

Reach out to Non-Traditional and Adult Students...

Tips from our Consultant Ellen Derwin on teaching Adult Students...

Motivation

Adult learners have different motivations for pursuing higher education. Their reasons for attending school are different from younger students reasons. They are different from other adult students. They are unique and individualized. If your adult learners are going to stay motivated, with their many competing obligations, they may need your help. During the first week, ask them to share their motivations. Why are they in school? Ask them to put it in writing along with their name on an index card or journal entry. Remind them of their motivation when they are struggling, when they are doing well, and at regular intervals during the class. Your support and appreciation for your students' personal motivations will help to inspire them to succeed.

Adult Learners as Teachers

Adult learners bring a wealth of experience to your class. Help them apply it to their coursework to teach themselves, their classmates, and you. Adult students can bring in real life case studies in their area of expertise. Encourage them to choose a course-related topic, apply it to their experience and talk about it in class. They will gain communication skills, analytical skills, and the ability to contribute to everyone's learning experience. This strategy also helps your class become more student-centered, so that your students contribute to the learning environment and become part of your instructional team.