

## **Why do you believe that students attend an online program instead of a traditional brick-and-mortar university?**

I read the other posts addressing this question and I agree with the general theme of what everyone is moving towards- convenience. Further, Martina made an excellent point that I would like to elaborate on.

Martina (2010) wrote (in applicable portion to this response), "Today, students are more of a consumer and they shop around for the classes they WANT to take instead of the classes they HAVE to take based on what is located by where they might live" (Msg. 7). I agree and this analysis links consumer culture with education choices. Adult learners are education consumers and there is a competitive market seeking enrollment. The question then becomes a boomerang and we are left with asking *why* adult learners choose online programs instead of on-site programs?

I believe the answer intersects consumer culture and adult learning style. Adult Learners have different needs than traditional learners. Knowles (1998) proposed andragogy as a learning-centered environment that fostered learner-centered approaches, mutual trust, and respect among learners and instructors. Andragogy is based on the following six assumptions:

- 1. *The Need to Know:*** Adults need to know why they are learning something.
- 2. *Self-Concept:*** People, as they grown, move from having a Dependent Personality to a Self-Directed Personality.
- 3. *Experience:*** Experience gained through life becomes a learning resource.
- 4. *Readiness to Learn:*** Adults want to learn things that are applicable to their daily lives.
- 5. *Learning Orientation:*** People evolve their learning orientation from task- or content-centered to problem-centered as they mature.
- 6. *Motivation:*** Adults are intrinsically motivated.

It becomes patently obvious why adult learners choose online classrooms after reading the six assumptions of andragogy. Online schools have been in a competitive market for a

number of years now; many online schools have adopted the paradigm of andragogy and encourage (or require) their instructors to tailor the curriculum to the six assumptions.

Adult learners likely begin attending school online for convenience purposes, yet then find that they 'fit' better; this circles back to the above paragraph.

Everyone benefits. I am glad to see a competitive market where the schools are continually seeking to refine the quality of their education for the benefit of the student.

### **What are some of the pros to online education?**

The pros to online education are the following (in no particular order):

- \* The convenience of attending class as time permits.
- \* Attending class with others in similar family and career situations.
- \* The control (flowing from convenience) of self-directed study.

### **And, how can we, as instructors, mitigate some of the potential cons here?**

The primary method that an instructor can employ to mitigate the cons in an online environment is to be a daily presence. The instructor's daily presence, which includes executing faculty expectations, alleviates the majority of problems.

### References:

Knowles, M., Swanson, E., & Holt, R. (Eds.). (1998). *The adult learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development* (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing Company.

Sternberg, M. (2010, March 10). Sheila schmitz- discussion one [Msg 7]. Message posted to <http://classroom.rockies.edu/re/DotNextLaunch.asp?courseid=4025118>.