

# CALL FOR PAPERS

## *Studia paedagogica*

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Issue Topic: Non-Traditional Students in Tertiary Education

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The theme of the forthcoming issue of *Studia paedagogica* is Non-Traditional Students in Tertiary Education<sup>1</sup>.

The number of students not reflecting the ‘standard’ profile of students in tertiary education has been steadily increasing in many countries. Often referred to as ‘non-traditional’ students, for purposes of international comparison, Schuetze and Slowey (2002) identify three distinguishing criteria: *educational biography, mode of study and entry routes*.

However, the criteria do not have to be connected only to the educational system, but also to the life and career of an individual. Within this context, an interrupted or discontinued educational biography can be a key issue. Some people may have acquired knowledge and skills from important ‘out-of-study’ experiences prior to deciding to return to the tertiary educational system on a part- time or full- time basis (for example from parenthood, employment, volunteer work or travelling). Here, the notion of ‘postponed studies’ offers one conceptual approach to interpreting such discontinuation of the educational biography (Souto-Otero & Whitworth, 2017).

Nevertheless, the term ‘non-traditional students’ can have many other meanings. It can refer to groups of students who come to universities from disadvantaged social-economic conditions (lower socio-economic status, minority ethnic), who suffer from a long-term health handicap, or who are threatened by study failure for some reason (Gilardi & Guglielmetti, 2011; Read, Archer, & Leathwood, 2003; Leathwood & O'connell, 2003). In connection with non-traditional studies, women (Leathwood & O'connell, 2003) in traditionally male fields and vice versa are often mentioned as well.

Non-traditional students can also be determined by age – most often on the basis that they may be, for example, older than 25 years of age when they enter tertiary education (for example Jinkens, 2009). Age is, of course, also connected with other socio-economic factors, such as financial independence, employment, care for dependent family members or a variety of other social roles (Daiva, 2017). Other denotations of non-traditional student include *mature students* or *life-long learners* (Schuetze, 2014).

As Schuetze (2014) further states, non-traditional students no longer represent a marginal group; on the contrary, we can speak of an ‘adultification’ of tertiary education<sup>2</sup>. Within this

<sup>1</sup> Tertiary Education is based on OECD definition of Tertiary-type A programmes (ISCED 5A) and Tertiary-type B programmes (ISCED 5B).

<sup>2</sup> The term “adultification” was used firstly by Abrahamsson (1987).

meaning, non-traditional students become typical bringers of changes in life and educational biographies, which tend to be losing the traditional form, characterized by the linearity of transfers between the phases of education, work and family and retirement. Tertiary education institutions are challenged to become more responsive to the needs of increasingly diverse groups of learners and adult and other non-traditional students might potentially act as forces for change and reform in teaching and learning, the curriculum and research.

The uniqueness of this group of students in the tertiary education system is clear and their potential to affect this system has important implications for research, policy and practice. Their position can be viewed from the individual level of their life and educational biography, but also from the institutional and social level of tertiary education. The proposed monothematic issue of this journal shall be focused on these and related topics. For example, theoretical and empirical works can be inspired by these sets of questions:

- How can non-traditional students be understood in different tertiary systems? What are their specifics in comparison to the ‘traditional students’?
- How do non-traditional students study? How do they choose their studies? With which motivations do they enter their studies and what obstacles do they have to overcome? What is their study behaviour and way of learning?
- In what manner does the presence of non-traditional students in tertiary education transform/affect the institutions from the standpoint of management, forms, modes of studies and the offered programmes?
- Which types of tertiary education institutions are more open to non-traditional students? Do these institutions tend to be private? Are these programme-specific institutions?
- Are there some programmes which are especially attractive to non-traditional students? Could pedagogical programmes represent such cases, for example?
- What are the existing non-traditional student support policies? How are they supported on the national level and on the level of specific tertiary institutions? Is this support somehow projected into the acceptance procedures? Into the financial and other support of non-traditional students?

In theoretical and empirical studies, it is appropriate to take into consideration the terminological variety and the diversity of discussions in relation to non-traditional students. Where papers are focused on a specific situation in one country, it is important to provide some national context, so that the discussion will be accessible to an international readership.

### Important dates

This issue will be published in English in December, 2020. The deadline for **abstracts** is 29 February, 2020, and the deadline for **full texts** is 31 May, 2020. Both abstracts and **full texts** are to be sent to the e-mail address [studiapaedagogica@phil.muni.cz](mailto:studiapaedagogica@phil.muni.cz). Articles should be written in English and they should meet the requirements mentioned in the instructions for authors on [the journal's website](#). The articles will be submitted to a peer-review process that will allow the editors to select articles for publication. Petr Novotný (Masaryk University), Milada Rabušicová (Masaryk University), and Maria Slowey (Dublin City University) are the editors of this issue.

You can find more information at: <http://www.studiapaedagogica.cz/>.

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