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## Challenges faced by Adult learners in their distance Education Studies

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### Introduction:

A visible intention to encourage high-quality training of the adult population is evident in many EU countries. The Education Development Strategy of Latvia also anticipates an increase in the proportion of adult students. Distance learning is one of the most convenient forms of education for adult students who have priorities different from learning, such as work and family. However, this form of education has its own problems connected with the peculiarities of distance education as well as with the peculiarities of adult audience. The article is devoted to the research, which purpose is to identify and explore the range of problems commonly encountered by mature students studying remotely, using the experience of Transport and Telecommunication Institute. This article emphasizes the factors causing the feeling of anxiety, concerns regarding the education process and learning results in adult learners, and can deter adults from participation in distance education such as: loss of learning skills, lack of experience in distance education, financial costs of education, lack of support by the family or by the employer, sense of hopelessness and irrelevance of their education, etc. The authors suggest some methods to cope with this anxiety and to optimize the learning process. The findings of this article should be useful for academic and administrative staff of the university providing distance education for adult students.

Their study found that some of the factors affected **adult learners'** decisions to persist in or drop out of the **online degree** programs such as basic physical constraints from work, scholastic aptitude, family/personal issues, motivation for studying, academic integration, interaction, and motivation.

Choosing to return to school can be a life-changing decision, whether it's been one year since you graduated or a decade since you sat in a classroom.

There are significant challenges posed to adults who decide to pursue education. The good news is these challenges are being recognized by many educational institutions, and non-traditional educational opportunities are becoming widely available. School and institutions are realizing the increasing importance of making learning accessible to everyone and are, consequently, offering more flexible options for students. Many institutions offer evening and weekend classes, as well as online or distance education options. Bursaries and grants can assist with the costs of tuition and books. As more adults return to school, more services and resources become available to assist with this challenging but worthwhile endeavor.

Ultimately, adult learners face a very unique set of challenges when deciding to enter or re-enter the educational sphere. Three of the biggest challenges facing adult learners are balancing school and life, accessibility and costs:

### **1. School and Life Responsibilities - The Balancing Act:**

As any postsecondary student can attest, school is a huge time commitment. There is time spent in class, time spent preparing for class and then the time needed for essays, assignments and other homework. Above and beyond school commitments, adults who are returning to school face additional demands on their time.

Many adult learners are pursuing their education while still working full time. Many also have families and family obligations. This means less time available for school-related activities. These additional responsibilities can lead to stress and frustration for adult learners.

### **2. Accessibility:**

A second challenge facing adult students is accessibility to classes. Sometimes getting to class is the biggest challenge! As previously mentioned, many adult learners have extensive time commitments. Whether it's a full-time job or a growing family, other responsibilities make it difficult to attend classes during regular school hours. This can lead to difficulty succeeding at school, or even reluctance to return to school at all.

### **3. Cost:**

The cost of education can be challenging for anyone. Tuition costs, books, supplies it all adds up. Throw daycare costs or mortgage payments into the mix and the cost of pursuing an education as an adult learner can become prohibitive.

Adult learners often do not qualify for student loans, which makes paying for an education difficult. On top of the costs of education itself, there is the potential lost income from unemployment, as many adults return to school following a job loss.

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