

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 391 961

CE 070 880

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 TITLE Attitudes of Adult Students Regarding the Learning Environment at East Tennessee State University.  
 PUB DATE 29 May 95  
 NOTE 40p.; Paper presented at the National Conference on the Adult Learner (San Antonio, TX, May 29, 1995).  
 PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.  
 DESCRIPTORS \*Adult Students; \*College Environment; College Faculty; College Programs; \*College Students; \*Educational Attitudes; Higher Education; \*Institutional Characteristics; Majors (Students); Nontraditional Education; \*Student Attitudes

IDENTIFIERS \*East Tennessee State University

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to obtain measurements of adult student attitudes using the Mattering Scales for Adult Students in Higher Education (MHE). The MHE is designed to assess the perceptions of adult learners about their learning environment. The purpose of the scale is to learn more about the different ways in which adult learners feel they matter to their institution of higher education. Researchers at East Tennessee State University surveyed 400 adult students, aged 23 and older stratified by classification. A 70 percent response rate was achieved, and the results were positive. Of the five subscales surveyed, the adult student respondents were the most positive about the Peers Subscale (the extent to which they feel they belong on campus and are accepted as peers in the classroom). This scale was followed in descending order of satisfaction by the remaining four subscales: the Faculty Subscale, the Advising Subscale, the Administration Subscale, and finally, the Multiple Roles Subscale. (This paper includes six appendixes that contain the questionnaire, results on the various subscales, comments from students, and frequency distribution of students' majors.)  
 (Author/KC)

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**Attitudes of Adult Students Regarding the Learning Environment at East Tennessee State University**

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presented at:

**The 1995 National Conference on the Adult Learner  
May 29, 1995  
San Antonio, Texas**

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**Abstract:**

The objectives of this study were to obtain measurements of adult student attitudes using the **Mattering Scales for Adult Students in Higher Education (MHE)** published by the American Council on Education. The MHE is designed to assess the perceptions of adult learners about their learning environment. The purpose of the scale is to learn more about the different ways in which adult learners feel they matter to their institution of higher education.

East Tennessee State University surveyed 400 adult students, aged 23 and older, stratified by classification. A 70% response rate was achieved and the results were positive. Of the five subscales surveyed, the adult student respondents were the most positive about the **Peers Subscale** (the extent to which they feel they belong on campus and are accepted as peers in the classroom). This scale was followed in descending order of satisfaction by the remaining four subscales as follows: The **Faculty Subscale**, the **Advising Subscale**, the **Administration Subscale**, and finally, the **Multiple Roles Subscale**.

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## **Attitudes of Adult Students Regarding the Learning Environment at East Tennessee State University**

### **Introduction:**

While many universities focus on the needs of traditional students, often less time is spent in determining how well the needs of the adult student population are being met. The Center for Adult Programs and Services at East Tennessee State University (ETSU) undertook this study to determine the extent to which ETSU's adult students feel they matter to the institution in the areas of administration, advisement, interactions with peers, multiple roles and faculty.

For faculty, staff, and administrators, the **Mattering Scales for Adult Students in Higher Education (MHE) (Appendix A)** identifies critical aspects of the institution's response to the needs of adult learners. Most importantly, it identifies the areas in which adult student needs are met, as well as where deficiencies are perceived by adult learners. While conducting preliminary research for the study, it became apparent that few universities had utilized the MHE and documented findings from the survey.

The MHE contains 45 questions using a Likert Scale response pattern with 5 indicating strong agreement, 1 indicating strong disagreement and 3 indicating a neutral response. The instrument was used as designed however, the demographic sheet (Appendix B) was altered to fit the needs of ETSU. Although no dedicated space exists for comments, the instructions encourage adult respondents to "please feel free to add any comments you wish to make". Our respondents did not hesitate to do so (Appendix C). As might be expected, these comments are reflective of strong feelings regarding issues and points of contention within the student's realm of experiences on the ETSU campus; i.e. class scheduling concerns and student fees.

Overall, the survey results were positive. Adult students at ETSU feel that they do matter to the institution. When compared to the institutions involved in the normative study, ETSU's mean scores for the **Administration, Peers, and Multiple Roles** subscales were on par with that for the other four year institutions. Please note that the normative sample is relatively small and therefore caution should be exercised regarding the comparison. It is interesting to note that the standard deviation for each of the five subscales at ETSU was higher than the comparable institutions in the normative group. This indicates a broader range of responses on the part of our students.

### Population

The target population was comprised of 400 full and part-time students randomly selected, stratified by classification as follows:

Freshman	- Age 23 or older
Sophomores	- Age 24 or older
Juniors	- Age 25 or older
Seniors	- Age 26 or older
Undergrad Special	- Age 23 or older

### Demographics of Student Respondents

#### Gender

90 Males (32.5%)  
187 Females (67.5)

#### Classification

48 Freshmen (17%)  
56 Sophomores (20%)  
78 Juniors (28%)  
81 Seniors (29%)  
7 Undergraduate Specials (2.5%)  
7 Did not identify classification (2.5%)

-----

277 Total

#### Racial/Ethnic

1.1% No Response  
4.0% Black  
1.4% American Indian/Alaskan Native  
0.7% Asian/Pacific Islander  
0.7% Hispanic  
90.6% White/non Hispanic  
0.4% Unknown  
1.1% Other

100.0% Total

**First Generation College Student\***

70% Yes

30% No

\* College Student Experiences Questionnaire (Spring 1994) total student body response: 58%.

**Degree Seeking**

90% Yes

10% No

**Transfer student**

43.3% Yes

54.2% No

2.5% No Response

**Readmit**

33.9% Yes

41.9% No

24.2% No Response

**Employment Status**

69.7% Yes

29.6% No

.7% No Response

**Employed on or off campus**

9.4% On

66.1% Off

24.5% No Response

**Number of hours enrolled**

Mean = 10.14 hours

**Study hours per week**

Mean = 14.3 hours per week

**Mean Number of Hours Studied per Mean Hours Enrolled**

Mean = 1.41 (approximately 85 minutes)

**Other hours spent on campus outside of class**

Mean = 6.8 hours

**Instrumentation**

Adult student participants received a copy of the survey instrument and demographic sheet. Of the 45 items, 11 concerned attitudes toward the administration, 8 concerned the advising process, 11 concerned their interaction with peers, 7 concerned their perception of the university community's recognition of their multiple life roles, and 8 concerned their interaction with faculty.

**Research Design**

The design of the study was descriptive using survey methodology. The purpose of this design was to describe relationships between variables. Students were mailed a survey, cover letter and postage paid envelope. A second mailing was done two weeks later and a third was done one month after the initial mailing to non-respondents. Data were analyzed using the SPSSX program. Means, standard deviations, sum of squares, chi squares, and cross tabs were calculated.

**Data Collection and Procedure**

Approval to conduct survey research was obtained during September of 1994 from the Institutional Review Board and President's Council. Permission to use the survey was given upon purchase of the "Focus On Adults" program published by the American Council on Education.

During the Fall of 1994, the Office of Institutional Research assisted in calculating the total number of survey participants needed per classification. The sample was then randomly selected per classification. An initial mailing was made, with a second mailing sent two weeks later and a third in four weeks to non-respondents. A 70% response rate was ultimately achieved.

Following is a listing of the strengths and weaknesses for items receiving 50% or higher combined score on the "agree"/"strongly agree" scales or on the combined "disagree"/ "strongly disagree" scales.



## Findings

### The Administration Subscale

The Administration Subscale measures adult students' perception of the extent to which campus policies and procedures are sensitive to adult students' concerns. The most negatively perceived element in the administration scale was the length of time it takes to register for classes or to correct registration problems when they occur. On a positive note, the adult respondents seem to feel that adult student priorities are considered by the administration to be as important as traditional student priorities and that the administration makes an effort to accommodate their needs. Freshmen and sophomore students were the most satisfied with the administration; Seniors were the least satisfied.

Questions in this section pertained to fairness of policies, activities fees, registration procedures. The overall mean was 33.6. The highest possible score was 55 and the lowest was 11 (Appendix D).

Freshmen	34.72
Sophomore	33.69
Juniors	33.66
Seniors	32.82
Undergrad Special	34.00

#### **Ways adult respondents feel they matter to the administration (Percentage listed combines strongly agree & agree response)**

1. The administration makes an effort to accommodate them (54.9%). (Q21)
2. The administration seems to consider adult student priorities as important as traditional student priorities (53.86%). (Q4)
3. Classes are offered at times that are good for me (50.2%). (Q37)

#### **Ways adult respondents feel they do not matter to the administration (Percentage listed combines strongly disagree & disagree response)**

1. It takes too long to register or correct registration problems (59.2%). (Q28)

### **Advising Subscale**

The Advising Subscale measures adult students' perceptions of the extent to which advisors and other information providers attend to their questions and concerns. The highest possible score in this category was 40, and the lowest was 8. The overall mean was 25.87 for all classifications with Freshmen being the most satisfied with advising and "undergraduate specials" being the least satisfied with advisement (Appendix D).

Freshmen	26.70
Sophomore	25.60
Juniors	26.21
Seniors	25.70
Undergrad Special	21.42

The most positively perceived elements in advising concerned the clarity of administrative rules and regulations and the student's faith that their advisors would seek out correct answers and information.

#### **Ways adult students feel they matter to advisors (Percentage listed combines strongly agree & agree response)**

1. The administrative rules and regulations are clear to me (70%). (Q9)
2. If my advisor didn't know the answer to my questions, I'm sure he/she would seek out the answers (64.6%). (Q13)
3. There has always been someone on campus who could help me when I had a question or problem (64.2%). (Q18)
4. There has always been an advisor available to talk with me if I need to ask a question (50.2%). (Q25)
5. Administrative staff are helpful in answering my questions (69%). (Q29)
6. Classes are offered at times that are good for me (50.2%). (Q27)
7. My advisor has office hours at times that I am on campus (56.4%). (Q41)

### **Ways Adult students feel they do not matter to advisors**

1. None cited because percentage of strongly agree and agree not 50% or higher.

### **Interaction With Peers Subscale**

The Peers Subscale measures adult students' perceptions of the extent to which they feel they belong on campus and are accepted as peers in the classroom. This subscale gives us insight into the adult students own perception of his/her "fit" into the academic community at ETSU. Questions deal with issues such as age sensitivity and interpersonal relationships with peers. The most positively perceived elements concerned "fitting in" and feeling welcome on campus. Overall, the respondents felt that they had good relationships with their younger classmates. The most negatively perceived element concerned feelings of isolation on campus. The overall mean was 39.7. The highest possible score in this category was 55 and the lowest was 11 (Appendix D).

Freshmen	40.47
Sophomeres	38.05
Juniors	40.44
Seniors	40.03
Undergrad Special	38.42

### **Ways adult respondents feel positive toward interaction with peers (Percentage listed combines strongly agree and agree response)**

1. I have a good relationship with my younger classmates (82.0%). (Q22)
2. I feel like I fit in my classes (77.6%). (Q19)
3. As an adult student, I feel welcome on campus (74.7%). (Q38)
4. I get support from my classmates when I need it (74.4%). (Q5)
5. I am listened to by fellow students when I share my experiences (65.7%). (Q30)

6. I have had adequate opportunities to get to know fellow students (64.9%). (Q33)
7. The classroom atmosphere encourages me to speak out in class (64.6%). (Q14)
8. My classmates would help me catch up to the new technology if I needed it (58.1%). (Q26)
9. My age does not get in the way of my interactions with fellow students (55.3%). (Q35)
10. I feel my classmates react positively to my experience and knowledge (54.2%). (Q15)

#### **Ways adult students feel negatively about interaction with peers**

1. None cited because percentage of strongly agree and agree not 50% or higher.

#### **Multiple Roles Subscale**

The Multiple Roles Subscale measures adult students' perceptions of the extent to which the campus acknowledges competing demands on their time. Questions in this subscale concerned a mix of areas such as sensitivity towards the time constraints that adults feel, the physical constraints of being older in a classroom setting (sight, hearing, etc) and availability of services. Of the five categories, this category was perceived, overall, in the most negative light. Although respondents disagreed with the statement "It's hard for me to go back to school", they did not do so wholeheartedly. No other areas were recognized in a positive light. Their anecdotal comments reveal their feelings of frustration in areas relating to the physical environment (i.e. desk size), regarding the impact of departmental rules on the achievement of personal goals, and feelings of frustration due to time constraints.

Seven questions dealt with multiple roles. The highest possible score was 35 and the lowest was 7. The overall mean was 21.6. Sophomores were the least satisfied and seniors the most satisfied with this factor (Appendix D).

Freshmen	21.31
Sophomore	20.91
Juniors	21.75
Seniors	21.95
Undergrad Special	21.28

**Areas in which adult respondents feel their multiple roles are recognized**

(Percentage listed combines strongly agree and agree response)

1. It's hard for me to go back to the school environment (disagreed 50.9%, thus this is positive). (Q12)

**Areas in which adult respondents feel their multiple roles are not recognized**

1. None cited because percentage of strongly agree and agree not 50% or higher.

**Faculty Subscale**

The Faculty Subscale measures adult students' perceptions of the extent to which faculty members accept them in the classroom. The responses in this category reflect the attitudes of adult students toward their professors and specifically, quality of lesson planning, faculty attitude and patience with adult learner characteristics and faculty defensiveness towards adult learners. The majority of the responses fell into the positive range with the exception of the item dealing with the expression of experience based comments made by adult learners in the classroom. Although the respondents felt accepted by professors, their expression of practical experiences was not perceived as being appreciated.

There were eight items in this category. Forty was the highest possible score; eight was the lowest. The overall mean was 28.7 (Appendix D).

Freshmen	28.95
Sophomore	27.53
Juniors	29.32
Seniors	28.72
Undergrad Special	28.28

**Ways Adult respondents feel they Matter to Faculty**

(Percentage listed combines strongly agree and agree response)

1. Professors do not ignore my questions or comments (75.4%). (Q44)
2. My professors seem to recognize the younger students but not me (disagreed 74.1%). (Q16)

3. I sometimes feel my professors want me to hurry up and finish speaking (disagreed 66.3%). (Q45)
4. Some of the jokes my professors tell me make me feel uncomfortable (disagreed 64.3%). (Q36)
5. My questions seem to put faculty members on the defensive (disagreed 62.1%). (Q6)
6. Sometimes I feel out of date in the classroom (disagreed 55.2%). (Q23)
7. My professors interpret my assertiveness as a challenge to their authority (disagreed 51.7%). (Q10)

**Ways adult respondents feel they do not matter to faculty**  
(Percentage listed combines disagree & strongly disagree)

1. My experience based comments are accepted by my professors (disagreed 61.7%). (Q27)

### Conclusions

Through this study, five major areas of campus life were analyzed. Adult students at ETSU feel that they do matter to this institution. On the whole, they feel noticed, appreciated and welcomed. Although no dedicated space existed for comments, respondents freely expressed their thoughts as they encountered various survey items. As is often the case, the anecdotal information reveals strongly felt concerns. (Appendix C)

Of the five subscales surveyed, the adult student respondents were the most positive about the **Peers Subscale** (the extent to which they feel they belong on campus and are accepted as peers in the classroom). This scale was followed in descending order of satisfaction by the remaining four subscales as follows: The **Faculty Subscale** (the extent to which they feel accepted by faculty members in the classroom); the **Advising Subscale** (the extent to which advisors and other information providers attend to their questions and concerns); the **Administration Subscale** (the extent to which campus policies and procedures are sensitive to adult student concerns); and finally, the **Multiple Roles Subscale** (the extent to which the campus acknowledges competing demands on their time).

When compared to the institutions involved in the normative study (Appendix E) ETSU's mean scores for the **Administration, Peers and Multiple Roles**

subscales were on par with that for the other four year institutions. ETSU's mean score for the **Advising** subscale compared less favorably to the other four year institutions. The **Faculty** subscale mean score compared more favorably to the other 4 year institutions in the normative study.

It is interesting to note that the standard deviation for each of the five subscales at ETSU was higher than the comparable institutions in the normative group. This indicates a broader range of responses on the part of our students.

As an institution, we can continue to engender good will among our adult students by improving our responsiveness to the complexities of the nontraditional student's life, and remaining sensitive to the impact of the environmental and developmental issues facing our adult students.

**Appendix A**



## MATTERING SCALES

### Purpose

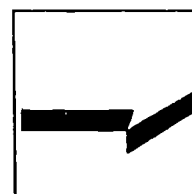
We are interested in learning more about the different ways in which adult learners feel they matter--to whom, under what circumstances, and what this means to them. To help us learn more about mattering, we would appreciate your taking the time to fill out this form. Also, please feel free to add any comments you wish to make.

Please check the response which best describes your feelings. Please select a response for each item.

**SD = STRONGLY DISAGREE   D = DISAGREE   N = NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE  
A = AGREE   SA = STRONGLY AGREE**

SD   D   N   A   SA

- | 1. The university's policy of transfer credits penalizes non-traditional students.                               |  |  |  |  |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 2. My advisor doesn't seem to remember things we have discussed before.                                          |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. I will have a hard time finishing my degree because of time limits on completing course requirements.         |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4. The administration seems to consider adult student priorities as important as traditional student priorities. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. I get support from my classmates when I need it.                                                              |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6. My questions seem to put faculty members on the defensive.                                                    |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7. The faculty and administrators are sensitive to my other responsibilities.                                    |  |  |  |  |  |



SD D N A SA

- 8. I sometimes feel alone and isolated at the university.

---

- 9. The administrative rules and regulations are clear to me.

---

- 10. My professors interpret assertiveness as a challenge to their authority.

---

- 11. The administration sets things up to be easy for them, not the students.

---

- 12. It's hard for me to go back to the school environment.

---

- 13. If my advisor didn't know the answer to my questions, I'm sure he/she would seek out the answers.

---

- 14. The classroom atmosphere encourages me to speak out in class.

---

- 15. I feel my classmates react positively to my experience and knowledge.

---

- 16. My professors seem to recognize the younger students but not me.

---

- 17. I don't have time to complete the administrative tasks this institution requires.

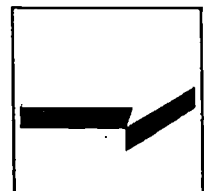
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- 18. There has always been someone on campus who could help me when I had a question or problem.

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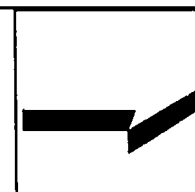
- 19. I feel like I fit in my classes.

---

SD D N A SA

20. The administration offices are not open at times when I need them. | | | | | |
- 
21. The administration makes efforts to accommodate adult students. | | | | | |
- 
22. I have a good relationship with my younger classmates. | | | | | |
- 
23. Sometimes I feel out of date in the classroom. | | | | | |
- 
24. The university does not commit enough resources to off-campus courses. | | | | | |
- 
25. There has always been an adviser available to talk with me if I need to ask a question. | | | | | |
- 
26. My classmates would help me catch up to the new technology if I needed it. | | | | | |
- 
27. My experience-based comments are accepted by my professors. | | | | | |
- 
28. It takes too long to register or correct registration problems. | | | | | |
- 
29. Administrative staff are helpful in answering my questions. | | | | | |
- 
30. Fellow students don't seem to listen to me when I share my life experiences. | | | | | |
- 
31. Unless I have another student my age in class, no one really understands how hard it is to be here. | | | | | |
- 



	SD	D	N	A	SA
32. The university offers alternatives to the traditional semester-length course (like weekends).					
33. I have had adequate opportunities to get to know fellow students.					
34. Campus rules and regulations seem to have been made for traditional-age students.					
35. My age sometimes gets in the way of my interactions with fellow students.					
36. Some of the jokes my professors tell make me feel uncomfortable.					
37. Classes are offered at times that are good for me.					
38. As an adult student, I feel welcome on campus.					
39. The desks weren't made for adults.					
40. I feel my activities fees are spent in a way that is meaningful to me.					
41. My advisor has office hours at times that I am on campus.					
42. Departmental rules sometimes make my goals difficult or impossible.					
43. The school newspaper doesn't discuss adult student issues.					
44. My professors sometimes ignore my comments or questions.					
45. I sometimes feel my professors want me to hurry up and finish speaking.					

**Appendix B**

### DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please provide the following information about yourself:

<b>Racial/Ethnic Descriptions</b> (please check one)	<b>Gender</b> Female    Male
<input type="checkbox"/> Black Non-Hispanic	<b>Did either of your parents graduate from college?</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, both parents <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, father only <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, mother only
<input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaskan Native	
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Pacific Islander	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic	
<input type="checkbox"/> White Non-Hispanic	
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Resident Alien	
<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

Are you enrolled in a degree program?    Yes    No

If yes, major area of study: \_\_\_\_\_ Concentration: \_\_\_\_\_

Classification:    Freshman    Sophomore    Junior    Senior    Special Undergraduate

Are you a transfer student?    Yes    No    Readmit?    Yes    No

Are you employed?    Yes    No    On campus?    Off campus?

Number of hours I work/week \_\_\_\_\_

Number of hours I study/week \_\_\_\_\_

Number of children in your household who require daycare service while you attend classes \_\_\_\_\_

Other than hours in class or at a student worker job, how many hours are you on campus each week? \_\_\_\_\_

Number of hours you are enrolled in this semester \_\_\_\_\_

***Thank you for completing the survey. Please use the enclosed postage paid envelope to return the survey to the CAPS Center.***

**Appendix C**

## MATTERING SCALE COMMENTS

### ADMINISTRATION

- I don't know
- I resent having to get a campus mailbox. I also do not go to games on campus. I feel it is a waste of money.
- Because I work full-time, I do not have time for school activities so why should I have to pay for this?
- One situation I have encountered this semester involves a class that requires 30 extra hours of outside work. This would be fine if I had known before signing up that there was this much extra time required. It was not mentioned in the catalog or anywhere else. Also, the extra hours can only be put in during times when I am at my regular job. (I cannot take time off during the week any more than I do.) In discussing this the first day of class with the professor, he persecuted me with a "Well, maybe you shouldn't take this class", attitude, and told me I could drop. Well, when I sign up for a class, I expect to be able to take the class. I told him his attitude and the policy of extra hours on his schedule only was discriminatory to "non-traditional" students who should be able to take any course offered by the university without hidden agendas. Presently, I am still in the class, maintaining an A and we've still not totally resolved the extra hours issue, but I am confident we will - I don't give up that easily.
- I live in Mountain City, TN & it would be great if I could take classes up here. It's a 2 hr. drive to ETSU.
- I am not aware that ETSU offers alternatives to the traditional semester-length course.
- I have no problems with the rules and regulations.
- Kingsport campus - not enough resources to off-campus courses.
- Took all day to register. Phone in computer?
- Don't know how my activities fees are spent.
- Academic Fresh Start shouldn't be restricted to TN college credit.
- I don't know that the university offers alternatives to the traditional semester-length course.
- The university offers no summer classes, weekends, or otherwise, for nursing students. This has been very hard on me taking 17 to 20 something hours per semester.
- I don't know anything about the university's policy of transfer credits penalizing non-traditional students.
- The administration seems to consider adult student priorities as important as traditional student priorities but to my knowledge we are all students, regardless of our age.



- The faculty and administrators are sensitive to my other responsibilities. The majority of the faculty are very understanding of personal matters outside the class. If you are on the up and up with them.
- It's hard to make both sides happy. We must do what we have too. Both "them" and "us".
- I have no knowledge on the matter that the university does not commit enough resources to off-campus courses.
- If you register early, it won't take long.
- I have no idea where the activity money goes.
- I haven't read a school newspaper in at least 1 year. (We read some at the off campus schools).

## ADVISING

- Never had an advisor.
- I do not have one.
- They are hateful.
- If I need something, I hunt someone who can help me.
- Some classes are offered when I have to be at work, (3-11). They should be offered at the time we can attend from our schedules at work & when we can take them, not at the schools convenience.
- I have limited contact with my advisor.
- I don't really know my advisor - would like some info on how to schedule an appointment with him/her.
- Very good advisor, helpful and understanding.
- Classes occasionally needed at different times.
- Number of days allowed to miss make my goals difficult or impossible.
- Don't even know who he/she is.
- Have not seen an advisor in years!
- Don't really know if my advisor has office hours at times I am on campus.
- Haven't visited him/her yet.
- Classes offered from 3 pm on, but not overlapping would be good.
- The only advisor I have had is general student services advisor in nursing.
- I don't even have an advisor. Am I going to be assigned one?
- My advisor has not been available to talk with me if I need to ask a question.
- I have had help with problems but not by my advisor.
- (Regarding classes offered at good times) Nursing, so many times, requires you to take classes that end at 5:30 or start at 6:30. This has been so hard regarding daycare. And they do not understand.

## PEERS

- I'm only 23.
- Because of my age I have more responsibilities - family, etc.
- I could teach them.

- I wouldn't have listened to me at their age either.
- Sometimes I feel out of place.
- My age never gets in the way of my interactions with fellow students.
- Sometimes I feel my classmates react positively to my experience and knowledge.
- Sometimes my age gets in the way of interactions with fellow students while at the Culp Center but not in class.
- My age doesn't really get in the way of my interactions with fellow students, but I am only 26 and have a family, husband and 4 yr. old makes it hard to do anything ever with anyone. The single traditional students or married with no children seem to have more in common and talk a lot more together.
- Sometimes my fellow students don't seem to listen to me when I share my life experiences. Some times they think you're full of bull, even though you're telling the truth.
- Most of the time it's into class and out of class and you go your own way, doesn't give one an opportunity to get to know fellow students.
- I don't really hang out with anyone from school. But your age can make you feel handicapped.

## MULTIPLE ROLES

- Desks were not made for left-handed people.
- Coming back 3 or 4 times when the task could have be done all at one time.
- The desks weren't made for anyone over 2 ft.
- The bookstore is not open at times when I need them.
- Occasionally I don't have time to complete the administrative tasks required.
- What time limits on finishing my degree? Would like to know more.
- What administrative tasks does this institution require?
- There have always been students my age in my classes.
- I can't compete with younger students, who don't have outside responsibilities, for better programs - as Nursing - as I can't study as much as they have the opportunity to do. I feel I am doing good to keep a C average with school, job, and 2 young children. School doesn't take this into consideration. It's as if I am being penalized for being older with children.
- It's not hard to go back to the school environment, but the curriculum I am in, nursing, is so demanding on time you have zero time for your family if you want to do well.
- It is hard on all students to be here. Older students just have more on them than the younger ones.
- Desks are made for students, regardless of age. Students are students.
- Who likes rules anyway!

## FACULTY

- I want a good grade so I don't usually give my point of view. Sometimes my politics are different from my instructors.
- When I write papers, I feel out of date.
- Faculty has no idea of real world aspects. They do not realize the importance or absurdity of some of the things they try to teach. Tenure should be abolished
- University should use more industry-trained teachers for evening classes. (That is, non-faculty)
- Some, but not all of my professors interpret assertiveness as a challenge to their authority.
- The ones who speak English clearly interpret assertiveness as a challenge to their authority.
- Instructors do not react positively to my experience and knowledge but my classmates do.
- My professors sometimes ignore my comments or questions by discounting my input when I'm trying to help a younger student by telling of my experience.
- Sometimes, but not often, I feel out of date in the classroom.
- Sometimes, but not often, my professors will ignore my comments or questions. This also true for young students.
- In some cases my questions seem to put faculty members on the defensive. Some faculty answer your questions with a question.
- I'm sure that some professors interpret assertiveness as a challenge to their authority. However none that I have come in contact with have.
- Most professors give you plenty of time to speak. If not you are asked to meet them after class or during office hours.

## GENERAL COMMENTS

- Math lab is insufficient. Need morning labs, Friday pm lab and Saturday lab for adults and working students.
- Registration could be greatly improved. In some areas incomplete information is given to the student causing the student to miss out on an opportunity that may have been beneficial to that person. Some professors do fail to realize that some of us do work as well as go to school. I think that one can teach material where the student reaches the instructors intended goals and objectives without being overbearing with the homework or out of class studies.
- The two teachers I have this semester are great. You really need to send this to me after 3 semesters.
- I feel like your time could be spent in a more helpful way by sending our questionnaires to the nursing dept., that's where the problems are.

- Some of my instructors are "disappointed" by the level of wording I use in my work. They make me feel like I need to communicate or write in more of an intermediate or "kindergarten" level so they can understand.
- I am enjoying attending ETSU - I have no complaints except to share my disgust about those who whine for more parking.
- No questions were asked about computer availability. I can never get to one when I need it or during hours at school without leaving, coming back, and bringing my child with me. It would be nice to be able to use one during the day when classes are cancelled or let out early but classes are being held all the time and several don't open until 9:00 a.m.
- 1) Much of the previous college educational experiences become useless under new curriculums, thus requiring the adult student to take courses which are redundant and meaningless. Ex. Student has World History but curriculum requires American History. This has no meaning. There should be a general overview of the adult students background in education and only require them to take actually beneficial classes. 2) Work experience has no meaning at all at ETSU. 3) In a TQM and competitive market, round table discussions are better than oral speeches. Oral speeches are top-down, useless in an information interchange environment that exists today.
- The core requirements are not geared toward an adult student.
- The parking around Brown Hall during sporting events at Mini-Dome is restricted for big-time alumni. It should be for students
- I don't understand why I have to have a mailbox on campus or pay all of the activity fees. Neither benefit - just an extra expense I can not afford.
- I am not an old student. I just don't go to ETSU anymore. I am only taking 3 hours as a visiting student and am really not qualified to respond to this.
- Someone in Administration should be available later than 4:30 at least once a week. Changing from one degree program to another should be done as a more convenient process to the students.
- The Technology Dept. is instituting a new policy - mandatory advisor's signature prior to registering. This just creates another special trip for a 15 minute function. When students like myself only take one to two classes, it's kind of a waste of time. There should be a mechanism for getting college credit for work experience. I worked side-by-side (actually trained and directed) with co-op students who were receiving credits that I could not receive. This is an extremely unfair practice. I have always felt that if the work experience & knowledge these students receive is worth 3 - 4 credits for one semester then my 13 years of experience (in the field of my major) should count for something!
- You don't check your own records, that's why I have asked that funds for this university and your administration dept. don't even process the fees they receive.

- Cut cards: I don't have much experience with them but what experience I have had is that it is a piece of red tape that can easily be eliminated, I am a KUC student and had an instructor who lived in Bristol and the Dept. Head, of course, was on campus. An advisor at KUC made calls & got the "OK" for me. The only person he was able to reach was the Dept. Head who gave the "OK". I know their (cut cards) purpose isn't to make students have to run here & there for someone to say "OK" or just to make us refrain from doing drop/adds (which are \$5.00 a shot). But....what are their purpose?
- I have enrolled in a 15-month accelerated learning program at Tusculum College. They recognized my transfer credits when ETSU did not. I will graduate in December 1995. ETSU is fine for adult students who work as long as they are willing to invest 8 - 10 years to get a BS degree. I think not.
- Can't get into programs of choice as I have C average due to outside responsibilities that I take as serious as school, as children and job to support them.
- For people who work full-time (days) its hard to complete degree when some classes are only offered every so often and they are only offered during the day. Should offer more major classes at night.

**Appendix D**

## Administration

	% Strongly Agree	% Agree	% Neutral	% Disagree	% Strongly Disagree
Q1 The university's policy of transfer credits penalizes non-traditional students.	9.0	23.1	50.2	13.4	4.0
Q4 The administration seems to consider adult student priorities as important as traditional student priorities	14.1	39.7	18.4	18.1	9.7
Q7 The faculty and administrators are sensitive to my other responsibilities.	7.2	35.0	17.7	27.4	12.6
Q11 The administration sets things up to be easy for them, not the students.	16.2	31.4	29.2	19.5	3.6
Q21 The administration makes efforts to accommodate adult students.	6.5	48.4	22.7	17.0	5.1
Q24 The university does not commit enough resources to off-campus courses.	13.0	23.5	50.2	12.3	1.1
Q28 It takes too long to register or correct registration problems.	24.5	34.7	16.2	22.7	1.8
Q32 The university offers alternatives to the traditional semester-length course.	1.8	8.7	49.1	22.7	16.2
Q34 Campus rules and regulations seem to have been made for traditional-age students.	9.0	37.5	30.3	20.6	2.5
Q37 Classes are offered at times that are good for me.	4.7	45.5	13.0	24.9	11.6
Q40 I feel my activities fees are spent in a way that is meaningful to me.	1.8	18.4	30.0	29.6	19.9
Q43 School newspaper doesn't discuss adult student issues.	7.6	23.5	56.7	11.2	.7

## Advising Questions

	% Strongly Agree	% Agree	% Neutral	% Disagree	% Strongly Disagree
Q2 My advisor doesn't seem to remember things we have discussed before.	6.9	15.5	34.7	28.2	13.7
Q9 The administrative rules and regulations are clear to me.	10.8	59.2	9.7	18.4	1.8
Q13 If my advisor didn't know the answer to my questions, I'm sure he/she would seek out the answers.	15.5	49.1	21.7	10.1	3.2
Q18 There has always been someone on campus who could help me when I had a question or problem.	9.7	54.5	13.0	17.7	5.1
Q25 There has always been an advisor available to talk with me if I need to ask a question.	8.3	41.9	20.6	23.1	5.8
Q29 Administrative staff are helpful in answering my questions.	6.9	62.1	17.3	11.6	1.8
Q37 Classes are offered at times that are good for me.	4.7	45.5	13.0	24.9	11.6
Q41 My advisor has office hours at times that I am on campus.	6.9	49.5	20.6	14.1	8.7



## Peers

	% Strongly Agree	% Agree	% Neutral	% Disagree	% Strongly Disagree
Q5 I get support from my classmates when I need it.	21.3	53.1	15.2	9.0	1.4
Q8 I sometimes feel alone and isolated at the university.	5.1	29.2	18.1	36.1	11.6
Q14 The classroom atmosphere encourages me to speak out in class.	7.9	56.7	19.1	14.1	1.8
Q15 I feel my classmates react positively to my experience and knowledge.	6.5	47.7	32.9	11.2	1.8
Q19 I feel like I fit in my classes.	12.6	65.0	13.0	9.0	.4
Q22 I have a good relationship with my younger classmates.	15.2	66.8	14.1	3.6	.4
Q26 My classmates would help me catch up to the new technology if I needed it.	7.2	50.9	30.0	9.7	1.8
Q30 Fellow students don't seem to listen to me when I share my life experiences.	1.1	4.3	28.5	57.8	7.9
Q33 I have had adequate opportunities to get to know fellow students.	9.7	55.2	18.4	14.1	2.5
Q35 My age sometimes gets in the way of my interactions with fellow students.	.7	23.8	20.2	41.9	13.4
Q38 As an adult student, I feel welcome on campus.	14.9	59.8	17.8	7.2	.4

## Multiple Roles

	% Strongly Agree	% Agree	% Neutral	% Disagree	% Strongly Disagree
Q3 I will have a hard time finishing my degree because of time limits on completing course requirements.	10.5	19.9	36.1	26.4	6.9
Q12 It's hard for me to go back to the school environment.	6.9	28.9	13.4	39.0	11.9
Q17 I don't have time to complete the administrative tasks this institution requires.	4.0	24.2	32.9	35.4	3.6
Q20 The administration offices are not open at times when I need them.	9.0	26.4	23.5	35.7	5.4
Q31 Unless I have another student my age in class, no one really understands how hard it is to be here.	9.7	26.4	20.2	36.5	6.9
Q39 The desks were not made for adults.	22.4	23.8	21.7	25.6	6.1
Q42 Departmental rules sometimes make my goals difficult or impossible.	9.4	23.6	33.7	27.9	4.3

## Faculty

	% Strongly Agree	% Agree	% Neutral	% Disagree	% Strongly Disagree
Q6 My questions seem to put faculty members on the defensive.	3.2	9.7	24.2	47.3	14.8
Q10 My professors interpret assertiveness as a challenge to their authority.	4.0	17.7	26.0	41.2	10.5
Q16 My professors seem to recognize the younger students but not me.	.7	5.4	19.9	54.2	19.9
Q23 Sometimes I feel out of date in the classroom.	3.6	28.2	13.0	45.8	9.4
Q27 My experience-based comments are accepted by my professors.	1.8	9.0	27.4	58.5	3.2
Q36 Some of the jokes my professors tell make me feel uncomfortable.	2.2	7.6	25.6	46.2	18.1
Q44 My professors sometimes ignore my comments or questions.	2.2	6.5	15.5	62.8	12.6
Q45 I sometimes feel my professors want me to hurry up and finish speaking.	2.2	10.9	20.3	53.6	12.7

**Appendix E**

### Mattering Scale Descriptive Statistics for Subscales

Subscale	Group	Mean	SD	N
<b>Administration</b> 60 pts possible	2-year	39.25	3.13	7 institutions
	4-year	33.04	4.13	16 institutions
	Combined	34.94	4.78	23 institutions
	<b>ETSU</b>	<b>33.61</b>	<b>7.19</b>	<b>277 students</b>
<b>Advising</b> 40 pts possible	2-year	30.20	1.95	7 institutions
	4-year	27.97	2.58	16 institutions
	Combined	29.63	2.53	23 institutions
	<b>ETSU</b>	<b>25.87</b>	<b>4.51</b>	<b>277 students</b>
<b>Peers</b> 55 pts possible	2-year	41.36	0.89	7 institutions
	4-year	37.84	3.30	16 institutions
	Combined	39.02	3.20	23 institutions
	<b>ETSU</b>	<b>39.57</b>	<b>3.20</b>	<b>277 students</b>
<b>Roles</b> 35 pts possible	2-year	22.66	0.95	7 institutions
	4-year	21.90	2.08	16 institutions
	Combined	22.13	1.82	23 institutions
	<b>ETSU</b>	<b>21.51</b>	<b>4.26</b>	<b>277 students</b>
<b>Faculty</b> 40 pts possible	2-year	29.65	1.45	7 institutions
	4-year	27.84	2.12	16 institutions
	Combined	28.39	2.08	23 institutions
	<b>ETSU</b>	<b>28.62</b>	<b>5.15</b>	<b>277 students</b>

Appendix F

### Comparative Data for Normative Sample and ETSU Population

<u>Hours Worked</u>	<u>Normative Data</u>	<u>ETSU Sample</u>
0-10	38.5%	31.8%
11-20	12.6%	10.8%
21-30	7.9%	11.2%
31-40	30.7%	12.3%
over 40	10.2%	33.9%

### Respondents by Major

<u>Major Category</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
No Response	10	03.6
Undecided	16	05.8
Business	31	11.2
Applied Sci. & Tech.	2	11.6
Continuing Studies	2	00.7
Arts & Sciences	57	20.6
Education	20	07.2
Public & Allied Hlth	32	11.6
Nursing	64	23.0
Pre professional	13	04.7
	<u>277</u>	<u>100.0</u>

## Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Reported College Majors

Major	Frequency	Percent
Accounting	4	1.4
Apparel Merchandising	2	0.7
Art	5	1.8
Banking/Finance	2	0.7
Biology	1	0.4
Biomedical Engineering Tech	2	0.7
Chemistry	3	1.1
Computer Science	13	4.7
Construction Technology	2	0.7
Continuing Education	2	0.7
Criminal Justice	7	2.5
Dental Hygiene	5	1.8
Early Childhood Development	5	1.8
Economics	1	0.4
Education	7	2.5
Electronics Engineering Tech	5	1.8
Elementary Education	1	0.4
Eng. Design Graphics Tech	4	1.4
English	4	1.4
Env. Hlth/Hlth Science	10	3.6
General Business	1	0.4
Health Education	9	3.2
History	1	0.4
Human Resource Mgmt	6	2.2
Mfg. Engineering Tech	3	1.1
Marketing	7	2.5
Math	3	1.1
Microbiology	1	0.4
Music Education	1	0.4
Nursing - Associate	16	5.8
Nursing - Baccalaureate	48	17.3
Office Administration	2	0.7
Operations Management	2	0.7
Philosophy	1	0.4
Physical Education	1	0.4
Political Science	4	1.4
Pre-Medicine	10	3.6
Psychology	4	1.4
Public Relations/Advertising	3	1.1
Radiologic Technology	6	2.2
Respiratory Therapy	2	0.7
Science Education	1	0.4
Social Studies Education	2	0.7
Social Work	12	4.3
Sociology	5	1.8
Special Education	3	1.1
Speech and Hearing	1	0.4
Surveying and Mapping Tech	2	0.7
Undecided	17	6.1
No Response	9	3.2
	<u>277</u>	<u>100.0</u>