

Chapter 5

For Administrators: Changing High Impact Practices to Reflect All Learners

ABSTRACT

As administrators, you have a unique role in the support of post-traditional learners. As your capacity may be in either student or academic affairs, the authors will attempt to highlight each of the areas in a way that can be useful to either role. Self-concept is a building block that good administrators acknowledge and account for when developing policies. Learners are major stakeholders at your institution and will develop internal coalitions with faculty and professional staff if their ability to pursue their educational goals is interrupted. If policies are stifling, learners may decide not to persist, which directly affects the health of the institution.

INTRODUCTION

You've made it through most of the book, great job! (Or, maybe you skipped to the tips, either way, you're here.) We'll outline several important concepts in this chapter and present some of the most important changes that could affect post-traditional learners in our higher education institutions

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Simple Tips for Curriculum Success

In the earlier chapters, one of the biggest changes we've touched upon is how much the curriculum matters. While external accrediting bodies and internal program reviews require institutions to follow specific guidelines, other factors have influenced higher education curricula. Including curriculum, one of the major factors, is developmental education.

Imagine this scenario - A post-traditional learner did not do well in high school or on a college entrance exam like the ACT or SAT. As a result, the learner landed in a lower level or remedial math course at the institution. The remedial course is required for the learner to pass to be able to enroll in a 100-level math class required to graduate. The learner completes this class in the first semester, but, because of the learner's lack of math knowledge and skills, the learner needs to take an additional remedial class to be able to enroll in the required 100-level class. The learner takes the second remedial class in the following semester. The learner finds out his job is transferring him to another area. After a full year of college, the learner has still not enrolled in the 100-level math course that is required for graduation. The learner finds a new institution but is told the remedial courses aren't considered general education courses and will not transfer. Like the previous institution, the new institution requires specific high school grades and college entrance exam scores which the learner does not have. The cycle then repeats with the learner forced to take the new institution's remedial classes.

If you were this student, what would you do? Personally, we would probably throw our hands up and not think too fondly of the first institution nor of the time lost because the two classes did not transfer. The saddest part? This scenario is far more common than we and we're sure you, too, would like. It is with this example that we now examine developmental education.

Developmental Education

Developmental education is found at many higher education institutions. According to the Center for the Analysis of Postsecondary Readiness, the majority of students at community colleges and a fairly large percentage of students at four-year colleges take developmental education courses

(Development, n.d.). Additionally,

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