

**THE CASE
FOR THE
ADULT
FRIENDLY
INSTITUTION**



***Matt Bergman
Assistant Professor & Program Director
University of Louisville***



UNIVERSITY OF
LOUISVILLE

The Case for the Adult-Friendly Institution

UNIVERSITY of LOUISVILLE



Matt Bergman, Ph.D. 2020



Are Adult Learners the New Traditional Students?

AGENDA

- *Data about workforce and enrollment trends*
- *Reframing the conversation about adult learners*
- *Reasons for return*
- *Variables that predict persistence*
- *Real world examples*
- *Strategies we should all be using*
- *Questions*

Workforce Realities

Problems & Opportunities

- 31-36 Million working age Americans have some college credits but no degree or high quality certificate (Lumina, 2018 & Kresge, 2018)
- Over 60% - The percent of jobs in the U.S. that will require a college degree by 2020 (Lumina 2017) shortage of 3 million
- Higher Education's value for the investment is being questioned
- We are facing a "demographic cliff" with traditional student enrollment (especially in the Northeast)
- Enrollment nationwide is down (except TN and Louisville)



**CHALLENGES
AHEAD**

A black and white photograph of a hand with text written on the fingers. The text is written in a cursive, handwritten style. The fingers are curled, and the text is arranged vertically from the thumb to the pinky.

I'm
not
good
enough

Same “old” story about adult students

- Likely to be first generation students
- Likely to come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds
- Likely to have low grades from the past
- Likely to need developmental education

Kasworm, Polson, and Fishback (2002)

The “real” story about adults



- High performing working adults
- Strong family backgrounds/support
- Have finances for priorities in their lives
- Large networks (highly connected)
- Laundry list of successes in life
- Highly Motivated
- Self Efficacious/Self Directed
- Achievement Oriented – more independent



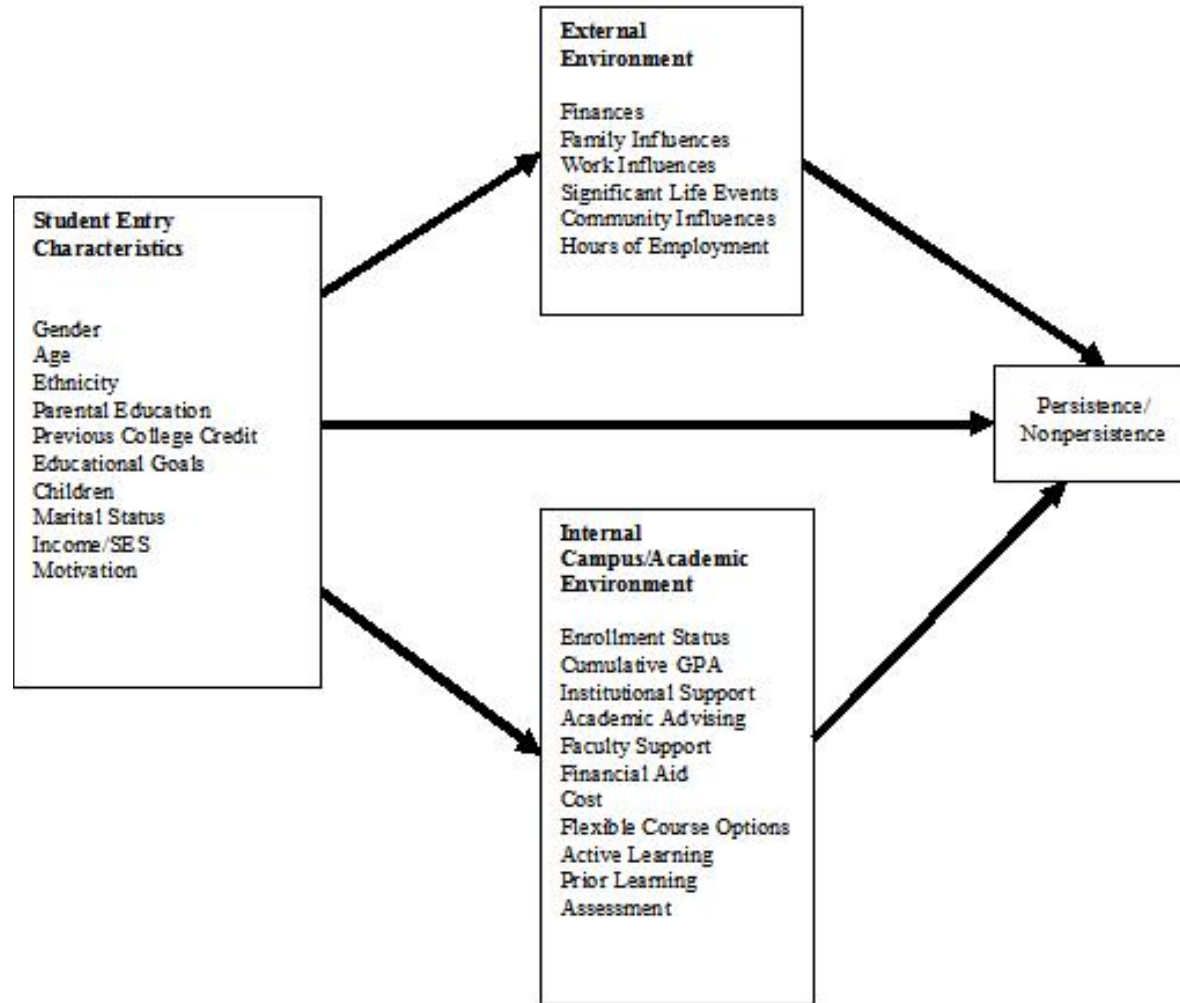
Why Adults Return to School (Personal & Workforce Implications)

- Develop skills to stay competitive
- Improve their employability
- Increase their earning power/workplace advancement
- Prepare them for a career change
- Personal Fulfillment
- Inspire Children – Set the Example

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics Brief, Bergman, 2014

Bergman model (2014)

Theory of Adult Learner Persistence in Degree Completion Programs



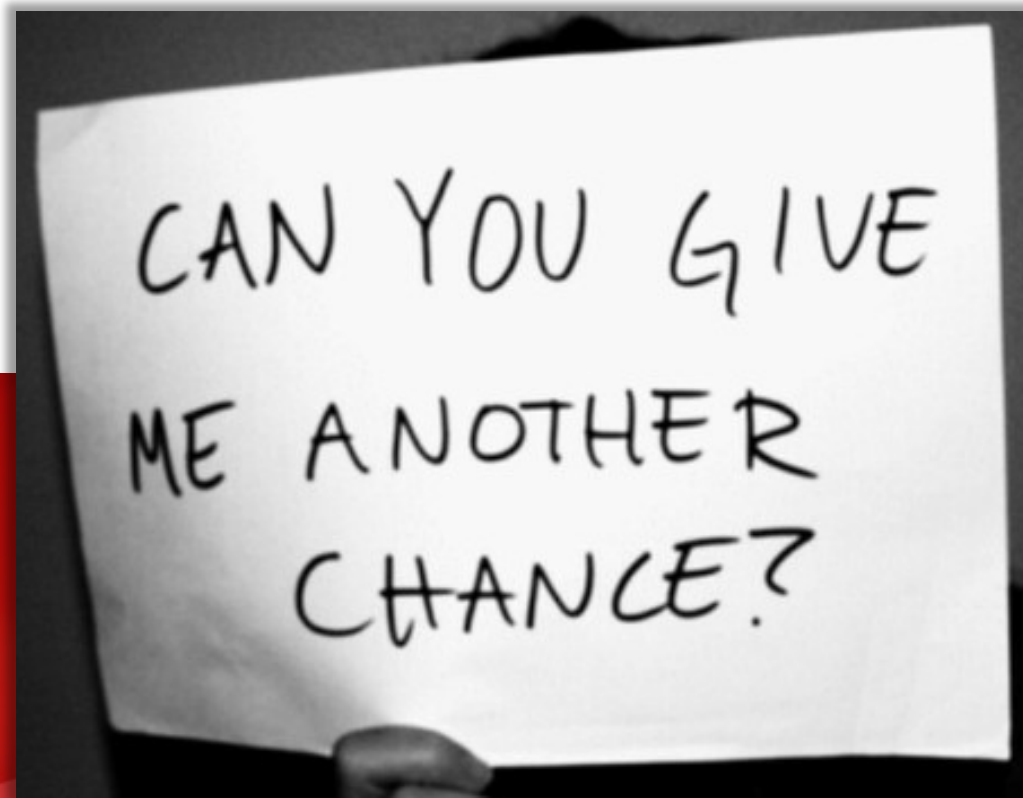
Barriers faced by Adult Learners

Background Characteristics Influences	External Environment Influences	Internal Campus Environment Influences
Age	Finances	Enrollment Status (full or part-time)
Income/SES	Employer Tuition Assistance Programs	Institutional support/flexibility
Parental Education	Work Responsibilities	Faculty/Advisor support
Previous College Credit	Significant Live Events	Financial Aid
Educational Goals	Community Responsibilities	Cost of Tuition
Children	Hours of Employment	Flexible Course Offerings
Motivation	Family Responsibilities	Active and Relevant Learning
Marital Status		Prior Learning Assessment

Implications for Higher Education

- Encourage manageable course schedule/sequencing (compressed, online, hybrid)
- Effective and efficient coaching (fast path)
- Provide flexible course options
- Professional trust and cooperation with organizations (workplace application)
- Prior learning assessment
- Lowering costs (e.g. cohort discounts, \$5,250)





Colleges and Universities should not say "*we will give you another chance.*"

Instead, we need to say, "***will you give us another chance.***" CCA

Keys for Comebackers S

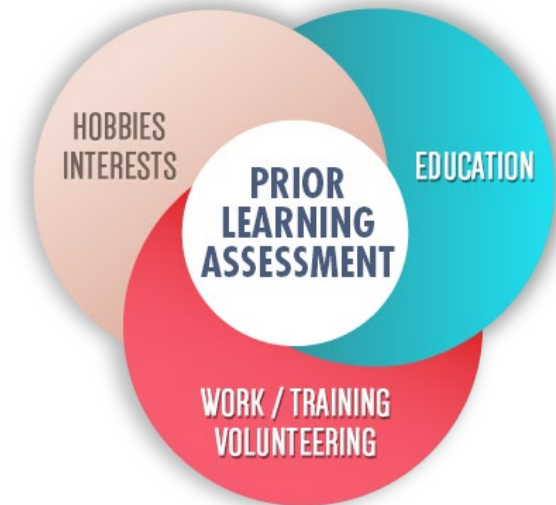


-
1. Find the right match - relevance = persistence
 2. Transfer articulation - make the most of what they have done – pre-assess prior credits
 3. Innovative programming - Traditional online, evening, weekend, CBE, hybrid, cohort, executive format
 4. Prior Learning Assessment - Category based credit, CLEP, DSST, course match, test out procedures Find explicit and standard options at your schools
 5. Reputation - if we want them to finish, they need to have options with the types of credentials that they intend to pursue
-

4 Reasons Colleges and Universities Should Offer PLA



1. Empirically proven to increase graduation rate and pace to graduation
2. Students are more engaged and ready for academics after the portfolio process
3. Students with access to PLA take 9.9 more credits
4. PLA is generally awarded for non major credit.



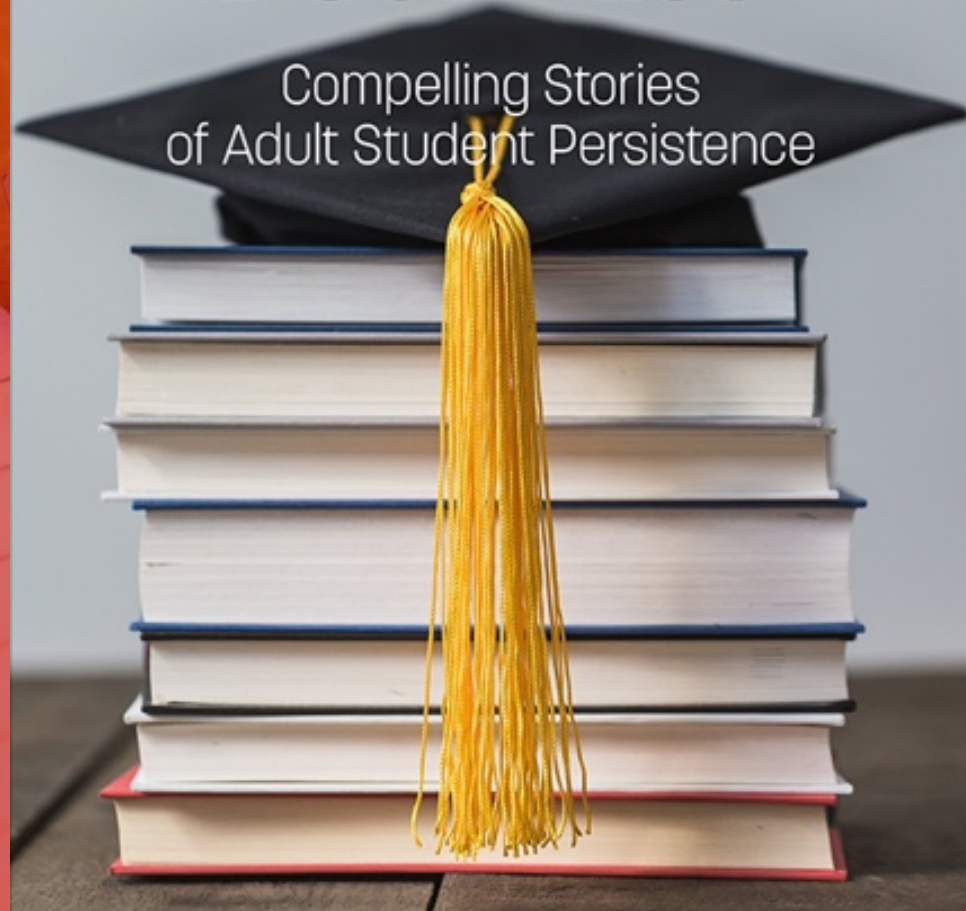
Unfinished Business: Compelling Stories of Adult Student Persistence

<https://www.infoagepub.com/products/Unfinished-Business>

A VOLUME IN ADULT LEARNING IN PROFESSIONAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND COMMUNITY SETTINGS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Compelling Stories
of Adult Student Persistence



MATT BERGMAN | JOANN S. OLSON
AND ASSOCIATES