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WEBB, PATRICIA CALLAHAN

A STUDY OF PERSONAL, ECONOMIC, AND INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS GERMANE TO DROPOUT, STOPOUT, AND LOW GRADUATION RATE OF ADULTS ENTERING THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

A STUDY OF PERSONAL, ECONOMIC, AND INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS GERMANE TO DROPOUT, STOPOUT, AND LOW GRADUATION RATE OF ADULTS ENTERING THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

PATRICIA CALLAHAN WEBB

Norman, Oklahoma

1984

A STUDY OF PERSONAL, ECONOMIC, AND INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS GERMANE TO DROPOUT, STOPOUT, AND LOW GRADUATION RATE OF ADULTS ENTERING THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

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A STUDY OF PERSONAL, ECONOMIC, AND INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS GERMANE TO DROPOUT, STOPOUT, AND LOW GRADUATION RATE OF ADULTS ENTERING THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Attrition was a phase of higher education that had been neglected by college and university administrators until the last few years. The lack of concern was due to the unparalleled increase in the number of students from 1950 to 1970, wherein little thought was given to a reduction in enrollment because administrators anticipated that the number of high school seniors would be more than adequate to fill the vacancies of the nonpersisters in the following year.[1]

Though many studies concerning college dropouts had been made, the problem of attrition persisted.[2] Since college dropouts had been found to be an exceptionally varied group in view of age race, educational background, and socio-economic status, no

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[1]Alexander W. Astin, "Student Persistence: Some Stay, Some Don't--Why?" College and University, Vol. 48, No. 4 (Summer 1973), p. 553.

[2]John Summerskill, "Dropouts from College," The American College (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1962), p. 627

identifiable set of characteristics to describe and predict which students would dropout was readily available.[1]

According to New York State Education Department figures, it was predicted that the number of traditional-age students on college campuses would decrease by at least 168,000 students by 1992,[2] although the total enrollment for this prediction was not reported. With respect to national total enrollment of students in higher education, the projection for 1978 to 1988 was that the traditional-age student enrollment would decrease by 200,000 students.[3] Therefore, institutions of higher education must focus on increasing student admissions and decreasing student attrition.[4] Affected most by attrition were the large state institutions.[5] Inflation and declining economic growth seemed to have had a profound financial effect on institutions, parents, students, and alumni in supporting higher education.[6]

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[1]Dennis Joseph Dulniak, "Predicting Freshmen Dropouts at Montana State University Using Selected Institutional Data," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Montana State University, 1981), p. 91.

[2]"Adults: No Collegiate Cure-All," American School and University, Vol. 52, No. 7 (March 1980), p. 65. (Reprinted in Inside Education (October 1979).

[3]William Graybeal, "How Changes in Enrollment Will Affect Higher Education," Today's Education, Vol. 70, No. 1 (February-March 1981), p. 54, 56.

[4]Golam Mannan and Gerald Preusz, "Reducing Student Attrition on Urban Campuses," College Student Journal, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Spring 1980), p. 19.

[5]Loren Pope, The Right College (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1970), p. 92.

[6]Graybeal, "How Changes in Enrollment Will Affect Higher Education," p. 54.

Fifty years ago, educators believed that (1) the college campus was only for the younger student; (2) the older student might influence the younger student; (3) the older student had missed the opportunity of an education years before; and (4) there was no place for the part-time student. After World War II, these concepts were altered by the veterans returning to institutions of higher education. This influx of new students was due to the G. I. Bill of Rights. Many adults came to the campuses for the first time to get an education which possibly had not been financially available to them prior to government financing. Though there was much doubt by educators concerning the abilities of these new students and the integration of these new students into campus life as a whole, these doubts proved to be poorly founded. Even though the returning G. I.'s had been out of the secondary system for several years, these adults proved to be excellent students--sincere and capable. This experience of admitting young adults into higher education proved that adults could successfully return to the classroom after a lapse of several years.[1]

Never before had there been as many adults, age 25 years and over, taking college courses.[2] Adults made up over 36 percent of all

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[1]Fred Harvey Harrington, The Future of Adult Education (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publisher, 1977), p. 34, 35.

[2] Adults: No Collegiate Cure-All," p. 64.

college student enrollment in 1977.[1] This fast growing segment, age 22 to 34 years, resulted during the baby boom.[2]

Mid-life changes in careers, more leisure time, women going back into the job market or entering the job market for the first time, and professional educational requirements were all factors in influencing adults to turn to higher education.[3] With over 125 million adults considered as potential learners,[4] it was thought that these adults could possibly be the answer to the survival for many institutions in the 1980's.[5] In view of these findings, it was noted that the traditional-age of college enrollment was declining. Consequently, the adult population should be recruited by institutions, and every effort should be made for the retention of these students.

Little time had been devoted to determine the variables for dissatisfaction of adult students at an institution of higher education. Because of the unrewarding and unattractive experiences by adult students in higher education, it appeared that these

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[1]U.S. Bureau of Census, "School Enrollment--Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1977," Current Population Report, Series P-20, No. 333 (Washington, D.C.: Department of Commerce, 1979), p. 3.

[2]K. Patricia Cross, Adults as Learners (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1982), p. 7.

[3]Astin, "Student Persistence: Some Stay, Some Don't--Why?", p. 66.

[4]Carol B. Aslanian and Henry B. Bickell, Americans in Transition (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1980), p. 4.

[5]"Adults: No Collegiate Cure-All," p. 66.

unstimulating experiences influenced the stopping out, the dropping out, and/or the low graduation rates.[1]

A study by Purcell was conducted at the University of Oklahoma to determine if there were significant differences between the adult student, age 20 years or over, and the traditional-age students entering the University of Oklahoma as freshmen. Purcell found no statistically significant difference between adult students and younger students in view of sex ratios, but she did indicate differences in marital status, predictive ability on ACT scores, composite ACT scores, selection of majors, changing majors, academic performance, stopout rates of part-time students, stopout rates of full-time students, dropout rates of part-time students, and graduation rates.[2] This study was conducted as a follow-up of the Purcell study in order to determine the factor or factors of the low graduation rate of those adult students who entered the University of Oklahoma as freshmen, Fall, 1977.

Purpose of the Study

No hierarchy of variables for nonsuccess of adult students in higher education had been established. Therefore, the purpose of this study was an attempt to isolate factors relative to the problem of low graduation rates of adult students in higher education. Once these factors could be identified, administrators of institutions of higher

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[1]Frank Newman, "A Challenge to Higher Education," The Prospects for Higher Education, ed. Nicholas Hobbs (Atlanta: Southern Newspaper Publishers Association, 1971), p. 20, 21.

[2]Chris Aubrey Purcell, "An Academic and Retentive Comparison of Adult to Younger Students Entering a Four-Year Institution of Higher Education," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1982).

education could consider them in terms of the nonsuccess of adult students in higher education and strive to alter or eliminate those variables that precipitated the nonsuccess.

Statement of the Problem

Dropout and stopout problems of adult students at institutions of higher education were usually manifested in five ways: (1) demographics, (2) aspirations, (3) attitudes, (4) economic status, and (5) academics. This did not mean that these continuances could be separated into five global categories. Specifically, the problem of this study was an attempt to identify the personal, economic, and institutional factors that precipitated nonsuccess of adult students at the University of Oklahoma who enrolled as freshmen in Fall, 1977.

These factors were separated into four categories according to the research objectives: I—Personal, II—Economic, III—Institutional, and IV—Reasons for Change. The categories seemed feasible and workable in view of purpose and items posed for obtaining the pertinent information. The specific questions listed under each category follow:

Questions

Questions Relevant to Category I—Personal:

1. What was the ethnic orgin of the adult student?
2. What was the sex of the adult student?
3. What was the age of the adult student, Fall, 1977?
4. What was the marital status of the adult student in Fall, 1977?

5. What was the number of children living at home while the adult student was attending the University, Fall, 1977?
6. What was the adult students major field of study?
7. What was the number of semesters completed at the University?
8. What was the adult students present academic status?

Questions Relevant to Category II—Economic:

9. Was the adult student employed while attending the University? If so, full-time or part-time?
10. Did the adult student commute to the University campus from beyond the Metrocomplex? If yes, how many times per week? How many miles one-way?
11. What problems did the adult student face in commuting?

Questions Relevant to Category III—Institutional:

12. Was the academic atmosphere of the University harmonious, and was the social climate friendly?
13. Was adequate information available concerning the registration and enrollment process?
14. Was the coursework stimulating?
15. Were there adequate course offerings?
16. Was the attitude of the instructor/professor favorable to adult students?
17. Were instructors/professors available for assistance in coursework?
18. Were the methods of teaching effective?

Questions Relevant to Category IV—Reasons for Change:

19. What was the reason for entering the University as an adult freshman?
20. What were the reasons for non-continuance of enrollment at the University?
21. What services could the University of Oklahoma implement to help the adult student?

Significance of the Problem

Many institutions of higher education were concerned about the dropout, the stopout, and the low graduation rate of adult students. Since adults made up such a large part of the enrollment today, and since adult enrollment was projected to be a greater part in the future, it seemed important that the factors germane to dropout, stopout and low graduation rates be known so that measures could be taken to decrease this phenomenon at the University of Oklahoma.

Undoubtedly, various factors contributed to dropout or stopout of adult students enrolled in this institution of higher learning. If the administrators were aware of the relevant factors of the nonsuccess of adult students, the institution could better meet the needs of these students, perhaps. Once the isolated factors were identified and properly treated, there possibly could be an increase in student retention and decrease in student attrition in the adult student population.[1]

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[1]Mannan and Preusz, "Reducing Student Attrition on Urban Campuses."

Definitions of the Terms

For the sake of consistency the definitions which follow were taken from the Purcell study since this was a follow-up investigation:[1]

Adult student - An adult student is one who was 21 years old or over when entering the University of Oklahoma as a freshman, Fall, 1977.

Dropout - A dropout is any student who was not enrolled at the University of Oklahoma during the last semester of the fourth year, Spring, 1981.

Full-time student - Full-time student is an enrollment status where a student is enrolled in twelve or more credit hours.

Part-time student - A part-time student is an enrollment status where a student is enrolled in fewer than twelve hours.

Stopout - A stopout is a student who was enrolled at the beginning of the four-year period, Fall, 1977, left school for at least one semester or more and subsequently re-enrolled during the four years, Fall, 1977, through Spring, 1981.

Traditional-age student - A traditional-age student is a student entering the University before the age of 21 years.

Organization of the Study

Chapter I set forth the Introduction, Purpose of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Questions, Significance of the Problem, Definitions of Terms, and Organization of the Study. The Review of Literature was presented in Chapter II. The Methodology was delineated in Chapter III; the Results of the Study in Chapter IV; and the Summary, and Discussion were presented in Chapter V.

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[1]Purcell, Dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1982.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The lifelong learning concept has drastically changed the impression of the traditional idea of the college campus. According to the Bureau of Census, United States Department of Commerce, the 35 year old and over age group has the highest growth rate of all age groups enrolled in college.[1] This age shift in population took place between October, 1972, and October, 1976,[2] causing major changes to take place in higher education.

With the decline in traditional-age students the next fifteen years will necessitate the recruitment of adults to fill the void caused by this decline.[3] It will be the purpose of this study to discover the factors relating to the dropout, stopout, and low graduation rates of the adult student population at the University of Oklahoma. For the purpose of this study the review of literature will be divided into two sections: Adults in Education and Adult Characteristics.

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[1]U.S. Bureau of Census, Series P-20, No. 335, p.3.

[2]Thelma C. Simpkins, "College at Middle Age,"College Student Journal, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Spring 1980), p.3.

[3]Mary E. Wolfgang and William D. Dowling, "Differences in Motivation of Adult and Younger Undergraduates," Journal of Higher Education, Vol. 52, No. 6, (November-December 1981), p. 640.

Adults in Education

No identifiable research on needs, services, counseling, and skills of adults in higher education was found. Much literature had been written concerning the education of adults, however, most of the writings were obsolete.[1] Literature was inadequate in describing the important factors of adults in higher education in order to prevent low graduation rates.

The theory that adults cannot adequately learn had been disputed by many theorists. The returning veterans of World War II proved that adult students could be successful learners in institutions of higher education, considering that the maturity, motivation, and past experiences of adults compensated for whatever impairment in learning the adult had experienced.[2]

According to Cross, there will be an estimated adult population, twenty-two years and over, of 155 million people by 1985.[3] Of these 155 million adults, over 30 million were presently enrolled in educational courses.[4]

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[1]Lewis C. Solmon and Joanne J. Gordon, The Characteristics and Needs of Adults in Postsecondary Education (Lexington: D. C. Health and Company, 1981), p. 1.

[2]Harrington, The Future of Adult Education, p. 2.

[3]Cross, Adults as Learners, p. 19.

[4]Simpkins, "College at Middle Age," p. 3.

Why did adults turn to college campuses after a lapse of time since their completion of the requirements for a secondary education? The Bishop and Van Dyk study stated that students returned for varied reasons. With modern technology today, a person had to continually keep abreast of current changes and upgrade his/her skills to provide advancement in his/her chosen profession.[1] Also, more colleges were being conveniently located in order to make campuses accessible to a greater majority of persons. These colleges were offering courses that were designed to fit the specific needs of more adults.[2]

Simpkins catalogued many factors for adults returning to the campus as did Bishop and Van Dyk. Yet, the author thought that many adults returned to the campuses to develop their full capabilities, and for self-gratification. After having received a degree, many expected to obtain a better position in the market place.[3]

Other trends for the increase of returning adult students to education involved more women who were entering the work force for the first time or who were returning at a later date with a need to upgrade obsolete skills. This generation of adults also had more leisure time than before.[4]

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[1]John Bishop and Jane Van Dyk, "Can Adults Be Hooked on College?" Journal of Higher Education, Vol. 48, No. 1 (January/February 1977), p. 40.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Simpkins, "College at Middle Age," p. 3.

[4]"Adults: No Collegiate Cure-All," p. 66.

The children born during the baby boom, beginning in 1947, were the traditional-age students starting college in 1964 and 1965.[1] It was at this time that the colleges and universities were besieged with traditional-age students; therefore, expansion in all areas--curricula, faculty, and physical plant--were necessary. This period of expansion continued until the early 1980's. With this overflowing of younger students, the adult student was not needed, nor was the adult student wanted; so once again, the adult student was labeled second-rate.[2]

The 1980's and 1990's will change the appearance of the college campus, since the United States will be dominated by a nation of persons in the middle years.[3] The 30 to 44 year-olds will be the largest age group by the year 2000 with the 45 to 60 year-olds closing the gap.[4]

A prediction of the potential number of possible traditional-age college students for the 1980's and 1990's can be calculated with a fair degree of exactness because these potential students have already been born.[5] A decline in the number of births started in 1963 and continued for the next ten years.

Graybeal stated that the 1988 matriculation figures for the nation would show a drop of 200,000 students from the 1978 enrollment

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[1]U.S. Bureau of Census, Series P-20, No. 335, p. 3.

[2]Harrington, The Future of Adult Education, p. 36.

[3]Cross, Adults as Learners, p. 3.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Graybeal, "How Changes in Enrollment Will Affect Higher Education," p. 54.

number.[1] To offset this decline in traditional-age enrollees, it would be necessary to recruit at least one million full-time adult students.[2] Approximately 86 percent of the traditional-age students were enrolled full-time, while only 39 percent of the adults were enrolled as full-time students.[3] According to the Bureau of Census, only 18 percent of all the full-time students reported in 1977 were the older students.[4] In a study completed at the University of Oklahoma by Purcell, it was found that out of 129 entering freshmen adults in Fall, 1977, 28 percent were full-time students and 72 percent were enrolled as part-time students.[5]

Solmon and Gordon suggested that it required five part-time students to equal one full-time student,[6] or it required three to six part-time students to net for the institution the same amount of money as one full-time student.[7] Therefore, five million part-time adult students would be needed to make up for the declining loss in enrollment that would be expected in 1988.[8]

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[1]Graybeal, "How Changes in Enrollment Will Affect Higher Education," p. 54.

[2]Solmon and Gordon, The Characteristics and Needs of Adults in Postsecondary Education, p. 4.

[3]Ibid.

[4]U.S. Bureau of Census, Series P-20, No. 335, p. 3.

[5]Purcell, Dissertation, University of Oklahoma, p. 77.

[6]Solmon and Gordon, The Characteristics and Needs of Adults in Postsecondary Education, p. 4.

[7]"Adults: No Collegiate Cure-All," p. 64.

[8]Solmon and Gordon, The Characteristics and Needs of Adults in Postsecondary Education, p. 4.

Since the adult population was increasing at a fast rate, and the traditional-age group was decreasing, it was imperative that the institutions of higher education face the challenge of recruiting the adult population. The administrators of these institutions must face this challenge to alleviate the projected loss expected in the declining enrollment of the traditional-age college students.

Adult Characteristics

Several studies had shown that the learning ability of adults reached its maximum at the ages of 27 to 29 years, yet there was no drastic impairment in learning ability in the following years. This fact showed that the older student could be successful in learning in later years.[1]

The mature student was in school because he wanted to be and was more earnest about his/her pursuit of learning.[2] Older students had become self-sufficient; they had found themselves; they had discovered what they desired in life. Therefore, the mature adult would set more realistic goals and worked toward reaching them.[3] The adult student became richer in experiences as he matured, and these experiences were important elements in the advancement of their knowledge.[4]

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[1]Frances A. Plotsky, "The Ivory Tower and Students Older Than Average," Journal of the National Association for Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Fall 1975), p. 21.

[2]Ibid.

[3]John H. Bicknell, "The Older Student Experience in Higher Education," Journal of the National Association for Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Fall 1975), p. 18.

[4]Ibid.

Among the resources of the mature adult learners were the dedication to devoting themselves to the educational process, a devotion to learning, a commitment to work diligently to achieve the most from their opportunity to learn, and perseverance to successfully reach their established goals.[1] They also possessed a curiosity that made them eager and desirous of learning, and were grateful for the opportunity of furthering their education and were most willing to share their varied experiences with other students.[2]

Recent trends showed that more people over the age of 35 years were attending institutions of higher education than before.[3] The number of adult freshmen students, 25 years of age and over, increased 11 percent during an eight year period from 1970 to 1978.[4] The motives for the clientele returning to the classroom in such numbers were as numerous and diverse as their interests.[5] Some students returned because they wanted to enhance their life-styles and enrich their lives. Many reasons were career related, such as displeasure with employment, a wish to change and prepare for a different career,

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[1]Simpkins, "College at Middle Age," p. 3, 4.

[2]Ibid.

[3]U.S. Bureau of Census, Series P-20, No. 335, p. 3.

[4]Solmon and Gordon, The Characteristics and Needs of Adults in Postsecondary Education, p. 13.

[5]Elinor Lenz and Marjorie Hansen Shaevits, So You Want to Go Back to School, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1977), p. 4.

or to better their opportunity for advancement on their present jobs.[1] Intellectual growth and a feeling of self-accomplishment were also given.[2]

In a study of 57,689 adults it was found that most women were enrolled in higher education for job-related reasons, and the G. I. Bill influenced the increasing number of men students. The workers in the field of technology and civil service employees were more likely to be enrolled because job advancement often depended on upgrading their education.[3]

Rawlins cited in her study of adults over the age of 30 that the reasons for their returning to college fell into three categories. These were career advancement, self-fulfillment, and the removal of previous obstacles.[4]

One of the most important issues, which faced the student was the selection of the school that was right for that particular

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[1]Bicknell, "The Older Student Experience in Higher Education," p. 17, 19.

[2]John C. Stewart, "The Urgency of Need for Counseling Services of University Extension Adult Students," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Arizona State University, 1976).

[3]Bishop and Van Dyk, "Can Adults Be Hooked on College?" p. 48, 49.

[4]Melanie Eisiminger Rawlins, "The Needs Identified by Over-Thirty Undergraduate Students Concerning Their Experiences of Returning to College," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1977).

student.[1] When the decision was reached, the authors found that many adults chose the college nearest his/her home.[2]

The steady increase in the number of community colleges had placed a college within commuting distance of almost anyone who might choose to attend.[3] In the Solmon and Gordon study, it was concluded that over three-fourths of the adult students lived within a radius of 50 miles of the college of their choice, while one-third to one-half lived fewer than ten miles from their choice of school.[4] The Chickering study revealed that the commuting student selected his/her college entirely upon its proximity to his/her home.[5] Often this was the only institution to which the student applied, and he/she did so because it was the one that was most accessible to him/her for personal reasons.[6]

Students who were reared in rural areas or in small towns were more apt to choose the community or two-year college, in preference to the four-year institution. These students were usually not as well qualified to cope with the demands and red tape of the larger institutions.[7]

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[1]Lenz and Shaevits, So You Want to Go Back to School, p. 53.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Solmon and Gordon, The Characteristics and Needs of Adults in Postsecondary Education, p. 27.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Arthur W. Chickering, Commuting Versus Resident Students (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1974), p. 89.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Alexander W. Astin, Preventing Students from Dropping Out (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1975), p. 138.

A greater number of adults during a four-year period in the mid-1970's enrolled in two-year colleges than did the younger students. Adults attending the four-year institutions were usually enrolled in less exclusive schools than those schools chosen by their younger counterparts. Other factors entered into the adult's preference for the smaller establishment, such as; the adult student was often employed, the conditions of acceptance were frequently less demanding, and tuition rates were usually lower at a two-year college.[1] One college can be chosen over another because of certain programs or courses offered that can be related to present job or career; cost of enrollment was lower; and the school was within commuting distance.[2]

Many adult students were not prepared for college. Yet, many adults would not be as poorly qualified as they felt themselves to be.[3] Adults were less sure of their ability to function well in the cultural environment of a college or university after having been absent from the classroom for a considerable length of time. In the Rawlins study it was found that a great concern of returning adults was that of finding time to study with children around the home, working in study time with their employment, and being expected to

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[1]Solmon and Gordon, The Characteristics and Needs of Adults in Postsecondary Education, p. 35.

[2]Ibid.

participate in community activities.[1] Many were apprehensive that they would not be able to learn.[2] Results of data amassed by Solmon and Gordon pointed out that most adult students would profit from special help. They found in the four-year period from 1974 to 1978, that more than one-third of returning adult students were never in a college preparatory program.[3]

In 1978, the mature student was found to be less qualified in all fields of learning, and was unable to successfully budget his/her time for study. Before entering the university, over 50 percent of the adults expressed concern about being placed in a classroom environment with the traditional-age students. After a very short period of time, the adults felt that the age difference was of no concern to either the adults or traditional-age students.[4] Adult students often felt the need for extra tutoring, particularly in mathematics.[5] Although there were many nice, young, traditional-age students available for tutoring, this had not proved to be successful because they had not had sufficient experience in the methods of

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[1]Rawlins, "The Needs Identified by Over-Thirty Undergraduate Students Concerning Their Experiences of Returning to College," p. 22.

[2]Lee Porter, "Adults Have Special Counseling Needs," Adult Leadership, Vol. 18 (March 1970), p. 275.

[3]Solmon and Gordon, The Characteristics and Needs of Adults in Postsecondary Education, p. 51.

[4]Rawlins, "The Needs Identified by Over-Thirty Undergraduate Students Concerning Their Experiences of Returning to College."

[5]Solmon and Gordon, The Characteristics and Needs of Adults in Postsecondary Education, p. 51.

teaching, and also, these students would have been the same age as the adults own children.[1]

The mature students, especially women, frequently experienced displaced and disoriented feelings when they found themselves adrift in the midst of the cultural sea structured for the young on today's campuses. She was overcome with an awareness of her inadequacy in competing with the traditional-age student.[2] Along with her lack of confidence in her ability to master college level work, [3] and doubtful of her own aims, she was confronted with opposition from others who planted seeds of doubt as to her capability to perform well.[4]

According to Preston, the older student returning to college was more conservative in his/her ideas concerning teaching methods and learning environment. He/She preferred instructor-centered classes with regular attendance and being given definite assignments rather than studying independently. Preston also found that approximately 66 percent of the adult students had to study more, spent more time in the library, and used the audio visual centers more than the younger students. Also, more than one-half of the adult students found the homework often took longer than the student had time to complete; opposed the idea of "pass-fail" grades; had no particular interest in

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[1]Janet Riddell and Sam Bingham, "The Older, Wiser Student," Ms., Vol. 2, No. 3 (September 1973), p. 88.

[2]Lenz and Shaevits, So You Want to Go Back to School, p. 202.

[3]Rawlins, "The Needs Identified by Over-Thirty Undergraduate Students Concerning Their Experience of Returning to College."

[4]Judith Berman Brandenburg, "The Needs of Women Returning to School," Personnel and Guidance Journal, Vol. 53, No. 1 (September 1974), p. 13.

student activities or college government; and had difficulty in adjusting their lives to home duties, employment, and attending college. However, the academic records of the older students showed them to be higher achievers, more serious of purpose, and more persistent than the younger students.[1]

According to the Cooperative Institutional Research Survey, over three-fifths of the adults had some monetary worries about the expense of their education.[2] This anxiety was due to the fact that many adults were not cognizant of the funds that were procurable,[3] or they possibly did not fall under the guidelines set by the governmental agencies.[4]

The married adult student that was living with husband or wife did not have as much financial concern as the single adult student or one that was divorced or widowed.[5] About one-third of the older adults would usually finance their education through savings and employment, but the younger adult possible would not have this means

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[1]William G. Preston, "Adults as Regular Community College Students: A Comparative Analysis of Some of Their Characteristics and Perceptions and Those of College-Age Students. Summary of Findings and Conclusions," (Diablo Valley College, Pleasant Hill, California, 1971), ERIC Research Report: ED 121 368.

[2]Solmon and Gordon, The Characteristics and Needs of Adults in Postsecondary Education, p. 39.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Brandenburg, "The Needs of Women Returning to School," p. 16.

[5]Solmon and Gordon, The Characteristics and Needs of Adults in Postsecondary Education, p. 40.

available.[1] Also, the young adult would usually have more home responsibilities than the older adult.[2] In the Boston Study on Higher Education for Urban Women, Riddell and Bingham found that in the Boston area about 50 percent of the adult evening students were financially assisted by private companies.[3]

Part-time adults were less apt to get aid than the full-time students.[4] Married women who were part-time students possibly would not be eligible to receive aid because of their husband's income.[5] Scholarships and grants were available from several sources, but few of these were tailored to meet the needs of the adult student.[6]

Rawlins stated that the family of the adult student would have to lower its standard of living, because there would be only one salary to support the family and pay the school expenses of the student. Another concern of the student's family was the arranging of course hours to coincide with the time their children were in school. This arrangement of class hours was necessary in order for the student not to feel guilty about leaving the children. [7]

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[1]Solmon and Gordon, The Characteristics and Needs of Adults in Postsecondary Education, p. 41, 47.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Riddell and Bingham, "The Older, Wiser Student," p. 86.

[4]Lenz and Shaevits, So You Want to Go Back to School, p. 223.

[5]Brandenburg, "The Needs of Women Returning to School," p. 16.

[6]Lenz and Shaevits, So You Want to Go Back to School, p. 223.

[7]Rawlins, "The Needs Identified by Over-Thirty Undergraduate Students Concerning Their Experiences of Returning to College."

Summary

Older men and women are returning to the college campuses in increasing numbers. At first, it was thought that this was unwise since the colleges and universities had been structured for the younger student, and the older student was already "over the hill" and would not be able to learn. But, the adult students had brought with them maturity, experience, and a desire to learn, which more than made up for any loss of retention or concentration. Their appreciation for a chance to extend their educational learning had made them work harder in whatever programs they had undertaken.

The mature students were returning to the college campuses for many reasons. The escalating economy had forced many to seek further education to improve their chances in the marketplace. Many returned as adult students because they did not have the opportunity for advanced education at an earlier age.

The majority of mature students chose the community colleges for financial reasons and family responsibilities, and also, the enrollment costs, entrance requirements, and tuition were usually lower at these institutions. Furthermore, a community college was often within a shorter commuting distance so the student could continue to live at home while attending classes, as many of those adults held full- or part-time jobs.

With the decline in enrollment of traditional-age students, the adult student would become more important as a means of helping to alleviate the financial burden placed upon the universities by this decline. It was imperative that the four-year colleges and universities recognized the needs of this growing segment of their

enrollment in order that the institution could implement changes needed to prevent the high rate of dropouts, stopouts, and low graduation rates of adult students. More adults needed to be recruited and retained to fill the vacuum caused by the declining enrollment of the traditional-age students.

CHAPTER 111

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study was concerned with the investigation of the characteristics of those adult students who were nonsuccessful in pursuing a degree at the University of Oklahoma. To isolate a variety of factors concerning particular subjects and programs of nonsuccessful adult students was the intent of this study.

The study was designed to obtain information concerning the current status of factors associated with the dropping out or the stopping out of adult students. The concern was to collect sufficient information to describe nonsuccess, not necessarily for immediate implementation of the findings in an educational program, but rather to contribute to fundamental knowledge as to the variables of nonsuccess. Within this study data were collected to answer questions concerning the personal, economic, and institutional status of the adult students involved, as well as, the reasons for change.

This follow-up study was conducted to determine the status of nonsuccessful adult students who entered the University of Oklahoma, Fall, 1977. It seemed appropriate to inquire and to seek objective information regarding the current status of these students and their opinions in terms of the adequacy of training.

Out of the findings of this descriptive survey could come the basis for the formulation of fruitful hypotheses about the dropping out, the stopping out, and the low graduation rates of adult students. As a general background to policy formulation, factual information was needed on nonsuccessful adult students and their opinions. This objective knowledge could provide a sound basis for administrative actions which might enhance a higher rate of success for adult students and lower the percentage of dropouts and stopouts if applied.

Subjects

Since this study was a follow-up to the Purcell[1] study, it was deemed desirable to use the same students; therefore, the names of the adult students were obtained post hoc from those originally identified. From the population of 129 adult students, age 21 years and over, who enrolled as freshmen at the University of Oklahoma, Fall, 1977, nine were graduated, nine were special students, four were auditing courses, and 14 were non-American students. These 36 students were eliminated, which left a total of 93 students who were considered as nonsuccessful. Because recent addresses nor telephone numbers for 51 of the 93 remaining subjects could not be located, the sample was comprised of 42 adult students. Upon further scrutiny it was found that one subject was killed, three were out of the country, four refused to cooperate, and five could not be reached, therefore, their names had to be eliminated which resulted in a total sample of 29 usable subjects.

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[1]Purcell, Dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1982.

Procedure

The interview method was used because it seemed more flexible and yielded data that subjects would be reluctant to give on a questionnaire. Furthermore, it was felt that the interview would produce more accurate and honest information. The interview guide was developed in terms of the objectives of the study so that the responses would be more valid. The validity of the procedure was determined through pretesting the guide and the process. A pilot study was conducted according to the recommendations, criteria, and specifications as delineated by Kornhauser and Sheatsly,[1] Gay,[2] Ary, Jacobs, and Razovich,[3] and Wiersma.[4] Since interviews can be both structured and unstructured, both formats were incorporated into the guide.[5]

In light of the trends noted and recommendations suggested in the Purcell study[6], the interview guide was designed to (1) cover common issues of adult dropouts in higher education, (2) ask questions

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[1]A. Kornhauser and Paul B. Sheatsly, "Questionnaire Construction and Interview Procedure", presented in Appendix B, Research in Methods of Education (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976).

[2]L. R. Gay, Educational Research (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1976), p. 133-35.

[3]D. Ary; L. C. Jacobs; A. Razovich, Introduction to Research in Education (New York: Rinehart and Winston, 1979).

[4]W. Wiersma, Research Methods in Education: An Introduction (Itasca, Illinois; F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc. 1980).

[5]D. J. Fox, The Research Process in Education(New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Incorporated, 1969), p. 545-546.

[6]Purcell, Dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1982.

about possible limitations of nonsuccess, (3) investigate the usefulness of facilities and services provided by the University of Oklahoma, and (4) determine the factors involved in nonsuccess. The guide included demographic information and questions asking for information and narrative comments on several issues related to nonsuccess. Because many of these students could have been exposed to personal and academic hardships, they could now be in a particularly helpful position to critically evaluate those nonsuccess issues. Nevertheless, to see their present as well as their past experiences of college in retrospect could possibly shed light on important variables which contributed to nonsuccess.

Demographic information was gathered to address Personal factors. Items related to Category II reflected responses to the objective and monetary conditions, and Category III inquired about conditions and attitudes of institutional training and a combination of both, and Category IV attempted to determine reasons for change.

This follow-up study involved the following procedure:

1. To identify the population to be surveyed and selected the sample.
2. To generate items appropriate to the research problem and questions posed.
3. To pretest the procedure and interview guide, a representative group was used in a small pilot study.
4. To revise accordingly in order to alter questions which were apparently unclear, those that elicited negative reactions, and solicited undesirable information.

5. To contact subjects for consent and scheduling of interviews.
6. To prepare data for analysis.
7. To analyze data.
8. To interpret and present the findings.

Items 1 through 8 under Category I were tabulated and reported in percentages. These data were arranged in order to describe the adult students who comprised the sample. This analysis involved the counting of the number of responses as they occurred under the various categories or classifications by item for the subjects involved.

The purpose was to determine if specific demographic variables as reported were pertinent to non-success. The demographic picture of the dropouts and/or the stopouts could document the need for program planners to be knowledgeable about the unique needs of the non-completers. It could facilitate the efforts of the decision-making persons to consider, to change, or to improve the quality of services to all students.

Items 19, 20, and 21 were designed to obtain a perspective on factors which could influence or be related to other aspects of nonsuccess which could be different from or additional to those responses given in the second and third parts. These responses were tabulated and reported in terms of frequency and submitted to a qualitative analysis.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF STUDY

Introduction

Data from the 29 adult students were obtained through the interview technique. The findings herein were based upon the information provided by them. The quantitative findings will be reviewed and then the qualitative findings will be discussed. The tallied frequencies along with the percentages, where appropriate, are presented in the tables for each of the respective categories.

Category I--Demographics

Table I shows the demographic characteristics of the adult students for items one through eight. It should be pointed out that only white students comprised this sample. Of the 29 respondents nine (31%) were single males, six (21%) married males, three (10%) single females, nine (31%) married females and two (7%) divorced females. No divorced males were represented. The next item shows the specific age if one person comprised the sample or average age if more than one person was included. The age is reported in years at the time of first enrollment by sex and marital status. The age range and average age show that the single persons were younger upon first enrollment than the married or divorced persons. The single males and females were about the same age, 22 and 25 years respectively. The highest average age was 35 years for married males and the two married females

TABLE 1

Category I—DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS
(n = 29)

	Males								Females											
	Single				Married				Single				Married				Divorced			
	*a	b	c	d	a	b	c	d	a	b	c	d	a	b	c	d	a	b	c	d
n	3	4	2	-	-	6	-	-	1	2	-	-	1	7	-	1	1	1	-	-
%	33	44	22	-	-	100	-	-	33	67	-	-	11	78	-	11	50	50	-	-
Age	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22	-	-	-	35	-	-	38	23	31	-	-
$\bar{X}$ Age	22	24	22	-	-	35	-	-	-	25	-	-	-	31	-	-	-	-	-	-
$\bar{X}$ No. of Children at Home	-	-	-	-	-	.83	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.33	-	-	1	2	-	-
Major	**1B	2B	1CH	-	-	1B	-	-	1HS	2U	-	-	1B	1B	-	1ED	1OT	1U	-	-
	1J	1M	1CR	-	-	1EN	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2ED	-	-	-	-	-	-
	1U	1U	-	-	-	1L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2N	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	3U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2U	-	-	-	-	-	-
$\bar{X}$ No. of. Sem. Comp.	5	2.3	8	-	-	2.3	-	-	4	1	-	-	1	1.7	-	0	6	0	-	-

*Academic Status
- a. Attending
- b. Not attending
- c. Graduated
- d. Transferred

**Major Field of Study
- B Business
- CH Chemistry
- CR Criminology
- ED Education
- EN Engineering
- HS Health Science
- J Journalism
- L Language
- M Medicine
- N Nursing
- OT Occupational Therapy
- U Undecided

were 35 and 38. Of the married students, more females had children living at home than males. One divorced female had no children at home, while the other had two. The stated major field of study was so diversified that no pattern emerged. Nevertheless, the most frequent declared major field was business for single males and education for married females. The next most frequent response was business and nursing for married females, two (22%) for each. More single males and married females successfully completed at least one semester of work. Four married males completed one semester, one married male completed eight semesters of work, and one divorced female completed six semesters. In view of academic status, four (44%) single males, six (100%) married males, two (67%) single females, seven (78%) married females and one (50%) divorced female quit school. Two (22%) of the male subjects were graduated and one married female transferred to a four-year college. Six (21%) of the students reported that they were still attending the University.

Category II--Economic

Table 2 lists the summary of responses to Items 9, 10, and 11 under Category II--Economic. Item 9 called for responses to "Were you gainfully employed while attending O.U.? If yes, Full-time___, Part-time___?" One hundred percent of male subjects were employed where all married students were employed full time and six (67%) of the single males were fully employed. Three (33%) of the single males were employed part time. The percentage differed among female subjects in that the largest percentage of married females were

TABLE 2

Category II--ECONOMIC
(Number of responses by item)

	Males								Females											
	Single				Married				Single				Married				Divorced			
	*a	b	c	d	a	b	c	d	a	b	c	d	a	b	c	d	a	b	c	d
9. Were you gainfully employed while attending O.U.?																				
Full time Empl.	2	3	1	-	-	6	-	-	0	1	-	-	0	4	-	0	-	1	-	-
Part time Empl.	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
10. Did you commute to the campus?																				
Com-mute	0	0	1	-	-	2	-	-	0	0	-	-	0	2	-	1	0	0	-	-
			30 mi. 2/wk			30 mi. 2/wk								55 mi. 3/wk		55 mi. 3/wk				
11. Did you encounter any problems in commuting?																				
No students encountered problems in commuting.																				

*Academic Status: a. Attending b. Not attending c. Graduated d. Transferred

working (78%) where four (57%) were employed full time. The one divorced female worked full time.

Item 10: "Did you commute to the campus? Yes___ No___. If yes, number of times per week___, number of miles driven one way___". The responses are summarized in Table 2 and show that only a few persons commuted. More female than male students drove to the campus and they drove more frequently and at greater distances. None of the subjects expressed difficulty with commuting as indicated under Item 11.

Category III--Institutional

The tabulation of responses to Items 12 through 18 under Category III--Institutional, were summarized and presented in Table 3. With the exception of the frequency of responses to Items 13, 14, and 18 all responses were positive. In view of fairly large discrepancies existing among some items, chi-square tests were performed across frequencies of response to all items with cells collapsed as to academic status, marital status, and sex. All Chi-square values exceeded probability levels greater than the .05 level of significance. Consequently, with the responses combined on those three variables, the frequency of responses showed that all items were favorably responded to by ninety percent (90%) of the combined sample. Only responses to two items had lower percentages, that is, Item 13 with 83% and Item 18 with 79% positive results. No statistically significant differences in frequency of responses to Item 12 through 18 existed between sex, among academic status or marital status.

TABLE 3

CATEGORY III--INSTITUTIONAL
(Number of responses by item)

	Males								Females											
	Single				Married				Single				Married				Divorced			
*a	a	b	c	d	a	b	c	d	a	b	c	d	a	b	c	d	a	b	c	d
12. Was the academic atmosphere at O.U. harmonious and the social climate friendly?																				
Yes	3	4	2	-	-	4	-	-	1	2	-	-	1	6	-	1	1	1	-	-
No	0	0	0	-	-	2	-	-	0	0	-	-	0	1	-	0	0	0	-	-
13. Was adequate infomation available concerning the registration and enrollment process?																				
Yes	2	3	2	-	-	6	-	-	0	2	-	-	1	6	-	1	1	0	-	-
No	1	1	0	-	-	0	-	-	1	0	-	-	0	1	-	0	0	1	-	-
14. Was the course work stimulating?																				
U	3	3	2	-	-	6	-	-	1	2	-	-	1	6	-	0	1	1	-	-
S	0	1	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	0	-	-	0	1	-	1	0	0	-	-
N	0	0	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	0	-	-	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	-
15. Were course offerings adequate?																				
U	3	3	2	-	-	6	-	-	1	2	-	-	1	6	-	1	1	1	-	-
S	0	1	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	0	-	-	0	1	-	0	0	0	-	-
N	0	0	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	0	-	-	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	-
16. Were the faculty and staff at O.U. favorable to adult students?																				
F	3	3	2	-	-	6	-	-	1	2	-	-	1	6	-	1	1	0	-	-
DC	0	1	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	0	-	-	0	1	-	0	0	1	-	-
O	0	0	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	0	-	-	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	-
17. Were instructors/professors available outside the classroom for assistance?																				
U	3	3	2	-	-	6	-	-	1	2	-	-	1	6	-	1	1	0	-	-
S	0	1	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	0	-	-	0	1	-	0	0	1	-	-
N	0	0	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	0	-	-	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	-
18. Were methods of instruction effective?																				
U	3	3	2	-	-	6	-	-	1	2	-	-	1	2	-	1	1	1	-	-
S	0	1	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	0	-	-	0	5	-	0	0	0	-	-
N	0	0	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	0	-	-	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	-

*Academic Status: a. Attending b. Not attending c. Graduated d. Transferred

Category IV--Reasons for Change

Because of the qualitative nature of responses to Items 19, 20, and 21, the kinds and frequency of responses were delineated and presented in Table 4. Since responses were so varied across sex, age, and marital status, they were combined in an attempt to arrive at a significant profile. In simply ranking the total number of frequencies given for a reason to enter the University was that of wanting a degree and the second highest was for want of something to do. The few others expressed reasons seemed to varied to justify a pattern of good cause.

Responses to Items 20 and 21 appeared to be too individual to really show a pattern. Nevertheless, noteworthy was the fact that one variable seemed dominant and emerged--that of strong negative attitudes and disfavor of having graduate assistants teach classes. Nearly 50% of the responses indicated poor teaching by graduate students under Item 21. Five persons responded unfavorably to the attitude of graduate assistants in Item 20. Registration, enrollment, and scheduling appeared to be of much concern, also.

TABLE 4

Category IV--REASONS FOR CHANGE
(Number of responses by item)

	Males								Females											
	Single				Married				Single				Married				Divorced			
	a	b	c	d	a	b	c	d	a	b	c	d	a	b	c	d	a	b	c	d
19. Reasons for entering the University?																				
Could afford it.	1				1								2							
Enjoy going to school.	1								1				2							
Just discharged from service.		1	1		1															
New job direction.		1			1															
No job.		1			1								1							
Service connected.	1																			
Wanted a degree.			1		1					1			1		1		1	1		
Wanted something to do.		1			1					1			1	1						
20. Reasons for non-continuance of enrollment?																				
Boring.		1																		
Didn't like it.		1			1								1							
Discourtesy of Grad. Asst's.					2								3							
Find a job.										1										
Financial problem.		1																		
Getting out of service.					1															
Home responsibilities.					1								1					1		
Hot love affair.										1										
Illness.													1							
Leaving State.		1			1										1					
No time to study.					1															
21. How and in what manner could people at the University have helped you in being successful?																				
Improve on enrollment procedures.					1				1	1			1							
Furnish better counseling.	1	1	1																	
Better teaching by Grad. Asst's.		3	1		2					1			1	5						
Scheduling.	1				3									1				1		

*Academic Status: a. Attending b. Non attending c. Graduated d. Transferred

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, AND DISCUSSION

Summary

This study involved the factors germane to dropout, stopout, and low graduation rate of adult students that enrolled at the University of Oklahoma in Fall, 1977, as a freshman student. The original population contained names of 129 adult students, 21 years of age and over. From this number nine were graduated, nine were special students, four were auditing courses, and 14 were non-American students. Of the 93 remaining students neither current addresses nor telephone numbers could be located for 51 adults. Thus, the total was comprised of 42 students. Further investigation revealed that one had been killed, three were out of the country, four refused to cooperate, and five could not be located. The final sample consisted of 29 usuable subjects.

The purpose of this study was to identify the factor or factors germane to the dropout, stopout, and low graduation rate of the adult student. The findings of this study may be used by the responsible personnel at the University of Oklahoma to decrease this phenomenon.

The categories investigated were divided into four specific areas. Category I pertained to the demographics of the adult student, Category II pertained to the economic status, Category III reflected

the institutional factors, and reasons for change were incorporated in Category IV.

Findings

A summary of the outcomes of this investigation was as follows:

1. There were no non-whites represented in the sample.
2. The sample was comprised of 52 percent male and 48 percent female.
3. At the time of enrollment, Fall, 1977, the single adults were younger than the married adults or those that had been divorced.
4. Of the total sample, 41 percent were single adults, 52 percent were married and 7 percent were divorced.
5. More female students had children living at home than male students.
6. The major field of study produced no pattern, although business was declared most frequently.
7. More single males and married females successfully completed one semester of work. Four married males completed one semester, one married male completed eight semesters of work, and one divorced female completed six semesters.
8. The academic status showed that six adults were currently attending the University of Oklahoma. Two male students had graduated from the University since 1981, and

the one female student that transferred to another four year institution was graduated from that college.

9. All male subjects were employed with all married males employed full time, where six single males were employed full time and three part time. Of the nine married female students, four were employed full time and three part time. Of the three single females, one was employed full time and one part time. One divorced female subject worked full time; the other divorced female did not work.
10. Most adult students lived in the Metrocomplex area. Of those that commuted, the females commuted more frequently and at a greater distance.
11. No subjects expressed difficulty in commuting.
12. Ninety percent of the adult students responded favorably to the academic atmosphere at the University.
13. Eighty-three percent responded favorably to adequate information concerning registration and enrollment.
14. Ninety percent of the subjects indicated that the course work was stimulating.
15. Ninety-three percent expressed adequacy of course offerings.
16. Ninety percent indicated that the faculty and staff were favorable to adult students.
17. Ninety percent indicated that instructors/professors were available outside the classroom for assistance.
18. Seventy-nine percent expressed that the methods of instruction were usually effective.

19. Most adults stated their reason for entering the University was to obtain a degree whereas a few students enrolled for something to do.
20. Seventeen percent of the adults were dissatisfied with graduate assistants teaching the courses. Other reasons given for nonsuccess were being discontented with college work, home responsibilities, and leaving the state.
21. Forty-five percent of the adult students stated that better teaching methods were needed by the graduate assistants. Twenty-one percent indicated a need for the reviewing of class schedules, whereas, eleven percent of the adult students stated a desire for easier enrollment procedures and the provision counseling services.

Discussion

The above statistics merely reflected the existence of what was rather than the quality or degree of dissatisfaction. The result of the present survey appeared to indicate a higher dropout rate among married students not only for reasons of economics, but because of their dissatisfaction with Graduate Assistants teaching the courses, differences in attitude and orientation to the program,and scheduling of courses. As the University of Oklahoma continues to expand in the future, it seems imperative that the adult education program should retain sufficient flexibility to prepare adult students to meet their goal. It seems inevitable that the qualified student of the future will extend his/her search for programs he/she desires, if University personnel remain insensitive to the needs of adult students. It appears both reasonable and desirable for the University of Oklahoma

to carefully evaluate and implement the needed changes in instruction and other related aspects of training.

In general, the investigator found the interview approach to be helpful, sensitizing her to the perceptions of the adult student's problems. With the accumulation of data, it should be possible to generate categories of comparison that could be used to improve the effictiveness of the service. Demographic comparisons seemed to be useful, but cell members were too small in this investigation to permit confident interpretation. The data also appeared useful in generating ideas for inservice sessions for faculty and areas for administrative inservice sessions which were suggested by the responses. On the negative side, the interview technique appeared to be limited because of time and brevity. The small sample size and nature of responses could appreciably limit generalizability of the findings.

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APPENDIX A

1748 Winchester
Ardmore, OK 73401
June 15, 1983

Dear Adult Student:

I am a doctoral candidate in Education at the University of Oklahoma, and your assistance would be greatly appreciated in the collection of data for a dissertation study.

The study deals with the low graduation rate of the adult students who entered the University of Oklahoma as freshmen, Fall, 1977, and will investigate the possible causes of dropping out and stopping out of the University before graduation. Results from this study will provide the University with criteria for implementing changes for the benefit of adult students so that he/she may obtain a bachelor's degree.

Please take just a few minutes to answer the enclosed questionnaire and return in the envelope provided. If possible, please return to me by July 15, 1983, so that I may process the returns. The reporting of this study will in no way indicate individual names or cities.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Patricia Webb

Enclosures

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide

Date of Interview_____
Time of Interview_____
Subject Number_____

SECTION I:

1. Race:_____ 2. Gender: Male_____ Female____

3. Age at time of enrollment, Fall, 1977:_____

4. Marital status when entering the University:
   Single___ Married___ Divorced/Separated___ Widowed___

5. Number of children living at home while attending O.U.:_____

6. Major field of study at O.U.:_____

7. Number of semesters successfully completed at O.U.:_____

8. Present academic status of student?
   Attending O.U._____ Transferred to Junior College_____
   Transferred to another four year college_____
   Transferred to Vocational-Technical School_____

SECTION II:

9. Were you gainfully employed while attending O.U.? Yes___ No___
   If YES, Full-time_____ Part-time_____

10. Did you commute to the campus? Yes___ No___
    If YES, number of times per week_____
    number of miles driven one-way_____

11. Did you encounter any problems in commuting? Yes___ No___
    If YES, Please specify._____

SECTION III:

12. Was the academic atmosphere at O.U. harmonious and the social climate friendly? Yes___ No___
    If NO, please specify_____

13. Was adequate information available concerning the registration and enrollment process? Yes___ No___

14. Was the coursework stimulating?
    Usually_____ Sometimes_____ Never_____

15. Were course offerings adequate?
Usually_____ Sometimes_____ Never_____

16. Were the faculty and staff at O.U. favorable to adult students?
Favorable_____ Don't care_____ Other (Specify)_____

17. Were instructors/professors available outside the classroom for assistance?
Usually_____ Sometimes_____ Never_____

18. Were methods of instruction effective?
Usually_____ Sometimes_____ Never_____

SECTION IV:

19. Reasons for entering the University?

_____
_____
_____

20. Reasons for non-continuance of enrollment?

_____
_____
_____

21. How and in what manner could people at the University have helped you in being successful or in attaining your goal?

_____
_____
_____