

# Adult returning to the class room

Life



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Trends If I only knew then what I Know now, words of wisdom that often young adults do not appreciate until later in life. As young adults approach graduating from high school, they are faced with having to decide on whether to pursue obtaining a higher education by attending a community college, university, technical school or to forego the education altogether and enter the workforce.

Often the decision process may not include considering what the impact may be 15 to 20 years down the road. As the global economy continues to be dynamic, employees are finding employers are demanding more than hard work and good work ethics to be considered for employment let alone career growth. Whether or not one has knowledge or experience in a particular field, employers are demanding academic training, resulting in adults returning back to the classroom, and institutions adapting to how people can obtain an education.

The recent trend for working adults indicates obtaining new employment, maintaining existing employment or climbing the corporate ladder could depend on one's educational background regardless of one's skill set. As a matter of fact, according to a CareerBuilder survey the results indicated, " For many companies, an associate or bachelor's degree is increasingly becoming the new high school diploma. " The survey also indicated " 27 percent of employers have increased the education requirements over the last five years. As employers strive for a greater return on investment, an educated employee willing to adapt to change, with strong interpersonal and technical skills become the most sought out employees. Additionally some employers are indicating that the shift in educational requirements has indicated

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positives results in regards to employees productivity, work quality, communication, innovation, customer retention, and increased revenue. As employers raise the bar on the educational requirement, more and more adults are returning to the classroom to acquire new skills.

Some adults are enrolling in college for the first time while others are seeking to obtain a bachelor's or master's degree. According to The National Center for Education Statistics for the 2013 school year " around 8. 7 million older students ages 25 and over have enrolled back in college courses. Some employers are contributing to this trend by enticing employees to return to school with a tuition reimbursement program in exchange for a commitment from the employee to continue employment for a specified period after payment.

Still some adult employees might ask is it worth it and according to the US Census data the answer would be yes. The 2011 Census results indicate that a person with a bachelor degree earns about 76 percent more than a person with a high school diploma. Employees and employers are not the only affected by the current trend of adults seeking a higher education; universities have also been affected. In today's environment attending the traditional school, does not necessarily fit the working adult's hectic schedule.

The work life balance is essential for working adults especially those with a family. The increasing trend of adult students has challenged universities to become creative with educational offerings. According to Peter Smith, Deed. D, Senior vice president for academic strategies and development at Kaplan

University, " It is critical for post-secondary institutions to provide prospective students with practical education options that will pen up higher educations to a broader audience and increase the ability of these individuals to complete. The inception of on-line learning at many universities has afforded working adults with a variety of benefits and flexibility to return to the classroom. Is a college degree or equivalent training needed to compete in today's dynamic workforce? The current trend would suggest, yes. With the additional options implemented by higher education institutions, employees have flexibility to obtaining an education. The more knowledge and skills an employee has to offer the more marketable they become to employers.