

Chapter 7

Conclusion

ABSTRACT

This chapter represents concluding thoughts as well as a recap of some of the overarching critical recommendations from the book. This chapter includes takeaways from the theories presented, as well as takeaways from the instructor and administrator chapters. Finally, the authors wrap up the chapter and book with comments on research ideas for administrators and instructors. These research ideas represent potential ways for both administrators and instructors to help engage the post-traditional learner population and support further research.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Before we get into a recap of the takeaways presented in this book, we wanted to put forth some concluding thoughts.

First and foremost, thank you for reading this book.

The amount of work required to publish a book is rewarding and challenging. Having someone take the time, even if they don't agree with all of the concepts is still validating. So, thank you, whoever you are. We intend to continue this work, update the theory presented in this book, and advocate for more research on post-traditional learners.

The work isn't done yet. It's not even close to being done.

While we have pockets of information regarding post-traditional learners, the bulk of the research comes from synthesizing other populations. To date, we can count roughly 100 peer reviewed articles that span post-traditional

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research. As an emerging area, you are in a unique position to not only assist post-traditional learners but enlighten the field. By documenting your changes in policies, programs, teaching methods, and services, you can support the research being conducted on the post-traditional population. For those who are in pre-K-12, or assist with these programs, consider this population when you're developing policies. In many states, the trend is moving from a pre-K-12 view to a pre-K-20 view, and there is merit in finding the "end goal" for your learners.

Publish And Present Work With Your Post-Traditional Learners

Whether you find yourself leaning towards quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods research, post-traditional learners will find success from your efforts to assist them. If you have the opportunity, speak regionally and nationally on post-traditional learners about your efforts to support them. We're sure you will be surprised by the amount of questions you get at conferences regarding this population and ways to best support with post-traditional learners.

Student Athletes And Post-Traditional Learners

While it's unexpected to add new information in the conclusion, there are a couple of research areas that could be immediately beneficial to post-traditional learners. Currently, one of your authors is pursuing the similarities between student athlete needs and post-traditional learner needs. One similarity with these two populations is the interaction between how we support student athletes and post-traditional learners. Here are a few early tidbits from a brief synthesis of existing research.

1. **Roles:** Student athletes and post-traditional learners are unique campus populations that have similar time demands due to their outside roles and academics.
 - a. Student athletes balance the roles of learner and athlete, which comes with consistent outside obligations that may take precedence over their studies. While we wish this wasn't true, it can very much be the case. To stay in college, athletic scholarships require athletes to perform a myriad of activities not necessarily focused on education.

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