

The attached seminar paper, by LaShimma Grosskopf, entitled “Barriers to Adult Education,” when completed, is to be submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Platteville in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science in Education degree, for which 3 credits shall be allowed, is hereby:

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BARRIERS TO ADULT EDUCATION

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In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirement for the Degree

Masters of Science

In

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By

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Abstract

BARRIERS TO ADULT EDUCATION

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The purpose of this paper is to give insight as well as definition to words such as compact, barriers, situational and importantly overcome.

In this paper the writer has researched barriers to Adult education. The writer has located journal articles. In this paper you will learn about the affordability of higher education. You will learn about the accessibility of higher educational intuitions, and accountability. This paper is designed to help one better understand the boundaries in adult education and how to overcome them.

Access to higher education has increased substantially, although some racial and ethnic groups remain underrepresented. But success in college—as measured by persistence and degree attainment— has not improved at all. (Thomas Brock)

This paper presents a template for typing a seminar paper. It is based on the most recent version of the APA Publication Manual (2010 version).

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Chapter One: Introduction

Adult learners may go through many barriers when it comes to learning. Some of adult learners are going through life changing experiences, marriage, divorce, illness, births, deaths, job loss, employment gain, new home, homelessness, paying bills, how bills are going to get paid, languages barriers, or cultural differences, some have children with extracurricular activities, or helping their children with their homework. They may have a massive deadline at work with a 10-page paper due at school. Many adult learners experience some of these every day.

Statement of the Problem

What are the barriers to adult education? Why do these barriers exist? What can be done to overcome these barriers?

Definition of Terms

Adult Education: a course of study for adults. ("Adult Education." *Merriam-Webster.com*. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 13 June 2015. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/adult_education>.)

Barrier: something (such as a fence or natural obstacle) that prevents or blocks movement from one place to another

: a law, rule, problem, etc., that makes something difficult or impossible

: something that makes it difficult for people to understand each other ("Barrier." *Merriam-Webster.com*. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 13 June 2015. <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/barrier>>.)

Overcome

: to defeat (someone or something)

: to successfully deal with or gain control of (something difficult)

: to affect (someone) very strongly or severely

"Overcome." *Merriam-Webster.com*. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 27 June 2015. <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/overcome>>.

The purpose of this study is to research to find what the barriers are in adult education. Why these barriers exist in adult education, while seeking a solution for the barriers.

The significance of this study is to locate information to barriers in adult education, while seeking a solution to the barriers and learning ways to overcome these barriers.

Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature

What are the barriers to adult education?

Barriers are situational boundaries that may occur in one's life. That barrier may impede one's self driven motivation for adult education. According to Medscape the adult learner has many responsibilities that must be balanced against the demands of learning. Because of these responsibilities, adults may have barriers against participating in learning. Some of these barriers include (a) lack of time, (b) lack of confidence, (c) lack of information about opportunities to learn, (d) scheduling problems, (e) lack of motivation, and (f) "red tape" (Lieb, 1991).

Lack of time an adult learner may struggle with this due to having multiple things to do such as having full time employment along with part time employment, having active children and working around their schedules. Working twelve hour days and not having enough time to go to school or complete school work. Furthermore, some teachers explained that for them the lack of time caused the biggest obstacle that inhibited their efforts to develop their teaching, although they may already have pursuable ideas in mind. (Studies in higher education)

Lack of confidence the adult learner may not have done very well in high school and feels that they may not succeed in higher education. The adult learner may experience some cultural barriers such as it is frowned upon for them to go to school. They may have heard that they may never amount to anything.

Lack of information about opportunities to learn they may have parents that never perused higher education. The adult learner may not have the proper information such as how to go about applying to colleges, which colleges to apply to or how to complete financial aid.

Affordability can be another barrier to adult education. If you do not meet the federal guidelines for financial aid you may not qualify. According to Federal student aid the eligibility requirements are Our general eligibility requirements are that you must demonstrate **financial need** (for most programs) ;be a U.S. citizen or an **eligible noncitizen**; have a valid Social Security number (with the exception of students from the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, or the Republic of Palau); be registered with Selective Service, if you're a male (you must register between the ages of 18 and 25); be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a **regular student** in an eligible degree or certificate program; be enrolled at least half-time to be eligible for **Direct Loan** Program funds; maintain **satisfactory academic progress** in college or career school; sign the certification statement on the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)* stating that you are not in **default** on a **federal student loan** and do not owe money on a federal student **grant** and you will use federal student aid only for educational purposes; and show you're qualified to obtain a college or career school education by having a high school diploma or a recognized equivalent such as a **General Educational Development (GED) certificate**; completing a high school education in a **home school** setting approved under state law (or—if state law does not require a homeschooled student to obtain a completion credential—completing a high school education in a home school setting that qualifies as an exemption from compulsory attendance requirements under state law). (FAFSA.edu)

According to the White House press family (White House Task Force) income is a major determinant of college enrollment and especially of college completion. While 78% of high school graduates from high-income families enrolled in college, the shares for middle- and low-income families were 63% and 55%. Middle-income children are about half as likely to

complete college as wealthier children: they have a 25% completion rate, compared to 53% for children from families in the top income fifth. (White house task force) Lack of financial income is a huge barrier because it opens the door to many other barriers. A barrier that spin off of the lack of financial needs is lack of information. For high income families it is easy to obtain information on colleges and prestige colleges. In higher income families going to college may be a normal everyday conversation. In higher income families not only are they having conversations at home it is being put in their faces in schools. For a lower income family college may not be a on the table conversation, due to families just trying to make ends meet. If a lower class person is able to get information on colleges, they may not know how to go about navigating the educational systems which then they may be discouraged. While trying to navigate the systems they may lack the proper information for higher education, such as affordability and financial aid eligibility benefits.

Ritt (2008) identifies barriers faced by adult learners in the form of personal, professional, and institutional barriers. Personal barriers include geographic location, personal and family commitments, work and family schedules, previous experiences in college, child care issues, financial limitations, and a general fear of returning to school. Goto and Martin (2009) refer to these personal barriers as psychological barriers and purport that educators assume that these psychological issues are beyond their influence, instead concentrating on barriers that they most directly influence (King, 2002) such as institutional and instructional issues. Some personal barriers that the adult learner may be worried about may be student loans and the repayment on the loan and not being able to afford the pay back on the balance of the loan. Scheduling problems the adult learner may work full time during the day and no classes are offered at night. The adult learner works third shift and the class that they need is only offered at 9:00 in

the morning and they don't get off work until 8:30 in the morning and they have to commute for work. Family schedules can be a huge barrier to education, such as locating suitable childcare so that one can attend school. Another family schedule barrier one can be committed to an unexpected situation such as an ill family member that they may have to look over and or take care of. Lack of motivation is when the adult learner's world has been turned upside down and they have a million and one thing going on school is the last thing on their mind. If the adult learner loses their motivation, they may not return to school. This may be considered a psychological barrier feeling the act of defeat. Another psychological barrier may be that a female adult learner may become a single parent with no assistance from any family, that adult learner may feel that they have to quit school to take care of their child. A psychological barrier is a situation that occurs that makes one feel that they can no longer continue the task at hand. Another barrier is geographical. Although the demographic composition of colleges and universities has become more diverse over the past forty years, the increased diversity is largely accounted for by nonselective institutions. Specifically, female, black, and Hispanic students are disproportionately enrolled in community colleges. Nontraditional students are also much more likely to be enrolled in community colleges. (Young Adults and Higher Education: Barriers and Breakthroughs to Success) Despite these gains, college access remains problematic, and gaps in enrollment between certain racial and ethnic minority groups are substantial. In 2006, for example, 44 percent of whites between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four were enrolled in college, compared with 32 percent of blacks and 25 percent of Hispanics.³¹ Rates of college attendance for black and Hispanic males are particularly low. (Young Adults and Higher Education: Barriers and Breakthroughs to Success) If the adult learner is doing great in school and a tragedy happens in their life there goes their motivation.

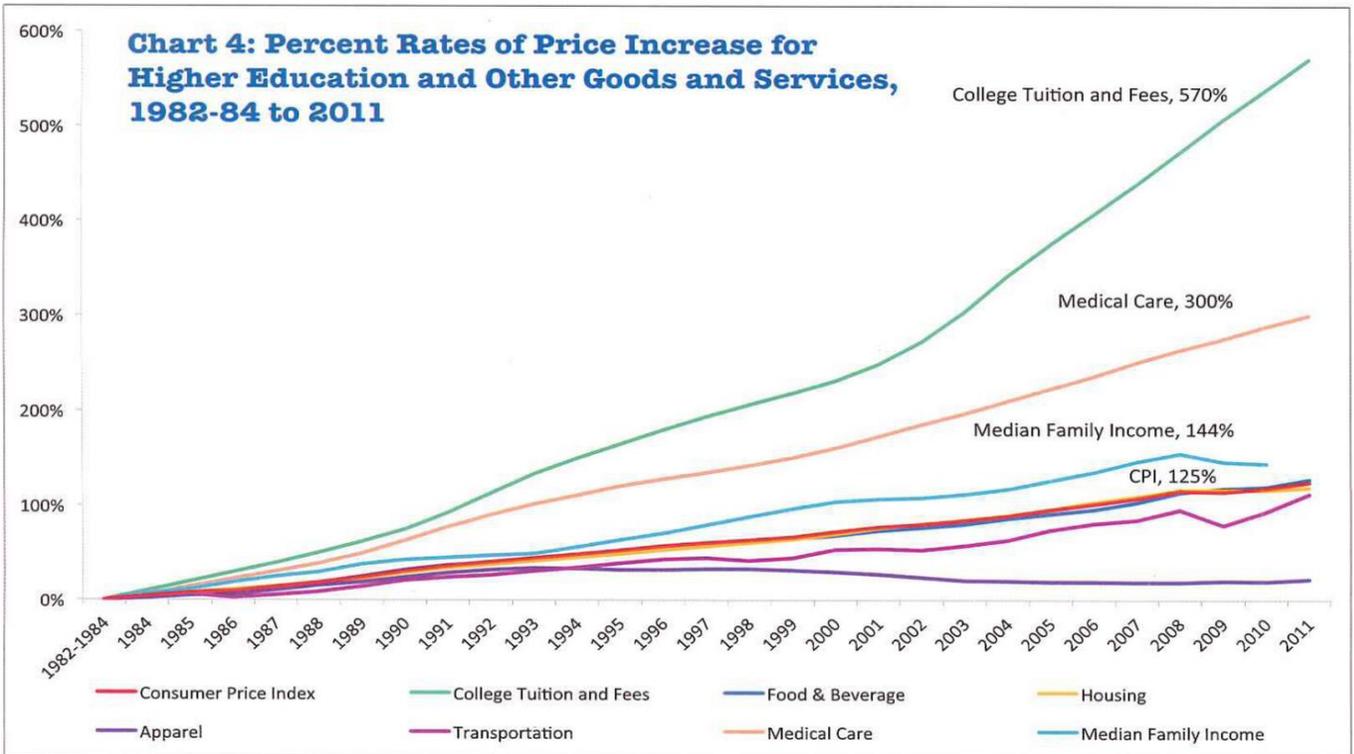
Why do these barriers exist?

These barriers exist in everyone's life. There has not been a time in anyone's life where they have not had a barrier come across their path. Barriers can impede on one's education. You have a woman who is going to school to earn her associates degree she finds out that she is pregnant and tries her hardest to get through school before her baby is born. Unfortunately, she is unable to complete her degree and has no childcare to go back and continue her education. This is called a situational barrier. According to (Cross, 1981) spaces a situational barrier is those that arise from one's situation or environment at a given point.

Another barrier that may exist in an adult learner's life may be the educational school system that the adult learner has chosen. There may be an adult learner that experiences institutional barriers, according to (Cross, 1981) practices and procedures the exclude or discourage adults from participating in organized learning activities.

The adult learner may have to argue on side of a dilemma and may not agree with the side that they were chosen to argue which may then turn the adult learner off to the educational school that they have chosen. An adult learner may have an outlook that they are not going to be able to pass a class so why bother even trying or even worse going to school all together. They may feel that they are not going to succeed so why bother trying. On another not the adult learner may feel that they did the absolute best and ended up not receiving the grade that they deserved and feeling that this is not the path for them. According to (cross, 1981) this type of barrier is called a dispositional which is those related to the attitudes and self-perceptions about ones-self as a learner. Barriers are a natural part of life however education should not be one. These barriers exist due to accessibility, affordability, accountability. Accessibility in traditional higher education is a disadvantage for working adults. Barriers relating to accessibility include time,

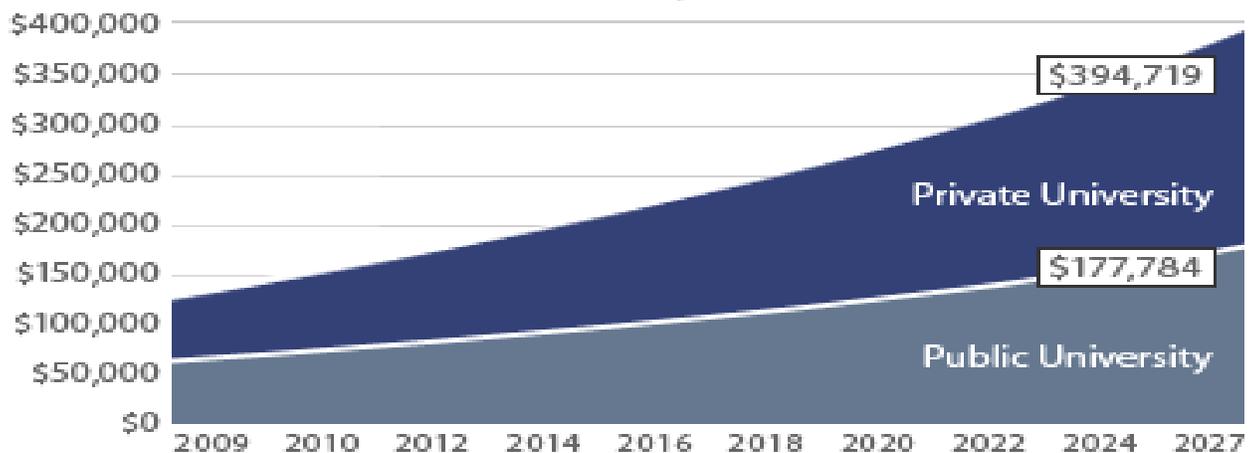
flexibility, and instructional methods. A notable difference between traditional and non-traditional students is their use of time. Most adult learners have families and full-time jobs that compete for their time. The flexibility or inflexibility of schedules and difficult access to locations, program duration, and pre-collegiate education make success in higher education difficult. Lastly, adults learn differently than children, yet the instructional methods in the classroom often times do not reflect the difference. (Knowles, 1970, 1998; Cross, 1981; Zemke & Zemke, 1995). By applying the learners need to know, self-concept of the learner, prior experience of the learner, and orientation to learning, Knowles principles can begin to address barriers of access in continuing education programs. While it is hard to control what outside obligations adult learners may have, continuing higher education programs can make classes available at a variety of times in a variety of ways to make it less of a competition to obligations that already exist. Services, including admission, academic and financial aid advising, registration, and the bookstore should be available at times convenient to adults as well as traditional students. Also the duration of the academic program provides significant inflexibilities (Cross, 1981). Affordability most colleges and universities students do not receive pell grants. In order to obtain a higher education degree most will have to take out student loans to pay for their educational goals. Higher education is expensive and to think that one day that money that has been borrowed will have to be repaid is a scary thought. Chart below shows the increase in college tuition in percentages from 1982-2011. (Bureau of Labor and Statistics, Consumer Price Index)



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index (All Urban Consumers); Other data from U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements, and American Community Survey.

This a grid below (Wells Fargo Advantage Fund) shows the projected rising cost of tuition over the coming years. From 1982 tuition and fees has risen to almost 600%. If tuition rates continue to climb at this rate those that can afford to go to a higher education facility may be the only one who are able to afford it.

The Rising Cost of Higher Education (Based on 4 years of school)



If this is the way that education tuition is going to rise then how middle are and lower income families expected to afford to continue on to a higher educational facility even with financial aid.

Accountability is everyone's responsibility in the educational system. The college and or university should be held accountable for ensuring that their professional educators are well qualified to teach students. Ensure that the professional educators are taking the time to properly explain a question to a student, while showing respect to all. For the adult learner they must be held accountable for attending classes as well as holding them accountable for their assignments.

Accountability occurs in many ways in educational systems. One type of educational accountability system is that in which the school is held responsible for the performance of its students. Another type of educational accountability is a system in which teachers or administrators are individually held responsible for the performance of their students.

Accountability systems in which schools or individual school personnel are held responsible for aspects of the educational process are most often used as ways to adjust the processes of education. Whether the school or individual teachers or administrators are held responsible, the educational accountability approach is termed *system accountability*. Educational accountability may also hold individuals responsible for their own performance. For example, students may be

held responsible for their performance in school (such as through promotion tests or graduation exams). Teachers may be held responsible for their performance on content and pedagogy through entry examinations or periodic tests of knowledge and skills. (Thurlow 2009) In addition to pointing to the conditions that the teachers felt defined their teaching from the outside, some teachers also articulated issues related to themselves that stand in the way of actualizing their ideas in practice. Some teachers said that at some points they are insecure in front of large audiences, and therefore they like to lean on the familiar and safe ways of doing things. Some pointed out that mastering the substance better might enable one to be more flexible in one's teaching, and employ ideas of supporting student learning. (studies in higher education).

What can be done to overcome these barriers?

The purpose of a Compact (establish special links between local institutions through which disadvantaged applicants are encouraged to make an application using alternative routes of entry). (Taylor) is to focus on students of ability who might not consider applying for higher education and encourage them to think of higher education as a possibility. Particular target groups are students from socio-economic groups who are under-represented in higher education (HE) and students from ethnic minorities. Compact's aim to create a close relationship between universities and the school or college concerned. They might involve reciprocal visits of staff and students, and other events which help pupils become familiar with the university, interested in what it offers and encourage them to apply. A number of institutions identified schemes which in nature are very similar to Compact's but do not appear to have close links with particular local educational providers. These schemes provide similar alternative routes to applicants that have experienced some disadvantage, for example health, outside circumstances, change of program, moving between schools or colleges. These schemes also seek to encourage applications from those who might not previously have thought of applying to university or those who feel that the present admissions patterns might not enable them to show their best side. They must be able to demonstrate the capability to tackle a degree course and that they would benefit from it. (Taylor) General outreach other interventions in the admissions process are more general in approach and can be loosely covered by the description of outreach in order to generally encourage an increase in the number of applications to university, sometimes from certain groups. This often acts as a process of familiarization where possible applicants are introduced to the idea of HE and some of the mystery about its relevance to themselves is tackled. One way in which a number of HE institutions are involved in outreach activities is through the use of

current students. In such cases students are sent out to schools to act as advocates of the institution and HE generally. They may make a presentation with school pupils, hold discussions and answer any questions pupils have. By creating relationships with high schools with a lower income students and developing a partnerships and regular visits to schools with the proper information on the higher education system the outcome for applicants would be higher.

Promoting colleges and universities and meeting tentative students at their location and explain the possibilities of life after high school and entry into a higher educational system will promote colleges and or universities. If universities and colleges are present at community events and or parent teacher conferences where parents and future students are present, then the educational systems have a better opportunity to promote their educational facility. Not only promote their educational facilities but cover all the barriers including program and degree paths for the future students. Including the financial aid portion and the costs of the program while administering compass test to see what would be the best degree path along with the information for the time limit and the educational work load. The barriers must be clear, meaning that tuition and financial aid must be closely explored and explained. The amount of time that will be needed to obtain the degree. Ensure that the future student is aware that the degree path is the correct path whether that be a compass test make sure that it is accurate. By the facility covering all basis these things may assist in bringing in more students therefor creating the possibilities of more graduates.

Summary

Adult learners may go through many barriers when it comes to learning. Some of adult learners are going through life changing experiences. There are four major barriers situational, dispositional, institutional, and educational. We have defined what adult education is. We have explained what accessibility is and how to navigate the educational system. You have learned about affordability and how to apply for financial assistance. We have discussed how to hold one's self accountable as well as the higher educational systems. We have learned what the barriers may be to adult learners and how to overcome them. These barriers may seem trying and simply impossible. Adult learner juggles a lot on a daily basic. One of the best ways to overcome the barriers in adult education is first identify the barrier. Second find a solution for the problem. Third is accountability accepting the barrier and finding a way to overcome that barrier.

Chapter Three: Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary, this paper you will now have a better understanding as to what some of the barriers are in adult education are. You have learned to identify the barriers to adult education, and what to do if you ever come across these barriers. You should have learned whom to communicate with in case a barrier obstructed your educational goals. You have learned how to balance the load of an adult learner with the load of life.

Resources

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