/worthwhile inputs in classroom discussion

ASSET: http://www.assetproject.info/learner_methodologies/before/anxieties.htm

Impostership

Doubts about coping strategies - juggling family, career and social commitments with demands of studying

Cultural Suicide

ASSET: http://www.assetproject.info/learner_methodologies/before/anxieties.htm

Impostership

What does all of this mean
for me and my role?

Application

Kathryn
Dennis
Charnée

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/degrees-of-difficulty.htm>

Real stories

- What questions might a nontraditional student ask you in your job?
- What should you be prepared to ask the nontraditional student?
- Are there campus resources that an adult learner could use to enhance the process(es) related to your job? How might we be prepared to integrate these resources?

In your role....

- Are there campus resources that an adult learner could use to enhance the process(es) related to your job?
- How might we be prepared to integrate these resources?
- How do we go about it?

What can you add?

<http://www.gvsu.edu/nontraditional/>

<http://www.gvsu.edu/veterans/>

Did you know?

How can we communicate with our students?

Talk *with* them!

Email

Blackboard/Wimba

E-zine

Mirror their language

Communication

“These entry or reentry events often become a *monologue* of information about the institution and its services, they also should reflect opportunities for adult students to *voice needs* related to their initial goals and plans for collegiate participation.” (Kasworm, p. 13)

Communication

- You may not be the one to ask these specific questions, but you may be the first one they see.
- Develop a relationship and make them feel welcome and not institutional.

Relational

- Why have you chosen to reenter college?
- What are your past and current college enrollment experiences?
- What are your academic interests, as well as potential needs for career counseling information?
- What is your work status, and what are your goals?

(Kasworm, et al. p. 14)

Potential questions:

- What are your support systems?
- Do you have particular concerns related to academic study skills, time management, and test-taking?
- Do you have specific concerns of a personal or social nature in relation to college?

(Kasworm, et al. p. 14)

Dialogue and learn!

- Many adult students will purposefully seek out assistance **only for problems they believe the college can solve.**
 - Many will find alternative ways to solve their college concerns **because they may see the institution as a bureaucratic, or youth-oriented structure.**
- Kasworm, et al. p 12
- We may need to reach out first and be open, accessible, engaging, supportive, empathetic, etc.

Keep in mind

Next steps?

Questions?

Additional thoughts?

Comments?

Next?

- Write 2-3 things that you learned today.
- What's at least one thing you can do differently beginning now?
- What's at least one thing you hope to try soon?
- What has to happen to make this possible?

One-minute Assessment

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