



RETHINKING THE SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR ADULT STUDENTS IN ONLINE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

PhDc. Olga Rotar
Lancaster University- United Kingdom
o.rotar@lancaster.ac.uk

Abstract

Adult students enrolling in online courses are confronted with a different to conventional learning environment which they have to adapt to immediately. New learning mode presents unique situations, initiatives and motivations which are inherently reflect on learners' academic performance. Scholars argue that adults may feel lost in the educational transition and it is critical to consistently encourage and provide a supportive learning environment for them (Dahan and Baba, 2005).

In online and distance learning adequate support named among main factors that determine students success and findings stress that adult learners who feel unsupported may decide to withdraw from the program (Park & Choi, 2009; Bourdeaux & Schoenack, 2016).

There is an assumption that adult learners have a clear goals when returning to schools and, as a consequence, tend to be independent and self- directed in their educational journey. However, high drop- out rates indicate that adults' perceptions of and experiences in online programmes are not well understood and it is not very clear how to address the difficulties students' might have in order to support them better.

Keywords: Adult learning, support, online education.