“Transitions: Lessons from the Adult and Non-Traditional Student”
Panel Presentation

• **Moderator:** Dr. Dennis Lettman, Dean, College of Adult and Lifelong Learning

• **Panel Members:**
  – Dr. Carolyn Palmer, Emerita Faculty, Bowling Green State University
  – Latasha Lane, part-time faculty member in the College of Adult and Lifelong Learning
  – Beth Gerasimiak, director, educational services, College of Adult and Lifelong Learning
  – Nila Jennings, graduate of College of Adult and Lifelong Learning and founder of Calico Coaching
Vision of an Adult Learner Today

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tu24QNtRado&feature=related
How would you describe “traditional” college students? (common characteristics)
Seven Characteristics of “nontraditional” students (NCES):

1. No HS diploma
2. First enrollment > year after HS graduation
3. Part-time enrollment
4. Full-time employment
5. Financial independence
6. Single parents
7. Dependents other than a spouse
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Undergrads (Overall)</th>
<th>Undergrads (4-year Public)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minimally Nontraditional</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2-3)</td>
<td>Moderately Nontraditional</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4+)</td>
<td>Highly Nontraditional</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
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</table>
A sampling of growing subgroups:

- Veterans
- Displaced workers
- Career changers
- Empty Nesters
- Retirees
- Degree-completion students
- Evening/weekend/online students
- Transfer students
• Multiple roles and responsibilities

• Life beyond the walls of the classroom and the borders of the campus (both before and during college)
• Pedagogy
• Andragogy
• Gerogogy
Sheldon’s (Who has NO Deficiencies) Teaching Deficiency
The Wisdom of Amy Farrah Fowler, Ph.D.

“In its essence, teaching is a performance art. In the classroom paradigm, the teacher has the responsibility to communicate as well as entertain and engage.”

Amy Farrah Fowler, Ph.D.
(portrayed by Mayim Bialik, Ph.D. in Neuroscience)
Big Bang Theory Episode
The Thespian Catalyst, 2011
Engaging Students in the Classroom

Chapman (2003) says student engagement depicts “students' willingness to participate in routine school activities, such as attending class, submitting required work, and following teachers' directions in class.”

Some Basics of Good Teaching Practice

*Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education*

A widely-used benchmark for determining good teaching practices

GOOD PRACTICE...

1. Encourages Student - Faculty Contact
2. Encourages Cooperation Among Students
3. Encourages Active Learning
4. Gives Prompt Feedback
5. Emphasizes Time on Task
6. Communicates High Expectations
7. Respects Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning

Training and Resources

Institutional, Technological, Human, Web-based

1. UT Learning Ventures – great resource!
2. Technology - Student Response Technology – “Clickers”
3. Blackboard (all-in-one portal)
4. Former students – invite them back!
5. The World Wide-Web!
### Principles of Effectively Serving Adult Students

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<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment of Learning Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>The institution defines and assesses the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired by adult learners both from the curriculum and from life/work experience in order to assign credit and confer degrees with rigor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching-Learning Process</strong></td>
<td>The institution’s faculty uses multiple methods of instruction (including experiential and problem-based methods) for adult learners in order to connect curricular concepts to useful knowledge and skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Support Systems</strong></td>
<td>The institution assists adult learners using comprehensive academic and student support systems in order to enhance students’ capacities to become self-directed, lifelong learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technology</strong></td>
<td>The institution uses information technology to provide relevant and timely information and to enhance the learning experience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (www.cael.org)
Serving Adult Students

• Holistic Approach in serving and advising adult learners

• Removing barriers

• Validation for prior learning and experiences (Prior Learning Assessment)
What is Prior Learning Assessment or ‘PLA’?

The evaluation for college credit of the knowledge and skills one gains from life experiences (or from non-college instructional programs) including employment, travel, hobbies, civic activities and volunteer service.

(CAEL, 2007)
Why PLA?

• An incentive for new students, especially adult learners, to “jump-start” their collegiate careers.

• It gives validation to students for work and life experience increasing confidence in their ability to complete their degree.

• Shortens the time to degree completion. PLA can save an average of 2.5 to 10.1 months of time in earning their degrees (http://www.cael.org/pdf/PLA_Executive-Summary.pdf).

• The recent Council on Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) study shows PLA students had better academic outcomes. PLA improves critical-thinking and reflection skills.
Learning from a Transitional Student

• Transitional students have a complex range of life experiences.
• Avoid making assumptions about what we know and don’t know.
• Be a facilitator of our learning – help us enjoy the process.
• Learning-style assessments are very helpful for transitional students.
• Ensure that books you require are really necessary and that you actually use them.
Learning from a Transitional Student

• Transitional students are more likely to experience either chronic or acute stresses.

• Transitional students like to benchmark (translation: compare themselves to others)

• Be prepared to give constructive development feedback.

Remember: Encourage Persistence and Avoid Dropouts
Why Should You Be a Good Facilitator of Learning for Transitional Students?

• Transitional students take evaluations seriously and usually give more detail on performance
• We might be well-connected – (translation: opportunities for you!)
• Transitional students generally take their learning seriously
• Teachers no longer have a monopoly on transmitting knowledge.
• Traditional, university-style learning is being challenged by advancements in technology
From the Appalachian Mountains
To The Platform in Savage Arena
Thanks to You, I Can Now Make A Difference!
Questions and Discussion
Resources

Council for Adult and Experiential Learning –
www.cael.org

College of Adult and Lifelong Learning -
www.utoledo.edu/CALL