

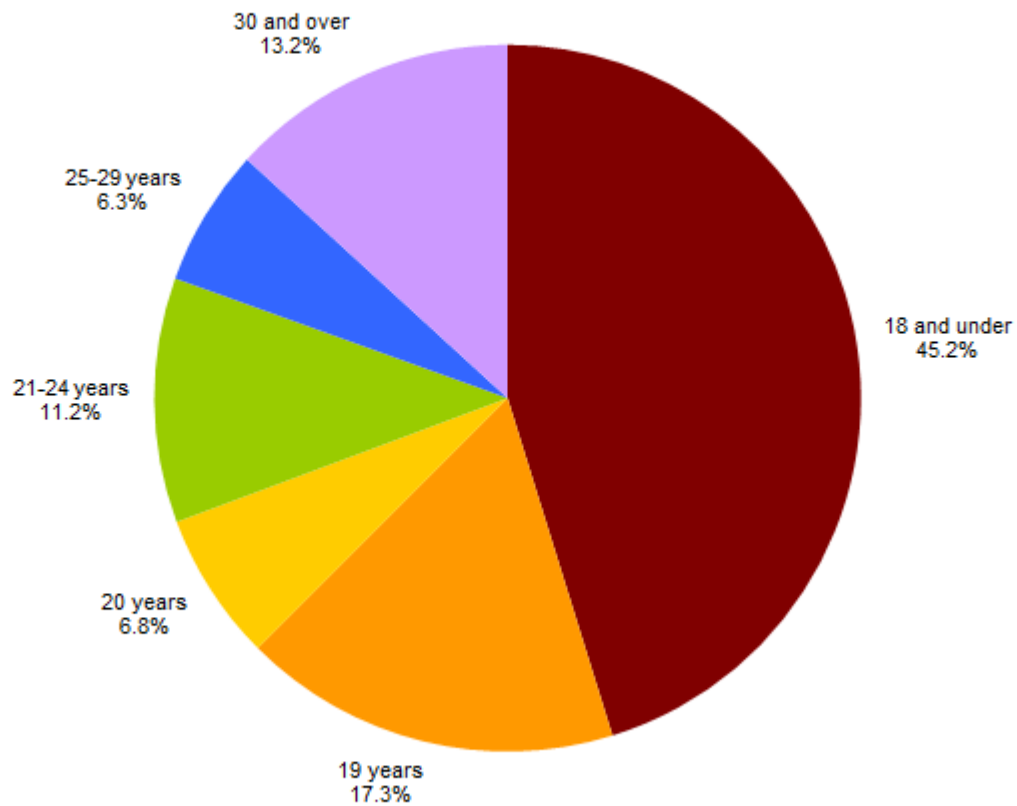
Mature students, learning and technology



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Chart 6 - Age(#5) distribution of first year UK domiciled first degree students 2012/13

Percentages in this chart have been rounded to one decimal place, therefore they may not sum exactly to 100%.



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30.7% 21 and over
19.5% 25 and over
13% 30 over

Combatting stereotypes



Some evidence that mature students who complete outperform traditional students

- Particularly over 25s and female (Baxter and Hart)
- Some disciplinary differences (Richardson; Woodley)

Outline

- Mature students – literature
 - Old and young mature students (Baxter and Hart)
 - Perspective taking (Mezirow)
 - Student parents (Scott, Burns et al. , Brooks)
 - Digital Immigrants (Prensky; Jones, Ramanau et al.)
- My interviews
- Some thoughts

Older Vs Younger Mature students

- Study of mature students in social science programme
- Found 'older' (25+) particular female students more successful than traditional
- Interrupters Vs Returners

Perspective Taking



“There are certain challenges or dilemmas of adult life that cannot be resolved by the usual way we handle problems [...] Life becomes untenable, and we undergo significant phases of reassessment and growth in which familiar assumptions are challenged and new directions and commitments are charted”
(Mezirow 1978: 101)

Student as parents

- Focus on role conflict
 - “parent” Vs “student”
 - Gendered (Brooks 2011)
- What about parents with adult children?





“Digital Native” unhelpful and unlikely

‘Digital Immigrants’

The “digital immigrant accent” can be seen in such things as turning to the Internet for information second rather than first, or in reading the manual for a program rather than assuming that the program itself will teach us to use it.” (Prensky 2001)



THIS IS THE SECRET HISTORY OF..

Dorothy

- Mid 40s
- 2 children still at home
- Divorced (trigger for entering HE)
- Serious time management issues as mother/student
- Uses laptop essentially as type writer
- Uses online catalogues to find physical materials
- Watches YouTube videos with a glass of wine of an evening

Rose

- Mid 50s
- 3 grown up children
- Divorced (trigger for entering HE)
- “...beginning of the end of my old life, but it was also the beginning of my new life...”
- “when it comes to me on my own, sat at home trying to do it, I can’t and I give up in the end’ and that is how I feel about technology, it’s not second nature to me”

Blanche

- 50s
- Married with childcare responsibilities
- “I felt as if I'd got to a stage, at my age, where I just thought, I'm useless. I just thought, where am I going? What am I doing?”
- “If it's on the screen I don't like it at all”
- “I don't like things such as your Pinterest. To me they are too gimmicky”

Future interviews

- Male mature students
- Non-social scientists

Some thoughts

- Use of technology is multi-layered
 - Reappraisal of Digital Immigrant?
 - Is this a one off phenomenon? (pre to post digital?)
- Recognise that “mature student” is not necessarily helpful term (21+), perhaps new categories needed? (extra mature?)
- What more can be done to support these students?