Chapter 1
Making Instruction Work for Adult Learners

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ABSTRACT

This chapter is a review of the goals of the adult learners, with a focus on factors that impact the learning process. Principles of education of adult learners are discussed. There are various effective strategies for instruction; however, regardless of the strategies developed, instruction of adults at any level in higher education must facilitate learners’ paths toward achieving their goals in pursuing higher education. In teaching adult learners, some factors impacting the learner that require consideration are discussed.
INTRODUCTION

The designation of adult learner refers to individuals engaged in learning in an institution of higher education at various levels who are seeking expertise in a variety of disciplines. Adult learners include a wide variety of individuals. Adult learners include: (a) students who are generally referred to as traditional students who enter college immediately after completing high school; (b) non-traditional students who enter or return to college and are enrolled in undergraduate programs; and (c) individuals who enter graduate programs, ranging from the master’s level students to those seeking postdoctoral degrees and credentials. Graduate-level students themselves have various levels of career and life experiences. Graduate students may enter graduate programs immediately after completion of an undergraduate program or return to school to seek an advanced degree after having first gained some work experience.

Even though a freshman in college is, by definition, legally and socially an adult, in higher education adult students usually refer to non-traditional students who are typically in their mid-20s. These non-traditional students attend the same classes and take the same coursework as traditional students. This diversity among the population considered to be “adult learners” requires that specific consideration be given to the various factors that affect their learning and impact educational practices. Among these factors are the social, personal, and psychological development of the learner and the emergence of technology as a driving force. The purpose of this chapter is to draw the attention of educators to the factors that influence adult learners in their pursuit of higher education and to provide insight into elements of effective instruction.

DIVERSITY OF INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

In considering the education of adult students at the undergraduate or graduate level, strategies must be adopted and implemented that cover at least two different populations of students who bring various levels of experience and expertise to the same classroom. The study habits of traditional students differ from those of non-traditional students who are rusty in their practice of studying and are more likely to learn from performance-based activities where they can incorporate the confidence they gained from work and life experiences in solving problems and connecting with the subject matter. Diversifying instruction and carefully assigning traditional and non-traditional students to collaborate together would help both
Street Poetry in Augmented Reality
Giuliana Guazzaroni (2014). *Synergic Integration of Formal and Informal E-Learning Environments for Adult Lifelong Learners* (pp. 178-197).
www.igi-global.com/chapter/street-poetry-in-augmented-reality/83425?camid=4v1a