

Exploring the Age Gap: Nontraditional Age Students at Parkland College, Podcast Transcript
Ethnographies of Parkland Student Life for Anthropology 103, Fall 2017
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- Speaker 1: 00:00 Hi. I'm Zoe from Parkland College's 2017 cultural anthropology class, joined by my colleagues Jed, Skie, and Allison.
- Speaker 2: 00:08 We conducted a native ethnography on nontraditional aged students.
- Speaker 3: 00:12 The purpose of our ethnography was to learn about and examine the experience of nontraditional aged students at Parkland.
- Speaker 2: 00:18 We were interested in this research because, in doing personal interviews, we were forced to realize and challenge our own preconceived notions of ageism toward other student groups.
- Speaker 4: 00:32 We concluded that nontraditional students all had a variety of different experiences with Parkland and cannot be placed into one category based on age.
- Speaker 3: 00:39 Before starting our research. We had preconceived notions that all non-traditional aged students had similar experience as a person.
- Speaker 2: 00:46 We interviewed three women of varying age between their 50s and 60s all of whom were mothers and were either currently attending where previously attended Parkland College. As non-traditional aged students
- Speaker 4: 01:01 We practice reflexivity. Throughout her ethnography and conducted three interviews which lasted approximately 25 minutes with seven questions for each.
- Speaker 1: 01:11 Each interviewee we have lots to say and spoke about their lives and responsibilities. Those interviewed even shared some free wisdom with us. The observations taken from the personal interviews show that nontraditional and traditional students have a lot in common and a lot of differences. Our interviewees were asked what was difficult and easy about being back to school. Many of the responses seemed familiar.
- Subject 1: 01:33 The easiest is that, having been a student for many years in the past, it's pretty familiar, and, I guess, the hardest will be getting up in the morning, like to walk the dog before I come here. I have other things I have to do at home.

Subject 2:	01:53	The hardest would be time management because now I have four children, a husband. Just managing my time between my family, my personal time, my class time. That was definitely a challenge.
Speaker 3:	02:13	Interviewee's offered some general insight as to how we are different as students.
Subject 1:	02:17	Most of these people who are nontraditional students have, you know, worked for thirty years, and now are.... They're used to being busy used to getting up, used to having things to do in their lives, and then you stop working and need to find something to fill your time.
Subject 3:	02:39	A lot of them in my classes are taking the classes because they have to whereas I'm taking what I'm taking because I want to.
Subject 2:	02:34	So the biggest difference would definitely be the mental energy that you have now. I would just use it for all you can, because when you get older body definitely does not function as you all know, even your mind as you did. So memory wasn't quite like it used to be, and that surprised me. I was like, I use to be able to just remember everything, and I would go to my tests, studying as hard as I used to, but the memory recall was not there and that was a big challenge.
Speaker 4:	03:09	We asked what social life is like.
Subject 1:	03:09	Because it's art, it's not, um.... You're doing things with your hands, so, you know, you sit and chat. I mean, in the jewelry making class, there is a group of retired women who have been doing it for the last 15 years of their lives, and they know each other, and they sit and they chat with each other the entire time that they're making their jewelry.
Subject 2:	03:32	I definitely felt like I wasn't part of the group. I mean I felt my age in the sense, of "wow." There's just a few of us in the class that are older, so I had to kind of overcome that. And that's easier as you get older. You're not so pulled by peer pressure when you're older. There's kind of this wall that you let down. It's not so important that you fit in.
Speaker 1:	03:55	We heard that pressures are different for non-traditional students and traditional. But at the same time not at all.
Subject 2:	04:03	Fortunately, I do have my husband who has a full time job. So that takes the pressure off our financial needs. But, Oh there's

definitely the pressure there. I need to be able to help somewhat.

- Subject 3 : 04:12 I always wanted to counseling and what deterred me from it when I was still in high school was my mother was like, "You don't want to do that. You'll just get so personally involved, you'll just be a mess all the time." You've got to be careful to what you say to your kids.
- Speaker 1: 04:26 Interviewees expressed that they found joy in doing new and fulfilling things. Interests in art, nursing, and social work were pursued by taking classes here at Parkland.
- Subject 2: 04:36 Finding a new joy that I always thought liked to try, you know, it kind of gave me a new outlook on life, a fresh start. Getting back into the world after being at home raising my kids, it gave me a new identity.
- Subject 3: 04:50 I've always actually been interested sociology, psychology field when I was in high school like a junior maybe.
- Speaker 1: 05:00 These points go to prove that nontraditional age students do have diverse and unique experiences not simply because of their generational background but because of their identity as a student.
- Speaker 3: 05:17 After comparing our lives with theirs we concluded that we all have a variety of interests struggles and advice that cannot be placed in one category based on age.
- Speaker 4: 05:26 We feel that this research is important because it knocks down social barriers between age groups.
- Speaker 1: 05:32 We thank you for listening and we hope you enjoyed it.