No Student Left Behind: 
Adult Learners and Financial Literacy Programming

Matthew Nettleton – Inceptia

WVASFAA Spring Conference 2016
Shifting Demographics

Students need financial education

Students are increasingly “non-traditional”
Shifting Demographics

Non-traditional
• Aged 24+
• Employed FT
• Has dependents
• Delays enrollment
• Single parent
• GED

Students are increasingly “non-traditional”
The New Traditional: Addressing Financial Literacy and Delivery Needs for Adult Learners

A Study from Inceptia
August 2014
Methodology

In August of 2014, Inceptia conducted an online survey of college students regarding financial education for nontraditional learners. For ease of data aggregation in this research brief, the term “nontraditional” was further defined as students 25 and older (referred to as adult learners). We also collected data from a small control group of >24. A total of 1,114 students completed the survey.

The main objectives of the study were:

• To identify financial attitudes and behaviors among adult learners
• To determine if adult learners were offered financial education opportunities at their school, and subsequent level of engagement
• To identify financial education topics pertinent to adult learners
Sample Demographics

A total of 1,444 individuals completed the survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Sought</th>
<th>% of Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Degree</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>% of Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24 or under</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 44</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 or older</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DETAILED FINDINGS
# Self Rating By Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>24 or Under</th>
<th>25 to 44</th>
<th>45+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How would you rate your level of financial education?</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to effectively manage my personal finances.</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you rate your level of financial education in comparison to your peers?</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Indicator: Retirement Planning

Retirement Knowledge - By Age
Have Retirement Plan

- 17% for 24 or Under
- 53% for 25 to 44
- 74% for 45+
Indicator: Retirement Planning

How Much is Needed for Retirement

- 24 or Under: 12% (Know how much they need) vs. 88% (Do not know)
- 25 to 44: 22% (Know how much they need) vs. 78% (Do not know)
- 45+: 43% (Know how much they need) vs. 57% (Do not know)

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### Paying for College by Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Funds</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>24 or Under</th>
<th>25 To 44</th>
<th>45+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid from the federal government or from the school</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work, Pay as I go</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savings, Investments</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts from Family or other private parties</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loans from family or private parties</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer/Tuition Reimbursement</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Benefits</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Financial Aid Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>24 or Under</th>
<th>25 To 44</th>
<th>45+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuition and Fees</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Expenses</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Food</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rent/housing</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transportation</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Credit Card bills</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Medical bills</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trips/vacations</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Financial Education

% Offering

- Information and/or links on the Financial Aid website: 67%
- Information and/or links on your School's main website: 59%
- One-on-one counseling by campus faculty or staff: 46%
- In-person group workshops by campus faculty or staff: 44%
- Session as part of student orientation: 39%
- In-person group workshops by a professional from the industry: 37%
- For credit academic course: 36%
- Online tutorials: 34%
- One-on-one counseling by a professional from the industry: 30%
- Online self-paced course: 28%
- Non-credit academic course: 27%
- In-person group workshops by trained student peers: 27%
- One-on-one counseling by a trained student peer: 25%
- Not sure or Don't know: 27%
# Financial Education

## % Participation

- None: 57%
- Information and/or links on the Financial Aid website: 28%
- Information and/or links on your School's main website: 20%
- Session as part of student orientation: 15%
- One-on-one counseling by campus faculty or staff: 13%
- For credit academic course: 11%
- Online tutorials: 9%
- In-person group workshops by campus faculty or staff: 8%
- In-person group workshops by a professional from the industry: 8%
- Online self-paced course: 7%
- One-on-one counseling by a professional from the industry: 6%
- Non-credit academic course: 4%
- In-person group workshops by trained student peers: 4%
- One-on-one counseling by a trained student peer: 3%
Financial knowledge is overestimated

Knowledge is nothing without application (& vice versa)

Adult learners need financial education, too

Greater effort is needed to engage students to participate
ADULT LEARNER THEORY
Who is the Adult Learner?

- 39% of undergrads are 25+
- 73% fall into at least one of the following categories:
  - Delays enrollment after high school
  - Attends part-time
  - Works full-time
  - Is considered financially independent
  - Has dependents
  - Is a single parent
  - Does not have a high school diploma (*NCES*)
How is the Adult Learner different?

- Adults can and do learn throughout their lifetime
- Adults change over time
- Adults accumulate experiences & prior learning that they bring to bear on current learning
- The role of time in the life of the adult learner has important implications in the learning process
- Adults bring an established sense of self and an inclination to protect this self from perceived threats that might arise in the learning process
- Both self-directedness and relatedness to others contribute to how adults prefer to learn
- Adults are not mature children, nor are children immature adults

(MacKeracher)
Kolb’s Learning Cycle

1. Concrete Experience
2. Observations & Reflections
3. Developing new ideas & meaning
4. Active Experimentation: Testing & Doing
Mezirow’s Transformative Learning Theory: 10 phases

The Learner:

- Experiences a disorientating dilemma
- Has an emotional reaction (guilt, fear, anger, shame)
- Assess present assumptions
- Understands one is not alone
- Creates plan of action
Mezirow’s Transformative Learning Theory: 10 phases

The Learner:

• Explores new roles
• Tries on new role
• Develops confidence in new role
• Integrates new perspective into life

*Critical Reflection & Reflective Discourse anchor the entire process*
SO, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?
Implications & Considerations

- We are constantly learning & applying
- Age & development affects learning
- Experience & prior learning color current learning: this is huge!
- Time: increasing past, fleeting, pressured present, & FINITE FUTURE
- Adults have a perceived established identity
Adult learner framework

- Maximize autonomy
- Relevant subject matter
- Give purpose
- Incorporate application
- Utilize feedback
How can we facilitate adult centric learning?

- Reflection exercises (journals, I am & I am from, discourse)
- Dialogic discussions vs. lecture models
- Experiential learning (service, action, vocational) vs. classroom only
- Multiplying voices, medium, & perspectives in the learning process: TED Talks, film, music etc.
How can we facilitate adult-centric learning?

- Teacher-student as co-learners vs traditional hierarchy
- Examining our own assumptions & philosophies - do we know how they affect our interactions with students?
Resources and References

- Inceptia Research Brief: **The New Traditional: Addressing Financial Literacy and Delivery Needs for Adult Learners**
- Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning by Jack Mezirow
- Transformative Learning in Practice by J Mezirow, E. Taylor, and Associates
Final Thoughts

• Financial knowledge is overestimated
  • Required programs can help students realize they don’t know what they don’t know

• Knowledge is nothing without application (§ vice versa)
  • Students have to connect what they’ve learned with real-life application; application may not always indicate knowledge

• Adult learners need financial education, too
  • “Adult” does not automatically translate to financial capability

• Greater effort is needed to engage students to participate
  • Adult learners have different learning styles; harness that difference to deliver content in a relevant and meaningful way
QUESTIONS?
Contact Info

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THANK YOU WVASFAA!