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Career and educational needs of adult students

Abstract

The fastest growing segment of the college student population consists of adults age 25 and over. Adults are attending college in record numbers. The growth of this population is substantial. In 1974, adults comprised 39% of a total enrollment of 8 million, while in 5 years, their numbers had increased to 48% of 10 million total enrollment (Knox, 1979, p. 32). "Several factors have caused the burgeoning adult enrollment, job obsolescence and the subsequent need for retraining, increased numbers of women wishing to enter or reenter the job market, and the increased availability of leisure time" (Perrone, 1977, p. 27). All of these factors combined have caused adults to reevaluate their career status.

A Research Paper
Presented to
The Department of Educational Administration
and Counseling
University of Northern Iowa

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

by
Alan Howard Long
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This Research Paper by: Alan Howard Long

Entitled: CAREER AND EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF ADULT STUDENTS

has been approved as meeting the research paper requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The fastest growing segment of the college student population consists of adults age 25 and over. Adults are attending college in record numbers. The growth of this population is substantial. In 1974, adults comprised 39% of a total enrollment of 8 million, while in 5 years, their numbers had increased to 48% of 10 million total enrollment (Knox, 1979, p. 32).

"Several factors have caused the burgeoning adult enrollment, job obsolescence and the subsequent need for retraining, increased numbers of women wishing to enter or reenter the job market, and the increased availability of leisure time" (Perrone, 1977, p. 27). All of these factors combined have caused adults to reevaluate their career status.

The U. S. population is gradually growing older. By the year 2,000, the dominant age group will be the middle aged, those 30 to 44 (Burnaham, 1982). From 1900 to 1970, with the exception of the years surrounding World War II, children under 15 were the nation's largest age group. By 1980, the largest age group was the group of people aged 15 to 29 years old. By the year 2,000 only 43% of the population will be under 29 as compared with 52% in 1970. Even now we are experiencing a rising curve for people age 45 to 64, who at 42 million strong comprise 20% of the population.

The adult population has great educational potential. The sheer size of the adult population will cause career counselors and others in college/university student personnel services to reevaluate their programs in order to meet the career and educational needs of this population.

If colleges and universities are to adequately meet the career and educational needs of the adult student population, they must know what these needs are. Career counselors especially must be familiar with the career and educational needs of the adult student if they are to design counseling programs to help the adult student.

This paper will examine the career and educational needs of the adult population in general. Included are the career and educational needs of adults in "Career Transition" and the career and educational needs of adult students. To adequately study the career and educational needs of adult students, it is important to look at the characteristics of adults. This study will investigate the characteristics of both the adult in career transition and the adult student.

Adults are attending colleges designed for the 18 to 25 year old traditional student. If colleges and universities are to design programs to meet the needs of the adult student, it is important for them to know how the needs of the adult student differ from those of the traditional student. This paper will investigate the differences in the career and educational needs of the two different student groups.

Colleges and universities are now beginning to recognize the adult student population and are beginning to develop programs designed to meet the needs of adult students. Two innovative community based career and educational programs will be presented.

Statement of the Problem

The adult student population in colleges and universities is growing at a phenomenal rate. Yet, not much is known about their career and educational needs. The amount of research effected on the career and educational needs of adult students has not kept pace with the rate of growth in the adult student population. If colleges and universities are to build programs designed to meet the needs of adult students, more research is necessary to determine those needs.

The review of the literature sought to answer several questions:

- 1. What are the career and educational needs of the adult student?
 - 2. What are the characteristics of adults in career transition?
 - 3. What are some reasons for career transition?
 - 4. What are the characteristics of the adult student?
 - 5. Does the adult go through different life cycles?
- 6. What are the career and educational needs of adults in career transition?
 - 7. Why do adults return to college?

- 8. Do the needs of adults differ from the needs of traditional students?
- 9. What are the implications of this study for colleges and universities?
- 10. Are there any problems that have been developed to meet the career and educational needs of adult students?

Purpose of the Study

In view of the fact that very little research has been effected on the career and educational needs of the adult student, there are four reasons for completing a study of this nature:

(1) determine the career and educational needs of adult students,

(2) determine existing counseling programs meeting career and educational needs of adult students, (3) determine difference between the career and educational needs of adult students and needs of traditional students, (4) compile this information into a report that will inform the academic community of the adult student's career and educational needs.

Definition of Terms

<u>Adult Counseling</u>. An educational activity through which a counselor assists an adult to:

- 1. develop an understanding of the self and life situation.
- 2. develop a critical evaluation of the self and life situation.

3. undertake a conscious and goal directed use of one's possibilities within one's life situation (Vance, 1981, p. 37).

Adult Development. The process by which adults "learn, cope with, and adapt to various aspects of their life situation" (Vance, 1981, p. 36).

<u>Career</u>. "A sequence of work and nonwork activities in which one engages throughout his or her life span" (Miles & Clause, 1981, p. 9).

<u>Career Advising</u>. "The process of providing information and assistance to individuals as they make decisions over the life span" (Miles & Clause, 1981, p. 9).

Career Development.

Encompasses life planning, self awareness, career awareness, decision making, job seeking and keeping. It can be offered through self-administering materials, general curriculum infusion, workshops, individual and group counseling, and short and long courses. Research is available that shows that career development in a variety of forms can significantly affect self concept, locus of control, work attitudes, decision making, goal setting, and life planning skills. (Welsh-Hill, 1983, p. 3)

Needs. "Personal conditions which move a person to act" (Miles & Clause, 1981, p. 21).

<u>Stage</u>. "A interval of time in which a person faces and resolves either adequately or inadequately a developmental crisis and it's developmental tasks" (Rodgers, 1980, p. 36).

Student Development. "A set of educational practices grounded in developmental education theory designed to marshall all available resources within an institution into a process which will produce a predictable result, self sufficiency in students" (Creamer & Clowes, 1982, p. 26).

Limitations of the Study

This study has been limited to the resources of the library at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, Iowa. The articles referred to in writing the Review of Literature come from three sources, E.R.I.C. (Educational Resources Information Center), journal articles from R.I.E. (Research in Education), and books that have been written on career and educational needs of adults.

A second limitation is that adult career and educational needs are extensive and broad. This study examines needs common to many adult students.

A third limitation is that the program herein discussed for counseling the adult student in careers and education are not all inclusive. There are many excellent programs today which assist adults in career decisions. This study presents two programs that are community based outreach programs.

A fourth limitation is that this study presents general adult career and educational needs. It does not present the career and educational needs of minorities and handicapped students. It touches very lightly on the career and educational needs of adult women.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Adult students age 25 and over are attending college in record numbers. The traditional view of college existing just for the 18-25 year old is outdated. More adults are taking courses than ever before.

In 1978-79, approximately 60 million adults, age 25 and older attended college to take one or more topics (Brocklehurst, 1979, p. 19). Looking more closely at the older population, we find that 50% of the 50 year old men and 58% of the same aged women queried had recently taken a course. Extropolations from the 1972 California study indicate that 6 million senior citizens are potential candidates for education. The phenomenon is known as life long learning, and the reasons for participating in it are as varied and complex as the participants themselves. (Burnham, 1982, p. 24).

The growth rate for adult students has been phenomenal.

Elliot (1977) states "Forty-eight percent of the total enrollment of 10 million students is made up of the adult student population (Beyond 22 years of age). Only five years ago the same group constituted 39% of a total enrollment of 8,000,000" (p. 1).

This rate of growth will be of benefit to colleges and universities in that more adults will be attending college, yet it will present problems for them. In an age of falling enrollments for traditional college students, administrators of post secondary education will need to be concerned with stimulating adult enrollment. To do this they must reevaluate programs designed to meet needs of the traditional student and develop programs suited

to meet the career and educational needs of adult students. This is called "Marketing the University" (Berner, 1980, p. 57).

Kotler (1975) says, "The university is a major industry and marketing is its legitimate concern" (p. 51). For the most part we don't like to think of an intellectual institution in this manner, but it does have a product to sell, its courses. Career counselors are the sales agents. They must know the characteristics of adult students as well as their career and educational needs.

Any sales organization can sell products only if these products are designed to meet the needs of its clients. Colleges will sell courses to the adult if the adult feels these courses meet some specific need.

Characteristics

Many of the articles located in the Review of Literature linked the characteristics of the adult student with his/her career and educational needs. If the counselors are to design programs to meet career and educational needs of a given adult student population, then it is important for them to know and understand that population. Will that adult student population be largely white, male, from the upper class, or will that student be black, female, and from the lower class. Are the students served likely to be married, unmarried, and have a family? Are these students between the ages of 25 to 30 or are they above 50 years of age?

Adult student characteristics will tend to dictate what their career and educational needs will be. For example, persons having both a family and a poor financial status may need to pursue a career which has a relatively short training period so that they can get back into the work force as soon as possible. Another example is persons above 50 who may not be willing to pursue a profession that requires a lengthy training period such as is required in becoming a doctor. They may consider the time that is left to work after the training period as being too short for them to move into that profession.

Characteristics of Adults in Career Transition

If colleges and universities are to market their product, then they must also know the characteristics of those adults in the nonstudent population. Arbeiter, Schmerbeck, Aslanian, and Brickell (1976) in their work, "Career Transitions: The Demand for Counseling, Vol. I" (1976), report on the study of the personal characteristics of people in career transition conducted by the College Entrance Examination Board and Policy Studies in Education:

The vast majority (82%) of those adults were white, 12% were black, and 6% were other minorities (American Indian, Mexican American, Puerto Rican, and Oriental). Sixty percent of the intransition adults were female; 40% were male.

The majority (63%) of the adults were married; only 23% had never married and 14% were divorced, widowed or separated. A greater percentage of males (30%) than females (18%) had never married and more females had been divorced, widowed or separated than had males (20% as compared to 6%).

Sixty-three precent of the adults had one or more children living in the household. Of those adults with children, 85% had three or fewer children and 50% had one or more children under the age of six.

Seventy percent of the adults contributed some earnings to their family incomes; almost all males (92%) and over half of the females (56%) were wage earners. Of those adults who did contribute, 60% were principal wage earners, 18% shared the responsibility equally with another family member, and 22% contributed somewhat to the total family income. However, 71% of all males were principal wage earners, only about a fourth of all females fell into this category.

Sixty-three percent of the adults had family incomes of \$10,000 a year or more, only 55% of the females had incomes at this level. Also blacks had much lower family incomes than did whites and "other" minorities, only 26% of the blacks had incomes of \$10,000 a year or more, and 37% had incomes of less than \$5,000 a year. Married adults had higher family incomes than did those who were not married, half of the married adults had incomes of \$15,000 a year or more, but only a fourth of the single adults and about 10% of those who were divorced, widowed or separated had incomes at this level. (pp. 6 & 7)

This study gives us an idea of the adult population that might seek out a college education. "The survey determined that 36% of the American population between the ages of 16 and 65 is in a career transition status" (Arbeiter et al., 1976, p. 5). "Adults in transition are predominately female, white, between 20 and 39 years of age. They are typically married with one to three children living in the household" (p. 6).

As we look at the characteristics of the adult in career transition, we also see that certain career needs are imminent, that need to be taken into consideration and addressed if the colleges and universities are going to sell their product to the adult population.

According to the Arbeiter et al. (1976) study, we not only have a large group of whites in career transition with needs to be met, but we also have a large group of minorities who are potential candidates for college. The minority groups bring with them their own special set of career and educational needs to the college campus. Career counselors will have to understand the needs of these special groups if they intend to attract them to college.

Women comprise another large subgroup of adults in career transition. They also have their own set of career and educational needs; many have been out of the work force for several years; many are parents with small children. If colleges are to attract this population, they must provide services to help women adjust to college life.

According to Arbeiter et al. (1976), the majority of adults contribute some earnings to family incomes. Thus, many of the adults returning to the college campus must work while pursuing their studies.

There are many reasons as to why people switch careers. It may be that they need more money, more prestige, or want to do something different. Financial need is the biggest motivator as to why people change careers. "About 50% of those who were employed sought higher salaries and over half of those unemployed expressed a need for money" (Arbeiter et al., 1976, p. 18).

Characteristics of the Adult Student

In her paper entitled "Characteristics of Post Secondary Students 25 Years and Older," Susan Hill (1982) examined data taken from the U. S. Census Bureau's 1976 Survey of Income and Education. The survey shows that in 1976 there were 4,852,000 adults enrolled in college. This fact means nothing unless it is compared with the rest of the student enrollment of 12 million. One can conclude from this comparison that the adult college student population is a sizable group of people coming to college. Since 1976 this population has grown considerably.

In developing their programs career counselors need to ask what type of program the adult student wants. To answer this question information has been taken from Hill's Table No. 2 "Adults and All College Students, by Level of Enrollment and Attendance Status: 1976." Of the 4,852,000 adult students, 59% were undergraduates and 41% were in other enrollment. Of the undergraduate enrollment, 818,000 were full time and 2,062,000 were part time. Of the older enrollment, 455,000 were full time and 1,517,000 were part time (p. 4). These statistics show that there is a strong need for part time programs. Adults do have to work and have other responsibilities while attending college.

Another characteristic that Hill (1982) found in the U. S. Census Bureau's survey that would tend to indicate a career and educational need is that 90% of adult students were financially

independent of their parental families. This characteristic would tend to dictate how much money can be spent on a person's education to be able to get into a career.

Personal Characteristics

If career counselors wish to understand the career and educational needs of adult students, they must look not only at demographic characteristics, but also at the adult's personal characteristics. Personal characteristics have a strong influence on what career needs persons have and how they meet those needs.

With the advent of the open door policy, colleges are now accepting most anyone. With this attitude comes the diversity of the adult student population. Adults are a heterogeneous group. They have a diverse range of characteristics that will affect what careers that they go into. Yet with all this diversity there are certain commonalities that career counselors can consider when looking at the adult student. Older students appear to be marked by: (1) transitory uncertainty, (2) strong goal orientation and a sense of immediacy, (3) muted aspirations, and (4) information thirst (Flohr & Sweeny, 1982).

Transitory Uncertainty. Adulthood is usually thought of as being in a time of stability, but it is really a time of high uncertainty and confusion. Studies show that as adults grow older they pass through certain life stages. As they pass through these stages, their learning characteristics change. Where the adult is

located on the developmental continum will determine what his/her career and educational needs are at a given point in time. Curtain & Hecklinger (1981) have divided adult life into five life stages:

(A) age 20-30, (B) 30-40, (C) 40-50, (D) 50-60, and (E) 60 and up. The following has been condensed from their work:

(A) Age 20-30

When adults are in their twenties they experience much change and growth. They establish independence from their parents and their own personal identity. They usually end formal education and begin full-time work during this stage of the life cycle. Both family and job skills are tested.

(B) Age 30-40

Around age 30, adults may reevaluate life's purpose. Decisions that had been made early in life regarding career, family, and self may be questioned. Many adults have experienced success in their careers and as a result have built up a great deal of self confidence. Others who have not met with successes may become uneasy and begin to search for another career.

Adults experience a great deal of stress during this stage of the life cycle. Parents must adjust to changes in life styles as children become more independent of them. More work and family responsibilities reduces the adult's leisure time. Women in the home may become frustrated and desire a change when they see their husbands achieving significant success on the job.

(C) Age 40**-**50

Adults in this life stage find many midlife challenges facing them. There are less opportunities to move up the career ladder or to move from one job to another. Financial goals that at one time were achievable may no longer be achieved. Aware that time is running out, they may begin to question values they had previously lived by and may begin to look for ways to change their lives. A concern about not having made changes in the past may now begin to develop.

(D) Age 50-60

A mellowing process marks this stage of the life cycle. There is a softening of feelings and relationships, with more emphasis on everyday jobs, minor achievements and irritations. New friendship experiences and activities are tried with varying results.

The adult's career may have reached a plateau. Challenges may continue to come, but may be of a more modest nature. An evaluation of alternatives open to adults is necessary as many opportunities are not open to them.

(E) Age 60 and Up

Adults face retirement during this stage of the life cycle.

Many may not be prepared for it and may perceive themselves as being told they are no longer useful. Other people who are prepared for retirement may see this as a time of freedom, opportunity and pleasure. Still others may see retirement as the reward for years

of hard work, but may not be adequately prepared to handle large amounts of unstructured time.

Strong Goal Orientation and a Sense of Immediacy. Adults are highly goal oriented. They come to college with a goal in mind, that of receiving an education that will lead to a career or self improvement. Today's dynamic technology and exploding knowledge base demand gearing up and keeping up through intense formal schooling. Many adults feel that those who do go back to college to update their knowledge in their field, are eligible for employment and advancement. Those who don't may find themselves without a job as a result of changes in employment brought on by technology. Many adults feel a sense of immediacy in that they feel the time is slipping away from them and that a change in their career needs to take place now. 'While adult learners may appear to be searching, indeed groping, they are not aimless dilettantes, they are purposeful students with a need for immediate gratification' (Flohr & Sweeny, 1982, p. 43).

<u>Muted Aspirations</u>. Adults sometimes underestimate their abilities. They feel they are too old to learn. Lynn Burnham (1982) refutes this idea. She states:

What may be seen at approximately age 50 as intellectual decline is actually decline in neural responses, or processing speed, the slowdown beginning at about age 25 and continuing with a loss of 1% per year. By age 50, other physical aspects of aging are more apparent: reduced visual and auditory acuity, physical flexibility and memory recall. Taken together, they traditionally

have been interpreted as meaning a decline in learning power. In fact, it may be that if the adult does not have to learn under time constraints; if physical impairments are compensated for, and if learning is analyzed, taxonomy may be experienced unto death. The implications for this are staggering, suggesting that barring certain handicaps, the human organism's intellectual power is literally temporarily free. (p. 24)

Adults' past experiences with education affect how they come to the learning experience and ultimately what career they select. This experience with past education forms the self concept. If the past educational experience has been negative, then the adult will view the present experience in a negative manner.

An adults' peers, family, and employers may not be supportive. This may deter them from going into certain careers or may even stop them from seeking out an education.

<u>Information Thirst</u>. Adults have a strong need for information. They are goal oriented. They want information that will meet their career goals. "They crave specific, personal, educational, and occupational information, for it makes their goals seem more desirable and reachable" (Flohr & Sweeny, 1982, p. 43).

Career and Educational Needs

To begin this study of career and educational needs, they first of all must be defined. Miles and Clause (1981), offer us this definition:

Needs refer to personal conditions which move a person to act, for example: a person who is in a state of

thirst probably has a need for water. If a person takes a drink, this person will no longer be thirsty and his need for water will be temporarily satisfied. (p. 21)

Career and educational needs are as diverse as the adult population itself. They vary from individual to individual. As we have already seen career and educational needs are influenced by the characteristics of the adult. There are certain needs that are common to all adults and/or groups of adults. In this study we will look at the common career and educational needs.

Needs of Adults in Career Transition

It is important for colleges and universities to know the career and educational needs of adults in general if they are to plan programs designed to attract the adult student. One way to measure the career and educational needs of adults is to extract information from them about services they desire as Solomon Arbeiter (1976) has done in his report "Career Transitions: The Demand for Counseling." He collected information to describe the degree to which adults were interested in 20 specific services. These services were selected to exemplify four service types: information services, guidance services, training services, and counseling services.

Information for Table No. 1 has been extracted from Arbeiter's Table No. 8, "Degree of Interest in Specific Career Services,"

(Arbeiter, 1976). He lists the percent of adults in career

transition showing both a high interest and a medium interest in career services. For the purpose of this study the high and medium interest percentages taken from Table No. 8 have been combined to show what percent of adults in career transition are interested in career services. Services have been grouped under the four categories listed by Arbeiter (1976) as follows: information, counseling, guidance, and training. These are the four largest career and educational needs that adults in career transition have as shown by their desires for these services. Referring to Table No. 1, it is interesting to note that more than 50% of the adults in career transition according to the Arbeiter (1976) study, have expressed some desire for career services in each of the categories listed.

The need for information is the largest service desired by adults in career transition. Table No. I shows that adults mostly desire lists of available jobs, facts on occupational fields, lists of educational or training programs, lists of financial aid sources, and facts on how personal abilities relate to educational success.

The high percentages of adults showing a desire for information services is not surprising. In the past ten years great strides have been made toward providing the adult with career information, yet this area is still lacking. Adults in the population at large do not have career information that is readily accessible to them. To receive information on careers available to them, adults have to go back to their high school counselors, colleges or to the employment office. Many communities do not have either colleges

Table No. I
Services Desired by Adults in Career Transition

Serv	vices Desired	Percent of Adults in Career Transition Expressing Some Interest for Services				
I. Information						
(A)	Lists of available jobs	85%				
(B)	Facts on occupational fields	82%				
(C)	Lists of educational or training programs	78%				
(D)	(D) List of financial aid69%					
(E)	Facts on how personal abilities relate to educational success	72%				
II. Cour	nseling					
(A)	Examination of career possibility and most rapid path for advanced in your field	nent				
(B)	Discussion of ways that your abilities/strengths can be used in various types of jobs	79%				
(C)	Discussion of which schools could best meet your personal needs					
(D)	Discussion of your families attitude toward your career	55%				
III. Gu	idance					
(A)	Explanation of educational programs in a given field that are offered at different schools	s78%				
(B)	Advice on eligibility for specific types of financial aid	72%				

Table No. I Continued

	Serv	vices Desired	Percent of Adults in Career Transition Expressing Some Interest for Services			
III.	Gui	idance, Cont'd				
	(C)	Occupational ability testing				
	(D)	Advice on ways to resolve person problems such as child care and family commitments				
	(E)	Advice on ways to deal with problems which block career progress	57%			
IV.	Trai	ining				
	(A)	Job skills training	77%			
	(B)	Training in self analysis and decision making techniques	64%			
	(C)	Training in writing career resumes and being interviewed	59%			
	(D)	Training in using classified ads employment agencies, and other ways to locate jobs	•			
	(E)	Training in locating and using directories and other occupation information				
* <u>No</u>	<u>te</u> :	From "Career Transitions: The De S. Arbeiter and others, 1976, (EF Service No. 143993), p. 23. Copy Entrance Examination Board and Po Education. Adapted by Permission	RIC Document Reproduction wright 1976 by College Dicy Studies in			

or employment offices. If agencies do exist that dispense career and educational information, many adults are not aware that such agencies exist. Therefore, it is difficult for adults to get visible career information. This may explain the high interest in information services that adults in career transition have.

Counseling and guidance are career services that are also in demand by adults in career transition. Even though adults may be gainfully employed in a profession, they still seem to need help in making decisions regarding that profession. Table No. I shows that 79% of adults in career transition desire to examine career possibilities and the most rapid path for advancement within their chosen fields.

Seventy-nine percent of the adults studied desired discussion of the ways their abilities and strengths could be used in various jobs. Career counselors have a dual responsibility of helping adults sort out their abilities and of knowing career requirements. The career counselor is a link in helping people to find career fulfillment.

Another type of counseling and guidance service adults seek is discussion of which schools could best meet their personal needs. Sixty-nine percent of adults in career transition marked this type of service as being important to them. When considering a school it is always important for a person to consider personal needs. In many cases adults have to provide for families, so they have to consider whether the school has available adequate housing,

employment possibilities in the area, available financing, and provision for child care while the parent is in class. Career counselors will need to be familiar with programs located at other schools that will meet the adult student's personal needs.

It is important to note that 31% of adults in career transition did not desire to discuss with the career counselor schools which could best meet their personal needs. There are many reasons for this. Some adults may feel that they do not need help with personal problems, and therefore don't feel a need to approach the counselor for a discussion of which schools could best meet their personal needs. Secondly, many adults own their own homes, many have children in school, and many are holding down good jobs that they may not wish to relinquish. Therefore to move to another school to meet their personal needs may be out of the question.

Seventy-eight percent of adults in career transition desired an explanation of educational programs in a given field that are offered at different institutions. To meet this need career counselors must be well versed in programs offered at other colleges and universities. They should have a good supply of college catalogues or other information on programs offered by other institutions. The career counselor can be a strong link between the adult and the career he decides to choose.

A large group of adults (72%) sought advice on eligibility for specific types of financial aid (Arbeiter et al., 1976). Whether or not the adult gets financial aid may determine what career he goes into. Financial need is a large need amongst adults. This issue will be dealt with later in this paper. (Please refer to the section entitled "Financing").

Eighteen percent of adults in career transition didn't request advice on eligibility for specific types of financial aid. Some adults are able to pay for their education. Others have spouses that are able to help them with their education. Solomon and Gordon (1981) point out that the CIRP (Cooperative Institutional Research Program) survey indicates that between the years of 1966-1969 and 1973-1978 work and savings were important sources for financing the first year of educational expenses.

Adults show a high degree of interest in another type of career service, training. Specifically adults are interested in job skills training, training in self analysis and decision making techniques, training in writing career resumes and being interviewed, in using classified ads, employment agencies, and other ways to locate jobs, and training in locating and using directories and other occupational information.

The Arbeiter et al. (1976) survey revealed that cultural and financial factors can influence the amount of interest shown in specific services. Blacks rate the following services higher than do whites:

Advice on ways to deal with problems which block career progress, advice on ways to resolve personal problems, discussion of which schools could best meet your personal needs, discussion with someone about personal problems you are having with your employer. (p. 24)

Arbeiter et al. (1976) goes on to state, "as family income increased, the need for the following services decreased: advice on ways to resolve personal problems, advice on eligibility for financial aid, job skills training, and discussion about problems you are having with your employer" (p. 24).

Career counselors can expect people coming from specific backgrounds to express a stronger interest in guidance and counseling services, than people coming from other backgrounds do. It would be logical then to have programs developed that will meet specific needs of special groups of people.

Needs of Adult Students

According to the review of literature, not much research work has been effected on career and educational needs of adult students. If colleges are to attract the adult student then they must know why adults are coming to college and what types of services they want.

In this section of the paper several questions about the career and educational counseling needs of adult students have been researched. These include:

- (1) Why do adults return to college?
- (2) Do adults experience psychological difficulties upon entering or reentering college?
 - (3) What kinds of concerns do adults express?
 - (4) Is financing a major problem for adults?
 - (5) Is there a difference between the career and educational

needs of adult students and traditional students?

(6) What types of educational problems are typical of adults?

Reasons for the Adult's Entry or Reentry in College

Young (1973) identifies several major reasons as to why adults return to school:

Many are studying to keep up with new developments in their chosen field or to obtain credentials necessary to enter a different line of work. Some are housewives taking college courses to obtain an undergraduate or graduate degree before reentering the labor market. Others are seeking a high school diploma in response to rising hiring and promotion requirements. Undoubtedly many also perceive of schooling as a means for personal development. (p. 39)

Apps (1981) states, "Today the largest majority of people returning to college are women" (p. 28). Women have their own separate set of reasons for returning to college. Many women hold jobs that require them to return to college to receive promotions. Some women are housewives and would like to broaden their horizons by learning new careers. There are also negative forces at work which cause women to seek a more fulfilling life style. There may be problems with her husband and family, the children have left the nest leaving her empty, she may be dissatisfied with her status in life.

Muskat (1978) is in agreement with Apps (1981) in pointing out that women have their own separate set of reasons for attending college. The reasons she gives are listed below: Increasing employment opportunities, a lower birth rate, social reform, and a growing flexibility toward sex role appropriate behaviors are some of the explanations for increasing participation of adult women in higher education. Some view continuing education as an end in itself and return to college to take courses with no immediate plan other than obtaining a B.A. degree. Others are returning to college to update their educational and technical skills to advance in jobs they already have. The majority of women, however, return to college to obtain the education, training, and skills necessary to eventually join the labor force. (p. 154)

The reason for adults returning to college seem to be clustered around the occupations. Every three years the National Center for Education Statistics conducts surveys to determine participation in adult education (Apps, 1981, p. 14). They found that 38.9% of adults participating in further education desired to either improve or advance in a job. They also found that 10.5% desired a new job. Forty-three point five percent said they are participating in further education for other reasons (p. 16).

Ferguson (1966) found similar results. She studied adult students who were enrolled in the spring semester of 1964 at the University of Illinois, Chicago Undergraduate Division. Of 280 total responses, 133 listed a desire for job improvement, 107 showed a desire for self improvement, and 40 desired to serve humanity better.

Adults have a need to grow. This need is expressed by adults in relation to job change. Lynn Burham (1981) states:

Many adults returning to post-secondary education are motivated by growth in relation to job change (most adults will be employed in 6 to 8 different jobs in a

life time) and the need to acquire new skills, brought about in part by the breakneck pace of technological advances, which have some knowledge experiencing only a brief five year life span before becoming obsolete. (p. 24)

Adults do have many reasons for coming to college. As a result they are now beginning to throw out an inherited value system that limits education to the young. They are finding that they can be multiparticipatory and that they are no longer just limited to one career during a lifetime.

Psychological Difficulties of Adult Students

Adult students have many psychological difficulties which could influence which career they choose. They are often apprehensive about coming to college. Many adults fear failure because they feel they are too old to learn, that they have been out of school too long to get back into the studying habit.

Past learning experiences may affect how adults view learning. If they have failed in the past they may see themselves as failing in the future learning experiences. Career counselors will need to be able to help them to overcome this deficiency by developing support programs.

Today colleges and universities are placing more emphasis on self-directed learning. Miles and Clause (1981) found that, "Many adults are not prepared for self-directed learning" (p. 5).

Traditionally self-directed learning has not been a part of the formal school setting. As a result adult students may not be clear

as to what is expected of them to give up their goals concerning a career.

Adult students are time conscious. As has been stressed earlier, adults have needs related to family and/or career needs. In considering a program it is important for them to consider how long it will take to get through the program. Many adults can only go part time. It can take from 6 to 10 years for part time adult students to complete a 4 year degree program. Feelings of frustration and despair can arise when having to go this long.

Miles and Clause (1981) feel that, "Often times learning itself poses a serious threat to the person trying to hold onto the values and beliefs that were adequate in the earlier years" (p. 5). Learning new ideas means that some of the older values have to be sacrificed. Today's highly technological society is forcing colleges and universities to keep pace with the onslaught of new ideas that are coming on the scene. If adult students see their values being threatened by their present program they may be deterred to a program in which they feel comfortable or they may drop college altogether.

Adult students who are from a disadvantaged environment or who are members of a minority group often live under a history of frustration and failure. Frequently they suffer from a negative self image. They see themselves as being unable to change the situation they are in. Career counselors need to develop programs that will help them to overcome this negative self image.

Special consideration needs to be given to the psychological needs of adult women returning to college. It has already been pointed out that the majority of adult students are women. Lordi (1980) says, "Returning women frequently exhibit characteristics that indicate they have poor self concepts" (p. 76). Many don't like the idea of leaving home and children even for a few hours.

Muskat (1978) found, "The women reentering college after several years of absence is between the ages of 35 and 45. She is usually in the stage referred to as mid-motherhood or midlife transition" (p. 153). Her children are making less demands upon her life because they are now in school. This transition is a crisis for many women. With the nest being partially empty, there is a need for women to find meaning in the future. It is a time when questions about values, personal worth, and genuiness are raised. This is a period of great conflict for many women.

The technological age that is upon us has brought along with it new opportunities for women, giving them the desire for personal growth. Yet there are obstacles which prevent them from growing.

Muskat (1978) finds that, "A major problem is that although many feel an intense internal pressure to grow, they simultaneously feel unprepared to meet their elevated aspirations. An awareness of personal limitations coupled with the desire to overcome them is a pervasive concern of many reentry women" (p. 153).

The review of literature shows that the psychological needs of adult students are many and vary greatly. Psychological needs can

and do affect what career a person goes into.

Concerns of Adult Students

Both Perrone (1977) and Welsh-Hill (1980) have studied the concerns of adult students. There are several concerns which adults rated highly in both studies. The need for more information on jobs and the desire to know more about their vocational abilities were common to both studies. Welsh-Hill (1980) states that adults also desire help with choosing a good training program, knowing how to prepare for a career, knowing how to interview for jobs, and to learn how to make decisions. Perrone (1977) reports students as having concern related to educational matters such as concern for doing well on examinations, being required to take courses the student doesn't like, concern with outside activities that interfere with getting homework done, failing courses, finding teachers too hard to understand, and not having a well planned program.

Financing

Financing a college education is a major concern for adult students. "Since 1966, the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) has annually surveyed students entering approximately six hundred colleges across the United States. Each year the responses have been weighted and the results have been compiled into a national norms series (1966-1978)" (Solomon & Gordon, 1981, p. 6). CIRP has found each year that over 60% of the adults in

college express at least some concern about their ability to finance their education (p. 41).

Wallace (1979) studied nearly 19,000 ACT profile reports that were sent to the University of Southern Mississippi between October 1974 and April 1977. The sample he studied was divided into three age groups, those 17 to 19 years old, those 20 to 22 years old, and those 23 years plus. He found that at least 50% of each group expressed a need for financial aid.

Considering the amount of adult students that have expressed a need for financial aid, it is ironic that most financial aid policy in this country assumes that the adult student should be made to pay his own way. "Often, an adult student's family income cannot support tuition costs, even on a part time pasis" (Schubert & Deitz, 1979, p. 2).

Career counselors and college administrators need to work at changing this attitude in financial aid policy. If aid is not available for adult students, they may decide to forego college.

Not only are adult students coming to colleges designed for traditional students, but they are also using financial aid packets that have been designed for traditional students. Career counselors and college administrators need to recognize that adult students have their own set of financial needs and should have financial aid packets designed to fit their special needs.

According to Solomon and Gordon (1981), the CIRP survey shows that traditional age students generally are supported by their parents and financial need for them is determined by family income. Adult students generally rely on either their own or their spouses income to pay for their education.

Married adult students have responsibilities that younger unmarried students do not have. Therefore they may have an obligation to bring in an income. When they return to college they may have to reduce the number of hours they can work, which can in turn reduce their available income.

Many financial aid packets have limits on earnings for eligibility. A family may earn \$30,000 per year, but they may need to spend \$30,000 per year for survival. This high of an income may eliminate some adults from receiving financial aid. A financial need is created here because even though these families are receiving a high income, they may not have enough money in their budget to send a spouse to college.

We are in an age where single parenting is becoming the norm. Single adult parents have a need traditional students do not have, that of chid care. Child care costs can present extra financial burdens prohibiting the single parent from obtaining an education. Yet not many financial aid packets have provisions for child care because they are designed to meet the needs of traditional students.

Housing presents financial needs to adult students that are not typical of traditional students. Traditional students can live in dormitories on campus. Many adult students have to seek off campus housing at high rental rates which places another financial burden on them. Associated with this need is the need for transportation to and from classes in which adults have to bear the cost of owning and operating a vehicle.

The current attitude towards financial aid policy, which states adults should be made to pay for their education, does not take into consideration the fact that adults are coming to college to learn a career to improve their financial situation. It was noted earlier in this report that 36% of the American population between the ages of 16 and 65 are in a career transition status (Arbeiter, 1976). Arbeiter goes on to state that, "About half of the intransition adults stated that they were making a career change because of financial considerations" (p. 18). It seems logical to assume that adults do have financial needs even before coming to college.

The review of literature shows that subgroups of the adult student population have their own special set of needs that need to be taken into consideration when planning financial aid programs. Colleges and universities can make themselves look more attractive by making allowances for these special subgroups.

<u>Women</u>. Women present a special financial need. Traditionally women have been paid less than men. Muskat (1978) points out that, "In 1974, a full time woman employee earned a median income of \$6,772, whereas a man earned \$11,835. A minority woman earned the least of all full time workers \$6,611" (p. 154). Of displaced homemakers (divorced women) only 14% were awarded alimony and 7% actually received it. When alimony was received, it constituted

only 42% of the poverty level income as defined by the U.S. Department of Commerce (Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1982, p. 7). Coupled with the relative inability for women as a whole to pay for their education, many are not eligible for the G.I. Bill, nor are they able to receive subsidies from employers as many are housewives (Solomon and Gordon, 1981). Also many have custody of their children and require child support.

<u>Part-Time Adult Students</u>. Part-time adult students make up a sizable group of the adult student population. Willard Boyd, former University of Iowa President states that in 1976, "more than 60% of all post secondary students were enrolled on a part-time basis" (Boyd, 1977, p. 3). In the following quote he points out the financial plight of many part-time students:

The financial plight of many part time students is a serious one because of severely limited access to financial assistance. Most post secondary institutions give priority to the needs of the full-time student in allocating scholarships, grants, loans, and jobs. All federal programs of student aid are restricted to students enrolled at least half time. In addition, current methods of assisting student financial needs are geared to serve the young traditional student. Therefore the student returning to school in mid life cannot expect to receive financial aid unless he or she is enrolled at least half time and has extremelt limited income and assets. (p. 3)

Adult students and subgroups of adult do have their own separate set of needs. It is highly advisable for colleges and universities to build financial packages that are targeted to meet the special needs of adult students. It is costly to set up funding programs that benefit adults, but in the long run it will greatly

benefit society if we can get adults off welfare roles and place them in higher paying jobs. The adult will then be able to pay higher taxes which in turn can fund further governmental and educational programs.

Needs of Adults Versus Traditional Students

The traditional student and the adult student differ in many ways. The adolescent coming right out of high school and persons in their mid 30's do not come to college on the same developmental level. Their needs, expectations, and characteristics are different. It is important for career counselors to recognize that these differences do exist. A comparison of the differences between the two students will provide the ground work from which student services personnel can build programs that benefit the adult student.

Hameister and Hickey (1977) have identified two major assumptions about the differences between adult students and traditional students:

- 1. Self Concept. The traditional college age student relies on family, school, and community to make major decisions. While in college, adult students want to be self-directing, respected by those in academia, and treated as adults.
- 2. Set Goals. Adult students enter the institution with a preconceived idea of what they want to learn. This is in contrast to the traditional college age student to whom the institution feels it can dictate what is to be learned. (p. 8)

The traditional student is a continuing student. He continues in school from a secondary institution. The adult student is the

returning student. Unlike the traditional student, the adult student has returned to school after much thought has been put into his decision. The adult student generally retains many commitments that the traditional student does not as of yet have such as marriage, family, job and etc. These are all things that will influence what type of training he/she seeks.

The traditional student's learning patterns are strongly influenced by formal education. Learning from work experience has not yet influenced the traditional student as it has the adult student. The adult student has learned to think according to the demands that his job has placed on him, which can present problems for the adult. Hameister and Hickey (1977) state, "Prior work experience often produces difficulties and complications when attempting to relearn theory which may be contrary to experience" (p. 8).

Unlike the traditional student, the adult student who first comes to campus is unfamiliar with educational routine. He/she doesn't know the best courses to take, the most effective teachers, and admissions procedures. Career counselors can be an asset to someone who is unfamiliar with the educational routine. They may help to retain the student who would normally get lost in the shuffle.

The traditional student's primary time commitment to school is usually as a full-time student. In contrast, the adult's major time commitment is part-time. As has been stated earlier, adult

students have commitments which keep them from committing themselves full-time.

While the traditional student displays adequate communication and study skills, the adult student displays frequent deficiencies in this area. During the period of time adult students have been out of school, they may have forgotten any or all study skills learned from prior educational experiences. Also adults experience frequent interruptions in their study time (child care, meals, and working) which may in turn cause bad study habits.

Apps (1981) has listed five areas that when compared with the younger traditional student, the adult seems to have problems with in beginning college. These include problems with concentration, reading, writing, numbers, and finding resources. The information that Mr. Apps has given for each of these areas has been summarized.

Concentration. Adults have commitments, such as to a job and family, which cause interruptions in his/her study schedule. Sometimes it can be hard for the adult to find an hour during the day in which he/she can read the assignment for the next day. When they do find the time, they might have a tendency to daydream during that hour.

Reading. Many adults have not yet learned how to read intelligently. This is not to say that they aren't able to understand the material they are reading, but that they aren't effective readers. They haven't learned that different assignments may require different styles of reading and they read everything in the same way.

<u>Writing</u>. Writing is also a problem for many returning students. Some adults have worked in jobs where written communication skills was not important.

<u>Numbers</u>. Skills in the effective use of numbers can be a problem for adults. Some adults know how to work basic math problems, but don't understand the reasoning behind the procedures.

Finding Resources. Mr. Apps didn't make any comment on the adult's ability to find and use resources that colleges make available to students such as libraries, placement offices, student affairs offices, financial aid offices, and counseling offices. One can conjecture that when the adult first comes to college, that finding the resources available to him/her may be a problem because of being unfamiliar with the campus.

These problems really aren't abnormal. Most adults will take from 6 weeks to 2 months to sharpen their study skills. Then they will become effective students. Remedial courses offered to the adult might speed this process up.

The traditional student comes to college with minimal work experiences whereas the adult has a considerable amount of work experience. This is important for the career counselor to know. The adult cannot be counseled in the same manner as the traditional student is counseled. When counseling the adult, the counselor must take into consideration the adult's past work experience, because the adult has learned a great deal through that experience.

Through having worked, the adult has weeded out what he/she likes and doesn't like in a career. The traditional student as of yet has not had that opportunity and may need to be pointed into a career.

Hanmeister and Hickey (1977) point out that there is a difference in vocational goals as held by the two types of students:

Vocational goals for the traditional student are often unclear and/or latent; vocational goals of the new majority are usually quite clear. Goals of educational institutions are often contrary and in direct opposition to this new learner group. This exemplifies a need for revised programs rather than extended programs in higher education institutions. An ultimate goal for the new majority may be to receive a degree and/or modified movement on the career ladder. The ultimate goal of the traditional student is graduation and a concern for employment. (p. 8)

When compared with the traditional student, adults seem to have many weaknesses; on the other hand they have many strengths the traditional student may not have. In building programs for the adult, the career counselor needs to recognize and capitalize upon these strengths if the adult's career and educational needs are to be met.

In his study of 19,000 ACT Profile reports Wallace (1979) found that "The older adult is considerably more sure of choice of program of study and occupational goal" (p. 16). Of the 17-19 year olds, 46% were very sure of their current choice of program of study and 47% were very sure of their first occupational choice. The percentage of adults marking each of these areas was considerably higher, 76% and 73% respectively (p. 17). As was stated earlier in this study, adults are goal oriented. Even if

they didn't know what career to go into, they know that they have to do something to gain the skills that will help them to support themselves. Traditional students still have a sense of security from their parents. As a rule they haven't learned what it is like to have to support themselves.

Apps (1981) points out another adult strength. "Returning students are serious students" (p. 47). They have given their time and money towards getting a degree and improving their marketability as a professional. They don't want to waste time in college. They want to get down to business and get their money's worth.

Solomon and Gordon (1981) have reviewed a study done by C.

Robert Pace in 1979 that shows that adults are very involved in the academic aspects of college. He found that, "Adult students exert more effort than younger students in library use, classroom or course learning, faculty contact, writing and scientific laboratory work, but less effort in a multitude of nonacademic or extracurricular activities" (p. 95).

According to Wallace (1979), the adult student (age 23+) shows a greater degree of confidence in the following academic skills than do traditional age students (age 17-22): making educational and vocational plans, writing, study skills, math, and personal counseling. Reading was the only academic skills in which they showed less confidence.

Their relationship to instructors is another area in which adults seem to be stronger than the traditional student. "Returning

students are more argumentative" (Apps, 1981, p. 48). They have a tendency to question the material that is presented to them. Their past life experience acts as a filter through which they process the information they have been given by the instructor. Some of the material that they are taught is accepted. Other material is rejected. The traditional student is more passive having come from 12 to 14 years of schooling in which he/she has been force fed material. He hasn't yet learned to really question material.

"The returning student is ready to work. They want the class to work, and they want the instructor to work" (Apps, 1981, p. 48).

The career and educational needs of the adult student are vastly different from the needs of the traditional student. Yet, the adult student is being fitted into educational programs that are designed for the traditional student. If adult students are to benefit as much as the traditional student from receiving an education, then colleges and universities must make programs accessible to them.

Educational Problems of Adult Students

The adult student brings to the academic environment a number of problems. Brown (1971), Mongano and Corrado (1981), Knox (1979), Hamilton (1976), and Farmer (1971) all have addressed the educational problems of the adult student. It is important that these be listed here because they will in one way or another affect what career the adult will pursue and what program he/she will enter.

Several problems were common to all of the studies. These include lack of confidence, communication deficiencies, poor study skills, family and job responsibilities.

Martha L. Farmer (1971) has described some of the more common educational problems of adult students:

Poor Educational Background. As most returning students have been out of school for several years, whatever was learned during high school may be of limited value. Many adults feel (justifiably) that "refresher" courses are needed in basic skill areas before entering more advanced courses at the university level.

<u>Inadequate Study Skills</u>. Many adults lack effective study techniques and may need to relearn how to study before competing with other students.

Lack of Confidence. This problem often lies at the foot of many educational problems encountered by returning students. The counselor can help by enabling the student to understand his anxieties, and offer suggestions as to how the student can prove to himself that he is capable of doing college level work.

Unrealistic Expectations. This problem has two forms, ie., the tendency on the part of the student to either underestimate or overestimate his capabilities. The role of the counselor is to help the student to develop a realistic view of his abilities.

Irrelevancy and Conflict. Most adults have a clear idea of why they are returning to school, and many feel that some of the courses they are required to take to fulfill university rules are a waste of time and money, they may experience considerable frustration which could greatly diminish their desire for further education.

In addition, adult students will necessarily undergo some degree of "culture shock" when they come into contact with the college setting, he/she must somehow learn to deal with radically different attitudes and beliefs.

Improper Orientation. "Cutting through the red tape" at a large university may prove to be a major obstacle for some returning students. Long lines and endless paper

shuffling may well be enough to permanently discourage adults from returning to college. Some kind of orientation program is absolutely necessary if adults are not to be defeated before they start. (p. 42

- B. E. Knox (1979) lists several other educational problems that plague adults:
 - 1. Lack of confidence.
 - 2. The press of time.
 - 3. Long range goals
 - 4. Budgeting time.
 - 5. Family life.
 - 6. More experience in living.
 - 7. Employment
 - 8. The mechanics involved in attending school.
 - 9. Memories of previous school experiences.
 - 10. Being dealt with in a flexible manner without lowering requirements.
 - 11. Continuity in contacts with faculty and counselors.

Several of the problems that Knox (1979) has listed seem unclear. In an attempt to clarify their meaning as to why they constitute a problem for adults, a statement has been added by the author of this paper.

Long Range Goals. Meeting long range goals can be a problem for adults. Family and job commitments may require that adults complete an educational program in as short of time as possible. As a result adults may be hindered in enrolling in lengthy programs. They may have to decide to take up a career that requires a shorter length of time in training.

Budgeting time. Adults who are employed and have families, experience time pressure when they become students. Most do not know how to budget their time properly. Career counselors will

need to be able to teach adults who are students to be able to use their time effectively.

The mechanics involved in attending school. The mechanics involved in attending school are often frustrating to adults and cause them to either change programs or to withdraw altogether once enrolled. Admissions procedures are often frustrating to adults. At many colleges the admissions hours are between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. If an adult is working it is tough for him/her to take time off to seek admission to college. For many adults it is difficult to find time to study. Others may need to find a baby sitter for their children. If an adult needs to speak with his/her advisor he/she may need to take time off from work to do so.

Being dealt with in a more flexible manner. Because of an already heavy list of responsibilities, adults need more flexibility in course schedules, getting assignments completed, and grading. Colleges could plan evening and weekend courses to meet the adult's working schedule. Instructors could allow some flexibility in having papers turned in on time.

Continuity in contacts with faculty and counselors. Adults need to know when, where and how they can contact advisors, counselors, and other faculty members. There needs to be a system of support for the adult student coming from the academic community.

The list of educational problems that Mangano and Corrado (1981) came up with on the adult student strongly agrees with

Farmer's (1971) list of the most common educational problems. They also pointed out that many reentry adult students:

- are handicapped by communication deficiencies, poor study skills and low self confidence.
- are constrained by family and job responsibilities that interfere with their academic pursuits.
- are easily frustrated by institutional "red tape." (p. 33)

Some new information that they added to the list of educational problems of adult students are that adults:

- are highly motivated but anxious about their ability to compete with younger, "sharper" students.
- are hampered by misinformation concerning intelligence, learning, and memory.

Hamilton (1976), in his article, "The Third Century, Post Secondary Planning for the Nontraditional Learner," states that the adult learner poses one or more of the following types of problems for the educator. The Learner:

- has a vague self-perception; he/she has not defined learning goals clearly.
- is "ends" oriented, and generally suspicious of the educational process.
- is highly individualistic; few generalizations hold true in practical settings.
- needs his/her potential for learning assessed; a personalized approach is usually needed.
- is fearful of failure, impersonality, institutional bureaucratic procedures, and competition.
- requires good information and a clearly defined "access" road to meet his/her perceived needs.

- is responsive to "successful" educational experiences.
- needs to enjoy learning. After all, learning is a voluntary activity and may be avoided.
- wants some "standards" against which to compare his/her achievements.
- likely lacks some basic skills and has memories of failure in the traditional schooling process.
- has few guides for what is an "appropriate" experience; lacks adult oriented guidance.
- has uncertain career goals; is often motivated by negative values; e.g., "I must get out of this situation."
- fears that he/she has lost the ability to learn or think clearly.
- has limited time and energy reserves, and can only devote a few hours a week to a learning activity.
- may be critical and intollerant of the teaching designed for the traditional learner.
- requires financial assistance to engage in further education.
- needs to receive the "social benefits" of education, including camaraderie. (pp. 151-153)

Career counselors need to be aware that adults have a broad array of educational problems that could effectively destroy the continuing education plans of even the most highly motivated individual. It would be advisable for him/her to be trained in and to have a thorough knowledge of the problems that affect the adult student. Educational problems can have a great effect upon what career a person pursues.

Implications for Higher Education

The influx of adult students will have a profound effect upon higher education. Not only will colleges have to design programs tailored to meet the traditional student's needs, but they will also have to develop programs that will meet the special career and educational needs of adult students.

Research shows that the traditional student population will be on the decline. To replace these students, colleges and universities will need to look to the full and part time adult student population to fill the traditional student's seats. If colleges and universities are to attract and retain the adult student, then administrators and counselors will need to become more sensitive to the career and educational needs of adult students.

Many innovative career and educational counseling programs are already in existence indicating a growing concern by colleges and universities for adult students. Yet more research is needed to help educators understand the unique career and educational needs of adult students.

Limited research is being conducted to find out what the career and educational needs of adult students are. Most of the research has been conducted using primarily adult students rather than adults in general (Knox, 1979). To gain a better understanding of the career and educational needs of adult students, additional research will need to be conducted on the career and educational

needs of adults in general. We can only gain an adequate view of the career and educational needs of adult students if we know what the career and educational needs of the adult community at large are. Some variables that need further study are sex, age, economic status, race, educational background, and employment background.

A major implication of this study is that adults have their own unique set of career and educational needs. To effectively meet these needs, counselors and administrators will need to design programs tailored to meet the needs of adult students. Research reveals that it is grossly inadequate to extend programs designed for traditional students to adult students. Yet, this is happening on a large scale. Adults have lived long enough to have well formed values, priorities, and expectations. Adult students present a major challenge to colleges and universities. The difference between the traditional and nontraditional student must be recognized if we are to assist the nontraditional student.

The increase in the number of adult students will cause counselors and other student personnel practitioners to rethink student development philosophy. (Please see p. 6 for a definition of student development.) Student development today focuses on the developmental growth of the 17-23 year old. Now developmental philosophy will need to take into consideration changes over the life span. Career counselors will need to work with educators in developing programs designed for life long learning.

Many factors will influence the rethinking of student developmental philosophy. Adult students have commitments to job and family which present problems for class scheduling and admissions. Many adults do not have the time to devote to receiving an education that is permitted to younger students. Therefore services offered by career counselors and other student services practitioners must be relevant to the needs of adult students. Programs designed for traditional age students will not be taken advantage of by adults if they have no meaning for them.

Implications for Career Counselors

In looking back over this report several major implications for the career counselor seem to stand out:

- 1. Adults seem to have a strong desire for up to date information on careers. They want to find out quickly what career will best match their abilities. Career counselors of the 1980's and '90's must have at their disposal up to date information on careers available to adult students. In one sense they will become an information dispenser.
- 2. Career counselors will need to recognize that adults have their own separate set of career and educational needs. Counseling programs must be designed to meet needs adult students need. To counsel adults with programs designed for traditional students will be grossly inadequate.

- 3. Research indicates that adults do have heavy financial burdens, yet because many people feel that the adult should pay his own way, financial aid is not readily available to the adult student. The career counselor will have to help the adult student locate available aid. Career counselors in the future will also need to work closer with the financial aid office to make improvements in financial aid policy which will benefit adult students.
- 4. Career counselors of the future will need to have a knowledge of and a close working relationship with outside agencies that can provide support to the adult student while he/she is attending college. For example, many adults have a need for child support, but may not know what agency will help them with this need. A duty of the career counselor in this case will be to help the adult to find an agency that will provide child support to that adult.
- 5. Career counselors must help adult students find support on campus. This might come through introducing them to other adult students, instructors, and to administrators that are supportive of the adult student. It may come through group counseling sessions in which adults can share their problems and experiences with other adults.
- 6. Career counselors must be prepared to deal with personal problems. Research reveals that personal problems can have a strong influence on which career a person chooses.

- 7. Career counselors need to have an understanding of the aging process. They need to know that the needs of a 20 year old will be different from those of a forty year old.
- 8. Career counselors will need to have a good idea of what teaching is all about. They will need to have a good working relationship with the faculty members at their particular college.
- 9. "Counselors must be prepared to serve as coordinators of many services (i.e. employment, health, finances, social services, educational opportunities, child care, housing)" (Knox, 1979, p. 35).

Innovative Programs

Today there are many innovative career and educational counseling programs designed to meet the needs of adult students. Not every program is alike, but there seems to be a major theme that is consistent with many of the programs. The theme is that if colleges are to attract adults, then they must reach out to the communities the adults live in and make themselves known. They must become community based. This section will present two community programs.

The Adult Learning Specialist

The Adult Learning Specialist, as discussed by Flohr and Sweeny (1982, p. 44), provides a flexible personalized approach to assist adults in meeting their career and educational goals. He/she is a person who selected by a given college and trained in meeting

the career and educational needs of adults. For easy access by adults, this person is based in the community he/she serves. Flohr and Sweeny (1982) state, "There are two basic reasons for having the Adult Learning Specialist (ALS) based in the community: (1) personal contact with adult learners is the initial, important step in establishing the helping relationship, and (2) access is a must for those who need information and counseling" (p. 44).

To make contact with as many adults as possible, the ALS's off campus assignment is to make presentations to civic groups, work at developing strong working relationships with social service organizations, and hold discussions with employers and employees in business and industry. To provide adults with easy access to the ALS, colleges need to establish ALS centers at various sites in the community where people tend to gather. Such sites would include shopping malls, libraries, community centers, and churches. Places where people can get to easily. Each site would be assigned a day and a time for people to meet with the ALS.

The ALS's role is primarily that of facilitator. He/she attempts to answer any questions the adult learner may have about careers and the educational process. He/she provides the adult with up to date occupational information.

The ALS assists the adult with conducting a self assessment. Together they review past test data and other information on achievement that may be available to them. The adult is provided the opportunity to do self assessment through taking a battery of

interest, aptitude, and other inventories. After analyzing the data, the ALS assists the adult in making a decision as to whether or not to pursue further schooling. If the adult decides on further schooling, the ALS will guide him/her through college admission procedures and will help him/her plan an academic program that will meet the learner's career goals.

On campus, the ALS provides support to adult learners. He/she orients the adult learner to the campus, he/she introduces them to instructors, administrative personnel, and to other adult learners. The ALS also works with faculty, helping them to understand and be supportive of the adult learner.

A main task of the ALS as support personnel is to provide service by carefully monitoring the adult's process, problems, and by providing continuous career counseling. As the adults procede with their education, they may find that the career and educational plans they had made are inadequate, thus they should be encouraged to reevaluate their original plan.

<u>Personal Qualities</u>. The ALS should be someone who is people oriented, flexible, and have problem solving ability. He/she must have the ability to show positive regard, empathy, be self reliant, and self directed. He/she should possess a wide variety of work experiences so that he/she will have a feel for the real world of work.

<u>Training</u>. The ALS is a counselor and should have training and experience as a counselor. He should have knowledge of a college's

operations and services available to students. He needs to have a knowledge of the adult's development and learning styles, individual assessment and be a good communicator.

Educational and Career Services Community Outreach Program

Today there is much confusion amongst adults regarding career decision making. Much of this confusion is brought on by rapid advancements in technology. Preparation for the future is a growing concern as many people are experiencing lay offs, cutbacks, and total job phase outs in the labor market.

The Educational and Career Services Community Outreach Program provides an innovative community based career and educational counseling program. "The goal of this project has been to assist adults with special needs in overcoming obstacles which prevent them from realizing the educational and vocational options available to them in their community" (New Jersey State Department of Education, 1982-83, p. 4). To meet this goal several program objectives were designed:

- 1. To provide support and guidance to targeted groups in the career transitioning process.
- 2. To stimulate in participants with vocational needs an awareness of those needs and of the accessibility of services to meet those needs.
- 3. To act as a broker between targeted groups with needs and services, agencies, or other people who can meet those needs.
- 4. To provide a replicable outreach transitioning service model easily adaptable for other community groups and institutions.

- 5. To collect data and information on existing business and industry to be included in the updated resources guide.
- 6. To disseminate developed training materials, instructional techniques and evaluation procedures resulting from this project. (p. 3)

To meet each of these objectives, the Educational and Career Services Community Outreach Program has established a seminar entitled, "Shifting Gears and Moving Ahead." The purpose of this seminar is to provide participants with increased knowledge with which to make informed career and educational decisions.

The seminar is spread out over a three week period and is divided into two group sessions followed by an individual counseling session held during the third week. Each session is 2 hours in length.

Session I. This session introduces the seminar. Background information is given to the participants on how the program was started. Also to help the students feel more at ease the facilitator is to share some of his background in changing careers. During this session an overview of the program is given discussing what two group sessions would and would not cover. In this session values are also examined through holding a group activity in which a positive work experience of each participant's life is examined and acted upon values are determined. Job myths and realities are discussed. An exercise is completed to delineate talents, abilities, and areas of importance to the participant. Following this the facilitator discusses John Holland's theory of vocational

choice and the Self-Directed Search Inventory, which the participants complete as homework for the following week.

Session II. During session II the Self-Directed Search
Inventory results are discussed with the goal of building self
confidence and of increasing option awareness in relation to
career choices. Two discussion and activity periods are held.
The first involves skills identification in which strenths are
identified to increase familiarity and participant self confidence.
The second discussion and activity period relates to goal planning
and personal change with the focus on decision making and
implementation of goals. During the wrap up part of session II,
resource materials are presented and alternative ways to reaching
goals are discussed.

Individual Counseling Follow up Session. The participant is given the option to hold a one on one counseling session with the facilitator the following week. Appointment times are scheduled at the conclusion of the second group session. During the one on one counseling session, the facilitator may, review with the individual participant seminar material, may clarify personal career direction with the participant, may give personal assistance in interpreting the results of the Self-Directed Search, or may refer the participant to another agency for help.

Publicity and Recruitment of Participants. The New Jersey State
Department of Education (1983) states, "The most successful
recruiting was accomplished through the listing of the program in

the hosting adult community education program's course offering brochure" (p. 6). This has proved to be successful as the brochure is mailed throughout the community each semester. Also traditional forms of publicity continue to be used such as newspaper want ads, calendar announcements, and newspaper press releases.

Chapter Three

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

More adults are attending college than ever before. The rate of growth for adult students has been phenomenal. They are the fastest growing segment of the college student population. From 1974 to 1979, the adult population grew from a group constituting 39% of a total enrollment of 8,000,000 college students to a group constituting 48% of a total enrollment of 10,000,000.

The growth of the adult student population is both a benefit and a challenge to colleges and universities. Research reveals that the enrollments of the traditional student are on the decline. The growth of the adult student population is a plus in that colleges and universities can draw from this population to fill the empty seats left by traditional students. A challenge is presented to colleges and universities in that, if colleges and universities are to attract, enroll, and retain the adult student, then they will have to reevaluate career and educational programs that have originally been designed to meet the career and educational needs of traditional students. Programs will need to be developed that will meet the career and educational needs of the adult student. Berner (1980) calls this, "Marketing the University" (p. 57).

To develop programs that will meet the needs of adult students, it is important for career counselors to know the characteristics

of the adult nonstudent population as well as those of the adult student population. It is important for the career counselors to know what the potential student who may come to college looks like. Will the majority of the students be black, male, from the upper class, or will they be white, female, and from the upper class?

Arbeiter (1976), studied the adults in career transition to find out what their characteristics are. This group of people is the most likely group of adults that will come to college of the nonstudent population. Arbeiter found out, "that 36% of the American population between the ages of 16 and 65 is in a career transition status and these adults are predominately female, white, between 20 and 39 years of age, with one to three children living at home" (p. 1). This study gives career counselors some idea of the adult nonstudent population that might come to college.

Susan Hill (1982) studied the characteristics of the adult student population. She found that according to the U.S. Census Bureau's 1976 Survey of Income and Education that there were 4,852,000 adult students enrolled in college in 1976. Of these 818,000 were full time students and 2,062,000 were part time. This fact indicates a strong need for part time programs for adult students.

Adults are a heterogeneous group. They have a diverse range of characteristics. Yet, with this diversity there are certain commonalities to consider when looking at the adult student.

"(1) Older students appear to be marked by transitory uncertainty,

(2) strong goal orientation and a sense of immediacy, (3) muted aspirations, (4) information thirst" (Flohr and Sweeny, 1982, p. 43).

Arbeiter (1976) studied the career and educational needs of adults in career transition by extracting information from them on the services they desire. He collected information to describe the degree to which adults were interested in 20 specific counseling services. These services were grouped into 4 categories, information, counseling, guidance, and training. He found that information was the largest type of career service desired by adults, followed by guidance, counseling, and training.

Welsh-Hill (1980) and Perone (1977) studied the concerns of adults. Their findings were similar to Arbeiter's (1976). Both of these studies found that adults were highly concerned with receiving information on jobs and with knowing more about their vocational abilities.

Financing is a major concern for adults that needs to be taken into consideration by counselors and administrators when developing career and educational programs for the adult student. CIRP (Cooperative Institutional Research Program) has annually surveyed adults since 1966 and have found that over 60% of adults in college express some concern about their ability to pay for their education (Solomon and Gordon, 1981).

Subgroups of the adult student population such as women and part time students have their own special set of financial needs.

Women generally have a smaller income than that of men and are not able to receive benefits that many men have such as the G.I. bill or subsidies from employers because many women are housewives. Part time adults generally have a hard time getting financial aid because most policies require that students be enrolled at least half time.

In developing programs to meet the career and educational needs of adults, it is important to recognize that differences do exist between adults and traditional students. Their characteristics as well as their career and educational needs differ. They do not come to college on the same developmental level. The adult generally has many commitments the traditional student does not have such as to marriage, family, job and etc. The adult also has more work experience behind him/her. In light of these facts, the adult must not be counseled in the same way as the traditional student is.

If colleges and universities are to get the adult student to fill the vacancies left by the traditional student, they will have to reach out to the adult in the community that he/she lives in. They will have to make their career services known and easily accessible. Two such innovative programs are "The Adult Learning Specialist" as discussed by Flohr and Sweeny (1982) and the Educational Career Services Community Outreach Program sponsored by the New Jersey State Department of Education (1982-83).

Conclusions

In an age of declining enrollments of the traditional college age student, colleges and universities will be looking to the adult student population to fill their seats. However, a challenge is presented to colleges and universities by the adult student population in that they have their own separate set of career and educational needs to be met. If colleges and universities are to meet the challenge presented to the adult student population, then they must have to build programs designed to meet the career and educational needs of adult students. This will require further research into the career and educational needs of adult students to understand how adults mature, grow and age throughout the life cycle.

Recommendations

I recommend the development of a philosophy of adult counseling. This is a need recognized by many writers as being fundamental to meeting adult counseling needs.

Secondly, I recommend that career counselors work to convince college administrators of the importance of counseling programs for adult students. It is only when administrators are convinced of the importance of such programs will they spend the money needed to support these programs.

It is also important for career counselors to find out what the career and educational needs of adults are in his/her community. This can be accomplished through taking surveys of adults in the community and meeting with adults on campus to find out what they need.

Another recommendation is that counselors of adult students make themselves highly accessible to adult students. Their office should be set up in places where adult students can get to them easily. For example, a counseling office might be set up on campus in places where adults frequent the most, such as student unions, libraries, and admissions buildings. To make themselves more accessible to the working student, they could establish office hours during the evenings or on weekends.

Counseling centers could be made more accessible to adults through career counseling by telephone. An example of a successful project of this nature is a project located in Providence, Rhode Island, The Career Education Project. "The Career Education Project provided short term, telephone based career counseling and referral for adults, primarily women, featuring educational and vocational information, emotional support, clarification of alternatives, job hunting tips, financial aid, and community referral services" (Roach, Reardon, Alexander, & Cloudman, 1983, p. 72).

Research shows that adults have a strong need for information.

I would recommend that counselors have on hand up to date career
and educational information which is easily accessible.

Being that financial aid is not readily accessible, career counselors need to have a knowledge of agencies that adults can

turn to for aid. Such agencies include:

- 1. The Veteran's Administration
- 2. The U. S. Public Health Service
- 3. The U. S. Department of Labor (Job Training Partnership Act)
- 4. Virginia Assistance Programs
- 5. Scholarship and Grant Programs Administered by Colleges and Universities
- Assistance Programs for Special Groups. (Miles & Clause,
 1981)

I would strongly recommend that counselors survey their communities to determine adult financial needs and make college administrators aware of these needs. I would urge colleges and universities to make financial aid available to both full and part time adult students. It would be costly to make changes in financial aid policy, but in the long rum it would be a sound investment. By making financial aid available, colleges would be adding another incentive to attract adult students. Good financial aid programs should be offered on both the graduate and undergraduate levels.

Career counselors need to develop techniques and programs to assist adults in clarifying their values, assessing their interests and activities, examining their preferences for life styles and career patterns, strengthening their self concepts, and acquiring a sense of control over their own lives.

Career counselors also need to develop techniques and programs that will help the special subgroups of adults such as women and minorities. These groups of adults have their own special set of career and educational needs.

To make themselves more visible to the adult population, colleges and universities could set up programs similar to the Adult Learning Specialist in which career counseling centers are located at community based sites. Many adults aren't aware of the counseling services provided by colleges. If they are aware of the services many times they feel that they have to be enrolled at that institution to take advantage of the services. As a result they don't make use of the services available to them.

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