

EDUCATING NON-TRADITIONAL FEMALE STUDENTS THROUGH LEADERSHIP  
DEVELOPMENT AT DELGADO COMMUNITY COLLEGE

by

Kim M. Russell

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SUNY Empire State College

Instructor

Shelley Dixon-Williams, Ph. D.

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### Abstract

When a person wants to better themselves, there is no better way to do this than by getting a quality education. In today's world, education is the key to empowerment. Education is a gift and a privilege many take for granted. The purpose of this project is to identify non-traditional female students who are returning to or just beginning their college experience and assist them in obtaining their degree. The intention of the project is to educate these female students on how to locate and utilize financial resources, tutoring, scheduling, etc. as well as develop their leadership potential. The female population at Delgado Community College is 68% female with 52% of those students being age 25 or older. By identifying the ways in which these students can succeed, it will show higher retention and completion rates. By being able to teach students how to recognize their leadership abilities and develop their core leadership strengths, this leadership development studies course will enable them to reach their full potential. A person who is teaching others how and what it means to be an effective leader is sharing his or her knowledge of what it means to be a true leader.

*Keywords:* Non-traditional student, leadership development, education planning

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Educating non-traditional female students through leadership development  
at Delgado Community College

Looking at researching studying non-traditional female students who enter into a community college, it has been discovered this type of student does not have the knowledge of where to obtain the proper resources that are available to them. These resources come in the form of knowing where certain labs are located on a campus, how to interact with college instructors and how to succeed in their course of study. As a former non-traditional student, it was noted firsthand how the student is not informed of the many resources available to them. With the knowledge gained through research, working at a community college and seeing the struggle non-traditional female students go through each semester, it gave way to the development of this project.

Two-year institutions, known as a community colleges or technical colleges, offer availability to the largest population groups in the State of Louisiana. “The story and development and growth of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System is one of the greatest accomplishments of the last half century for a state that has earned a historical reputation for low performance in nearly every educational category. Since LCTCS’s inception in the late 1990’s, member colleges, [including Delgado Community College], have been some of the nation’s fastest growing institutions in terms of enrollment and completers” (Louisiana Community & Technical College System, 2017).

### **History of Delgado Community College**

The history of Delgado Community College (DCC) began with Isaac Delgado “in 1909 codicil to his will, he bequeathed the residue of his estate to the City of New Orleans to establish a manual trade school for young boys” (“Delgado Community College,” n.d.). From this

endowment, the land adjoining the current fifty-seven-acre City Park Campus was purchased. A vocational trade school for young boys and men was begun in September 1921. During World War II, the demand for a skilled workforce was needed and “Delgado had a brief period of glory in the 1940s, only to once again fall into desperate financial straits during the 1950s” (“Delgado Community College,” n.d.).

The search for a new purpose came in the mid-fifties with Tulane University proposing “Delgado be expanded to a technical institute at the junior college level and that its main function be to provide post-high-school educational programs for technicians—and that the school be properly funded” (“Delgado Community College,” n.d.). The proposal was adopted by the Board of Managers and the City of New Orleans and the name was changed to Delgado Trades and Technical Institute, graduating its first class in 1960.

By action of the Louisiana State Legislature and the New Orleans City Council, in 1966 Delgado Institute became Isaac Delgado College and then Delgado Vocational-Technical Junior College and was recognized and approved as a model multi-campus, comprehensive community/junior college for Louisiana. Dr. Thames became its first President. Four years later, in 1970, Act 446 of the State Legislature (based on a 1969 New Orleans City Council Resolution) transferred Delgado College from control by the City of New Orleans to the Louisiana State Board of Education (“Delgado Community College,” n.d.). The growth of Delgado was assisted by Community College students being able to obtain both Pell Grants and Student Loans.

Delgado was accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 1971; the accreditation was reaffirmed in 1975, 1986, and 1996. The College name was changed to Delgado Community College by Legislative act in 1980. In 1982, the central administration of the College was moved into a new building at 501 City Park

Avenue, adjacent to the City Park Campus. Since the early 1970s, with state funding for students and facilities, not only has the original City Park Campus developed dramatically, but other new campuses and learning sites have brought Delgado Community College to all areas of metropolitan New Orleans (“Delgado Community College,” n.d.).

Today, Delgado is renowned as Louisiana’s oldest and largest community college, serving men and women of all ages who reflect the diversity of the New Orleans metropolitan area. Delgado is a comprehensive, multi-campus community college and a major institution of higher education in the State of Louisiana. Its nine locations form a center for professional and advanced technology career education, academic pre-baccalaureate education, and traditional occupational training” (“Delgado Community College,” n.d.).

Delgado’s mission statement states, “Delgado Community College, a comprehensive community college, offers programs through the Associate degree. The College provides a learning-centered environment through face-to-face and distance education to prepare students from diverse backgrounds to attain their educational, career, and personal goals, to think critically, to demonstrate leadership and to be productive and responsible citizens” (“Delgado Community College,” n.d.).

The college’s vision statement goes on to say, “Delgado Community College is a diverse, dynamic, comprehensive community college committed to student success through innovative leadership, to excellence in teaching and learning, and to the cultural enrichment of the community it serves. The values at Delgado Community College are listed as follows:

- The worth of each individual
- Lifelong learning and the pursuit of knowledge
- Excellence in teaching in an accessible learning centered environment

- Meeting the needs of a changing workforce
- The cultural diversity of our students, faculty, staff, and administration
- Public trust, and personal and professional integrity and accountability
- Our responsibility to community, state, nation, and world” (“Delgado Community College,” n.d.).

More women return to school than men due to life changes such as a divorce, career change, or finally deciding to return after raising children (Barnes, 2014, p. 72). It would seem for all colleges to be successful, specialized assistance should be offered to non-traditional female students who want to begin or continue their education. This group of women faces unique challenges and not all colleges have been able to step up to meet these challenges. The female population at DCC is 68% female with 52% of those students being age 25 and over (“Delgado Community College,” n.d.).

### **Theoretical Perspective**

Harper and Quaye (2014) state in the chapter “Making engagement equitable for students in U. S. higher education” in the e-book *Student engagement in higher education: Theoretical perspectives and practical approaches for diverse populations* “As American higher education continues to become increasingly diverse, so too will the needs of and challenges faced by our students. A dependency on sameness is no longer appropriate, as contemporary cohorts of students at colleges and universities are different; the ways they experience and respond to their campus vary” (p.1). Student engagement can be simply defined as what a student does inside and outside the classroom. With students finding ways to be engage on and off campus, this will lead to student success. Higher retention rates, higher transfer rates and even higher completion rates

could all be accomplished if a student finds a way to become involved. Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges and Hayek (2006) note:

Student engagement represents two critical features. The first is the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities... The second component of student engagement is how the institution deploys its resources and organizes the curriculum, other learning opportunities, and support services to induce students to participate in activities that lead to the experiences and desired outcomes such as persistence, satisfaction, learning, and graduation (p. 44).

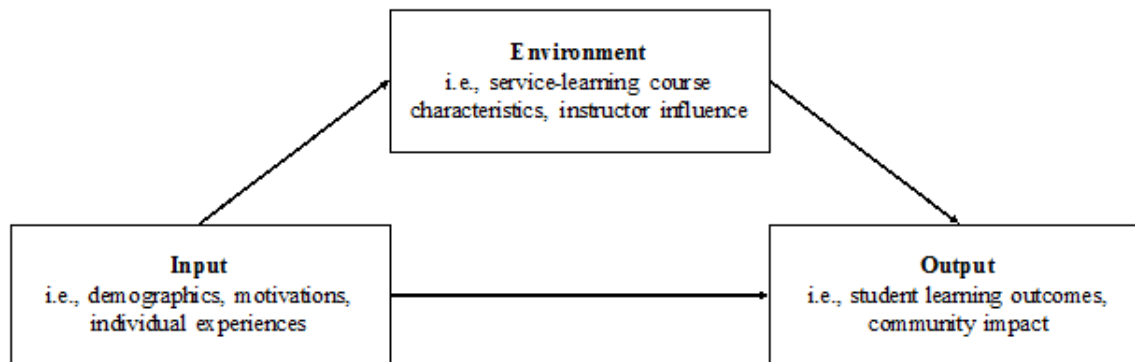
The report *What matters to student success: A review of literature* goes on to say:

For example, although the educational progress of women and minority groups has long been an important policy concern, trend analyses by gender or race have tended to mask important within-group differences with regard to access to and participation (as distinguished from enrollment) rates in postsecondary education. That is, enrollment rates are often calculated as the percentage of high school graduates who are currently in postsecondary education. To more accurately reflect the educational progress of the nation, the proportion of a total age cohort enrolled in postsecondary education or who have completed at least 2 years of postsecondary education should be calculated (p. 11).

Astin's (2012) I-E-O model theorized a student's involvement in college through how they change and develop throughout five claims: psychology and physical energy, involvement, qualitative and quantitative energy, development of involvement and educational effectiveness. The functions of this model are inputs, environment and outcomes. This theory relates to this program through gender, previous experiences as the inputs, their enrollment status and



leadership development course as the environment and leadership development skills and impact on other non-traditional students as the outcomes.



*Figure 1.* Astin's I-E-O model (Astin, 2012)

Pascarella and Terenzini's (2005) model focuses on assessing student change through the direct and indirect effects of the characteristics of an institution and its environment. The five variables in the model: student background traits, organizational characteristics, institutional environment, socialization, and the quality of student effort. The before mentioned variables could be placed into this model and demonstrate how they relate to leadership development skills.

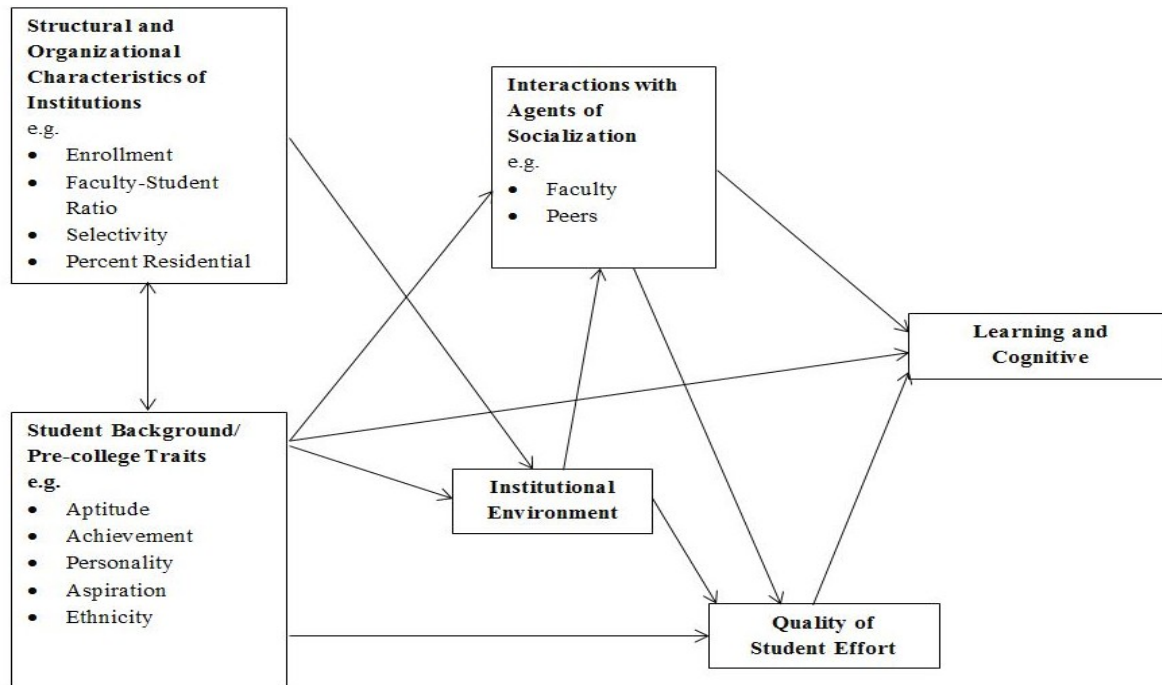


Figure 2. Pascarella and Terenzini's theory of involvement model (Wolgamott, 2014, p.

10)

## Review of related literature

### Introduction

This literature review will show the history of the many struggles and obstacles women have faced in acquiring a degree in higher education. This is especially true in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), a world mainly dominated by men (Hill, Corbett, & St. Rose, 2010, p. xiv). It will also show how women have sought out resources to assist them through their educational journey. Despite not knowing how to educate women in the 1800s, “founders of the Seven Sisters and other women’s colleges believed women had a right to higher education” (Barnes, 2014, p. 72).

The researcher analyzed literature related to the history of women pursuing a degree in higher education and its long road. This was followed by a look at women attending and

obtaining degrees from a community college. Finally, the researcher looked into women wanting to enter programs in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) at an institution of higher education.

### **History of women pursuing a higher education**

The fight for women to have an education has been ongoing since the 1800's (Barnes, 2014, p.71). Women did not receive any schooling because it was thought women did not have a place in political and social environments. According to Barnes, women were supposed to take care of the home and family while leaving their livelihood in the hands of their husbands and fathers. Women were clearly only supposed to raise productive citizens as opposed to being ones themselves. The rise in the ongoing debate of women receiving an education came once they began entering higher education. "Divorce rates rose, birth rates went down; trends became a cause for public concern, reigniting the debate over the utility and social effect of educating women" (Barnes, 2014, p.73). Women were becoming free-thinkers and this began to impact the lives of men and was, therefore, considered a cause for concern.

Men were at the helm of the notion that women's involvement in education would be detrimental to society. They did not like the radical notion women were no longer happy to be homemakers and sought any means possible to relegate them back to the household. This was especially true in lower class families where women were treated as the property of their fathers and husbands. Feeling threatened, a few radical women teamed up with male allies to help establish colleges for women. With this new path to education, adult women could pursue something for themselves. "Women banded together to fight against slavery and disenfranchisement, and fight for equal right and access to services" (Barnes, 2014, p. 74).

In the last 40 years, the number of women completing degrees has steadily increased to eventually surpass men. As a result, there has been more satisfaction in female career paths than previously experienced (Leopold, 1959, p. 281). More women return to school than men because of life changes such as divorce, career changes, or finally being able to return after raising children (Lindsay, 2017, p. 209). In Faehmel's book, *College Women in the Nuclear Age*, the author was able to see the shift in women's education firsthand. The author introduced the personal journal of a young woman living in the 1940's by the name of Helene. To Helene, education was an important part of self-fulfillment. This is further proof that women have long dreamed of lives where being a housewife would not be their only future (Faehmel, 2012, p. 13).

### **Women in community college**

Sander (2012) conveyed in her article, "Colleges confront a gender gap in student engagement" in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, boys and girls are treated differently even from the day they are born, and this disparity is being played out on the community college campus (p. 1). Even if limited funds were available in a lower-class family, the male was the one who was able to attend college rather than the female. Harris III & Harper (2008) reported "In 2006, men were 41.6 percent of students enrolled in two-year colleges and earned 38.4 percent of associate degrees awarded" (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2007, p. 25). Early in the history of the community college, very few women attended, and if they did, they depended on their families for financial support. "Not until 1978 did the number of women attending college in the United States exceed the number of men. By 2003, women were ahead, 58 percent to 42 percent" (Cohen & Brawer, 2008, p. 52).

Townsend (2008) states in her article *Community colleges as gender-equitable institutions*, "although the community college was full of women in various roles, these women

still appeared to experience some gender inequities” (p. 8). Townsend (2008) goes on to state “as the twenty-first century began, the gender gap became defined as a declining percentage of male students relative to female students, whether traditional age or nontraditional age” (p. 9).

According to the NCES, in 2017 51 percent of females completed an associate’s degree as compared to their male counterparts who only had 41.3 percent complete an associate’s degree. By offering an education at a fraction of the cost of a four-year university, women and minorities from low socio-economic backgrounds can pursue better paying careers and leave behind the situations in which they would otherwise be relegated.

In a report done by Hanover Research entitled “Strategies for attracting and supporting non-traditional students done in January 2018, it found “at a time when many colleges and universities face increased challenges to their recruitment and retention goals, a deeper understanding of this non-traditional student population is crucial to help meet the social and academic expectations of a rapidly emerging and vital student population” (p. 7). The report goes on to say due to the varying population because of their differing situations, it has an impact on how and when they enroll in higher education (p. 7). “Despite the growing population of non-traditional students in higher education, these students continue to face barriers to success that their more traditional counterparts do not” (p. 7). Overcoming these barriers at times can be seen as unachievable due the process of finding assistance. Non-traditional students may need counseling on how to balance school, work and family as well as being advised on courses to take, knowing which financial aid option is the best for them as well as pointing them to locations on campus where they can receive various types of student services.

### **Women pursuing STEM**

Even with the changing times, some things remained the same. Just 15 years ago in the two-year institutions, “men dominated in mechanics and repairers with 94 percent of the degrees;

engineering technology, 85 percent; and computer and information science, 69 percent” (Cohen & Brawer, 2008, p. 53). As the shift came to encouraging women to enroll in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) programs, there was a lack of data as to why so few women pursued these fields. It was through Lindsay’s research it was discovered women were at a disadvantage due to cultural and socioeconomic challenges. Women were still not prioritized when it came to receiving an education over their male counterparts. There is an even steeper decline in success among minority women (Lindsay, 2017, p.3). “Despite these barriers, some poor single mothers have pursued postsecondary education in the post-welfare era with many turning to America’s community colleges” (Duquaine-Watson, 2013, p.230). This begs the question, are there enough resources in community colleges for women from low socio-economic background who want to pursue education in (STEM) programs?

As a result of these women pursuing nondomestic roles, more women’s colleges cropped up. There are several colleges geared toward women only and their courses have expanded to include more STEM programming as it has become the one field where men still dominate. “Despite the tremendous rise in college degrees for women, women must earn doctoral degrees to make as much money as men with bachelor’s degrees” (Barnes, 2014, p. 80).

In a study done at Washington State University (WSU) regarding women in the field of engineering, they found a lot of the women had dropped out prior to the study not being treated fairly in a field mainly designed for men (Poor & Brown, 2013). The college decided to ask their women alumni to take part in a mentoring program that would help the women who were enrolled in the engineering fields. A collaboration of faculty and alumni was formed to help further these women in completing their degrees. Through a process of matching each female student with a mentor within their first semester of their program, they began to truly excel in

their field. This mentorship consisted of three meetings including emails, face to face meetings, and a banquet. There were also internships the female students could take part in. In addition, the alumni started a scholarship fund to help offset the financial needs for these women to complete their degree (Poor, 2013 p. 421-428).

Similarly, North Carolina Community College wanted to increase the enrollment of women in the STEM fields. The college employed new recruiting ideas to help promote earning a degree the science, information technology, engineering, and mathematics. Some of the women who they spoke to wanted to help people and subsequently pursued nursing as it required less schooling but paid significantly (Morris, 2014, p. 4). Even so, there are still far fewer scholarships available than there are impoverished women and these scholarships do not cover everything.

Community colleges have many roles when it comes in serving their students. They offer students who will be attending a four-year university general education courses as well as helping student transition into the workforce. When it comes to the STEM field, community colleges are preparing women who are taking these courses to either continue their education at a university or, for those women who earn a certification or associate's degree, to enter into their desired fields. "One essential role of the community college is the transfer function, where students transfer to a four-year institution to complete a bachelor's degree after attending a community college for the first two years of their education. President Obama has recognized community colleges as being uniquely positioned to raise the skill and knowledge base of our workforce" (Jackson, 2011, p. 40). Without community colleges and those who attend our workforce surely could not survive.

### Summary

Women's education has been a very hard and long road. It has suffered setbacks at the hands of men who sought to keep their patriarchal history intact. Even so, women have fought for their own paths in life and are now poised more than ever to have an education. Through diligence, feminism, and activism, women were able to create male allies and break down gender roles that kept them from self-fulfillment. Although more women are seeking their education than ever before there are still many hurdles to overcome. One such hurdle is rivaling their male counterparts in STEM careers. Where women at first were not allowed to learn, they were at first given finishing school. From there, women's colleges set them on a course of empowerment and the ability to learn more than becoming a housewife. The next step for women in education are STEM programs and they will continue to thrive so long as they continue to persevere.

Much has changed in the way of educating women. Whereas only the wealthy were afforded a basic education, today even those who fall below the poverty line have the opportunity to attend college. This is not to say that it is easy. It takes dedication and financial assistance through grants, loans, and scholarships. In recent years, more females graduate from community colleges than men. This is due to the ease of scheduling and relatively low cost (Leopold, 1957, p. 3). Even so, women are often overlooked in the workplace and are only now using affirmative action to take their place among their male counterparts in high ranking jobs. There is still much work to be done for women to have an equal opportunity to pursue their education and the job of their dreams.



## **Method**

### **Introduction**

For this project, the instructional model chosen is the ADDIE model (“ADDIE Model,” 2018). This model was first used in the 1970s by the military as an instructional design system. It has since seen changes and has transitioned into the education world. The model has five phases that include analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation. Each phase helps focus on the social and cognitive content of the material and its delivery.

By using the ADDIE model to assist in putting the project, “Finding Your Voice Through Your Educational Journey” together, the author will look at the five areas: (1) analysis of the project asking who, what, when, where, why and how, (2) the design phase utilizing the mapping technique, (3) the development of three workshops, (4) the implementation of the workshops at Delgado Community College’s Women’s Center and the 2019 SUNY Empire College Fall Student Conference and (5) evaluation of what students learned and feedback.

### **Analysis phase**

Being a former non-traditional female student at Delgado Community College, the focus of the project is non-traditional female students currently attending Delgado Community College. Research was conducted to explore the availability of resources for non-traditional female students who attend community colleges. From journal articles, to an interview of the director of Delgado Community College’s Women’s Center, as well as an interview with a representative from the U.S. Department of Education’s TRIO program at DCC, it was necessary to know if DCC female students knew what was available to them. Information was gathered from current non-traditional female students at DCC in spring 2019. Workshops will be conducted during the 2019-20 academic year. The workshops will take place at the Irma Thomas

Center for W.I.S.E. (Women In Search for Excellence) at Delgado Community College under the guidance of the director and founder, Ms. Melanie Defendall. This center “exists to empower women to help fulfill their academic, personal and professional potential” (M. Defendall, personal communication, April 10, 2019). Due to students, in particular female students, not seeking the available resources at DCC, it was intended to educate them on how to locate and utilize financial resources, tutoring, scheduling, etc. as well as develop their leadership potential. The outcome for the non-traditional female students who take part in this project should be able to utilize the many resources that are offered through the college to help them map out and be successful in their educational endeavors. Another hope for this project, is to see the non-traditional female learn how to advocate for themselves either in education or workforce. By gaining the leadership skills this will enable the female non-traditional student to be a leader either on a personal level or professional level. By gaining these tools it will help these females advance in their careers and personal life.

### **Design phase**

The National Center for Education Statistics in its web table of Demographic and enrollment characteristics of non-traditional undergraduates: 2011-12 note that non-traditional students are usually characterized by one or more of the following traits: “being independent for financial aid purposes, having one or more dependents, being a single caregiver, not having a traditional high school diploma, delaying postsecondary enrollment, attending school part time, and being employed full time” (Simone, 2015, p. 1).

This project will utilize Donaldson and Graham’s Model of Outcomes for adults. “This framework proposes to examine and access key elements affecting the learning of non-traditional students. It also looks at relationships between six major elements related to adults’ lives and

undergraduate experiences” (“NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND THE MODEL OF COLLEGE OUTCOMES FOR ADULTS Applied Technology, Training and Development University of North," n.d). In the article, “A model of college outcomes for adults” it states:

“The model consists of six components: (a) prior experience and personal biographies; (b) psychosocial and value orientations; (c) adult cognition; (d) the connecting classroom as the central avenue for social engagement on campus, for defining the collegiate experience, and for negotiating meaning for learning; (e) life-world environment—the different contexts in which adults live, defined by the roles they occupy in their various work, family, and community settings, in which they learn and develop knowledge structures that differ from the academic knowledge structures of the classroom; and (f) college outcomes—different types of outcomes such as learning new content to finish a course, to really understand it, to apply it in authentic settings, and to use it to improve the lives of others”(Donaldson & Graham, 1999, p. 28).

Donaldson and Graham (1999) further explain “the variations within each of the components and the interactions among them highlight the important dynamics associated with adult development in college” (p. 28).



Figure 3. Model of project in all of its components.

### Development

There will be a series of workshops that will help non-traditional female students who are currently attending Delgado Community College. This would be a service to reach out to all

female students from all socioeconomic backgrounds. These workshops will also be a place where participants will be on the same playing field. If any individual is in need of special accommodations they will be provided the necessary accommodations. These workshops are also for women who may be a first-generation college student or female students who have to change careers to support their families.

These participants will attend a weekly one hour workshop for eight weeks during the semester. For those who choose to participate, there will be a meet and greet social. At this event, the women will be asked to complete a form regarding their desired certification or degree. One of the requirements for taking part in these workshops is to have a daily planner to bring with them.

Here is a sample of the organization of this project:

Initial meeting: social meet and greet (duration: one hour)

- Setting up contacts with one another as well as Ms. Deffendal
- Planners – Each participant will receive a planner to help organize their contacts and projects.
- Introductions – Each person will introduce themselves by stating their name and using the first letter in their name to create an adjective to describe them. (ex. My name is Kim and I pride myself on being kind.)
- Campus Resources – There will be a resource fair showcasing the different campus resources and the services they provide (ex. math lab, reading lab, English lab, science lab, library, and TRIO). Students will be encouraged to utilize the campus resource most relatable to their needs and education. They should make an appointment with that particular resource and add it to their provided planner.

- Purpose of the workshops: The importance of having this campus resource information will be stressed to participants as these resources will lead to other resources that will be accessible long after graduation (ex. Those involved in *Phi Theta Kappa* often need references which the organization is happy to provide to members that have participated in fundraising and charitable works.).
- Follow-up: Students will draft an email to one of their instructors as well as a draft a voicemail they could leave one of their instructors.

First workshop: How to build a rapport with instructors (duration: one hour)

- Review of emails and voicemail messages – students will trade with one another their email and voicemail drafts to see what needs to be corrected and improved
- Professionalism - students will learn how to compose a professional email, leave a professional voicemail and how to schedule an appointment with their instructor
- Contact with your instructor: since learning how to write professional emails, students will send an email to each of their instructors introducing themselves as well as asking any questions about the syllabus or course objectives
- Follow-up: Students will be given a campus map and asked to locate and visit three learning labs and asked to get to know at least one tutor in each lab visited.

Second workshop: Finding resources for your education (duration: one hour)

- Learning labs – students will have visited various learning labs on campus; student-led discussion about where these labs are located and share with one another

- Other essential campus resources – students will be provided a list of telephone numbers for financial aid, registrar office, their education division, business office and campus police as well as learn where these offices are located
- Contact your assigned advisor – students will compose a professional email to be sent to their advisor and set up an appointment to discuss their degree plans
- Follow-up: Before the next workshop, students will be asked to read “Learning Style Perspectives” by Lynne Celli Sarasin to familiarize themselves with the learning styles in prep for discovery.

Third workshop: Finding your learning style (duration: one hour)

- Learning Style – Students will take an assessment on learning styles found on the How to study website: <https://www.how-to-study.com/learning-style-assessment/>
- Study Skills – Utilizing what students have learned about their learning style they will devise study plans. (ex. Auditory learners can tape lectures for playback, sit closer to the front to hear better, and read aloud.)
  - Identifying strengths and weaknesses – Students will be given a list of different study habits to try where they can identify whether they have tried them and if it has been beneficial or not. Once they find the study habits that help them most they can add this to their study plan. (ex. Some students listen to classical music when they study while others need total silence. Some students work better early morning while others work better at night.)  
Knowing what doesn't work is just as important as what does work as when they find themselves having a hard time they know what to illuminate.

- Time Management – Using Eisenhower’s Urgent/Important Principle to prioritize urgent issues over non-urgent issues. (ex. Important and Urgent > Important but Not Urgent > Not Important but Urgent > Not Important and Not Urgent) will be shown as well as given a handout to learn how to manage time. Apps for cellphones will also be provided for students to take advantage of when managing their time.
- Follow-up – Students will be asked to make a list of words that will mean empowerment to them and prepare a two-three-minute self-reflection of what they have gained and learned in the workshops to be presented at the final meeting.

Final meeting: Tools for Self-Empowerment (duration: one hour)

- Words of Encouragement – Students will learn how to utilize empowering language to be successful in their education and career. Students will discuss their list of empowering words and brainstorm collectively to add to the list thinking about words that pertain to their own experience.
  - Self-Reflection – The student will use the new language they have learned to give a two-three-minute speech. They will describe themselves and reflect upon what they have gained from the workshops and how they will use this knowledge in their schooling and career.
  - Post-survey (same questions as pre-survey) will be administered along with three open-ended questions asking what topics were the most helpful, what would you do differently to enhance these workshops? And were they helpful to you?



“It is very important for students to learn about their future careers while in college. We want them to use the resources at the college to determine if their career plan is a good fit with their interests, skill level and monetary needs” (M. Defendall, personal communication, April 10, 2019). Females need to feel as if they are more accepted in the institution if they are to succeed. By hosting these workshops at the Women’s Center, it is the belief that students will benefit from the reassurance of what resources are available to them.

### **Implementation**

To pilot the curriculum, these workshops will be combined and presented in a one-hour session at the 2019 SUNY Empire State College Fall Student Conference. This conference will be held in Syracuse, NY at the Crowne-Plaza Hotel, October 24-26, 2019. After the conference, any adjustments and changes will be made before implementing at Delgado Community College.

At the pilot workshop, four non-traditional female students, who are currently enrolled at various campuses of SUNY Empire State College, participated in the session. It was noted these four students were in various stages of their education, some were in undergraduate programs and others in graduate programs. As the information was presented, it was evident the students did not know how important the topics of finding one’s learning style, knowing what campus resources are available and where they are located as well as how important it is to build a rapport with their instructors can be in completing a college degree. After the presentation, many questions were asked about each of the topics presented and how much of an impact they can be in their educational futures.

### **Evaluation**

The evaluations and/or assessments that will be conducted through these workshops will consist of pre-and post-surveys, reflection papers, and keeping journals throughout the semester.

All of the data will be combined to analyze the progression of the women who participated in the series of workshops. All participants will remain anonymous when it comes providing the data at the conclusion of the three workshops. By taking in consideration of how well these evaluations and/or assessments of the workshops will help the college keep track of how to assist the non-traditional female student in gaining the proper tools needed for these individuals to be successful throughout their education and employment.

### **Conclusion**

To ensure this project reached its full potential, several factors were considered. Two different framework models were looked at because no two students are alike, especially their learning style. Astin's (2012) I-E-O model looks at input, environment and outputs. This comes into play when looking at the non-traditional female student and what she brings from her background, previous experiences, enrollment status and how she plans to move forward with her education. Pascarella and Terenzini's (2005) model emphasizes the changes a student has through their direct and indirect contact with the institution and their learning environment. To bring these frameworks to fruition, the ADDIE model was used to move this project forward in its design and development. This model can also allow the instructor to make adjustments in the workshops once student learning styles are reported.

Currently, the workshops are geared towards non-traditional female students and will be held at the women's center. It is well-known on campus for assisting those students who seek help in attaining their education. This is in part because women have a harder time in college due to it being designed for men. Delgado Community College is 62% women and 52% are non-traditional female students who are 25 years of age or older students. By facilitating these workshops together over a semester period, it should help the non-traditional female student find

her path in higher education. These workshops are to help the non-traditional female student grow and fulfill their full potential in their educational endeavors. Each workshop is designed to explore, enhance and expand their minds. As a student moves through the workshops, it would be necessary to track their progress. One way to see the progress of the participants would be to check with the various labs and their sign-in sheets. Also, having a follow-up meeting every semester to see how the students are progressing with their studies would be beneficial.

Once these workshops receive a high demand for them to continue after the pilot semester, and there is an increase in the graduation rate of the non-traditional female student, then the workshops can be re-evaluated and made for all students, male and female, traditional and non-traditional. However, by attending these workshops any student will be able to advocate for themselves in finding the resources that the college has to offer along with the ultimate goal of receiving a college education.

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