Supporting Adult Learners with an Advising Lens

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Agenda

• Who Are Adult Learners?
• Data from EAB
• Challenges Adult Learners Face
• Supporting and Advising Adult Learners
• Group Activity
• Staying Connected
• Q & A
Who Are Adult Learners

• Adult Learners are a diverse population of students who vary in age (usually 24+) and life experiences.

• Common Names of Adult Learners:
  • Adult Learners
  • Non-Traditional Students
  • Adult Students
  • Returning Adults
  • Adult Returners
  • Mature Learners
Data from EAB

• 1 in 2 adult learners consider online options when researching programs

• 49.6% of 1,000 adult learners said they would change their plans and consider going back to school if tuition was more affordable

Source: EAB’s Adult Learner Survey
Data posted: February 2019
Data from EAB

• 61% of adult learners say career or financial factors are their primary reason for enrolling

• Family and work-related commitments are the top enrollment barrier for adult learners

Source: EAB’s Adult Learner Survey
Data posted: February 2019
Total student debt in the United States hit 1.5 trillion dollars in 2018, which amounts to more than two and a half times the sum owed just a decade earlier.

Source: EAB’s Adult Learner Survey
Data posted: February 2019
Challenges Adult Learners Face

• Feeling disconnected from classmates and their institution
• Balancing work, family, school, etc.
• Lacking self-confidence
• Not prepared for academics
• Unable to utilize or understand technology
• Cost of tuition / low-income
Challenges Adult Learners Face (continued)

• Lack of flexibility with their schedule
• Credits won’t transfer
• Unable to navigate or access campus resources
• Lack of childcare
• Undiagnosed learning disabilities
• Lack of support at home and/or work
• Moving often due to active military duty
Supporting and Advising Adult Learners

Advising Models

Academic Advising / Support Network

Flexibility for Adult Learners

Technology Tools

Engagement and Community Building
Supporting and Advising Adult Learners

Advising Models

- **Holistic Advising/Coaching**, a developmental process that focuses on the “whole” student.
  - **Developmental Advising**
  - **Intrusive/Proactive Advising**
  - **Strengths-Based Advising**
  - **Appreciative Advising**
Supporting and Advising Adult Learners

Academic Advising / Support Network

• Email each of your newly accepted advisee
• Enroll adult learners into their courses each semester
• Offer evening Advising hours at-least one night a week
• Survey your Adult Learners once a semester and ask them what they need and want to be successful
Supporting and Advising Adult Learners

**Academic Advising / Support Network**

- Referrals to have learning disabilities diagnosed with accommodations made as needed via Accessibility Services

- Hire an Adult Learner as a Peer Mentor to support fellow Adult Learners

- Use a flexible advising model such as Holistic or Developmental

- Listen and help them develop realistic goals to build up their confidence as a non-traditional/Adult Learner
Supporting and Advising Adult Learners

**Academic Advising / Support Network**

- Encourage Adult Learners to develop a support network at home and on campus
- Family, friends, faculty, classmates, staff, etc.
- Advisors who support Adult Learners should have open drop-in hours during the day and at least one evening each week
- Consider having an open door policy, pending your student caseload size
- Advocate for dedicated individuals who specialize in supporting Adult Learners in campus support offices
Supporting and Advising Adult Learners

Flexibility for Adult Learners

- Offer credit for prior learning options
- Accept up to 80 transferable credits
- Support “I” incomplete grades for active military students
- Advocate for evening, weekend, hybrid, online, and summer class options
- Partner with a local daycare to offer child care
- Exempt them from select general education requirements (Ex: language)
Supporting and Advising Adult Learners

Technology Tools

• Slides/Presentations
  • Prezi & Powerpoint

• Recording Presentations
  • Panopto & Kaltura

• Creating Fliers
  • Canva

• Animation Presentations
  • Powtoon & Rawshorts
Supporting and Advising Adult Learners

Technology Tools

• Texting/Emailing
  • Persistence Plus, Admin Hub, Signal Vine, Smore, WhatsApp, & Constant Contact

• Virtual Meetings/Classrooms
  • Blackboard Collaborate, Moodle, Blue Jeans, Skype, Go To Meeting, Zoom & Open Voice

• Social Media & Social Media Management Tools
  • Hootsuite, Buffer, Sprout Social, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, & HubSpot
Supporting and Advising Adult Learners

Engagement and Community Building

• Adult Learner focused orientation with an online orientation option to provide flexibility

• Create an Adult Learner/Commuter Lounge

• Plan passive events or pre-recorded workshops

• Host Adult Learner appreciation week

• Offer a FAFSA and tax assistant workshop

• Monthly e-newsletter just for Adult Learners

• Establish an Alpha Sigma Lambda chapter
Supporting and Advising Adult Learners

Engagement and Community Building

• Veteran or Active Military Students
  • Establish a Student Veterans of America chapter or partner with them to sponsor events

• Online Adult Learners
  • Have an online holiday party for your advisees as a way to allow people to get connected in a fun way. Play holiday music, have an ugly holiday sweater contest, and ask them to share their favorite holiday memory.

• Adult Learners who are Parents
  • Plan family friendly evening & weekend events
Group Activity

Get into a small group and take about 3-5 minutes to discuss this question:

If you had unlimited funds, what is one event, program, resource, or outreach effort you would implement at your institution to better support adult learners?
Stay Connected

• Exchange business cards with the person next to you.

• Join the “NACADA Advising Adult Learners Advising Community” Facebook group

• Email the presenter: Cindy.Firestein@Simmons.edu
Success isn't about how much money you make. It's about the difference you make in people's lives.

— Michelle Obama
Support Resources

- EAB Adult Learner Survey
- Alpha Sigma Lambda academic honor society for adult learners
- Organizational Models for Advising
- Academic Advising Approaches
- Organizational Models for Advising
- Definitions of Academic Advising
- Adult Learning Theories Every Instructional Designer Must Know
- Schlossberg’s Theory
- The Adult Learning Theory - Andragogy - of Malcolm Knowles
- 3 Adult Learning Theories Every E-Learning Designer Must Know
- Motivating Factors for Adult Learners in Higher Education
- Millennial Students: Rethinking Time Management
- Student Veterans of America
Support Resources

- EAB Adult Learner Survey
- EAB: Adult Student Marketing Blog
- Common Factors: A Meta-Model of Academic Advising
- Campus Grotto
- Teaching Across Generations
- The Returning Adult Learner: Advising Strategies to Support Their Degree Completion Efforts
- Fresh Ideas to Help Adult Learners Succeed
- NACADA Adult Learning Resources via Clearinghouse Advising Adult Learners Community Resources
- Southern Regional Education Board
- Adult Learning by eLearning Industry
- The End of the Remedial Course