Breaking Down Barriers and Building Opportunities for Nontraditional Students

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I. Part One: General Information
   - Define nontraditional student populations
   - Identify continuum of nontraditional students based on characteristics
   - Review enrollment patterns
   - Examination postsecondary persistence and attainment

II. Part Two: Barriers
   - Identify situational, institutional, and dispositional barriers
   - Review associated risk factors with each barrier

III. Part Three: Strategies
   - Obtain strategies to remove situational, institutional, and dispositional barriers
     - Policies: federal, state, and institutional
     - Strategies: prevalent theories and best practices
Who may be classified as a nontraditional student?

- Veterans
- Adult Leaners
- Students with Disabilities
- Low-Income Students
- Single Parents
- Married Students
- Full-Time Students
- Part-Time Students
- High School Drop Outs (GED Students)
- Transfer Students
- Displaced Homemakers
- Homeless Students
- Underrepresented Minorities
- Distance Learners
- Commuters
- English as a Second Language (ESL) Students
- Undocumented Students
- Students from Foster Care
- Financially Independent Students
- First-Generation College Students
- Students with Financial Dependents
- Reentry students
Definition

- Typically over the age of 25
- Presence of one or more of the following seven characteristics:
  1. Beyond a year of high school completion upon first enrolling in a postsecondary institution
  2. Long term postsecondary part-time enrollment
  3. Full-time employment while enrolled (35 or more hours)
  4. Classified as financially independent for financial aid purposes
  5. Financially supporting dependents other than spouse
  6. Single parent status
  7. Lacking a traditional high school diploma (earned GED)

(Horn & Carroll, 1996; Choy, 2002)
Nontraditional Continuum

(Horn & Carroll, 1996; Choy, 2002; Levin, 2007)
National Enrollment Patterns

Fall 2011 Full-Time Enrollment

- 4 Year Public
- 4 Year Non-Profit
- 4 Year Private For-Profit
- 2 Year Public
- 2 Year Private Non-Profit
- 2 Year Private For-Profit

under 25 | 25 to 35 | 35 or older

Table 1.1 Characteristics of Postsecondary Students Adapted from The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2013, Condition of Education, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC.

(Aud et al., 2013)
Table 1.2 Characteristics of Postsecondary Students Adapted from The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2013, Condition of Education, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC.
Table 1.3 2007-2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study Adapted from The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2008, Student Financial Aid Estimates, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC.
Persistence and Attainment

Persistence after 3 Years – No Longer Enrolled
- 50% highly nontraditional for any 4-year degree
- 62% highly nontraditional for any 2-year degree

Attainment After 4 - 5 Years
- 31.3% Nontraditional students overall
  - 42.4% Minimally
  - 16.9% Moderately
  - 11.2% Highly

U.S. Census Bureau (2012) shows gap in degree attainment for 25 to 29 year old Black and Hispanic underrepresented minorities
- 40% White
- 23% Black
- 15% Hispanic
- 60% Asians/Pacific Islanders

Each nontraditional characteristic negatively affects persistence and attainment directly or indirectly
- Most at risk for dropping out in 1st year at 2 or 4-year institution

(Horn & Carroll, 1996; Choy, 2002)
Theoretical Framework

Adult Learner
Decision Making Process

Participation in Higher Education

Access to Information
Life Phase or Timing
Evaluation of Cost versus Benefit
Assessment of Ability to Succeed
Educational Attitudes

(Stein, Wanstreet, & Trinko, 2011)
Cross (1981) identified three barriers to participation that prevented adult learners from fully integrating into higher education settings:

I. Situational

II. Institutional

III. Dispositional
Situational Barriers

(Keith, 2007)

Employment
- Torn between employee and student identity
- Lack of time

Family Obligations
- Financial constraints
- Financial dependents

Civic Involvement
- Outside responsibilities within the community
- Balancing obligations

Transportation Issues
- Physical or mental disabilities
- Geographic location and distance
Institutional Barriers

- Difficulty Navigating Institution
  - Unfamiliar with campus culture
  - Unfamiliar with policies and procedures

- Lack of Postsecondary Information
  - Difficulty admitting and registering for classes
  - Missed opportunities

- Difficulty Scheduling Classes and Obtaining Services
  - Conflicting class times
  - Inconvenient office hours

(Keith, 2007)
Dispositional Barriers

Poor Learning Perception
- Fear over learning abilities
- Low self-confidence

Age Concerns
- Anxiety over fitting in with younger students
- Difficulty adjusting

Negative Past Educational Experiences
- Feel hopeless about future educational success
- Fear of failure

(Keith, 2007)
Polices Decreasing Barriers

Federal

State

Institution

(Advisory Committee, 2012)
3 Areas of Focus Strategies

Situational
Institutional
Dispositional

Diverse Learning Methods
Non-Academic Support Services
Instructional Approaches
## Decreasing Situational Barriers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevalent Theories</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bean and Metzner (1985)</strong></td>
<td>1. Assist nontraditional students with degree audit mapping/plans of study</td>
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<td>• Proposed that: (a) educational performance, (b) intrinsic factors, (c) demographic characteristics,</td>
<td>2. Develop early warning systems to identify at-risk students</td>
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<td>(d) external factors all influenced student outcomes</td>
<td>3. Offer workshops to help students with stress and time management, organization, and resource</td>
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<td><strong>Braxton, Hirschy, &amp; McClendon (2004)</strong></td>
<td>identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Asserted that although employment and family can influence student persistence nontraditional</td>
<td>4. Connect nontraditional students with financial aid information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students who feel their institutions are committed to looking after their well-being are more likely</td>
<td>5. Offer onsite daycare or transportation services</td>
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<tr>
<td>to persist</td>
<td>6. Offer flexible degree programs (block scheduling, virtual learning, mixed mode, video</td>
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<td></td>
<td>streaming...etc.)</td>
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(Pelling, 2001; Schuetze & Slowey, 2002; Hart, 2003; Ritt, 2008; Monroe, 2006; Wyatt, 2011,)
Decreasing Institutional Barriers

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<tr>
<td><strong>Bourdieu (1999)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Asserted that social capital networks can be used to enhance knowledge and cultural capital (skills, education, prior knowledge ...etc.) can be used to access opportunities</td>
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<td><strong>Pascarella (1989)</strong></td>
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<td>▪ Successful academic assimilation, demonstrated in GPA, psychosocial development, and interaction with faculty are most influential for persistence</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Astin (1993)</strong></td>
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<td>▪ Three areas of involvement that impacted students the most were faculty, academic, and peer group connections</td>
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1. Increase opportunities for nontraditional students to connect with faculty and staff
2. Create bridge or mentoring programs for transfer students
3. Strengthen and centralize student support services
4. Offer transfer student success workshops during the evening
5. Help nontraditional students identify on campus resources and opportunities
6. Develop a strong advising program with varied advising hours

(Pelling, 2001; Brown, 2002; Fowler & Boylan, 2010; Wyatt, 2011; Karp, 2011)

“I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” - Maya Angelou
## Decreasing Dispositional Barriers

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<tr>
<td><strong>Knowles Andragogy Model (1980)</strong></td>
<td>1. Enhance faculty and staff knowledge over nontraditional students perspectives, complex lives, and needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Preference for self-directed learning</td>
<td>2. Mix andragogy teaching methods with pedagogy methods</td>
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<td>2. Contains extensive experience</td>
<td>3. Increase practical and applied learning modalities used in the classroom</td>
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<td>3. Displays learning readiness based on need and applicability</td>
<td>4. Strengthen vocational and career counseling services</td>
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<td>4. Approaches learning in a task- or problem-centered manner rather than subject-centered manner</td>
<td>5. Develop programs offering cohort student learning communities</td>
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<td>5. Possesses high internal motivation</td>
<td>6. Offer opportunities for families to become involved</td>
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**Chao and Good (2004)**
- Hope positively affects well-being and resiliency to overcome obstacles in five areas: support systems, life transitions, career development, financial investment, and motivation.

(Brown, 2002; Murray, 2007; McGrath, 2009; Sandoval-Lucero, Maes, & Chopra, 2011; Wyatt, 2011, )
Final Thoughts

- **Advocacy**
  - For marginalized nontraditional students

- **Awareness**
  - Over nontraditional student barriers and strategies

- **Attention**
  - Towards improving and creating federal, state, and institutional policies that support nontraditional student populations

- **Comprehensive Change**
  - Focused on strengthening non-academic support services, increasing diverse learning methods, and enhancing instructional approaches
Thank you for attending my session. I would like your feedback! Please send your feedback or any additional questions to Catherine.Cash@ucf.edu


References


References


