



**FINISH** for **YOUR** **FUTURE**

**FULFILLING OHIO'S ADULT LEARNER PROMISE**

Report of the Adult Learner Working Group

**High-Impact Practices** Subgroup Report

*September 2020*

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*High-Impact Practices Subgroup Report*

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## **Problem Statement**

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, community colleges serve the largest portion of adult learners. However, there is a growing trend of adults returning to four-year higher education institutions to complete a bachelor degree or higher. Adult learners want to minimize the amount of time they spend in class while maximizing the economic payoff for their effort. The State of Ohio wants to help these learners with their educational attainment and has set a goal of 65% of Ohioans aged 25-64 will have a degree, certificate, or other postsecondary workforce credential of value by 2025. This means increasing the proportion of adults over age 25 enrolled in higher education to at least 40% by 2025.

To that end, the High Impact Practices working group was charged with researching institutions that have determined, implemented, and measured their high impact strategies for adult learners and how they plan for continuous improvement. This included researching and formulating recommendations regarding high impact workforce connections and alignment for adult learners in Ohio and addressing the equity imperative.

The challenge was to identify high impact practices in terms of themes, practices, and core principles that are common among public and private institutions, regardless of the differing missions. The hope was to reduce the cycle of time of discovery at institutions by providing a wide range of examples.

In short, the following critical high impact practices were identified: Communication, Deliberate Modalities, Cohort Programs, Online and Competency-based Education, Prior Learning Assessments, Support Services, and Employer Apprenticeships. This paper will discuss the framework; significant data for each practice; key research findings; emerging trends/best practices; and recommendations.

## Framework

Based on the urgency illustrated above, the time to evaluate high impact practices is now. As such, the Adult Learner Working Group evaluated the research through the lens of two different frameworks: the CBE Wheel and a 2019 white paper by EAB entitled *Is Your College Designed for Post-Traditional Learners? 13 Strategies to Ensure You Aren’t Underserving Today’s Community College Student*. The key components of these frameworks informing this research are summarized below.

### CBE Wheel

The CBE Wheel (Figure 1 below) touches on the importance of institutional resources for the adult learner. These include the bursar’s office, registrar’s office, instructional design, institutional research, instructional technology, academic support, enrollment management, financial aid, advising, and faculty. As part of this high impact practices report, key components will include instructional design, instructional technology, academic support, advising, and faculty.



Figure 1: CBE Wheel (Blackboard Learn, Inc.)

**EAB (2019) White Paper**

The purpose of the EAB (2019) white paper is to provide a fresh perspective on how to retain post-traditional learners by addressing their real motivation: a promising career. The paper also offers specific strategies for integrating students’ career goals from application to graduation by ensuring students are in the right program of study, making students services more accessible and aligning curricula with student goals and the expectations of local labor markets. The key to post-traditional student success is derived through a sense of belonging, feeling that the content they learn is relevant to their professional goals, and receiving support from faculty and staff they perceive as allies.

To that end, the paper identifies five challenges and five common factors for adult learners as tabulated below:

<b>Five Challenges (p. 5 )</b>	<b>Five Common Factors (p. 10)</b>
Limited after-hours class schedules and services	Need to work to support themselves or family
Penalties for being absent	Balance work and learning, combining or moving between them frequently
Programs lack milestone credentials	Pursue knowledge, skills, and credentials that employers demand and compensate
Little basic needs support	May require developmental education in order to succeed in college-level courses
Minimal credit for past experiences	Seek academic/career advising to navigate their complex path to a credential

In addition, the EAB (2019) report identifies thirteen key retention strategies as outlined below. When identifying high impact practices, the group sought to incorporate the thirteen retention strategies into the high impact practices, which will be discussed in the appropriate places throughout the Research section.

Thirteen retention strategies include (p. 13-25):

1. Self-directed early career assessment
2. Tools for informed decisions
3. Road maps for the future, planned with realistic expectations
4. Services that engage off-campus students
5. Course schedules crafted for students' availability
6. Classroom adaptation through the use of technology
7. Federal work study as practical experience
8. Apprenticeships in industry
9. Partnerships with workforce development boards and community-based organizations
10. Career preparation workshops in flexible formats
11. Employer-student networking during nonworking hours
12. Professional skills as course content
13. Stackable credentials that are market recognized and maintain momentum

### **Holistic View of the Framework**

A holistic view of the framework combined into one graphic is better summarized with Figure 2 below:

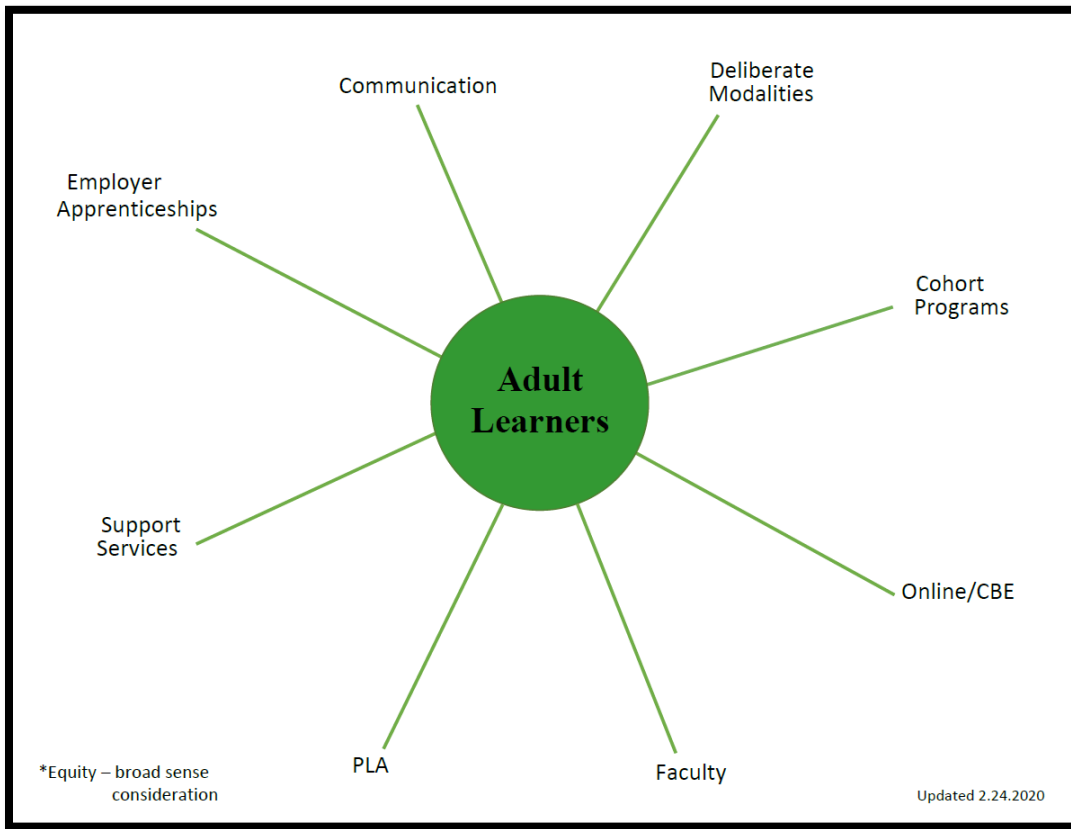


Figure 2

In the following sections, each of the spokes of the wheel above will be discussed, and where appropriate, related to the CBE Wheel and the 13 Strategies from the 2019 EAB white paper. The key spokes of the wheel include the following:

Communication

Deliberate Modalities

Cohort Programs

Online/Competency-based Education (CBE)

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)

Support Services (which includes Advising and Financial Support)

Employer Apprenticeships

Faculty



## **Key Spokes of the Wheel – High Impact Practices**

Each bucket, or spoke of the wheel, as detailed above in the Framework discussion, is a rising high impact practice critical to the success of adult learners. To illustrate this, the discussion of each practice begins with a brief overview of significant, eye-catching Data followed by the key Research that supports that data, often with additional data of interest. Pulled from the research are Emerging Trends/Best Practices with each section concluding with tangible Recommendations with respect to the High Impact Practice.

### **Communication**

**Data.** According to an EAB (2017) survey, 54% of respondents said they do not always read emails from the university or academic departments. They view them as white noise. So how does a college reach students? The answer may be in different modes of communication based on the complexity of the message and circumstance. According to Ruffalo Noel Levitz's (RNL) article, "Best Practices in Adult and Online Recruitment," 80% of students welcome texts, particularly about the application and post admit status, but texts are not welcome in all situations.

**Research.** Four key research documents were reviewed that address adult and online recruitment, retention and persistence to graduation and beyond with respect to communication (Altieri, Mutimer & Perkins, 2019; Castleman, 2018; EAB, 2017; Jeffe & Manning, 2019). These communication strategies are for prospective and current students. Each institution should decide for themselves which trends and recommendations make sense for their own setting. However, these documents do include best practices and direct examples which can be implemented quickly and, depending on their level of intricacy, easily. The EAB (2017) Strategies related to the communication arena addressed in the articles include self-directed, early career assessment; tools for informed decisions; road maps for the future, planned with realistic expectations; and services that engage off-campus students.

The documents describe how every institution must develop an annual marketing and recruitment plan including actionable and measurable goals. Regardless of how you structure your annual marketing and recruitment plan, it must include digital communications. For example, EAB's article "Optimizing Your Student Communications Strategy" specifically addresses best practices for student digital communications. Specific strategies that a campus can implement immediately are: (a) understanding the most common mistakes institutions make; (b) audit your communications and promote unit coordination; and (c) improve messaging.

The final two articles dive into nudge theory and how it can be useful on your campus. There are innovations that should be considered for implementation with specific examples given, including text messages that can be utilized.

**Emerging Trends/Best Practices.** If an institution expects to be successful in their marketing strategies, they must be digitally present. You must determine the composition of your students and where they are online – and meet them there. Your messaging should match the channel of delivery. In addition, when multiple offices across a campus send messages independent of each other, this leads to confusion and overuse of emails – and will lead to overuse of other messages if they are not coordinated. According to the EAB 2017 survey, 54% of respondents said they do not always read emails from the university or academic departments. Specifically, they discuss the 'white noise' when there is no coordination and thus inboxes are flooded with emails. It is found that Gen Z students prefer simple tasks to be automated, but want an in-person interaction for more complex tasks. The use of the Signal Vine platform (or something similar) creates an exchange system with students regarding the simple tasks. Complex tasks can also be addressed by personally replying to students and offering an in-person meeting. Texting students in combination with advisor support replicates the in-person attention and will increase the students' engagement. Nudge theory approach discussed in the guide, "Nudges, Norms and New Solutions" highlights two important insights (Castleman, 2018):

1. Our intentions don't always translate into actions.
2. Context matters, often far more than we think.

Utilize the innovations and examples highlighted in these articles to help students get into college, stay in college and graduate from college (Altieri, Mutimer & Perkins, 2019; Castleman, 2018; EAB, 2017; Jeffe & Manning, 2019).

The key takeaways gathered from the data, research and emerging trends include the following:

- Train your enrollment representatives to specifically work with your adult students. Their needs are different – they have a consumer mentality. Secret-shop your own institution.
- Conduct a cross-departmental process mapping to visualize and analyze student contact across campus.
- Coordinate communications among departments with a communication policy and a central communications calendar. Audit communications for content, jargon, and a call to action.
- Create communication with personalization.
- Evaluate the innovations that are recommended by Nudge<sup>4</sup> Solutions Lab at the University of Virginia. They need to determine the return on their investment, as there are costs associated with each innovation (both direct costs and personnel).

**Recommendation One:**

Postsecondary institutions should coordinate communications among campus departments in order to provide adult students with clear, personalized attention to guide them from entry into the institution through completion of a degree or credential.

## **Deliberate Modalities & Cohort Programs**

**Data.** When thinking of alternatives to the in-person delivery of courses, the common thought is online course delivery. Online courses are a growing, important trend – so much so that they have a separate section below. However, even more effective than online courses, based on a study from the US Department of Education from 1996 through 2008, is distance higher education combined with some traditional learning (blended or hybrid learning). According to researchers at the University of Kansas, one segment of adults enrolled in an online graduate course in special education, consisting of adult learners, ages 50 to 65 felt less confident in their technical skills at the beginning of the course required higher levels of technology support. Nonetheless, the adult learners exhibited “stellar performance on all assignments” and reported high satisfaction levels after the course was finished (GetEducated, 2019). Franklin University has embraced the online and blended class model. Even more powerful – blending learning with an employer model, such as those by Batesville tool and Die Inc. in Indiana and Wal-Mart.

**Research.** Many higher education institutions are realizing the need to be flexible in class modalities to accommodate the varying learning patterns of adult learners. Research indicates that the following parameters must be taken into consideration when defining modalities for adult learners (U.S. Department of Labor, 2007).

- Focused offerings targeted to meet specific career needs of adult learners.
- Curriculum and course content that are standardized and developed centrally, making it possible for students to take courses at different campuses of the same institution or find the same course taught at different times at different campuses.
- Use of technology to deliver instruction on line and in combination with classroom instruction.
- Faculty hiring decisions that are biased toward applicants with industry experience and an appreciation of applied learning (in addition to an education credential in their field).

- Instructional methods that are hands-on and practical.
- Integration of some general education courses with occupational content, and delay of general education courses until after students have started their technical program.
- Aggressive and integrated marketing strategy that links admissions, financial aid, assessment, advisement, and registration.

These same parameters match with EAB's 2019 key strategies including course schedules crafted for students' availability; classroom adaptation through the use of technology; professional skills as course content; and stackable credentials that are market recognized and maintain momentum.

According to research work conducted at Columbia University (2014), the primary motivation for taking online classes is flexibility and convenience. However, this same research revealed that blended learning (combined online and face-to-face) in the community college setting serves students in a deeply meaningful way, allowing the institution(s) to address learners specific needs and customize the learning environment rather than relying on a one-size-fits-all approach.

The United States Department of Education conducted an online learning study undertaken from 1996 to 2008 and concluded the following:

- Distance higher education is more effective than traditional face-to-face learning;
- Distance higher education combined with some traditional learning (blended or hybrid learning) is the most effective; and
- Face-to-face learning alone is the least effective (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

What seems to give distance higher education and hybrid education their significant power boost is time spent on learning combined with the additional communication opportunities that online delivery affords (GetEducated, 2018).

Typically, for-profit colleges target adults looking for accelerated paths to jobs. For-profit institutions and many college occupational programs are emphasizing adult-focused teaching methods with applied learning models and “practical” curricula that tap into adult experiences in work and life. New partnerships with employers are helping to integrate job-related content and teach what students need to advance in their careers.

Research conducted by Jeffrey Helms at Kennesaw State University (2014) indicated that “Instruction combining online and face-to-face elements had a larger advantage relative to purely face-to-face instruction than did purely online instruction.”

Many working adults have indicated that if they return to college or begin college, they'd likely take courses or training offered through an employer. As an example, healthcare workers prefer this option. Batesville Tool and Die Inc. is a good example. As a part of its “Pay for Skills” program, the company has partnered with Indiana's community college system, Ivy Tech, to create opportunities for employees to earn credentials and earn a raise. Similarly, Walmart Inc., which employs 1.3 million workers nationwide, subsidizes tuition, books, and fees for employees who want to earn their associate or bachelor's degree. Employees, who pay just \$1 a day to participate, get coached on everything from selecting courses to getting credit for prior work experience. If all goes as planned, employers, employees, and society will all benefit. Programs like this perfectly reflect what the Strada-Gallup survey respondents revealed. Adult learners who “stopped out” clearly need education to be more affordable; they need education and work to fit easily together in their lives, and they want to see meaningful career benefits from spending time and money to learn (Lumina Foundation, 2019).

The continued growth of online and blended education in all its forms has been ubiquitous. Whether or not online and blended learning will be considered transformational in shaping higher education is still open to debate. However, it has influenced policies at the state and federal levels

as well as the many national accrediting bodies' standards and regulations concerning the use of online and blended modalities.

**Emerging Trends/Best Practices.** The research reveals the following trends and best practices, with some specific to Ohio including the following:

- Franklin University – High level of online and blended classes. However, there are face-to-face classes, too, and partnerships with community colleges.
- University of Oregon - Students are more engaged and motivated when the curricular materials and instruction varies between online and face-to-face conditions. The combination of online and digital elements; especially the inclusion of different learning activities, proves to be the most effective in online and blended modalities. The study provides practical reasoning for utilizing a blended learning approach. Blended learning environments increase the amount of time that students spend engaging with the instructional materials. (Pritt, 2016)
- Combining blended modalities with workplace learning as done by Batesville Tool and Die Inc. in Indiana.
- Sinclair Community College's blended/hybrid course offerings have proven successful.

### **Cohort Programs**

**Data.** Running targeted cohort programs have proven effective at building deep relationships with community college students and are most common when two- and four-year schools are geographically proximate. In addition to serving as an outreach opportunity, cohort programs support long-term transfer student success. Exemplary cohort programs work with students as early as possible during their associate's degree programs to influence course choices, address gaps in academic preparation, and/or raise comfort levels with residential four-

year campus culture (The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program, 2018). For example, Valencia College utilizes a cohort model and increased completion rates of Latino students by more than 10 percentage points (Aspen Institute Data – Lake Area Technical Institute, 2019). Lake Area Technical Institute, also an adopter of the cohort model, closed the gap in graduation rates for low income students (Aspen Institute, 2016).

**Research.** Research conducted by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (2001) indicated that adults learning styles are evolving as they age. NCSALL (2001) cohort research at Bunker Hill Community College in Charlestown, Massachusetts, showed that although students began classes together, the cohort of adults disbanded to independently selecting their own courses. Despite the disbanding, the students in this research reported that the cohort served the following key purposes:

- The cohort served as a holding environment spacious enough to support and challenge adults in their academic learning.
- The cohort served as a context in which students provided each other with a variety of emotional and psychological support (note: adults have diverse life issues encompasses jobs, family, financial matters, health, living, etc.)
- The cohort challenged the adult students to broaden their perspectives

The importance of cohorts and the different ways in which learners will experience them suggest implications for both teacher practice and program design. Since learners make sense of their cohorts and collaborative learning activities in qualitatively different ways, they need different forms of both support and challenge to benefit more fully from them (NCSALL, 2001).

Based on research conducted by the Aspen Institute, at Lake Area Technical Institute (LATI) in South Dakota, students don't just apply; they must declare a major in order to enroll. Once admitted, they're assigned a cohort, ranging in size from 20 to 100 students (depending on major), that moves through a prescribed series of courses needed for the occupation students



are studying for. The cohorts help students avoid wasting any time or money in coursework they don't need. For the Pell recipients who comprise half of the population at LATI, this efficiency is of particular importance. It forces students to be deliberate about their career choice from day one. Rather than working toward a degree in auto mechanics, for example, they're working toward becoming an auto technician. This gives them purpose in their day-to-day work and a sense of how their education connects to their long-term goals. Moreover, the cohort model provides a critical support net of peers who can serve as a source of morale and encouragement when—as they often do—life challenges get in the way of education.

**Emerging Trends/Best Practices.** Cohort approach seems best when admission/enrollment/registration/ and class assignments are projected as a holistic cohort system (select admission/enrollment/registration team act as a cohort system).

- UCLA, University of Washington approach to comprehensive advisor supports, including transfer from community college to 4-year institutions – better partnerships (not just articulation agreements) a cohort relationship with targeted workforce partners.
- Valencia College - By partnering deeply with a four-year institution (creating a “cohort transfer relationship), establishing structures that fundamentally change students’ transfer experience, and embedding commitment to equity throughout the college and its partners, Valencia has more than doubled the number of students earning associate degrees since 2005, increased by more than 10 percentage points the completion rates of Latino students, and dramatically improved the rates at which low-income and underrepresented minority students go on to earn bachelor’s degrees after transfer. (Aspen Institute Data, 2019)
- Lake Area Technical Institute - Since Lake Area Technical Institute began intentionally using cohorts, they began splicing the data and focusing on low-income students, the

gap in graduation rates between Pell Grant-eligible students and non-Pell students has closed (Aspen Institute, 2016).

- Admission/enrollment/registration/ and class assignments must be a holistic system
- Be career-focused, not degree-focused
- Students must declare a major to enroll
- Develop cohort transfer relationships from community colleges to four-year institutions

### **Recommendation Two:**

Postsecondary institutions should provide flexible and innovative programming and course scheduling practices that are achievable for adult learners.

### **Online and Competency-Based Education**

#### **Data.**

**Online.** Ruffalo Noel Levitz's (RNL) article, "Best Practices in Adult and Online Recruitment" starts with a picture of today's undergraduate student including the fact that 13% of them are enrolled exclusively in online programs and of those, 31% are 25 or older. The majority of them are enrolled part-time and in public institutions. Almost 100% of the schools that were surveyed indicated that the demand for online education is either increasing or staying the same. Online education is here to stay. However, not all online programs are created the same. There are best practices and research that can help colleges make the best programs fit for the adult learners based on their needs.

**Competency-based Education.** With respect to CBE, in 2019, CBE programs grew over 15% from 2018 (American Institutes for Research, 2019). Of the 602 institutions that responded to the American Institutes for Research survey, 11% had full CBE programs, another 51% were in the process of adopting CBE programs, and 23% indicated they have interest in adopting CBE programs. Of the institutions with CBE programs, 61% indicated they plan to increase the number of programs offered.

Specific to Ohio, of the 12 Ohio universities, three currently offer CBE programs and another will offer a new CBE program in fall 2020. Of the 14 Ohio colleges, four offer CBE programs and another will launch a new program in fall 2020 (more details in the Emerging Practices section):

### **Research.**

**Online.** As previously stated in the deliberate modalities section, online learning has become a pervasive instructional modality. Each year online enrollment continues to increase in the number of students who enroll in online courses as well as a percentage of course enrollments. (NCES, [Linked here](#)) Institutions of higher education in Ohio (Universities, colleges, and technical colleges) have all incorporated online instruction into their offerings in some way. Some institutions have years, or even decades, of experience in building and offering online courses, certificate, and degree programs. However, it is important to note that online instruction practices and standards can include specific strategies for increasing successful engagement and learning outcomes for Adult Learners. For online Adult Learners these considerations include:

1. Program design
2. Course design
3. Student support services
4. Technology and technology support

Program design: Certificates, degrees, and other credentials that are designed to engage Adult Learners need to consider their audience's prior learning, current professional experience, and anticipated career and advancement opportunities. If an online program does not have a specific target audience (a group of individuals with similar prerequisite and professional profiles) and a specific target outcome (a career advancement, salary growth, or professional parity achievement) then the ability to attract Adult Learners to that online program will be difficult. The

first indication that a program is designed for Adult Learners will appear in the recruiting and admissions process. If transfer credit and advanced standing policies do not value the education and professional experiences they have had, many Adult Learners will choose not to participate in the online program. Adult Learners will consider their own personal professional profile as a starting point for any additional credential that they might pursue. If it appears that an online program will require what appears to the Adult Learner as random, general, or non-specific courses and activities the Adult Learner will disregard the option as “not a good fit.” Similarly, if the online program does not have a clear outcome in terms of career advancement, salary growth, or professional standing, then there is not a clear connection to encourage the commitment needed to enroll in the program (Conaway & Zorn Arnold, 2015).

Course design: Adult Learners are different than younger learners. Younger learners tend to focus on the instructor and the instruction, Adult Learners are more engaged when treated as a learning partner and when their professional and life experiences are relevant to the course topic, assignments, and course outcomes. Adult Learners appreciate the ability to know the course plan and incorporate their professional, personal, family and other responsibilities into an overall plan and calendar. This means (Pappas, 2019):

- Make all components of an online course visible from the outset
- Set due dates for Sunday night
- Adhere to the published syllabus once the course is in progress
- Establish an accelerated course structure that allows the Adult Learner to focus on one course at a time, yet complete at least 2 courses each semester
- Create multiple formative assessments over the length of the course in order to allow milestones and guidepost that indicate progress toward learning outcomes and achievement.

**Student support services:** The topic of student support services will be addressed more fully in other areas of this report; however, a few key elements warrant attention here. Adult Learners who study online are not able to dedicate time and energy to discovering and navigating an institution's intricacies for admissions, financial aid, transfer credit, textbooks, degree certification, and many others. Having a dedicated point of contact who can act as the Adult Learner's program advisor or navigator will encourage a trusted relationship between the Adult Learner and that individual so that program logistics do not become an obstacle for the academic objectives and learning outcomes desired by instructors and Adult Learners alike.

**Technology and technology support:** Institutions of higher education that offer online program to Adult Learners should encourage them to acquire and use current technology tools (computers and software that will support current browsers and university systems that must be accessed through them). During the recruiting and advising process, Adult Learners should participate in an orientation that outlines the technology requirements and expectations - in terms of hardware, software, and time that will be required to dedicate to the program. Institutions that offer online programs to Adult Learners should offer 24x7 technology support available by telephone. Even if every problem cannot be resolved during an after-hours tech call, the ability to speak with someone and receive some guidance and reassurance reduces the anxiety that an Adult Learner will experience when technology issues arise.

**Competency-based education.** Competency-based education (CBE) has been experiencing slow but steady growth nationally. The American Institutes for Research annual CBE report for 2019, *State of the Field: Postsecondary CBE in the US* (American Institutes for Research, 2019) indicates that in 2019 CBE programs grew to 492 undergraduate programs (15% increase over 2018) and 96 graduate programs (13% increase over 2019). Though the overall number of CBE programs is small compared to total US programs, CBE is becoming strategically important as shown by the 85% of the study respondents who indicated they already have, are in

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process, or are interested in establishing CBE programs. Of the 602 institutions that responded to the American Institutes for Research survey, 11% had full CBE programs, another 51% were in the process of adopting CBE programs, and 23% indicated they have interest in adopting CBE programs. Of the institutions with CBE programs, 61% indicated they plan to increase the number of programs they offer.

As expected, the most common undergraduate disciplines were nursing/health professions, computer and information science and business administration. Institutions who were in the process of adopting CBE cited opportunities to serve nontraditional students, response to workforce needs and desire to improve learning outcomes as their most common motivators. CBE start-up costs, federal student aid regulations and processes, and institutional business systems and processes continue as perceived barriers for implementing CBE programs. Consistent with the 2018 survey 78% of the respondents expect the number of CBE programs to grown in the next 5 years. Please refer to the Emerging Trends section for a discussion of the trends in Ohio and specifically with efforts at Sinclair Community College.

#### **Emerging Trends/Best Practices.**

**Online.** Ruffalo Noel Levitz's (RNL) article, "Best Practices in Adult and Online Recruitment" starts with a picture of today's undergraduate student including the fact that 13% of them are enrolled exclusively in online programs and of those, 31% are 25 or older. The majority of them are enrolled part-time and in public institutions. Almost 100% of the schools that were surveyed indicated that the demand for online education is either increasing or staying the same. If an institution does not have an online education presence, consider it. But an institution cannot simply take a current in-person program and make it an online program. It must be done well. As previously stated in the Research section, there are four key considerations to starting and managing an online program: program design, course design, student support services, and technology and technology support services.

**Competency-based education.** In 2017, the Ohio CBE Network was formed. The Ohio CBE Network serves as a forum for activities designed to bring Ohio faculty, staff, and administrators together to learn about and share information related to CBE programming and to discuss different topics (e.g., selecting technologies to support CBE programming, gaining ODHE, HLC and USDOE approvals for CBE programs, partnering with business and industry on joint development of program competencies, projects and assessments). The Ohio CBE Network Steering Committee strives to create practical tools for colleges and universities interested in pursuing competency-based education to include a network of expert practitioners, and a repository of resources and best practices for CBE development, implementation, and sustainment.

Twenty-two public institutions participate on the Ohio CBE Network Steering Committee with additional representation from the Ohio Association of Community Colleges, Inter-University Council of Ohio and Ohio Department of Higher Education.

A task that the Committee undertook that began in '18-'19 was a survey of CBE activity amongst its members. Of the 12 Ohio universities, three current offer CBE programs and another will offer a new CBE program in Fall 2020. Programs cover certificate, bachelor and master levels. Of the 14 Ohio colleges, four offer CBE programs and another will launch a new program in Fall 2020.

Strategic reasons for offering programs in a CBE format include:

- To provide flexibility to progress through a program
- To meet the needs of current working adults
- In some cases, better modes of instruction

As previously highlighted, Sinclair Community College has offered CBE programs since 2016. Comparing their CBE students to traditional semester students the following outcomes are reported:

- Seventy percent of the CBE students were new to the college or “stopped out” learners of two years or more from Sinclair Community College;
- Seventy-five percent are adult learners;
- CBE students finished courses 35% faster across all disciplines as compared to traditional semester students;
- Credentialing rates were 10-15% higher across all programs at two, three- and four-year snapshots; and CBE students were 10 times as likely to take an internship with a 90% internship to hire rate. Students in the Accelerate MFG Basic Machining program are finishing 16-week courses in an average of 10 weeks.

### **Recommendation Three:**

Postsecondary institutions should provide resources and faculty development opportunities with respect to different course modalities including, but not limited to, online and CBE environments.

### **Prior Learning Assessments**

**Data.** Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) has been defined as the evaluations and assessment of learning gained outside of the college classroom for college credit, certification or advanced standing toward further education or training (Klein-Collins, 2016). In a 2010 study conducted by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), data indicated that of the 60,000 students in the study, 56% of students with PLA credit earned a post-secondary degree within seven years; only 21% of non-PLA students did so. PLA students earning associate degrees did so at twice the rate of non-PLA students (Klein-Collins, 2010). In another study, of



the 26,122 students in a survey aged 25 or older, 42% of students with PLA credit had earned a degree or postsecondary credential compared to 26% of students without PLA credit. In terms of persistence, 90% of students with PLA credit had better persistence compared to 74% of students who did not have earned PLA credit.

**Research.** Prior learning may be obtained through work experience, employer training programs, non-credit coursework, military training, community service and other avenues. The concept of PLA is not new; however, colleges and universities in the U.S. are expanding their use of PLAs as a means to allow students to advance their education while reducing the amount of time and financial resources needed for degree or certificate completion (Delleville, 2019).

According to the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (Klein-Collins, 2016), there are four generally accepted forms of PLAs. These include:

1. Individualized Assessments
  - a. Portfolios – faculty with subject matter expertise evaluate it and determine the credit awarded
  - b. Skill Simulation or Demonstration – awarded based on a student's performance or demonstration of a specific skill or competency
  - c. Interview-based Assessment – College credit awarded based on evaluations of responses given during a structured interview on the subject matter
2. Standardized Exams
  - a. Advanced Placement Examination Program (AP exams)
  - b. College Level Examination Program Exams (CLEP exams)
  - c. Excelsior College Exams (UExcel)
  - d. The DANTES Subject Standardized Tests, or DSST Exams
  - e. International Baccalaureate (IB) exams
3. College faculty-developed exams

- a. Institutional, departmental or challenge exams
- b. Take the final exam of a course
4. Evaluated non-college programs
  - a. The National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS)
  - b. American Council on Education (ACE)
  - c. Some employers work directly with their local postsecondary institutions to evaluate their companies training; this includes ACE credit recommendations for military training and occupations as a part of a contract with the U.S. Department of Defense

There have been several studies that compared the graduation rates of students who have earned PLA credit to those students who have not been awarded PLA credit. As previously mentioned, in a 2010 study conducted by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), data indicated that of the 60,000 students in the study, 56% of students with PLA credit earned a post-secondary degree within seven years; only 21% of non-PLA students did so. PLA students earning associate degrees did so at twice the rate of non-PLA students (Klein-Collins, 2010). In CAEL's 2016 study, *Do Methods Matter? PLA, Portfolio Assessment, and the Road to Completions*, the relationship between PLA and student outcomes was examined. As in prior studies, the researchers found that students who earned credit through PLA persisted and completed degrees at higher rates than those who did not have PLA credit (Hudson & Klein-Collins, 2018). Of the 26,122 students in the survey aged 25 or older, 42% of students with PLA credit had earned a degree or postsecondary credential compared to 26% of students without PLA credit. In terms of persistence, 90% of students with PLA credit had better persistence compared to 74% of students who did not have earned PLA credit.

In 2013, Ohio launched the [PLA With A Purpose](#) initiative. The goal of this initiative was to work with colleges, universities, and OTCs in the state to promote credit awards through PLA.

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The initiative focused on identifying core criteria of PLA best practices and on the development of preferred models for PLA credit awards. Approximately 90 faculty and staff from across the state collaborated on the initiative and identified six core criteria of PLA best practices. The six criteria were: (1) credit is given only for learning, not experience; (2) transparency will be preserved in all aspects of the PLA process, with clear, rigorous and public criteria for credit granting; (3) consistency in the evidence requested for the evaluation of prior learning will be assured and all USO institutions will transcript, apply and transfer credits awarded on the basis of the statewide standards; (4) discipline-appropriate faculty from within the institution and other subject-matter experts (SMEs) will evaluate prior learning; (5) ongoing and rigorous training and professional development will be provided to all participants in the assessment process; and (6) there will be broad institutional commitment to PLA.

In addition to the core criteria, the three working groups developed three preferred models for awarding credit for prior learning. These included: (1) credit by examination; (2) credit for military training and experience; and (3) portfolio-based assessment. Ohio has handled the standardized exams in a few different ways. Advanced Placement courses are universally accepted across the state based on a score of "3". This was done via legislation in 2007 (ORC 3333.163) and with faculty input and consultation was further enhanced by [Directive 2008-010](#) which established the AP policy for Ohio. In 2015, legislation was passed ([ORC 3345.38](#)) that required institutions to establish their own policies to evaluate International Baccalaureate programs. In 2011, work started to formally establish a College Level Examination Program (CLEP) policy for Ohio, but was put on hold due to semester conversion around the state and then revived again in 2016. Over the course of a year, many faculty teams from around the state gathered to evaluate CLEP exams. The [CLEP policy](#) for Ohio officially became effective on May 1, 2018.

Ohio has done significant work evaluating military training, experience, and coursework. Where possible, Ohio has used current transfer guarantees such as the [Ohio Transfer Module](#), [Transfer Assurance Guides](#), and [Career Technical Assurance Guides](#) to better articulate military credit. Essentially, the state treats the military like another “Ohio” institution. The military’s coursework goes to faculty panels to be evaluated and they make credit alignment decisions. Once a military course has been evaluated at the state level and approved for a credit match, the course becomes a [Military Transfer Assurance Guide](#). If matches do not exist for military coursework, it is still recommended that the student follow the credit evaluation process or portfolio process at their respective institution.

In regards to individualized assessments, portfolios, Ohio worked with faculty around the state to develop a portfolio evaluation rubric. That rubric can be found at <https://www.ohiohighered.org/PLA/resources>. The rubric uses a scoring system that is based on the following portfolio assessment categories: Sources of Learning, Demonstration of Learning, Evidence of Learning, Mastering Knowledge & Skills, Reflection on Learning, and Presentation. In Ohio, six community colleges and one comprehensive university are participating in FastPathOhio. FastPathOhio helps students petition and develop an e-portfolio. The portfolio is reviewed by faculty members within the participating colleges to award credit for life and work experiences. The electronic system guides students step-by-step through the PLA credit seeking process.

The *PLA with a Purpose* initiative concluded with five core, centerpiece recommendations. These recommendations focused on: (1) defining the processes and procedures governing PLA on USO campuses; (2) improving students’ access to PLA opportunities; (3) ensuring the quality and rigor of the PLA processes; (4) providing training and professional development to participants in the assessment process; and (5) clarifying the state’s role and responsibilities in the awarding of PLA credit.

Nationally, the concept of PLA is not new. States such as Florida and Tennessee have been awarding PLA credit for several years. The Florida Department of Education's Community College and Technical Center Management Information Systems (CCTCMIS) reported that from 2008 to 2013, the number of students receiving PLA credit increased by approximately 6,000 students (Florida Department of Education, 2014). Tennessee has developed a PLA system referred to as Timewise TN. Similar to other PLA credit options, Timewise TN purports that students may finish college faster and at less cost. Students are advised that some institutions may refer to Timewise TN as PLA, Experiential Learning Credit, or Credit for Prior Learning (Tennessee Higher Education Commission & Student Assistance Corporation, n.d.).

In its 2019 General Session, the Utah Legislature passed House Bill 45. The bill provided minimum standards for accepted forms of PLA, credit awards, transferability of prior learning credit among institutions, institutional procedures for PLA, communication guidelines to stakeholders, required training of faculty and advisors on PLA standards and process, and portfolio-specific PLAs (Utah System of Higher Education, 2019).

**Emerging Trends/Best Practices.** Because PLA practices are not standardized across different states, it is difficult to track the use and effects of PLA credits on student outcomes. Many of the existing student information systems used by institutions are unable to specifically track PLA. Some colleges have developed ways to “workaround” systems but this makes tracking PLA data even more difficult (Klein-Collins, 2016).

Several institutions have figured out ways to make the PLA experience attractive to students and easy to understand. Click on the following institution links to examine their websites and the ways they have made the PLA process accessible to students by explaining the process and how it works: [Cleveland State University's](#) Assessment and Accreditation of Prior Learning Experience (AAPLE) Program; [The University of Akron Wayne College](#) Prior Learning Assessment; [Youngstown State University](#) Prior Learning Assessment; [Sinclair Community](#)

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[College](#) Prior Learning Assessment; and [Cuyahoga Community College](#) Credit for Prior Learning programs.

The key takeaways gathered from the data, research and emerging trends and best practices including the following:

- PLA materials should be examined to ensure student-facing communication emphasizes promotion over posted policy thus improving students' access to PLA opportunities
- Avoid using higher education jargon
- Use a standardized name for credit earned through PLA across multiple institutions
- Work with OTCs to facilitate the transfer of industry-recognized credentials and certifications through PLA
- Map out adult students' journey from interest in credit through PLA to the decision point where credit is or is not conferred
- Develop a standard system for tracking PLA data
- Provide training and professional development to participants in the assessment process

#### **Recommendations Four and Five:**

Postsecondary institutions should develop a standard system of awarding PLA credit and tracking PLA data.

Postsecondary institutions should provide training for personnel involved with PLA credit to include enrollment specialists, student navigators, and faculty members who are conducting the PLA assessments.

## **Support Services**

**Data.** Research indicates that students who meet at least one of the following characteristics are less likely to graduate without specialized support and services: (1) over the age of 25, (2) considered independent for purposes of federal financial aid, (3) balancing work and college, and (4) have legal dependents (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2015). Additionally, work obligations, access to child care, and financial concerns impact an overwhelming number of students as they pursue degrees (Porter and Umbach, 2019).

Navigators/Success Coaches can serve as holistic advisors who work with students from pre-enrollment to graduation, serving as the principal point of contact for students through their educational pathway. This aligns with an evidence-based strategy, intrusive advising (Boston Consulting Group, 2019), proven to mitigate stop out. Boston Consulting Group found that broad-based advising reforms significantly improved student outcomes for a relatively low annual incremental investment. Specifically, the reforms contributed to an increase in on-time graduation rates of as much as 21 percentage points. At the same time, the reforms required a relatively modest and sustainable annual incremental investment of less than \$100 per student—an amount that was largely driven by investments in additional advising personnel rather than technology infrastructure.

**Research.** According to the EAB (2019) report “Is Your College Designed for Post-Traditional Learners?” there are five strategies to enhance the support services that you provide to adult students. The first strategy involved self-directed early career assessment. Advising to complete career interest and skills inventories prior to advising appointments enable them to get the most out of their advising experience and insight into their career interests. Closely tied to the first strategy, the second strategy encourages students to utilize tools data to inform their career decision making process. The third strategy involves providing clear road maps for the future, planned with realistic expectations. Providing a clear plan towards graduation including

opportunities for credit for prior learning and the effects of part-time enrollment on time to degree and other important program requirements should be provided to the student from the onset.

The fourth strategy discusses the necessity to provide services that engage off-campus students. Responsive service models should expand access and effectiveness for post-traditional learners. This should also be considered when implementing the fifth strategy which is to provide career-preparation workshops in flexible formats such as in the evening, virtually or on demand.

These strategies can be wrapped into two words: holistic advising. As today's college students seek help to earn a credential, make meaningful connections, and develop the skills necessary to become employed, they need the best possible advising delivered in the most optimal ways at the most critical times. Institutions have to advise students at this level of excellence, because their success during and after college depends on it (Boston Consulting Group, 2019).

Many students lack basic information about how to navigate the higher education system, particularly as it relates to course registration (how many credits to enroll in each term), and obtaining financial aid. Focus groups held in 2018 at Sinclair Community College with newly enrolled students revealed that many did not know the distinction between a part-time and full-time course load. Several students believed that they were automatically on track to earn an associate's degree in two years despite their part-time enrollment status. Several respondents believed that their financial aid package would automatically renew each year. Many of these students admitted to "self-advising" or seeking out friends who attended Sinclair to get answers to their financial aid and scheduling questions, leaving them vulnerable to misinformation (Sinclair 2018).

A full suite of services can be provided by Navigators/Success Coaches: orientation, financial planning, academic advising, career guidance, and consultation on non-academic



supports provided through the college (i.e. food assistance, emergency funds, book assistance, housing assistance, transportation assistance, and childcare).

The streamlined enrollment process for Adult students starts with one-on-one assistance to students. For example, if students are academically ready for college-level courses, Navigators/Success Coaches help students create their Academic Plan, complete the FAFSA, and register for courses. If they are not academically prepared, Navigators/Success Coaches work closely with students to help them access resources needed to become college-ready prior to beginning their chosen program.

**Emerging Trends/Best Practices.** There are numerous examples of institutions that are reworking their approaching to student support services. Several notable examples include:

1. Florida State University, Georgia State, Montgomery County Community College (Pennsylvania), and University of Texas (Austin) are using advising reforms that focused primarily on
  - a. innovative technological changes to support improved advising (Early Alert, Illume, Starfish, Colleague)
  - b. using data as the primary foundation to solving student-focused problems
  - c. reducing ratio of student to advisor
  - d. predictive analytics
  - e. increased advising “touch-points” with students
  - f. advisors acting as “cross-functional” go-to persons for the students
2. Student recruitment for the EAGLE (Engaging Adults to Graduate Leveraging Efficiencies) program at Sinclair Community College differs from standard recruitment procedures. It is standard for a Sinclair enrollment advisor to recruit students and then refer them to an academic advisor for assistance with courses/program information and other enrollment steps. However, holistic advisors called Navigators/Success

Coaches recruit EAGLE participants, help them enroll, and continue to serve as the student's main contact throughout their entire educational pathway at Sinclair. The title "Navigator" was carefully chosen to describe the high-touch, consistent personal assistance provided. At Sinclair Community College, adult students do not have to be on campus to receive information. In collaboration with Sinclair's recruitment, admissions, and outreach departments, Navigators/Success Coaches travel into the community to showcase the EAGLE program at various venues, including the job centers, career fairs, and other recruiting events.

The key takeaways gathered from the data, research and emerging trends and best practices including the following:

- Reduction of advisor to student ratio to allow for a more holistic "success-coach or navigator" relationship
- Students should be deterred from "self-advising"
- Notification systems are designed to notify student's advisor as soon as the student is off track
- Advisor becomes a "one-stop" coach and support for student

**Recommendation Six:**

Postsecondary institutions should support hiring additional staff to serve as student navigators, specifically for adult learners. These personnel should be trained to provide services such as financial planning, academic advising, career guidance, and availability of non-academic supports provided by the institution.

**Employer Apprenticeships**

**Data.** Ohio is home to over 20,000 apprentices. This number has increased by 51% since 2014. In the recent past, many of these apprentices would not have been involved in the higher education system in Ohio.

Some apprenticeship data for Ohio with the cohort from 2012-2017 is as follows:

- 12,760 students started an apprenticeship program
- Of those 12,760 that started, 5,119 completed
- Of those 5,119 completers, 764 started associate degrees
- Of those 764 who started degree programs 282 completed an associate degree

Though the data is a couple years old, it is important to note that when this data was collected community colleges were not yet registered apprenticeship locations and many more apprenticeship programs have since been created. During the 2012-2017 cohort mentioned above, at least 150 known apprenticeship programs had some type of relationship with Ohio's community colleges.

**Research.** Since around 2018 many of Ohio's community colleges have worked to become registered apprenticeship locations and have created more registered apprenticeship programs. In order to better understand this, one must learn some of the definitions of apprenticeship programs.

In Ohio we typically refer to apprenticeship programs as "Registered" or "Non-Registered". A registered apprenticeship program utilizes some national or state recognized training program, the apprentices are paid during the program, and upon completion earn a nationally or state recognized certification or credential. Registered apprenticeships in Ohio are recognized by ApprenticeOhio within the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. In order to become a registered apprenticeship site a business works with ApprenticeOhio to verify their program and their on the job training and related instruction.

A non-registered apprenticeship program is one that is not formally recognized by the state or federal department of labor (DOL). The apprentices in the program might be paid or unpaid and completion of the program might or might not lead to a certification or credential.

Essentially, any business can claim to have a non-registered apprenticeship program, but until they reach out to ApprenticeOhio and do the appropriate paperwork to get their program verified and follow certain set standards, they cannot become a registered apprenticeship program.

Registered apprenticeships and non-registered apprenticeships typically have worked with community colleges to assist with the related instruction portions of training. However, in 2017-2019 several grants were awarded to Ohio by the US Department of Labor that sought to expand apprenticeships in Ohio. Part of this was done by allowing an academic institution to become a registered apprenticeship location and partner directly with businesses. This allowed many small businesses that could not achieve registered status to fall under the umbrella of a community college as a registered apprenticeship program. Because those apprenticeship programs were now being run by the community college, the programs could be directly incorporated into associate degree programs. Thus, giving apprenticeship program completers a more direct path to an associate degree.

**Emerging Trends/Best Practices.** The current trend seems to be that every apprenticeship program in Ohio is growing, likely due to increased job market demand as well as the DOL grant money that has come to Ohio. Also, there is a new emphasis on apprenticeship programs that are referred to as “outcomes-based apprenticeship programs”, which include programs such as pharmacy technician, cyber security, nurse assistant, engineering technology, etc.

ApprenticeOhio Statistics ([showing growth since 2014](#))

- 20,000 current apprentices
- 75% increase in people entering into ApprenticeOhio programs
- 37% increase in veterans enrolled
- 189% increase in women enrolled
- Average salary upon completion is \$60,000

Accurate data is currently difficult to get at the state level because many apprenticeship programs were not previously tracked very well if at all. However, this has somewhat been remedied by adding some required data fields about apprenticeship programs into Ohio's higher education information data system. Nonetheless, some institutions are already tracking some of this new data and have featured it on their webpage. For example, some talking points for new apprenticeship programs that were started at Sinclair Community College ([link here](#)) are:

- 52 Apprentices Enrolled
- 3.08 average GPA
- 100% of tuition is covered
- \$17.46 average hourly wage
- Direct relationship with 13 employers in the region

The new apprenticeship model is quickly growing in Ohio. Encouraging the community colleges to become registered apprenticeship locations has had two notable effects. First, more apprentices are having a direct relationship with higher education and now have a way to more credentials and degree options. Second, businesses that didn't have the human resources or ability to become a registered apprenticeship program can now align themselves with a community college and share in the benefits which is a true mutually beneficial relationship. This has caused more businesses to have an interest in higher education and the institutions are getting more direct feedback about the needs of the business.

The key takeaways gathered from the data, research and emerging trends and best practices including the following:

- Encourage community colleges to become registered apprenticeship locations
- Encourage four-year institutions to consider some type of transfer/completion pathway for apprenticeship students

**Recommendation Seven:**

Four-year institutions, community colleges, and OTCs should work together to develop seamless transfer and completion pathways for adult learners and those enrolled in apprenticeship programs.

**Faculty**

**Data and Research.** Faculty are also an important piece of the framework for adult learners. Research increasingly shows college students are more successful when they are offered a "guided pathway" through their coursework. This includes providing instructor frameworks that align with benchmarks to keep students on track. The fluctuating array of life demands that adults face triggers a greater need for instructors to be better prepared to meet the classroom challenges that may arise.

For example, Pasadena City College (PCC), in California, provides intensive training for faculty members, who teach the college's low-income and minority students, including adults, but have themselves often had very different college and life experiences. A cohort of about 40 new faculty instructors meets each week throughout their first year to learn how to better interact with their students. (One annual lesson is from a faculty member who based her dissertation on writing a syllabus for nontraditional students). This has also generated improved advising for its 27,000 students with more contact and specific attention to their course selection and path to graduation or transfer, as well as to their academic performance and need for supports (Paterson, 2019)

Unlike their full-time counterparts, adjunct faculty face challenges that often go unnoticed. In many instances, the majority of community college courses are taught by adjunct faculty. However, these faculty generally do not have the opportunities to engage in professional development and are less likely to be integrated into the college system (Caruth & Caruth, 2013; Dailey-Hebert, Mandernach, Donnelly-Sallee, & Norris, 2014; Thirolf & Woods, 2017). In their

2016-2018 study of students age 40 and older, researchers found that faculty members often serve as the contact point with the college and are generally adult students' front-line advisors. (Cummins, Arbogast, McGrew, and Bahr, 2019). They suggested that institutions need to recognize and support full-time and adjunct faculty professional development to help adult students achieve their goals (Cummins et al., 2019).

**Emerging Trends/Best Practices.** Professional development for faculty appears to be the key emerging practice in new and exciting forms beyond the one-day mandatory workshop. According to Pasadena.edu, the New Faculty Orientation is a one-year program facilitated for all newly hired full-time faculty. The objectives of the program are to assist faculty in: (a) becoming familiar with PCC's culture and operations and developing a supportive network of colleagues and friends; (b) integrating effective practices related to course design, pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment; (c) furthering their understanding of the student populations served at PCC and ways in which one creates an equity-minded classroom; and (d) leveraging technology to connect with and engage 21st century learners, including adults.

In addition, Pasadena City College has a Professional Learning Institute called "College 1" which operates as a three-day event that provides instructors the opportunity to learn about: a) foundational theories pertaining to first year student success, b) reading apprenticeship principles and tools, and c) student learning outcomes and related curriculum. According to Pasadena City College's vice president of student services, Cynthia Olivo, 41% of their students go on to a four-year college which is well over the national average for community college students who transfer within six years. In addition, Olivo states that the faculty instructor training model provides context for better interaction with students beyond grading.

The key takeaways gathered from the data, research and emerging trends and best practices including the following:

- Encourage institutions to provide faculty development opportunities in faculty learning communities focused on the unique needs of adult learners, such as writing syllabi with the adult learner in mind; reviewing course policies and practices from the lens of the adult learner; incorporating technology to connect with adult learners

**Recommendation Eight:**

Postsecondary institutions should provide professional development opportunities for full-time and adjunct faculty focused on the unique needs of adult learners.



## **Summary of Report Recommendations**

### **Communication:** *Immediate Implementation*

1. Postsecondary institutions should coordinate communications among campus departments in order to provide adult students with clear, personalized attention to guide them from entry into the institution through completion of a degree or credential.

### **Deliberate Modalities & Cohort Programs:** *Immediate Implementation*

2. Postsecondary institutions should provide flexible and innovative programming and course scheduling practices that are achievable for adult learners.

### **Online/Competency-based Education (CBE):** *Implementation before the next biennial budget*

3. Postsecondary institutions should provide resources and faculty development opportunities with respect to different course modalities including, but not limited to, online and CBE environments.

### **Prior Learning Assessment (PLA):** *Implementation before the next biennial budget*

4. Postsecondary institutions should develop a standard system of awarding PLA credit and tracking PLA data.

5. Postsecondary institutions should provide training for personnel involved with PLA credit to include enrollment specialists, student navigators, and faculty members who are conducting the PLA assessments.

### **Support Services (which includes Advising and Financial Support):** *Implementation before the next biennial budget*

6. Postsecondary Institutions should support hiring additional staff to serve as student navigators, specifically for adult learners. These personnel should be trained to provide services such as

financial planning, academic advising, career guidance, and availability of non-academic supports provided by the institution.

**Employer Apprenticeships:** *Implementation before the next biennial budget*

7. Four-year institutions, community colleges, and OTCs should work together to develop seamless transfer and completion pathways for adult learners and those enrolled in apprenticeship programs.

**Faculty:** *Implementation before the next biennial budget*

8. Postsecondary institutions should provide professional development opportunities for full-time and adjunct faculty focused on the unique needs of adult learners.

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