-

Dear Amy,

 Thanks for your correspondence. I will resend what I have sent with him included in another email. Will copy you as well. Cheers and thank you for all your correspondence. Wishing you all the best and hope everything is well in your life and endeavors.

Best,

On Thu, Apr 25, 2019 at 1:39 AM Amy EllisThompson <Amy.EllisThompson@sagepub.co.uk> wrote:

> Dear Constance,
>
> I am writing to let you know that we have a changeover in staff at SAGE – I am leaving the company on Friday and my colleague Matt Snelgrove, cc'd, is now managing *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education.*
>
> Please send the changes which you suggest to the draft corrigendum to Matt.
>
> Best wishes,
>
> Amy
>
> **From:** Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu>
> **Sent:** 16 April 2019 15:30
> **To:** Amy EllisThompson <Amy.EllisThompson@sagepub.co.uk>
> **Subject:** Re: ADU corrigendum
>
> Dear Amy,
>
> I hope all is well. You will have updated later today. Thank you.
>
> On Tuesday, April 9, 2019, Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu> wrote:
>
>> Thank you. I can an updated version to you before the end of the week.
>>
>> Warm regards,
>>
>> On Tuesday, April 9, 2019, Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu> wrote:
>>
>>> I will send my updated to you in an hour. I do not approve this. I have been in the hospital and just got out.

On Tuesday, April 9, 2019, Amy EllisThompson <Amy.EllisThompson@sagepub.co.uk> wrote:

Dear Constance,

In the interest of time, our contracts team have updated the corrigendum to make changes bearing in mind your feedback.

Please find the final draft attached. The corrigendum contains only the information that it is essential to inform the readers of the changes to the version of record.

I will shortly be sending the corrigendum to our production team, for them to prepare it for publication.

If you have any comments, please could you let us know by the end of the week?

Thanks.

Best,

Amy

From: Amy EllisThompson
Sent: 04 April 2019 09:56
To: Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu>
Cc: Mike Osborne <Michael.Osborne@glasgow.ac.uk>
Subject: RE: ADU corrigendum

Dear Constance,

Following your email below, please could you outline the proposed changes that you are suggesting to the corrigendum?

Best wishes,

Amy

From: Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu>
Sent: 27 March 2019 14:17
To: Amy EllisThompson <Amy.EllisThompson@sagepub.co.uk>
Cc: Mike Osborne <Michael.Osborne@glasgow.ac.uk>
Subject: Re: ADU corrigendum

Greetings,

I hope this email finds you well. Per my previous email, this is not accurate however. Those references were not left out, they were added because of new text. I also do not approve of any language that includes "the author regrets." I can send a new version as again I do not approve of the current and would never allow such. I will submit shortly.

I will send an updated. Please let me know if you have any questions. Have a great day.

Best,

On Wed, Mar 27, 2019 at 4:20 AM Amy EllisThompson <Amy.EllisThompson@sagepub.co.uk> wrote:

> Dear Constance,
>
> Thank you for your time in reviewing the draft corrigendum.
>
> However, we have concerns about the changes which you have made, particularly removing the record of references which have been amended/included in the updated version of your article.
>
> In line with best practices of transparency when making changes to a published version of record, we need to include this information in the corrigendum. Please see links below for further information on these policies and practices:
>
> https://publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines-new/principles-transparency-and-best-practice-scholarly-publishing
>
> https://www.stm-assoc.org/2017_09_05_STM_Guide_Preserving_the_Record_of_Science_5_September_2017.pdf
>
> As an article published Online First is fully citable, we have to be clear to authors who may have used or cited the article what has changed since the initial publication. This is why we publish a corrigendum rather than just updating the article. We also include a watermarked version of the original article as part of the corrigendum, to demonstrate the changes made to the published record:
>
> https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/corrections-crossmark-policies
>
> We do need to publish a full correction notice to be able to publish your updated article. I hope that the information above helps to explain why we follows these steps.
>
> However if you have a specific question or concern about any aspect of this, please let Mike or I know and hopefully we can address this.
>
> Thanks in advance for your response.
>
> Best,
>
> Amy
>
>
> **From:** Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu>
> **Sent:** 21 March 2019 17:18
> **To:** Amy EllisThompson <Amy.EllisThompson@sagepub.co.uk>; Mike Osborne <Michael.Osborne@glasgow.ac.uk>
> **Subject:**
>
>
> Greetings,

Please find attached.

Warm regards,

--

Constance Iloh, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Higher Education

....
University of California, Irvine
School of Education
Irvine, CA 92697-5500

We have moved!

SAGE UK is on the move (temporarily), please find our new offices at [1 Broadgate, London EC2M 2QS](#)

How to find us

We're located at Broadgate Circle in between Moorgate and Liverpool Street

Nearest Tube Stations: Liverpool Street (5 minute walk), [Moorgate (5](#) minute walk), Old Street (10 minute walk)

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Constance Iloh, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Higher Education

....
University of California, Irvine
School of Education
Irvine, CA 92697-5500

 [My Website](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Academia.edu](#)

--

Constance Iloh, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Higher Education

CORRIGENDUM: Does distance education go the distance for adult learners? Evidence from a qualitative study at an American community college

Constance Iloh, Does distance education go the distance for adult learners? Evidence from a qualitative study at an American community college. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, Online First October 18, 2018. DOI: 10.1177/1477971418785384

The author regrets that at the time of submission the following sources were not adequately referenced:

Alsaaty, F. M., Carter, E., Abrahams, D., & Alshameri, F. (2016). Traditional versus online learning in institutions of higher education: Minority business students' perceptions. Business and Management Research, 5(2), 31-41. doi:10.5430/bmr.v5n2p31

Fernandez, W. D. (2004). The grounded theory method and case study data in is research: Issues and design. In D. N. Hart & S. D. Gregor (Eds.), *Information systems foundations: Constructing and criticizing.* Canberra, Australia: ANU E-Press.

Hajibayova, L. (2017). Students' viewpoint: What constitutes presence in an online classroom? Cataloging & Classification Quarterly, 55(1), 12-25.

Huang, X., Chandra, A., DePaolo, C. A., & Simmons, L. L. (2016). Understanding transactional distance in web-based learning environments: An empirical study. British Journal of Educational Technology, 47(4), 734–747.

Mbwesa, J. K. (2014). Transactional distance as a predictor of perceived learner satisfaction in distance learning courses: A case study of bachelor of education arts program. Journal of Education and Training Studies, 2(2), 176-188.

Pelletier, S. (2010). Success for adult students. Public Purpose, 2-6.

Seaman, J. E., Allen, I. E., & Seaman, J. (2018). Grade increase: Tracking distance education in the United States. Babson Survey Research Group: Babson Park, MA.

Shannon, D. M. (2002). Effective teacher behaviors and Michael Moore's theory of transactional distance. Journal of Education for Library and Information Science, 43(1), 43-46.

Sections throughout the original manuscript have therefore been re-written and updated with the correct attribution. The online version of the article has been corrected.

This correction notice includes for reference a watermarked version of the article as published on October 18, 2018.

CORRIGENDUM: Does distance education go the distance for adult learners? Evidence from a qualitative study at an American community college

Constance Iloh, Does distance education go the distance for adult learners? Evidence from a qualitative study at an American community college. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, Online First October 18, 2018. DOI: 10.1177/1477971418785384

Sections throughout the original manuscript have been re-written and updated to include the following references. The online version of the article has been corrected.

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Alsaaty, F. M., Carter, E., Abrahams, D., & Alshameri, F. (2016). Traditional versus online learning in institutions of higher education: Minority business students' perceptions. Business and Management Research, 5(2), 31-41. doi:10.5430/bmr.v5n2p31

Fernandez, W. D. (2004). The grounded theory method and case study data in is research: Issues and design. In D. N. Hart & S. D. Gregor (Eds.), *Information systems foundations: Constructing and criticizing.* Canberra, Australia: ANU E-Press.

Hajibayova, L. (2017). Students' viewpoint: What constitutes presence in an online classroom? Cataloging & Classification Quarterly, 55(1), 12-25.

Huang, X., Chandra, A., DePaolo, C. A., & Simmons, L. L. (2016). Understanding transactional distance in web-based learning environments: An empirical study. British Journal of Educational Technology, 47(4), 734–747.

Mbwesa, J. K. (2014). Transactional distance as a predictor of perceived learner satisfaction in distance learning courses: A case study of bachelor of education arts program. Journal of Education and Training Studies, 2(2), 176-188.

Pelletier, S. (2010). Success for adult students. Public Purpose, 2-6.

Seaman, J. E., Allen, I. E., & Seaman, J. (2018). Grade increase: Tracking distance education in the United States. Babson Survey Research Group: Babson Park, MA.

Shannon, D. M. (2002). Effective teacher behaviors and Michael Moore's theory of transactional distance. Journal of Education for Library and Information Science, 43(1), 43-46.

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CORRIGENDUM: Does distance education go the distance for adult learners? Evidence from a qualitative study at an American community college

Constance Iloh, Does distance education go the distance for adult learners? Evidence from a qualitative study at an American community college. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, Online First October 18, 2018. DOI: 10.1177/1477971418785384

The online version of the article now reflects the correct version. The manuscript has been updated and now includes the following references.

Alsaaty, F. M., Carter, E., Abrahams, D., & Alshameri, F. (2016). Traditional versus online learning in institutions of higher education: Minority business students' perceptions. Business and Management Research, 5(2), 31-41. doi:10.5430/bmr.v5n2p31

Fernandez, W. D. (2004). The grounded theory method and case study data in is research: Issues and design. In D. N. Hart & S. D. Gregor (Eds.), *Information systems foundations: Constructing and criticizing.* Canberra, Australia: ANU E-Press.

Hajibayova, L. (2017). Students' viewpoint: What constitutes presence in an online classroom? Cataloging & Classification Quarterly, 55(1), 12-25.

Huang, X., Chandra, A., DePaolo, C. A., & Simmons, L. L. (2016). Understanding transactional distance in web-based learning environments: An empirical study. British Journal of Educational Technology, 47(4), 734–747.

Mbwesa, J. K. (2014). Transactional distance as a predictor of perceived learner satisfaction in distance learning courses: A case study of bachelor of education arts program. Journal of Education and Training Studies, 2(2), 176-188.

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Shannon, D. M. (2002). Effective teacher behaviors and Michael Moore's theory of transactional distance. Journal of Education for Library and Information Science, 43(1), 43-46.

Dear Matthew and Constance,

I am content with this.

My apologies for not reply to your Skype call Constance – I have only just got back from Zimbabwe. I now hope that we can go forward and get this published. Best wishes Mike

Michael Osborne
Professor of Adult and Lifelong Learning and Director of Research, School of Education, 11 Eldon St, University of Glasgow G3 6NH

T: +44 141 330 3414
M: +44 780 358 9772
Director of PASCAL Observatory
Director of Centre for Research and Development in Adult and Lifelong Learning

PI British Academy-funded GCRF Strengthening Urban Engagement of Universities in Asia and Africa (SUEUAA) project
Associate Director and Co-I ESRC-funded Urban Big Data Centre
Co-I RCUK-funded GCRF Global Centre for Sustainable Healthy Learning Cities and Neighbourhoods

---

From: Matthew Snelgrove <Matthew.Snelgrove@sagepub.co.uk>
Date: Thursday, 16 May 2019 at 16:12
To: Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu>
Cc: Mike Osborne <Michael.Osborne@glasgow.ac.uk>
Subject: RE: Journal of Adult and Continuing Education - Corrigendum

Thank you for understanding our perspective and responsibilities and for working with us to achieve accuracy. The latest suggested wording should be fine so I will confirm Mike's approval and move this forward.

Our production editor will be in touch when the revised article has been typeset.

Thanks again,
Matt

From: Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu>
Sent: 15 May 2019 11:24
To: Matthew Snelgrove <Matthew.Snelgrove@sagepub.co.uk>
Cc: Mike Osborne <Michael.Osborne@glasgow.ac.uk>
Subject: Re: Journal of Adult and Continuing Education - Corrigendum

Thanks for your prior email.

I have attached the new, where only two updates were made from your submission. I was told that my agreement was needed. As you can see, those references were added in updating the text but they were not missing in the one from before so I want accuracy as well. That is all I was trying to capture before but I also see what you are saying. Thank you.

On Wed, May 15, 2019 at 3:14 AM Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu> wrote:

> I will send another version then. I added these references but they were never missing from the text before. I was trying to accomodae what you all listed.

On Wed, May 15, 2019 at 2:17 AM Matthew Snelgrove <Matthew.Snelgrove@sagepub.co.uk> wrote:

> Dear Constance,

I hope you are well.

Thank you for sending your proposed edits to the corrigendum wording.

We follow COPE's recommended guidance, and are guided by their principles of transparency and best practice. We have accommodated your changes as best we can, however the latest changes you have suggested are not transparent enough to meet the criteria set out in the COPE guidelines. We have the agreement of the Editor of the *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education* on the corrigendum wording, and will therefore be proceeding with the publication of the corrigendum text as attached with this email. I would like to thank you for your co-operation on this matter and hope you appreciate that SAGE and the Editor of the journal are responsible for ensuring transparency and that relevant procedures are adhered to, and therefore have full discretion regarding the content of the corrigendum wording.

Many thanks again,
Matt

Matthew Snelgrove
Associate Editor, HSS Journals
SAGE Publications Ltd
1 Broadgate Circle,
London, EC2M 2QS
UK

From: Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu>
Sent: 08 May 2019 17:25
To: Matthew Snelgrove <Matthew.Snelgrove@sagepub.co.uk>; Mike Osborne <Michael.Osborne@glasgow.ac.uk>
Subject:

Greetings,

I hope this email finds you well! Please find attached.

Best,
Constance Iloh, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Higher Education
....
University of California, Irvine
School of Education
Irvine, CA 92697-5500

--
Constance Iloh, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Higher Education
....
University of California, Irvine
School of Education
Irvine, CA 92697-5500

 My Website | Twitter | Academia.edu

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Constance Iloh, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Higher Education
....
University of California, Irvine
School of Education
Irvine, CA 92697-5500

From:	Karuna Rana <Karuna.Rana@sagepub.in> <Karuna.Rana@sagepub.in>
Sent time:	05/30/2019 12:49:01 AM
To:	ciloh@uci.edu
Cc:	Matthew Snelgrove <Matthew.Snelgrove@sagepub.co.uk>
Subject:	ADU 785384	Updated proof
Attachments:	ADU785384.pdf

Dear Dr Constance Iloh,
I hope you are keeping well.

Please find attached the updated proof for your review.

I request you to please send your response by tomorrow.

Warm regards,
Karuna

Karuna Rana (Ms.)
Associate Production Editor
SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd.
www.sagepub.in

From:	Karuna Rana <Karuna.Rana@sagepub.in> <Karuna.Rana@sagepub.in>
Sent time:	05/31/2019 04:09:00 AM
To:	ciloh@uci.edu; Mike Osborne <Michael.Osborne@glasgow.ac.uk>
Cc:	Matthew Snelgrove <Matthew.Snelgrove@sagepub.co.uk>
Subject:	ADU 785384 Correction Notice
Attachments:	ADU857491.pdf

Dear Constance and Mike,
I hope you are keeping well.

This is to let you know that the Correction notice has been typeset and shall be made online once the updated version will be finalized. I have attached it for your reference.
I have send the updated version of the article to Constance for review.

Warm regards,
Karuna

Karuna Rana (Ms.)
Associate Production Editor
SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd.
www.sagepub.in

■JACE

Corrigendum

Constance Iloh, Does distance education go the distance for adult learners? Evidence from a qualitative study at an American community college. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, Online First October 18, 2018. DOI: 10.1177/ 1477971418785384

Sections throughout the original manuscript have been re-written and updated to include new references. The online version of the article has been updated.

This notice includes for reference a watermarked version of the article as published on October 18, 2018.

Alsaaty, F. M., Carter, E., Abrahams, D., & Alshameri, F. (2016). Traditional versus online learning in institutions of higher education: Minority business students' perceptions. *Business and Management Research*, 5(2), 31–41. doi:10.5430/bmr.v5n2p31

Fernandez, W. D. (2004). The grounded theory method and case study data in is research: Issues and design. In D. N. Hart & S. D. Gregor (Eds.), *Information systems foundations: Constructing and criticizing*. Canberra, Australia: ANU E-Press.

Hajibayova, L. (2017). Students' viewpoint: What constitutes presence in an online classroom? *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 55(1), 12–25.

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Mbwesa, J. K. (2014). Transactional distance as a predictor of perceived learner satisfaction in distance learning courses: A case study of bachelor of education arts program. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 2(2), 176–188.

Pelletier, S. (2010). Success for adult students. Public Purpose, 2-6.

Seaman, J. E., Allen, I. E., & Seaman, J. (2018). *Grade increase: Tracking distance education in the United States*. Babson Survey Research Group: Babson Park, MA.

Shannon, D. M. (2002). Effective teacher behaviors and Michael Moore's theory of transactional distance. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science*, 43(1), 43–46.

Hi Constance,

Please find the attached updated correction notice. As mentioned by Matt, please note that we will not be able to make any further changes. We have checked through the wording and made the changes you proposed.

Please confirm the **Pelletier** reference as given in the below email at earliest today and I shall proceed further.

I hope you appreciate that we cannot delay the publication any further. Also, I request you to please respond to the same email chain and do not start a new email (also please do not change the subject line) as it helps in keeping a record.

Warm regards,
Karuna

Karuna Rana (Ms.)
Associate Production Editor
SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd.
www.sagepub.in

From: Karuna Rana
Sent: 27 June 2019 15:16
To: Matthew Snelgrove <Matthew.Snelgrove@sagepub.co.uk>; Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu>
Subject: RE: Re:

Hi Constance,

I hope you are in receipt of below email from Matt.
Could you please confirm if it is fine with you to have the reference as under? I shall then proceed.

Pelletier, S. (2010). Success for adult students. *Public Purpose*, 2–6. Retrieved from
http://www.aascu.org/uploadedFiles/AASCU/Content/Root/MediaAndPublications/PublicPurposeMagazines/Issue/10fall_adultstudents.pdf,

Warm regards,
Karuna

Karuna Rana (Ms.)
Associate Production Editor
SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd.
www.sagepub.in

From: Matthew Snelgrove <Matthew.Snelgrove@sagepub.co.uk>
Sent: 26 June 2019 19:16
To: Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu>; Karuna Rana <Karuna.Rana@sagepub.in>
Subject: RE: Re:

Hi both,

I recommended adding Fall 2010 as this is how the journal denotes its issues. I have looked at how other articles reference this paper and they all reference it as Pelletier, S. (2010). Success for adult students. *Public Purpose*, 2–6. Retrieved from
http://www.aascu.org/uploadedFiles/AASCU/Content/Root/MediaAndPublications/PublicPurposeMagazines/Issue/10fall_adultstudents.pdf,
therefore to avoid potentially adding an error I suggest we do the same. I hope that is agreeable to you, Constance.

This part of the process is not for requesting additional changes, but to confirm the changes agreed to previously have been incorporated

into the typeset version. However, as we are making this change we may as well remove the references below as well.

Karuna, sorry to ask you to update this again.

Many thanks,
Matt

From: Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu>
Sent: 26 June 2019 14:05
To: Karuna Rana <Karuna.Rana@sagepub.in>; Matthew Snelgrove <Matthew.Snelgrove@sagepub.co.uk>
Subject: Re:

Thanks!I can be on stand by all day with my computer and have cancelled everything else. I am just conforming exactly how Pelletier should be referenced. The last two references are redundant and overkill so I removed them for this updated version.

Again with Pelletier, I just wanted to make sure everything was correct and I was seeking a definitive answer on how that reference should be written amidst the conflicting other references in other articles for this same text. Is there a number I can best reach you?

Best,

On Wed, Jun 26, 2019 at 4:51 AM Karuna Rana <Karuna.Rana@sagepub.in> wrote:

> Hi Constance,
>
> I will check on this with Matthew and let you know.
>
> Warm regards,
> Karuna
>
> Karuna Rana (Ms.)
> *Associate Production Editor*
> SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd.
> www.sagepub.in
>
> [GREAT PLACE TO WORK CERTIFIED] We are SAGE— A Great Place to Work!
>
> **From:** Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu>
> **Sent:** 26 June 2019 16:55
> **To:** Karuna Rana <Karuna.Rana@sagepub.in>
> **Subject:**
>
> Hello there. Please halt what you are doing. I don't think the Pelletier reference is written correctly, it has 2010 written twice, and I sought out an APA expert about this. I also want to see updated corrigendum.
>
> Please also remove reference (in-text cites) and reference to these articles:
>
> Iloh, C. (2017). Paving effective community college pathways by recognizing the Latino post-traditional student. Journal of Latinos and Education. doi:10.1080/15348431.2017.1371603
>
> Iloh, C. (2018a). Not non-traditional, the new normal: Adult learners and the role of student affairs in supporting older college students. Journal of Student Affairs, 27, 25–31.
>
> --
> **Constance Iloh, Ph.D.**
> *Assistant Professor of Higher Education*
> ....
> University of California, Irvine
> School of Education
> Irvine, CA 92697-5500

--
Constance Iloh, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Higher Education
....
University of California, Irvine
School of Education
Irvine, CA 92697-5500

■JACE

Corrigendum

Constance Iloh, Does distance education go the distance for adult learners? Evidence from a qualitative study at an American community college. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, Online First October 18, 2018. DOI: 10.1177/1477971418785384

Sections throughout the original manuscript have been re-written and updated and this manuscript also includes new references. The online version of the article has been updated.

This notice includes for reference a watermarked version of the article as published on October 18, 2018.

Alsaaty, F. M., Carter, E., Abrahams, D., & Alshameri, F. (2016). Traditional versus online learning in institutions of higher education: Minority business students' perceptions. *Business and Management Research*, 5(2), 31–41. doi:10.5430/bmr.v5n2p31

Fernandez, W. D. (2004). The grounded theory method and case study data in is research: Issues and design. In D. N. Hart & S. D. Gregor (Eds.), *Information systems foundations: Constructing and criticizing*. Canberra, Australia: ANU E-Press.

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Mbwesa, J. K. (2014). Transactional distance as a predictor of perceived learner satisfaction in distance learning courses: A case study of bachelor of education arts program. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 2(2), 176–188.

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Shannon, D. M. (2002). Effective teacher behaviors and Michael Moore's theory of transactional distance. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science*, 43(1), 43–46.

PREVIOUS VERSION: Does distance education go the distance for adult learners? Evidence from a qualitative study at an American community college

Constance Iloh [iD]
University of California, Irvine, USA

Abstract
Online coursework is dramatically changing the higher education landscape, particularly for adult learners. And while research notes the way these courses increase college opportunity for post-traditional students, they have poor learning and completion outcomes at many of the institutions to which older students frequently enroll. The author conducted a qualitative exploration involving 34 adult students at a large community college on the west coast to better understand the perceptions, experiences, opportunities, and challenges of online instructional delivery for adult students. Informed by semi-structured interviews with participants, findings from this study highlight: (1) the challenge of being a digital/online course novice, (2) online courses as better in theory than practice, and (3) problematic institutional assumptions that online pedagogy is better for adult learners. Results from this investigation provide new directions for implementation of online courses for adult learners students in higher education.

Corresponding author:
Constance Iloh, University of California, Irvine, USA.
Email: ciloh@uci.edu

Adult students are a growing presence in 21st century American higher education and the new majority in online distance education (Ausburn, 2004; Cercone, 2008; Iloh, 2018b). Current research on U.S community colleges, the institutions most likely to enroll students 25 and older, demonstrates online courses' ability to increase access, particularly for adult learners, while highlighting how they have not achieved the educational results of "traditional" face-to-face classroom learning (Cox, 2006). Research and intervention efforts in online distance education, however, are still predominantly based on the historical perspective of the traditional student profile at "traditional" public and private four-year institutions of higher learning (Ke, 2010).

Understanding adult students' perceptions and experiences in online courses has implications for improving design and instructional delivery, maximizing the value proposition of online courses, and strengthening educational equity for marginalized students (Sahin & Shelley, 2008). Because most empirical research in this area is not specific to the adult learners and the institutions to which they often enroll; closing gaps, conceptually and methodologically, is essential if online learning is to reach its potential, particularly for adult learners and colleges tasked with educating them. This qualitative exploration allows for a timely and deeper understanding of a growing form of instructional delivery for an underserved student population in higher education.

Adult learners in postsecondary education

Research on higher education has been predominantly based on historical perspectives, beliefs, and curriculum of a traditional student profile that of a person who between 18 and 22 years old, and who do not have other major responsibilities and roles that compete with their studies (e.g. full-time employment, parenting, and community responsibilities) (Kasworm, 1990; Ke, 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998, 2005). However, contemporary higher education reflects increasing diversity and distance from this traditional student profile. As a major grouping, adult students now comprise more than 47% of all students enrolled in higher education (Ke & Chavez, 2013).

The "nontraditional" student designation (what I prefer worded as post-traditional[1] to avert deficit framing) is generally applied to students who are 25 years or older who did not enroll immediately after high school, are not in their first cycle of education, attend part-time, are financially independent, have other major responsibilities and roles that compete with their studies (e.g. parenting, caregiving, employment, and community involvement), and/or lack the standard admission requirements of a program (Iloh, 2017; Iloh, 2016; Iloh & Tierney, 2014; Kasworm, 2003; Panacci, 2015; Soares, 2013). A key characteristic distinguishing reentry adults from other college students is the high likelihood that they are juggling other life roles while attending school, including those of worker, spouse or partner, parent, caregiver, and community member (Ross-Gordon, 2011). More often, these multiple roles present challenges in students' allocation

of time for both academic study and participation in campus-based organizations and activities (Iloh, 2017, 2018a; Ross-Gordon, 2011).

Some argue that "adult learners have particular characteristics that set them apart from post-traditional students" and these characteristics "deserve our attention and the recognition that these students are a distinct group" (Compton, Cox, & Laanan, 2006). In their definition, adult students are 25 years old and over who are "more likely to be pursuing a program leading to a vocational certificate or degree," "have focused goals for their education, typically to gain or enhance work skills," and "may consider themselves primarily workers and not students" (p. 74). While there are different definitions of nontraditional students, mature students, and adult students, all three are commonly used to refer to "nontraditionally aged" students who are participating in higher education primarily for career-related reasons while having other major responsibilities and roles. Throughout this text, when I reference adult students, this indicates adults age 25 or older who are participating in higher education for career-related reasons while having other major responsibilities and roles.

Online college courses

Institutions of higher education have increasingly embraced online education, and the number of students enrolled in distance programs is rapidly rising in colleges and universities throughout the United States. Today, over 64% of higher education institutions offer distance education, a purposeful course design using technical media to deliver content, compared to only 34% in 2002 (Moore & Kearsley, 2012; Mupinga, Nora, & Yaw, 2006). NCES reported in 2008 that at least two-thirds of two-year and four-year Title IV degree-granting institutions offered online courses, blended/hybrid courses, or courses offered in other distance education formats for college-level credit (Parsad & Lewis, 2008).

While some research suggests that students who complete online courses learn as much as those in face-to-face instruction, earn equivalent grades, and are equally satisfied (e.g. Johng, Krug, & Zhang, 2007; Sitzmann, Kraiger, Stewart, & Wisher, 2006), other research finds students are less likely to complete online courses (Moore, Bartkovich, Fetzner, & Ison, 2003). Adult students are often a target market for online classes, due to the flexibility of the format (Choitz & Prince, 2008). Considering both adult students' characteristics and representative adult learning theories (i.e. andragogy, self-directed learning, experiential learning, and transformational learning), high-quality online learning for adults is characterized by (a) social interaction and collaboration with peers, (b) connecting new knowledge to past experience, (c) immediacy in application, (d) a climate of self-reflection, and (e) self-regulated learning (Cercone, 2008).

Proponents of online learning argue that technology-enhanced education can lead to excellent learning outcomes and that higher online dropout rates are not due to the medium per se, but rather to the characteristics of students who choose online courses (Howell, Laws, & Lindsay, 2004; Jaggars & Bailey, 2010). These advocates

are particularly optimistic about how online coursework provides students with technology literacy necessary for the 21st century workplace and increases access to college by reducing the cost and time of commuting and allowing students to study on a schedule that is optimal for them (Grinager, 2006). This goal of improved access is one of the top drivers of institutional decision-making regarding increases in distance education offerings (Parsad & Lewis, 2008).

Critics of online learning raise concerns about the quality of online coursework (Bennet & Monds, 2008; Jaggars & Bailey, 2010). Participants in online courses complain about a lack of faculty–student and student–student interaction and communication (Bambara, Harbour, Davies, & Athey, 2009). Other research indicates that instructors, in many cases, simply transfer their in-class pedagogy to an online format rather than take advantage of the capabilities of computer-mediated distance education (Cox, 2005). These practices may contribute to low online course completion rates. Many educators imply that the observed high drop rates should disqualify online education as a high-quality option to traditional education (Bennett & Monds, 2008). Institutions harbor concern about online course performance among underserved students who might be more likely to withdraw from the courses (Jaggars & Bailey, 2010).

Past research indicates that student needs, experiences, and perceptions should be central in designing, developing, and delivering online courses (Ni, 2013; Sahin & Shelley, 2008). Further, failing to meet student expectations and needs may lead to low levels of student participation and completion (Hall, 2001). Indeed, without investigating what satisfies students in distance education courses, it is difficult to meet their needs and improve their learning. Literature also emphasizes the importance of research for improving online learning courses (Levin & Wadmany, 2006; White, 2005).

Junior colleges as important sites for understanding adult online participation

The national commitment to increasing postsecondary educational attainment, combined with growing economic anxiety, has made community colleges the focus of many federal and state policy initiatives (Baime & Baum, 2016). There is good reason for this: by virtue of their nature and reach, community colleges—public institutions of higher education that mostly award associate degrees and sometimes bachelor's degrees—are indispensable to meeting national goals for educational attainment as well as for the development of a productive workforce (Baime & Baum, 2016). The nation's over 1100 community colleges are increasingly considered to be the "backbone" of the public workforce system with a track record for serving adult students (Van Noy, Heidkamp, & Kaltz, 2013).

Community colleges are an essential point of access to higher education for historically underserved student populations. Compared to their four-year college counterparts, community college participants are older, more likely to be women,

members of racially minoritized groups, less likely to attend full time because they are working and taking care of family, and more likely to be first-generation college students (Bragg, 2001; Iloh, 2014; Pusser & Levin, 2009). This profile of students who attend community colleges is not new; historically, the student populations of community colleges have been much more diverse than the populations at other public and private nonprofit institutions of higher learning.

Community colleges are often asked to fulfill numerous missions, including providing academic, vocational, noncredit, and enrichment courses to their communities and playing a role in local economic development (Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Zeidenberg & Bailey, 2010). Although the colleges differ considerably in terms of the missions they are willing to undertake, there is a core mission, shared by virtually all community colleges, of enabling low-income students and underserved populations to continue their education and acquire useful skills (Barbatis, 2010; Zeidenberg & Bailey, 2010). In the last several years, student enrollment pressure has escalated and community colleges have struggled with steep state budget cuts, limited facilities, faculty turnover and expenses, a progressively more diverse student body, increasing numbers of students who need remedial work before they can take college-level classes, and competition with for-profit institutions (Scrivener, 2008). Seeking out innovative approaches to developing and growing distance-learning programs has been identified as one way to increase community colleges' capacity to address some of these issues without massive, new building projects and investments (Ives, 2006).

Using transactional distance theory

I employed the theory of transactional distance to examine adult learner perceptions and experiences of online courses at a junior college. The concept of transaction is derived from Dewey and Bentley (1949) and developed by Boyd and Apps (1980) and "connotes the interplay among the environment, the individuals and the patterns of behaviors in a situation" (Boyd & Apps, 1980, p. 5). Moore (1993) expanded this concept by defining distance education as a type of transaction, and the distance between learners and teachers as psychological rather than physical. He described this transactional distance as a "continuous…variable…; relative rather than an absolute term" (p. 22), and constantly changing depending on the situational environment. According to the transactional distance theory, teaching and learning strategies have to be adjusted to avoid potential misunderstandings due to transactional distance (Gorsky & Caspi, 2005).

Moore's theory of transactional distance articulates the idea that distance in education is not simply a geographic separation of learners and teachers, but, more importantly, is a pedagogical concept (Moore, 1993; Moore & Kearsley, 1996). This definition includes both synchronous and asynchronous delivery formats; even in face-to-face teaching, there is some element of transactional distance (Rumble, 1986). Transactional distance theory is important conceptually, since it

proposes that the essential distance in distance education is transactional, not spatial or temporal (Gorsky & Caspi, 2005).

According to Moore, the development of the *transaction* is influenced by three basic factors: (1) the dialog developed between instructor and learner, (2) the structure that refers to the degree of structural flexibility of the program, and (3) the autonomy that alludes to the extent to which the learner exerts control over learning procedures (Giossos, Koutsouba, Lionarakis, & Skavantzos, 2009). The fundamental concepts proposed by Moore (1993) initially involved several types of interactions: learner–content, learner–learner, and learner–instructor. A fourth interaction, learner–interface, was later developed by Hillman, Willis, and Gunawardena (1994) to address the technology utilized in distance education courses and how the technology affects student perceptions of the overall learning experience. The learner–interface level of interaction involves the instructor's utilization of technology, but also involves the learner's understanding and use of the online technology (Su, Bonk, Magijuka, Liu, & Lee, 2005). Learner–interface interaction is significant because the technology employed in online distance education courses serves as the primary conduit between the instructor and the learner (Su et al., 2005).

Transactional distance can vary by time. At each point in time throughout a course, requirements for learning and teaching may change. As students become more knowledgeable and self-reliant, their need for autonomy may or may not increase (Burgess, 2006). Some students who naturally display a need for structure may continue to require a more structured approach, even when they have become more competent in what they are learning (Burgess, 2006). Therefore, optimal transactional distance varies for each student, subject, and instructional situation. The goal should be for instructor and student to optimize transactional distance within a certain range to keep the instruction productive (Saba, 2000).

Method

This study qualitatively explored adult student experiences and perspectives of online courses at an American community college. The investigation was guided by three questions:

RQ1: What perceptions do adult learners have of the distance present in online courses?

RQ2: What experiences have adult students had taking online courses at community colleges?

RQ3: What challenges and opportunities, if any, do these courses provide for older students?

Transactional distance theory is useful for this study because it is based on individuals' perceptions and experiences. There is no such thing as an abstract or

intangible transactional distance, but, rather, an individualized one (Giossos, 2009). For these reasons, theories such as transactional distance are "invaluable in guiding the complex practice of understanding teaching and learning at a distance" in specific contexts and settings (Garrison, 2000).

This study drew from a large multisite study on online learning in vocational institutions of higher learning. All participants were 25 or older and either currently enrolled or had been enrolled in an online course at a community college within the past two years. I interviewed students at one large community college in California for approximately five months, with data analysis taking place concurrently.

Research setting

California served as an important location for understanding the perceptions and experiences of students enrolled in an online course, particularly at community college. California's community colleges offer more online credit courses than any other state, with online course enrollment totaling almost one million, representing about 11% of total enrollment (Johnson & Cuellar Mejia, 2014). Similar to national records, at California's community colleges, students are less likely to pass an online course than a traditional course and the success rates of Black and Latino students are significantly lower than the success rates of white and Asian students (Johnson, Mejia, & Cook, 2015).

The students interviewed were all enrolled at a community college that is part of the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD). LACCD, one of the largest community college districts in the world, enrolled over 232,000 students in the 2015–2016 school year (LACCD, 2016). Each of the nine campuses offers unique programs and services, while sharing a common mission: to provide quality education at a reasonable price to students wishing to transfer, adults seeking to upgrade skills, employers seeking to retrain their workers, and community members interested in lifelong learning (LACCD, 2016). The junior college, from which I recruited participants, offered a number of distance education courses in fall, winter, and spring across the spectrum of the humanities, social sciences, sciences, and applied disciplines. Distance education courses in this setting were especially marketed toward students who have numerous commitments outside of school.

Research participants

The participants for this study were recruited through a community college campus office, tasked with providing outreach and support services to diverse students. Specifically, the director of this center identified students who fit the sampling criterion (discussed in next paragraphs). In some cases, the director of the campus office introduced prospective participants to me while I was there in the office. In other cases, an e-mail was sent to prospective interviewees and students who expressed interest in participating and were contacted by me for interview. This director and college representative was also helpful in providing

space in her office for me to interview participants on the campus (which took place during the first round of interviews).

Each of the 34 students was asked about one or more online course experiences at their community college, during the past two years. As the focus of this study is adult learners, all participants were age 25 and older. Participants' demographic data, including age, gender, and ethnicity were collected prior to the study. As Table 1 highlights, the participants aged 25–51, 68% were Latino and Black, and 62% were female.

Data collection included two waves of 50 minute telephone and in-person interviews with adult community college students. Roughly 75% of the sample had an initial first meeting in-person and the remaining had their first interview via phone. All the second wave of interviews took place via phone.

Data collection

This study focuses on the experiences and perspectives of adult learners; thus, the primary data for this investigation are the interviews I conducted from a sample of 34 student participants age 25 and older. Each interview lasted for approximately 50 minutes and consisted of open-ended questions intended to uncover the participants' understandings of their online course college experiences and perceptions. The three research questions served as the primary guiding questions for interviews. I also followed-up with specific questions based on each participant's initial responses. The topics of these interviews included: (a) adult student perspectives on online courses, (b) past and current experiences with online courses, and (c) comparisons of their perceptions and experiences of online courses to face-to-face courses.

Table 1. Participant sample.

Female	21	62%
Male	13	38%
American Indian/Alaskan	1	2%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3	5%
Black/Non-Hispanic	10	36%
Latino	13	41%
Other	0	0%
Two or more races	1	5%
White/Non-Hispanic	6	11%
25–29	11	32%
30–34	9	26%
35–39	6	18%
40–44	5	15%
45–49	2	6%
≥50	1	3%

Data analysis

The analysis of the data included triangulating surveys (consisting of demographic and educational information about each participant) and transcription of semistructured interviews (each participant was interviewed a twice). This was followed by Bogdan and Biklen's (2003) constant comparative method, in which any newly collected interview data are compared with previous data that were collected. In the constant comparative method, theories are formed, enhanced, confirmed, or even discounted because of any new data that emerge from the study. This method enabled me to review data from interview responses and ask more pertinent follow-up questions during individual interviews. As I compared common themes and approached theoretical saturation—the point at which new data fit into existing categories—an image of students' responses to the three research questions emerged.

Meaning units in this study were derived by asking a series of questions. During this part of the research process, I proceeded in coding and analyzing statements by inquiring: (1) Does the statement address an aspect of the research questions? (2) Is the statement a necessary and significant constituent for understanding a research question? (3) Is it possible to abstract and label it? Once labeled, these meaning units were clustered into common categories or themes, removing overlapping and repetitive statements, and then clustered into themes (Moustakas, 1994), that represent perceptions and experiences of online courses in this particular college setting. For example, "You definitely have to be on your time management because it can be consuming. This is not a structured environment and I wonder if people know that going in" is an example of a participant statement that was compared and contrasted with other participant statements until they formed clusters of similar following themes. This example loosely highlights both the constant comparative method, and how a particular statement ultimately moved from data point to being clustered into a broader and reoccurring theme across participants.

Results

The goal of this study was to understand the ways in which adult learners perceive and experience online courses in a community college setting. The findings are organized and illustrated with quotes from participants during interviews. The constant comparative analysis of research interviews suggested three overarching themes regarding student perceptions and experiences of online courses: (1) the challenge of being a digital/online course novice, (2) online courses as better in theory than practice, and (3) problematic institutional assumptions that online pedagogy is better for adult learners.

The challenge of being a digital/online course novice

A Latina female shared of her online course experience,

When I first started, it was worse than adjusting to school overall. I think in some ways it would have just been easier to figure out another way to get to campus. I am just not used to the format.

A Black female in her late 20s shared, "It creates a climate where you are experiencing the difficulty of the online course, but you don't want to or know where to ask for help." A Latino male student, age 24, said of his experience,

I guess for me the biggest challenge is judging how well you are doing against yourself. In a real class, you can kind of see what your peers are doing. But online, it's sort of hard to get used to and hard to tell if your participation is too much or not enough relative to everyone else.

Online courses, while familiar in the higher education literature, were less familiar for approximately 79% of participants. Many discussed the challenge in excelling in courses to which they have little or no experience in the delivery format.

A Black male shared during his interview,

There is a learning curve. I'm supposed to be mastering a course not mastering how to master an online course. My first class online, I actually spent more time than expected trying to figure it out. For example, there is a guessing game of when you will even get a response from your professor. These are things people don't really think about as challenging but you realize really quickly there are many and unique challenges of this kind of class.

One American Indian student shared,

I get that we are supposed to be prepared students, but I actually have no idea how this works. I guess they train the instructors. I'm a little embarrassed that I kind of wish there was a training for me.

Similarly, a Black woman participant in her mid-30s stated,

I use my phone/internet all the time only for social media. I mean Facebook, Twitter.... To stalk to my kids that is. I just wish they could just keep this stuff on Blackboard. Blackboard is easy and makes sense. This [online course] isn't intuitive for all of us.

Dynamics such as these highlight the real and perceived difficulties of students acclimating to and navigating the virtual community college course. Online courses, often pitched for their convenience, were anything but that quality for countless respondents.

Online courses as better in theory than in practice

In this theme, participants were clear in discussing how their online course experiences did or did not fit in practice what they believed was the perceived value proposition of the courses.

In one interview, a 25-year-old female participant shared,

> I mean I am glad my courses aren't totally online. I get that they want to serve more students, but it seems like a lose-lose for us [students] already here. You don't even know why that class was online. It's like they haven't figured out the right recipe, but are still serving the food. Yeah, the dish sounded like it would be a hit based on your preferences, but it tastes terrible when you get it.

A Black woman participant, age 42, echoed, "For me, college is an opportunity to get what I have been missing. Convenience finally means teachers that care in front of me. High school didn't give me that and classes online definitely don't either." One White woman in her late 20s playfully winked then shared, "I'm so tempted all the time to have one of my friends post for me in this online class. It's too tempting...Having someone make it all the way convenient." She chuckled then added. "Isn't that the idea?"

A 32-year-old Filipina female shared of her online course experience,

> It's easier to check in physically (going to an actual class). I have to drive to campus, park, and walk in, but online is different. I have to consider when am I going to schedule my homework, my assignments, everything. You even have to mentally check-in before you even start. And you constantly worry you will miss so much stuff that it can get to the point where you feel like you are online 24/7. And it's not even convenient given everything I have going on to live my life on my phone. I have to keep up. I can't miss anything. And also in class physically, you can listen to someone talk. Online, you have to read paragraphs which is even more time consuming than if you were just there in person.

A Black male student, age 31, shared of his online course experience,

> I think a lot of times you think about something and it sounds like it will work but then when you do it, you realize there is a huge gap between what you think about it and what it is. There just really is so much extra stuff that comes with this kind of course in comparison to others. But when you think about it on an abstract level, it really does seem like a problem solver. I wish there was a way to bundle up everything you need to know about getting involved in this kind of course so you can at least be somewhat prepared for the unexpected ways it is difficult.

For most respondents, there appeared to be an incompatibility of online courses ideally and realistically. The last theme addresses the troubling ways their

institution seemed to prefer online courses for adult students, when student experiences may not support that preference.

Institutional assumptions that online pedagogy is better for adult students

My first interview took place on campus with a mixed-race female veteran. She was quick to share the ways in which her institution seemed too optimistic about the prospect of online courses for adult students.

> Online classes...That is the kind of education for someone who just wants to work in isolation. I got sort of used to that while I was serving. I think when you think of people who are older and have busy lives, yes you think anything they can do off campus will help them get by. But the more I think about it, when you are in it, you think about how doing it really doesn't fit what school means in our heads and it just becomes more cumbersome. Because deep down that isolation isn't really what you want. I don't think it's wise for a school to just assume because a student is older that what they really need is an online course. I do see that it is coming from a good place but for people I talk to, it is not always working.

A Black male student in his late 20s shared,

> I just think if you came to school to do your own thing and want to bypass the noise and the day to day of college life coming to a campus, you would be motivated to take and do well in as many online classes as possible.

A Latina student in her late 30s shared,

> I notice a lot of my peers struggle. I really don't need to engage with others. I think it comes down to personality and learning needs. For people here that are actually looking for learning communities with people in front of them, I can see how this would be a challenge. I also think that's most students that come to community college in a way. I think schools just assume older students want their ticket punched or would prefer online.

A 42-year-old woman said of online courses at her junior college,

> They do everything but practically push online courses on to you. Once they know you are older, they assume all these hardships are following you. They really believe that online is the answer for busy old people with families. I don't think there is real time taken to understand what students like us want and what we need. I guess because they teach so many students, they have to punch as many tickets as possible. But there must be a better way.

This last theme highlights the ways in which the institution overestimated the value of online courses for older students.

Discussion

The themes presented highlight few areas of strength and many opportunities for improvement regarding online courses for adult learners. The following discussion section details ways in which we can continue to improve and challenge online instruction in both community colleges and urban contexts.

Socializing and on-boarding adult learners to online courses

As the transactional theory postulates, generally, novice learners require more structure and socialization than experienced students. As novice students acquire skills and expertise, their need for dialog increases, and the transactional distance between instructors and students decreases (Saba, 2000). Crucial to students' engagement in online learning is an appropriate orientation or induction to the environment, to the skills they will need, to the support that is available, and to their fellow students, not only for the creation of an online community colleges but to hopefully reduce the dropout rate and improve student retention and success. Previous research also corroborates that when students are better prepared for their online experience, supports long-term retention rates in their online courses (Jones, 2013).

This study also highlights the existence of an "online course digital literacy" that multiple participants believed they did not possess at the time they took their course. At the community colleges where data collection took place, all that exists pertaining to orienting the students is a voluntary quiz to gage students' readiness to take an online course and a manual with resources. Many described a lack of preparation or orientation available to help them best engage online, particularly for courses to which they had no choice. Some of the students did not know online courses would be part of their community college experience or why it was which underscores why not just the course itself, but its preparation warrants institutional attention.

Adult online participation requires customization and explanation

Online learning at a macro-level is often promoted as being at the cutting edge of education, and the development and use of the skills that come with it are held up as crucial for economic and employment advancement. Despite this emphasis, most students are driven to take courses due to a desire for knowledge on a particular topic, rather than by a curiosity to experience a different way of learning. Thus, outside of the perceived convenience these courses provide, it remained unclear to most participants how these courses might uniquely equip them for the 21st century world and workforce. Due to the lack of onboarding discussed earlier, there may be no infrastructure to illuminate the skills students are acquiring by taking courses

online. Through formally orientating adult students to the long-term benefits, institutions might be better able to generate and sustain enthusiasm for online courses. It might be also worth emphasizing during these explanations and discussions that learner autonomy is intimately tied in with a learner's sense of self-direction or self-determination which can impact their success in a course (Giossos et al., 2009, p. 2).

Further, entry surveys might help institutional researchers and administrators consistently evaluate and address the hesitations and conceptions marginalized and post-traditional students have about online courses. This will help institutions make sure that they are being proactive about listening to adult student perceptions and experiences, rather than implementing online courses based on the institution's enthusiasm and judgment alone (Iloh, 2018a). This also might help institutions discern what kinds of courses would be best suited for online delivery.

Conclusion

The utility and future of online courses is intertwined with the perceptions and experiences of the many adult learners that now take them. Exploring the experiences, opportunities, and challenges of these students highlights effective ways institutional leaders, administrators, instructors, and policymakers might make changes and address a growing older student population in postsecondary education. The findings of this study urge researchers and leaders to reconsider not just the access of online courses, but the extent they are equitable for marginalized and post-traditional students.

Note

1. Pos-ttraditional reflects an understanding that use of the term nontraditional continues to reinforce these learners as aberrations to the postsecondary education system (Soares, 2013). I also use the term post-traditional to indicate that we should move past a dichotomy of traditional and nontraditional students, toward a more detailed and nondeficit understanding of the heterogeneous 21st century college student population.

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Constance Iloh, Does distance education go the distance for adult learners? Evidence from a qualitative study at an American community college. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, Online First October 18, 2018. DOI: 10.1177/ 1477971418785384

Sections throughout the original manuscript have been re-written and updated to include new references. The online version of the article has been updated.

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PREVIOUS VERSION: Does distance education go the distance for adult learners? Evidence from a qualitative study at an American community college

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Abstract

Online coursework is dramatically changing the higher education landscape, particularly for adult learners. And while research notes the way these courses increase college opportunity for post-traditional students, they have poor learning and completion outcomes at many of the institutions to which older students frequently enroll. The author conducted a qualitative exploration involving 34 adult students at a large community college on the west coast to better understand the perceptions, experiences, opportunities, and challenges of online instructional delivery for adult students. Informed by semi-structured interviews with participants, findings from this study highlight: (1) the challenge of being a digital/online course novice, (2) online courses as better in theory than practice, and (3) problematic institutional assumptions that online pedagogy is better for adult learners. Results from this investigation provide new directions for implementation of online courses for adult learners students in higher education.

Keywords

Adult learners, older students, distance education, community colleges, post-traditional students, online courses, higher education

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Adult students are a growing presence in 21st century American higher education and the new majority in online distance education (Ausburn, 2004; Cercone, 2008; Iloh, 2018b). Current research on U.S community colleges, the institutions most likely to enroll students 25 and older, demonstrates online courses' ability to increase access, particularly for adult learners, while highlighting how they have not achieved the educational results of "traditional" face-to-face classroom learning (Cox, 2006). Research and intervention efforts in online distance education, however, are still predominantly based on the historical perspective of the traditional student profile at "traditional" public and private four-year institutions of higher learning (Ke, 2010).

Understanding adult students' perceptions and experiences in online courses has implications for improving design and instructional delivery, maximizing the value proposition of online courses, and strengthening educational equity for marginalized students (Sahin & Shelley, 2008). Because most empirical research in this area is not specific to the adult learners and the institutions to which they often enroll; closing gaps, conceptually and methodologically, is essential if online learning is to reach its potential, particularly for adult learners and colleges tasked with educating them. This qualitative exploration allows for a timely and deeper understanding of a growing form of instructional delivery for an underserved student population in higher education.

Adult learners in postsecondary education

Research on higher education has been predominantly based on historical perspectives, beliefs, and curriculum of a traditional student profile that of a person who between 18 and 22 years old, and who do not have other major responsibilities and roles that compete with their studies (e.g. full-time employment, parenting, and community responsibilities) (Kasworm, 1990; Ke, 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998, 2005). However, contemporary higher education reflects increasing diversity and distance from this traditional student profile. As a major grouping, adult students now comprise more than 47% of all students enrolled in higher education (Ke & Chavez, 2013).

The "nontraditional" student designation (what I prefer worded as post-traditional[1] to avert deficit framing) is generally applied to students who are 25 years or older, who did not enroll immediately after high school, are not in their first cycle of education, attend part-time, are financially independent, have other major responsibilities and roles that compete with their studies (e.g. parenting, caregiving, employment, and community involvement), and/or lack the standard admission requirements of a program (Iloh, 2017; Iloh, 2016; Iloh & Tierney, 2014; Kasworm, 2003; Panacci, 2015; Soares, 2013). A key characteristic distinguishing reentry adults from other college students is the high likelihood that they are juggling other life roles while attending school, including those of worker, spouse or partner, parent, caregiver, and community member (Ross-Gordon, 2011). More often, these multiple roles present challenges in students' allocation

of time for both academic study and participation in campus-based organizations and activities (Iloh, 2017, 2018a; Ross-Gordon, 2011).

Some argue that "adult learners have particular characteristics that set them apart from post-traditional students" and these characteristics "deserve our attention and the recognition that these students are a distinct group" (Compton, Cox, & Laanan, 2006). In their definition, adult students are 25 years old and over who are "more likely to be pursuing a program leading to a vocational certificate or degree," "have focused goals for their education, typically to gain or enhance work skills," and "may consider themselves primarily workers and not students" (p. 74). While there are different definitions of nontraditional students, mature students, and adult students, all three are commonly used to refer to "nontraditionally aged" students who are participating in higher education primarily for career-related reasons while having other major responsibilities and roles. Throughout this text, when I reference adult students, this indicates adults age 25 or older who are participating in higher education for career-related reasons while having other major responsibilities and roles.

Online college courses

Institutions of higher education have increasingly embraced online education, and the number of students enrolled in distance programs is rapidly rising in colleges and universities throughout the United States. Today, over 64% of higher education institutions offer distance education, a purposeful course design using technical media to deliver content, compared to only 34% in 2002 (Moore & Kearsley, 2012; Mupinga, Nora, & Yaw, 2006). NCES reported in 2008 that at least two-thirds of two-year and four-year Title IV degree-granting institutions offered online courses, blended/hybrid courses, or courses offered in other distance education formats for college-level credit (Parsad & Lewis, 2008).

While some research suggests that students who complete online courses learn as much as those in face-to-face instruction, earn equivalent grades, and are equally satisfied (e.g. Johng, Krug, & Zhang, 2007; Sitzmann, Kraiger, Stewart, & Wisher, 2006), other research finds students are less likely to complete online courses (Moore, Bartkovich, Fetzner, & Ison, 2003). Adult students are often a target market for online classes, due to the flexibility of the format (Choitz & Prince, 2008). Considering both adult students' characteristics and representative adult learning theories (i.e. andragogy, self-directed learning, experiential learning, and transformational learning), high-quality online learning for adults is characterized by (a) social interaction and collaboration with peers, (b) connecting new knowledge to past experience, (c) immediacy in application, (d) a climate of self-reflection, and (e) self-regulated learning (Cercone, 2008).

Proponents of online learning argue that technology-enhanced education can lead to excellent learning outcomes and that higher online dropout rates are not due to the medium per se, but rather to the characteristics of students who choose online courses (Howell, Laws, & Lindsay, 2004; Jaggars & Bailey, 2010). These advocates

are particularly optimistic about how online coursework provides students with technology literacy necessary for the 21st century workplace and increases access to college by reducing the cost and time of commuting and allowing students to study on a schedule that is optimal for them (Grinager, 2006). This goal of improved access is one of the top drivers of institutional decision-making regarding increases in distance education offerings (Parsad & Lewis, 2008).

Critics of online learning raise concerns about the quality of online coursework (Bennet & Monds, 2008; Jaggars & Bailey, 2010). Participants in online courses complain about a lack of faculty–student and student–student interaction and communication (Bambara, Harbour, Davies, & Athey, 2009). Other research indicates that instructors, in many cases, simply transfer their in-class pedagogy to an online format rather than take advantage of the capabilities of computer-mediated distance education (Cox, 2005). These practices may contribute to low online course completion rates. Many educators imply that the observed high drop rates should disqualify online education as a high-quality option to traditional education (Bennett & Monds, 2008). Institutions harbor concern about online course performance among underserved students who might be more likely to withdraw from the courses (Jaggars & Bailey, 2010).

Past research indicates that student needs, experiences, and perceptions should be central in designing, developing, and delivering online courses (Ni, 2013; Sahin & Shelley, 2008). Further, failing to meet student expectations and needs may lead to low levels of student participation and completion (Hall, 2001). Indeed, without investigating what satisfies students in distance education courses, it is difficult to meet their needs and improve their learning. Literature also emphasizes the importance of research for improving online learning courses (Levin & Wadmany, 2006; White, 2005).

Junior colleges as important sites for understanding adult online participation

The national commitment to increasing postsecondary educational attainment, combined with growing economic anxiety, has made community colleges the focus of many federal and state policy initiatives (Baime & Baum, 2016). There is good reason for this: by virtue of their nature and reach, community colleges—public institutions of higher education that mostly award associate degrees and sometimes bachelor's degrees—are indispensable to meeting national goals for educational attainment as well as for the development of a productive workforce (Baime & Baum, 2016). The nation's over 1100 community colleges are increasingly considered to be the "backbone" of the public workforce system with a track record for serving adult students (Van Noy, Heidkamp, & Kaltz, 2013).

Community colleges are an essential point of access to higher education for historically underserved student populations. Compared to their four-year college counterparts, community college participants are older, more likely to be women,

members of racially minoritized groups, less likely to attend full time because they are working and taking care of family, and more likely to be first-generation college students (Bragg, 2001; Iloh, 2014; Pusser & Levin, 2009). This profile of students who attend community colleges is not new; historically, the student populations of community colleges have been much more diverse than the populations at other public and private nonprofit institutions of higher learning.

Community colleges are often asked to fulfill numerous missions, including providing academic, vocational, noncredit, and enrichment courses to their communities and playing a role in local economic development (Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Zeidenberg & Bailey, 2010). Although the colleges differ considerably in terms of the missions they are willing to undertake, there is a core mission, shared by virtually all community colleges, of enabling low-income students and underserved populations to continue their education and acquire useful skills (Barbatis, 2010; Zeidenberg & Bailey, 2010). In the last several years, student enrollment pressure has escalated and community colleges have struggled with steep state budget cuts, limited facilities, faculty turnover and expenses, a progressively more diverse student body, increasing numbers of students who need remedial work before they can take college-level classes, and competition with for-profit institutions (Scrivener, 2008). Seeking out innovative approaches to developing and growing distance-learning programs has been identified as one way to increase community colleges' capacity to address some of these issues without massive, new building projects and investments (Ives, 2006).

Using transactional distance theory

I employed the theory of transactional distance to examine adult learner perceptions and experiences of online courses at a junior college. The concept of transaction is derived from Dewey and Bentley (1949) and developed by Boyd and Apps (1980) and "connotes the interplay among the environment, the individuals and the patterns of behaviors in a situation" (Boyd & Apps, 1980, p. 5). Moore (1993) expanded this concept by defining distance education as a type of transaction, and the distance between learners and teachers as psychological rather than physical. He described this transactional distance as a "continuous...variable...; relative rather than an absolute term" (p. 22), and constantly changing depending on the situational environment. According to the transactional distance theory, teaching and learning strategies have to be adjusted to avoid potential misunderstandings due to transactional distance (Gorsky & Caspi, 2005).

Moore's theory of transactional distance articulates the idea that distance in education is not simply a geographic separation of learners and teachers, but, more importantly, is a pedagogical concept (Moore, 1993; Moore & Kearsley, 1996). This definition includes both synchronous and asynchronous delivery formats; even in face-to-face teaching, there is some element of transactional distance (Rumble, 1986). Transactional distance theory is important conceptually, since it

proposes that the essential distance in distance education is transactional, not spatial or temporal (Gorsky & Caspi, 2005).

According to Moore, the development of the *transaction* is influenced by three basic factors: (1) the dialog developed between instructor and learner, (2) the structure that refers to the degree of structural flexibility of the program, and (3) the autonomy that alludes to the extent to which the learner exerts control over learning procedures (Giossos, Koutsouba, Lionarakis, & Skavantzos, 2009). The fundamental concepts proposed by Moore (1993) initially involved several types of interactions: learner–content, learner–learner, and learner–instructor. A fourth interaction, learner–interface, was later developed by Hillman, Willis, and Gunawardena (1994) to address the technology utilized in distance education courses and how the technology affects student perceptions of the overall learning experience. The learner–interface level of interaction involves the instructor's utilization of technology, but also involves the learner's understanding and use of the online technology (Su, Bonk, Magijuka, Liu, & Lee, 2005). Learner–interface interaction is significant because the technology employed in online distance education courses serves as the primary conduit between the instructor and the learner (Su et al., 2005).

Transactional distance can vary by time. At each point in time throughout a course, requirements for learning and teaching may change. As students become more knowledgeable and self-reliant, their need for autonomy may or may not increase (Burgess, 2006). Some students who naturally display a need for structure may continue to require a more structured approach, even when they have become more competent in what they are learning (Burgess, 2006). Therefore, optimal transactional distance varies for each student, subject, and instructional situation. The goal should be for instructor and student to optimize transactional distance within a certain range to keep the instruction productive (Saba, 2000).

Method

This study qualitatively explored adult student experiences and perspectives of online courses at an American community college. The investigation was guided by three questions:

RQ1: What perceptions do adult learners have of the distance present in online courses?

RQ2: What experiences have adult students had taking online courses at community colleges?

RQ3: What challenges and opportunities, if any, do these courses provide for older students?

Transactional distance theory is useful for this study because it is based on individuals' perceptions and experiences. There is no such thing as an abstract or

intangible transactional distance, but, rather, an individualized one (Giossos, 2009). For these reasons, theories such as transactional distance are "invaluable in guiding the complex practice of understanding teaching and learning at a distance" in specific contexts and settings (Garrison, 2000).

This study drew from a large multisite study on online learning in vocational institutions of higher learning. All participants were 25 or older and either currently enrolled or had been enrolled in an online course at a community college within the past two years. I interviewed students at one large community college in California for approximately five months, with data analysis taking place concurrently.

Research setting

California served as an important location for understanding the perceptions and experiences of students enrolled in an online course, particularly at community college. California's community colleges offer more online credit courses than any other state, with online course enrollment totaling almost one million, representing about 11% of total enrollment (Johnson & Cuellar Mejia, 2014). Similar to national records, at California's community colleges, students are less likely to pass an online course than a traditional course and the success rates of Black and Latino students are significantly lower than the success rates of white and Asian students (Johnson, Mejia, & Cook, 2015).

The students interviewed were all enrolled at a community college that is part of the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD). LACCD, one of the largest community college districts in the world, enrolled over 232,000 students in the 2015–2016 school year (LACCD, 2016). Each of the nine campuses offers unique programs and services, while sharing a common mission: to provide quality education at a reasonable price to students wishing to transfer, adults seeking to upgrade skills, employers seeking to retrain their workers, and community members interested in lifelong learning (LACCD, 2016). The junior college, from which I recruited participants, offered a number of distance education courses in fall, winter, and spring across the spectrum of the humanities, social sciences, sciences, and applied disciplines. Distance education courses in this setting were especially marketed toward students who have numerous commitments outside of school.

Research participants

The participants for this study were recruited through a community college campus office, tasked with providing outreach and support services to diverse students. Specifically, the director of this center identified students who fit the sampling criterion (discussed in next paragraphs). In some cases, the director of the campus office introduced prospective participants to me while I was there in the office. In other cases, an e-mail was sent to prospective interviewees and students who expressed interest in participating and were contacted by me for interview. This director and college representative was also helpful in providing

space in her office for me to interview participants on the campus (which took place during the first round of interviews).

Each of the 34 students was asked about one or more online course experiences at their community college, during the past two years. As the focus of this study is adult learners, all participants were age 25 and older. Participants' demographic data, including age, gender, and ethnicity were collected prior to the study. As Table 1 highlights, the participants aged 25–51, 68% were Latino and Black, and 62% were female.

Data collection included two waves of 50 minute telephone and in-person interviews with adult community college students. Roughly 75% of the sample had an initial first meeting in-person and the remaining had their first interview via phone. All the second wave of interviews took place via phone.

Data collection

This study focuses on the experiences and perspectives of adult learners; thus, the primary data for this investigation are the interviews I conducted from a sample of 34 student participants age 25 and older. Each interview lasted for approximately 50 minutes and consisted of open-ended questions intended to uncover the participants' understandings of their online course college experiences and perceptions. The three research questions served as the primary guiding questions for interviews. I also followed-up with specific questions based on each participant's initial responses. The topics of these interviews included: (a) adult student perspectives on online courses, (b) past and current experiences with online courses, and (c) comparisons of their perceptions and experiences of online courses to face-to-face courses.

Table 1. Participant sample.

Female	21	62%
Male	13	38%
American Indian/Alaskan	1	2%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3	5%
Black/Non-Hispanic	10	36%
Latino	13	41%
Other	0	0%
Two or more races	1	5%
White/Non-Hispanic	6	11%
25–29	11	32%
30–34	9	26%
35–39	6	18%
40–44	5	15%
45–49	2	6%
$\geq$50	1	3%

Data analysis

The analysis of the data included triangulating surveys (consisting of demographic and educational information about each participant) and transcription of semistructured interviews (each participant was interviewed a twice). This was followed by Bogdan and Biklen's (2003) constant comparative method, in which any newly collected interview data are compared with previous data that were collected. In the constant comparative method, theories are formed, enhanced, confirmed, or even discounted because of any new data that emerge from the study. This method enabled me to review data from interview responses and ask more pertinent follow-up questions during individual interviews. As I compared common themes and approached theoretical saturation—the point at which new data fit into existing categories—an image of students' responses to the three research questions emerged.

Meaning units in this study were derived by asking a series of questions. During this part of the research process, I proceeded in coding and analyzing statements by inquiring: (1) Does the statement address an aspect of the research questions? (2) Is the statement a necessary and significant constituent for understanding a research question? (3) Is it possible to abstract and label it? Once labeled, these meaning units were clustered into common categories or themes, removing overlapping and repetitive statements, and then clustered into themes (Moustakas, 1994), that represent perceptions and experiences of online courses in this particular college setting. For example, "You definitely have to be on your time management because it can be consuming. This is not a structured environment and I wonder if people know that going in" is an example of a participant statement that was compared and contrasted with other participant statements until they formed clusters of similar following themes. This example loosely highlights both the constant comparative method, and how a particular statement ultimately moved from data point to being clustered into a broader and reoccurring theme across participants.

Results

The goal of this study was to understand the ways in which adult learners perceive and experience online courses in a community college setting. The findings are organized and illustrated with quotes from participants during interviews. The constant comparative analysis of research interviews suggested three overarching themes regarding student perceptions and experiences of online courses: (1) the challenge of being a digital/online course novice, (2) online courses as better in theory than practice, and (3) problematic institutional assumptions that online pedagogy is better for adult learners.

The challenge of being a digital/online course novice

A Latina female shared of her online course experience,

When I first started, it was worse than adjusting to school overall. I think in some ways it would have just been easier to figure out another way to get to campus. I am just not used to the format.

A Black female in her late 20s shared, "It creates a climate where you are experiencing the difficulty of the online course, but you don't want to or know where to ask for help." A Latino male student, age 24, said of his experience,

I guess for me the biggest challenge is judging how well you are doing against yourself. In a real class, you can kind of see what your peers are doing. But online, it's sort of hard to get used to and hard to tell if your participation is too much or not enough relative to everyone else.

Online courses, while familiar in the higher education literature, were less familiar for approximately 79% of participants. Many discussed the challenge in excelling in courses to which they have little or no experience in the delivery format.

A Black male shared during his interview,

There is a learning curve. I'm supposed to be mastering a course not mastering how to master an online course. My first class online, I actually spent more time than expected trying to figure it out. For example, there is a guessing game of when you will even get a response from your professor. These are things people don't really think about as challenging but you realize really quickly there are many and unique challenges of this kind of class.

One American Indian student shared,

I get that we are supposed to be prepared students, but I actually have no idea how this works. I guess they train the instructors. I'm a little embarrassed that I kind of wish there was a training for me.

Similarly, a Black woman participant in her mid-30s stated,

I use my phone/internet all the time only for social media. I mean Facebook, Twitter. . .. To stalk to my kids that is. I just wish they could just keep this stuff on Blackboard. Blackboard is easy and makes sense. This [online course] isn't intuitive for all of us.

Dynamics such as these highlight the real and perceived difficulties of students acclimating to and navigating the virtual community college course. Online courses, often pitched for their convenience, were anything but that quality for countless respondents.

Online courses as better in theory than in practice

In this theme, participants were clear in discussing how their online course experiences did or did not fit in practice what they believed was the perceived value proposition of the courses.

In one interview, a 25-year-old female participant shared,

> I mean I am glad my courses aren't totally online. I get that they want to serve more students, but it seems like a lose-lose for us [students] already here. You don't even know why that class was online. It's like they haven't figured out the right recipe, but are still serving the food. Yeah, the dish sounded like it would be a hit based on your preferences, but it tastes terrible when you get it.

A Black woman participant, age 42, echoed, "For me, college is an opportunity to get what I have been missing. Convenience finally means teachers that care in front of me. High school didn't give me that and classes online definitely don't either." One White woman in her late 20s playfully winked then shared, "I'm so tempted all the time to have one of my friends post for me in this online class. It's too tempting...Having someone make it all the way convenient." She chuckled then added. "Isn't that the idea?"

A 32-year-old Filipina female shared of her online course experience,

> It's easier to check in physically (going to an actual class). I have to drive to campus, park, and walk in, but online is different. I have to consider when am I going to schedule my homework, my assignments, everything. You even have to mentally check-in before you even start. And you constantly worry you will miss so much stuff that it can get to the point where you feel like you are online 24/7. And it's not even convenient given everything I have going on to live my life on my phone. I have to keep up. I can't miss anything. And also in class physically, you can listen to someone talk. Online, you have to read paragraphs which is even more time consuming than if you were just there in person.

A Black male student, age 31, shared of his online course experience,

> I think a lot of times you think about something and it sounds like it will work but then when you do it, you realize there is a huge gap between what you think about it and what it is. There just really is so much extra stuff that comes with this kind of course in comparison to others. But when you think about it on an abstract level, it really does seem like a problem solver. I wish there was a way to bundle up everything you need to know about getting involved in this kind of course so you can at least be somewhat prepared for the unexpected ways it is difficult.

For most respondents, there appeared to be an incompatibility of online courses ideally and realistically. The last theme addresses the troubling ways their

institution seemed to prefer online courses for adult students, when student experiences may not support that preference.

Institutional assumptions that online pedagogy is better for adult students

My first interview took place on campus with a mixed-race female veteran. She was quick to share the ways in which her institution seemed too optimistic about the prospect of online courses for adult students.

> Online classes. . .That is the kind of education for someone who just wants to work in isolation. I got sort of used to that while I was serving. I think when you think of people who are older and have busy lives, yes you think anything they can do off campus will help them get by. But the more I think about it, when you are in it, you think about how doing it really doesn't fit what school means in our heads and it just becomes more cumbersome. Because deep down that isolation isn't really what you want. I don't think it's wise for a school to just assume because a student is older that what they really need is an online course. I do see that it is coming from a good place but for people I talk to, it is not always working.

A Black male student in his late 20s shared,

> I just think if you came to school to do your own thing and want to bypass the noise and the day to day of college life coming to a campus, you would be motivated to take and do well in as many online classes as possible.

A Latina student in her late 30s shared,

> I notice a lot of my peers struggle. I really don't need to engage with others. I think it comes down to personality and learning needs. For people here that are actually looking for learning communities with people in front of them, I can see how this would be a challenge. I also think that's most students that come to community college in a way. I think schools just assume older students want their ticket punched or would prefer online.

A 42-year-old woman said of online courses at her junior college,

> They do everything but practically push online courses on to you. Once they know you are older, they assume all these hardships are following you. They really believe that online is the answer for busy old people with families. I don't think there is real time taken to understand what students like us want and what we need. I guess because they teach so many students, they have to punch as many tickets as possible. But there must be a better way.

This last theme highlights the ways in which the institution overestimated the value of online courses for older students.

Discussion

The themes presented highlight few areas of strength and many opportunities for improvement regarding online courses for adult learners. The following discussion section details ways in which we can continue to improve and challenge online instruction in both community colleges and urban contexts.

Socializing and on-boarding adult learners to online courses

As the transactional theory postulates, generally, novice learners require more structure and socialization than experienced students. As novice students acquire skills and expertise, their need for dialog increases, and the transactional distance between instructors and students decreases (Saba, 2000). Crucial to students' engagement in online learning is an appropriate orientation or induction to the environment, to the skills they will need, to the support that is available, and to their fellow students, not only for the creation of an online community colleges but to hopefully reduce the dropout rate and improve student retention and success. Previous research also corroborates that when students are better prepared for their online experience, supports long-term retention rates in their online courses (Jones, 2013).

This study also highlights the existence of an "online course digital literacy" that multiple participants believed they did not possess at the time they took their course. At the community colleges where data collection took place, all that exists pertaining to orienting the students is a voluntary quiz to gage students' readiness to take an online course and a manual with resources. Many described a lack of preparation or orientation available to help them best engage online, particularly for courses to which they had no choice. Some of the students did not know online courses would be part of their community college experience or why it was which underscores why not just the course itself, but its preparation warrants institutional attention.

Adult online participation requires customization and explanation

Online learning at a macro-level is often promoted as being at the cutting edge of education, and the development and use of the skills that come with it are held up as crucial for economic and employment advancement. Despite this emphasis, most students are driven to take courses due to a desire for knowledge on a particular topic, rather than by a curiosity to experience a different way of learning. Thus, outside of the perceived convenience these courses provide, it remained unclear to most participants how these courses might uniquely equip them for the 21st century world and workforce. Due to the lack of onboarding discussed earlier, there may be no infrastructure to illuminate the skills students are acquiring by taking courses

online. Through formally orientating adult students to the long-term benefits, institutions might be better able to generate and sustain enthusiasm for online courses. It might be also worth emphasizing during these explanations and discussions that learner autonomy is intimately tied in with a learner's sense of self-direction or self-determination which can impact their success in a course (Giossos et al., 2009, p. 2).

Further, entry surveys might help institutional researchers and administrators consistently evaluate and address the hesitations and conceptions marginalized and post-traditional students have about online courses. This will help institutions make sure that they are being proactive about listening to adult student perceptions and experiences, rather than implementing online courses based on the institution's enthusiasm and judgment alone (Iloh, 2018a). This also might help institutions discern what kinds of courses would be best suited for online delivery.

Conclusion

The utility and future of online courses is intertwined with the perceptions and experiences of the many adult learners that now take them. Exploring the experiences, opportunities, and challenges of these students highlights effective ways institutional leaders, administrators, instructors, and policymakers might make changes and address a growing older student population in postsecondary education. The findings of this study urge researchers and leaders to reconsider not just the access of online courses, but the extent they are equitable for marginalized and post-traditional students.

Declaration of conflicting interests

Funding

Note

1. Pos-ttraditional reflects an understanding that use of the term nontraditional continues to reinforce these learners as aberrations to the postsecondary education system (Soares, 2013). I also use the term post-traditional to indicate that we should move past a dichotomy of traditional and nontraditional students, toward a more detailed and nondeficit understanding of the heterogeneous 21st century college student population.

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Constance Iloh http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9540-0055

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AQ: 1	Please provide volume and issue information for ref. Pelletier, S. (2010).

Hi both,

Now we have confirmed the removal of the two references and found the correct way to reference the Pelletier article we should proceed with publication.

Karuna, please have the latest updates incorporated and start the publication process.

Many thanks,
Matt

From: Karuna Rana <Karuna.Rana@sagepub.in>
Sent: 28 June 2019 07:00
To: Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu>
Cc: Matthew Snelgrove <Matthew.Snelgrove@sagepub.co.uk>
Subject: RE: ADU 785384 and Correction notice 857491

The last inquiry is pasted as under:
Could you please confirm if it is fine with you to have the reference as under? I shall then proceed.
Pelletier, S. (2010). Success for adult students. *Public Purpose*, 2–6. Retrieved from
http://www.aascu.org/uploadedFiles/AASCU/Content/Root/MediaAndPublications/PublicPurposeMagazines/Issue/10fall_adultstudents.pdf

Warm regards,
Karuna

Karuna Rana (Ms.)
Associate Production Editor
SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd.
www.sagepub.in

From: Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu>
Sent: 28 June 2019 11:28
To: Karuna Rana <Karuna.Rana@sagepub.in>
Cc: Matthew Snelgrove <Matthew.Snelgrove@sagepub.co.uk>
Subject: Re: ADU 785384 and Correction notice 857491

Will do! Let me find what last email your inquiry was.....

On Thu, Jun 27, 2019 at 10:55 PM Karuna Rana <Karuna.Rana@sagepub.in> wrote:

> Hi Constance,
> Yes, I confirm that there will be just one reference Iloh, 2018. Now, may I request you to please let me know about the **Pelletier** reference?
>
> Warm regards,
> Karuna
>
> Karuna Rana (Ms.)
> *Associate Production Editor*
> SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd.
> www.sagepub.in
>
>
>
> **From:** Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu>
> **Sent:** 28 June 2019 11:23
> **To:** Karuna Rana <Karuna.Rana@sagepub.in>
> **Subject:** Re: ADU 785384 and Correction notice 857491

Hi there! Thanks! Just for clarity:

The two references will also change the in-text cites. For example, the 2018b should just be 2018 but I need to double check.

Warm regards,

On Thu, Jun 27, 2019 at 10:43 PM Karuna Rana <Karuna.Rana@sagepub.in> wrote:

> Hi Constance,
>
> I have pasted your emails here for my record. We will get the references removed as per your email and have marked it in the article. We request you to please confirm the **Pelletier** reference as given in the below email at earliest today and I shall proceed further to get them incorporated.
>
>
> Warm regards,
> Karuna
>
> Karuna Rana (Ms.)
> *Associate Production Editor*
> SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd.
> www.sagepub.in

> **From:** Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu>
> **Sent:** 27 June 2019 20:04
> **To:** Karuna Rana <Karuna.Rana@sagepub.in>
> **Subject:** Re: Re:
>
> Hello there,
>
> Thank you so much. I will look at this when I get to a computer. Were you able to take out those references and their in-text cites as Matthew said? It would also make the Harvard ed review one just (2018) in-text and not (2018b) I believe.
>
> **From:** Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu>
> **Sent:** 27 June 2019 19:53
> **To:** Karuna Rana <Karuna.Rana@sagepub.in>
> **Subject:** Re:
>
> Hello there! Going to a computer now. Did you remove the two references I spoke about and as he said ?
>
> **From:** Karuna Rana
> **Sent:** 27 June 2019 17:30
> **To:** Matthew Snelgrove <Matthew.Snelgrove@sagepub.co.uk>; Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu>
> **Subject:** ADU 785384 and Correction notice 857491
> **Importance:** High
>
> Hi Constance,
>
> Please find the attached updated correction notice. As mentioned by Matt, please note that we will not be able to make any further changes. We have checked through the wording and made the changes you proposed.
>
> Please confirm the **Pelletier** reference as given in the below email at earliest today and I shall proceed further.
>
> I hope you appreciate that we cannot delay the publication any further. Also, I request you to please respond to the same email chain and do not start a new email (also please do not change the subject line) as it helps in keeping a record.
>
> Warm regards,
> Karuna
>
> Karuna Rana (Ms.)
> *Associate Production Editor*
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> www.sagepub.in

From: Karuna Rana
Sent: 27 June 2019 15:16
To: Matthew Snelgrove <Matthew.Snelgrove@sagepub.co.uk>; Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu>
Subject: RE: Re:

Hi Constance,

I hope you are in receipt of below email from Matt.
Could you please confirm if it is fine with you to have the reference as under? I shall then proceed.

Pelletier, S. (2010). Success for adult students. *Public Purpose*, 2–6. Retrieved from
http://www.aascu.org/uploadedFiles/AASCU/Content/Root/MediaAndPublications/PublicPurposeMagazines/Issue/10fall_adultstudents.pdf,

Warm regards,
Karuna

Karuna Rana (Ms.)
Associate Production Editor
SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd.
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From: Matthew Snelgrove <Matthew.Snelgrove@sagepub.co.uk>
Sent: 26 June 2019 19:16
To: Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu>; Karuna Rana <Karuna.Rana@sagepub.in>
Subject: RE: Re:

Hi both,

I recommended adding Fall 2010 as this is how the journal denotes its issues. I have looked at how other articles reference this paper and they all reference it as Pelletier, S. (2010). Success for adult students. *Public Purpose*, 2–6. Retrieved from
http://www.aascu.org/uploadedFiles/AASCU/Content/Root/MediaAndPublications/PublicPurposeMagazines/Issue/10fall_adultstudents.pdf,
therefore to avoid potentially adding an error I suggest we do the same. I hope that is agreeable to you, Constance.

This part of the process is not for requesting additional changes, but to confirm the changes agreed to previously have been incorporated into the typeset version. However, as we are making this change we may as well remove the references below as well.

Karuna, sorry to ask you to update this again.

Many thanks,
Matt

From: Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu>
Sent: 26 June 2019 14:05
To: Karuna Rana <Karuna.Rana@sagepub.in>; Matthew Snelgrove <Matthew.Snelgrove@sagepub.co.uk>
Subject: Re:

Thanks!I can be on stand by all day with my computer and have cancelled everything else. I am just conforming exactly how Pelletier should be referenced. The last two references are redundant and overkill so I removed them for this updated version.

Again with Pelletier, I just wanted to make sure everything was correct and I was seeking a definitive answer on how that reference should be written amidst the conflicting other references in other articles for this same text. Is there a number I can best reach you?
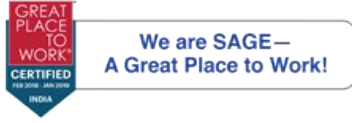
Best,

On Wed, Jun 26, 2019 at 4:51 AM Karuna Rana <Karuna.Rana@sagepub.in> wrote:

Hi Constance,

I will check on this with Matthew and let you know.

Warm regards,
Karuna

Karuna Rana (Ms.)
Associate Production Editor
SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd.
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From: Constance A Iloh <ciloh@uci.edu>
Sent: 26 June 2019 16:55
To: Karuna Rana <Karuna.Rana@sagepub.in>
Subject:

Hello there. Please halt what you are doing. I don't think the Pelletier reference is written correctly, it has 2010 written twice, and I sought out an APA expert about this. I also want to see updated corrigendum.

Please also remove reference (in-text cites) and reference to these articles:

Iloh, C. (2017). Paving effective community college pathways by recognizing the Latino post-traditional student. Journal of Latinos and Education. doi:10.1080/15348431.2017.1371603

Iloh, C. (2018a). Not non-traditional, the new normal: Adult learners and the role of student affairs in supporting older college students. Journal of Student Affairs, 27, 25–31.

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