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# DISTANCE NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS: *THE OTHER, OTHER, SPECIAL POPULATION*

JOHNA WRIGHT

SR. ACADEMIC ADVISOR

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

Contact Information:

[johna@tamu.edu](mailto:johna@tamu.edu)

979-436-0626

# AT THE END OF THIS PRESENTATION, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO:

- Recognize the definition of a non-traditional distance student
- Identify the advisor's role with this student population
- Explore strategies to successful advising with this student population

# ACADEMIC ADVISING CORE COMPETENCY RELATION

Core Competencies in the Relational component (skills academic advisors must demonstrate) include the ability to:

R1 Articulate a personal philosophy of academic advising.

***R2 Create rapport and build academic advising relationships.***

R3 Communicate in an inclusive and respectful manner.

***R4 Plan and conduct successful advising interactions.***

R5 Promote student understanding of the logic and purpose of the curriculum.

R6 Facilitate problem solving, decision-making, meaning-making, planning, and goal setting.

***R7 Engage in on-going assessment and development of the advising practice.***



How do you define a non-traditional student?

## NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENT DEFINED:

Graduate online learners often display some of the characteristics of “nontraditional students,” such as items 2, 3, 4, and 5 below. Choy (2002) defined nontraditional students as those who have one or more of the following seven characteristics:

1. Delays enrollment (does not enter postsecondary education in the same calendar year that he or she completed high school);
- 2. Attends part time for at least part of the academic year;**
- 3. Works full time (35 hours or more per week) while enrolled;**
- 4. Is considered financially independent for purposes of determining eligibility for financial aid;**
- 5. Has dependents other than a spouse (usually children, but sometimes others);**
6. Is a single parent (either not married or married but separated and has dependents); or
7. Does not have a high school diploma (completed high school with a GED or other high school completion certificate or did not finish high school). (pp. 2-3)



How do you define distance education?

## DISTANCE EDUCATION DEFINED:

Education that uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor synchronously or asynchronously.

Technologies used for instruction may include the following: Internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcasts, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite or wireless communication devices; audio conferencing; and video cassette, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if the cassette, DVDs, and CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with the technologies listed above.

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**Simplistic definition:  
Non-traditional distance student –  
Really busy**





**Definition of a non-traditional distance  
student:**

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**Non-traditional distance student –  
A student who is completing an educational  
program using technology and has other  
responsibilities other than their education.**



What are some advising needs of non-traditional students?

*Think about their experiences!*

# NONTRADITIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCES

## Motivations to Return

- A personal desire to complete what they started
- Being a role model for their children
- Financial incentives

## Academic Challenges

- Acclimating to an academic regimen
- Balancing school with family life
- Lack of support from the university

## Generation Gap

- Social alienation (no real peers)
- Discrimination (professors and other students)
- Academic priorities (group work logistics)

## Support System

- Family
- Faculty (approachable/responsive)

# IMPORTANT SERVICES FOR DISTANCE STUDENTS

## Advising

- Student development – social, personal, and academic competencies (relationship impacts student persistence)

## Academic Support

- Online academic support services (tutoring & library access)

## Technical Support

- Access to support, user friendliness, and prior experience

## Financial Aid

- Increase in subsidized loans and family contribution

# SUCCESSFUL ADVISING TECHNIQUES

## Non-traditional students

### Build Relationships

- Communication strategies

### Flexible Advisement and Early Registration Options

- Schedule logistics

### Partners for Advocacy

- Collaborative support services

### Specialized Resources

- Non-traditional handbook/guidebook, list of peer groups

### Training and Professional Development

- Specific to student population needs

## Distance students

### Communication – Web conferencing


- Verbal and nonverbal cues

Mueller, D., and Meyer, A., (23 August 2017). Design a sustainable online advising option. Retrieved from: <https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Academic-Advising-Today/View-Articles/Design-a-Sustainable-Online-Advising-Option.aspx>

### Communication - Email

- Be available
  - Treat an email response as an advising session
- Comprehensive
  - Fight the temptation to just give quick answers to quick questions
- Timely
  - Prompt response saves you time in the long run

Fusch, D., (9 August 2013). Email advising: Doing it wrong, doing it right. Retrieved from: <https://www.academicimpressions.com/blog/email-advising-doing-it-wrong-doing-it-right/>



Think about some advising techniques  
you use?