Research

Practice

Here Today...
Gone Tomorrow

**Strategies for Motivating
and Retaining
Adult Learners**

Illinois
Adult Education Workshop

April 23, 2014

**Presented by
Dr. Lennox McLendon**
050207

Table of Contents

- ## Here Today…Gone Tomorrow
Strategies for Motivating and Retaining
Adult Learners

Objectives
- Examine the latest research on student persistence to determine factors that promote retention.
- Determine research implications for the delivery of adult education services.
- Explore a variety of instructional and management strategies that address the research findings.
- Examine professional development options that can help instructors support student persistence.
- Review a template for a student persistence learning project.

Agenda

Part I
Welcome and introductions
Training objectives
Why is student persistence so important?

What does the research tell us?
- NCSALL's Learner Persistence Study
- **Activity 1: Indicators of Persistence**
- B. Quigley's Critical First Three Weeks
- H. Beder's Classroom Dynamics
- T. Sticht's Turbulence and Focus

Research implications

The Three P's: Practice, Policy/Procedures, Professional Development
Activity 3: What Are You Doing Now?

Part II

Persistence supports and strategies
- ❖ #1: Strategies for addressing management of positive and negative forces
- ❖ **Activity 4:** Managing the Forces

Persistence supports and strategies
- ❖ #2: Strategies for building self efficacy
- ❖ **Activity 5:** The Flipchart Brainstorm

Persistence supports and strategies
- ❖ #3: Strategies for setting clear goals
- ❖ **Activity 6:** What Can I Change?

Persistence supports and strategies
- ❖ #4: Strategies for demonstrating progress
- ❖ What are you doing now?

Professional development options

Next Steps: Making a Learner Persistence Plan

McLendon and McLendon, 2014

Notes

Research

Practice

Here Today... Gone Tomorrow

Strategies for Motivating and Retaining Adult Learners

RESOURCE PACKET

Student Persistence
Research and Articles

Adult Learner Retention Revisited (Kerka, S. 1995)
http://www.cete.org/acve/docgen.asp?tbl=archive&ID=A002

Build Motivation by Building Learner Participation (Garner, B. 1998)
http://www.ncsall.net/?id=419

Getting into Groups (Pritza, M. 1998)
http://www.ncsall.net/?id=415

Getting to Class and Completing a Semester is Tough, pg. 12 **(Sticht, T. et al. 1998)**
http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/lp_c.pdf

Improving Retention in Adult Basic Education and Recommended Strategies for Effective Instructional and Counseling Interventions (Quigley, B. 1997)
http://literacy.kent.edu/Oasis/Pubs/0600-3.htm

NCSALL's Adult Persistence Study
- **Persistence among Adult Basic Education Students in Pre-GED Classes** (Comings, J. Parrella, A, & Soricone, L. 1999)
  http://www.ncsall.net/?id=663

- **Helping Adults Persist: Four Supports,** pg. 6 (Comings, J. Parrella, A, & Soricone, L. 2000)
  http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/lp_d.pdf

- **Sponsors and Sponsorship,** pg 13 (Comings, J. & Cuban, S. 2002)
  http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/lp_d.pdf

- **The K-12 School Experiences of High School Dropouts**, pg. 4 (Reder, S. & Strawn, C. 2001)
  http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/lp_c.pdf

- **Stopping Out, Not Dropping Out,** pg. 7 (Belzer, A. 1998)
  http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/lp_c.pdf

Research to Practice: Increasing Retention Through Student Success (Malitz, . & Nixon-Ponder, S. 2003)
http://literacy.kent.edu/Oasis/Pubs/0200-11.htm

McLendon and McLendon, 2014

Staying in a Literacy Program (Willard, A. 1998)
http://www.ncsall.net/?id=418

Self Efficacy (Bandura, A. 1994)
http://www.emory.edu/EDUCATION/mfp/BanEncy.html

The First Three Weeks: A Critical Time for Motivation (Quigley, B. 1998)
http://www.ncsall.net/?id=420

Tips for Motivating Your Students
http://opd.iupui.edu/ctl/idd/docs/tipsheets/motivation.pdf

Where Attendance is Not a Problem (Lucey, M. 1998)
http://www.ncsall.net/?id=416

Persistence Resources
Strategies, Tips, and More

Adult Students: Recruitment and Retention
M. Wonacott, Practice Application Brief No. 18, ERIC Clearinghouse of Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, 2001
Reviews research on adult learner persistence and provides guidelines for recruiting and retaining adult learners.
http://www.cete.org/acve/docgen.asp?tbl=pab&ID=108

California Adult Learner Persistence Project
Use the California Adult Learner Persistence Project Website to examine practices at your local agency. The Website will guide you through evaluating your own local agency, and will provide links to other resources – such as research publications and professional development opportunities – that will enrich your learning process.
http://www.adultlearnerpersistence.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Home

Considerations for Setting Realistic NRS Goals
Provides considerations and examples for setting realistic NRS goals related to employment, postsecondary education, and GED.
http://naepdc.org/Word%20Documents/setting_realistic_nrs_goalscon.htm

Enhancing Adult Motivation to Learn: A Comprehensive Guide for Teaching All Adults
R.J. Wlodkowski, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998
Revised edition offers culturally responsive practical advice and strategies to enhance adults' motivation to learn. Looks at theory and research on how motivation affects instruction and highlights the integration of motivational strategies into lesson plans.
Available for purchase from
http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0787903604.html

Florida Adult Education Online Learning Center – *Improving Student Retention in Adult Education Programs*
A free, open-entry online professional development course on student retention developed by the Florida Adult Education Online Learning Center.
http://adulted.successfast.net/courses/introduction.cfm?classif=137

Group Goal Setting Activities: An Approach from Youth Service Corps
Provides various options for helping students set realistic goals.
http://www.sabes.org/resources/adventures/vol4/4pece.htm

Goal Setting
Provides three goal setting models including time required, size of group, materials, procedures and rules, and discussion questions
http://www.kappakappagamma.org/Template.cfm?Section=Home&CONTENTID=1472&TEMPLATE=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm

National Adult Education Honor Society
Includes information on the history, student eligibility, inducting students, getting started, benefits, and nomination process.
http://www.naehs.org/Default.htm

NCSALL Study Circle Guide: *Learner Persistence in Adult Basic Education*
The study circle is designed for adult education practitioners who desire to explore specific topics, brainstorm ideas, and develop strategies in a small group setting. This guide includes everything needed to initiate a study circle on learner persistence including handouts, readings, discussion questions, etc.
http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~ncsall/teach/lp.pdf

NCSALL *Seminar Guide: Helping Adults Persist.*
This 3 ½-hour seminar introduces adult education practitioners to the research on adult student persistence, focusing on the positive and negative forces that help and hinder persistence.
http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/persistence_role.pdf

NCSALL *Seminar Guide: Supports and Barriers to Persistence.*
In this 4-hour seminar, participants explore reasons why students leave programs and ways to support students, including sponsorship.
http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/supports_role.pdf

NCSALL *Seminar Guide: Self-efficacy in Persistence.*
This 3 ½-hour seminar introduces adult education practitioners to the four supports to adult student persistence identified in the research study.
http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/self-efficacy_role.pdf

Ordering Information for the *Group Embedded Figures Test*
Ordering information for the GEFT that assesses cognitive style and analytical ability.
http://www.mindgarden.com/products/gefts.htm

Recruitment and Retention in Adult Education Programs
The Central Illinois Adult Education Service Center (CIAESC)
This manual addresses possible reasons for the drop in the retention rate for adult learners and for their academic failure and offers procedures for identifying those most at risk of dropping out. The 200 strategies in this manual are designed to empower learners, establish group cohesion, facilitate the identification of goals, and encourage participation. Strategies are categorized as follows: User-Friendly Strategies, Responsive Strategies, Empowering Strategies, Personal and Relevant Strategies, and Interactive Strategies.
http://www.cait.org/ciaesc/prof_dev/publications.jsp#rec

Recruitment Issues and Strategies for Adults Who Are Not Currently Participating in Literacy and Adult Basic Education (ABE) Programs
A. Kohring, C. White, and M. Ziegler, 1999
Discusses some techniques, tools, and strategies for recruiting adult learners using various marketing and public relations methods. Also reviews other issues related to recruitment and lists suggestions for strategies to test in ABE or literacy programs.
http://cls.coe.utk.edu/lpm/manage_ins/1999mi/aaronk.html

Student/Teacher Evaluation and Planning Session (STEPS)
Provides a detailed process for setting up and implementing regularly scheduled planning sessions between adult students and teachers.
http://naepdc.org/Word%20Documents/seconddoc.htm

Brainstorming and Prioritizing
Developed by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy

A Needs Assessment Activity
This activity is helpful in guiding a group to think about the forces that hinder and help them to achieve a goal.
(Note: To adapt for use with an individual, skip Steps 7-12.)

STEP 1: Ask the group to think about the goal of continuing to pursue their educational goals.

STEP 2: Write the goal on the top of a sheet of newsprint. Then, draw a vertical line down the middle of the newsprint, with a + (positive sign) over the left-hand column and a – (negative sign) over the right hand column, as shown below:

Goal: Continuing to Pursue Our Educational Goals	
+	-

STEP 3: Ask learners to first brainstorm all the things that make it hard for them to continue to pursue their educational goals. Write them on the right side of the newsprint. Use the question: *Who or what gets in the way of continuing to come to these classes?*

STEP 4: Then ask learners to brainstorm all the things that help them to attend class or to continue to pursue their education goals. Use the question: *Who or what helps or supports you to continue to stay in these classes?* Write these responses on the left side of the newsprint.

STEP 5: Ask the learners to look at the newsprint and talk about what they see. For example, *are there more negative than positive forces? Where do the forces come from* (e.g., from the class, from your life, etc.)?

STEP 6: Give each learner an index card or a blank piece of paper. Ask each learner to write down the answer to this question: *What two forces from the list do you most want us to work on in class?* Point out that they can take their forces from the positive force list (forces they would want to work on strengthening/increasing), from the negative force list (forces they would want to work on weakening/decreasing), or from a combination of the two.

STEP 7: Ask learners to get into pairs and discuss their two forces, coming to agreement about the two forces they feel are most important to work on in class. One person in each pair should write their new list of two forces on another piece of paper or card.

STEP 8: Have two pairs join to form a group of four. Have each pair shares its list of two items with the other pair. The group of four now has several minutes to come up with a new list of two forces upon which all four can agree. Ask a volunteer to write their new list of two forces, representing their "consensus," on a piece of newsprint to hang in front of the class.

STEP 9: Then ask a member from each group to post their newsprint and read the two forces the group listed. Instruct the whole class to examine the newsprints, looking for similarities, and ask: *Are there any forces that appear on everyone's list?* If so, write these on a fresh sheet of newsprint (which will represent the whole class consensus).

STEP 10: Continue until all of the items listed on more than one newsprint are rewritten on the fresh newsprint. Then ask the class to consider which items still remaining on the original newsprints are important enough to include on the fresh newsprint. When completed, the fresh newsprint represents a list of all the forces that the class wants to work on in the coming semester or year.

STEP 11: If at this point, there are only two forces listed on the "consensus newsprint," skip to Step 12. If there are more than two forces, give out two dot stickers to each learner. Ask each learner to come up to the newsprint and place his/her two dots on the forces that s/he feels are the most important to work on in class.

STEP 12: The class has now whittled their forces down to the two which they most want to work on and influence in class. The next step is to brainstorm with the class, the various ways in which the class can work together to address these forces.

Acting It Out
A Needs Assessment Activity
Developed by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy

This activity is a way to bring learners' experiences with a particular issue to life and set the stage to analyze those experiences.
(Note: The acting out portion of this activity is better suited for use in a class of four or more learners rather than for a one-on-one teaching situation.)

STEP 1:   Ask the group to think about the goal of continuing to pursue their educational goals.

STEP 2:   Write the goal on the top of a sheet of newsprint. Then, draw a vertical line down the middle of the newsprint, with a + (positive sign) over the left-hand column and a − (negative sign) over the right hand column, as shown below:

Goal: Continuing to Pursue Our Educational Goals	
+	-

STEP 3:   Ask learners to first brainstorm all the things that make it hard for them to continue to pursue their educational goals, to stay in the program. Write them on the right side of the newsprint. Use the question: *Who or what gets in the way of continuing to come to these classes?*

STEP 4:   Then ask learners to brainstorm all the things that help them to attend class or to continue to pursue their education goals. Use the question: *Who or what helps or supports you to continue to stay in these classes?* Write these responses on the left side of the newsprint.

STEP 5:   Ask each learner to copy one of the forces on an individual strip of paper with positive forces on one color and negative forces on another color. Spread out the strips with the positive forces along one side of a table and the strips with negative forces along the other side.

STEP 6:   Then explain what will happen during the activity and the roles that people will need to fill.
• Learners will act out the forces they have just generated.
• One person will play the role of the representative learner and <u>this person will listen quietly.</u>
• The rest of the group will divide into two smaller groups: the positives and the negatives.

• Each person can choose which group s/he would like to be in, but the final two groups should have approximately the same number of people as the number of strips of paper representing positive or negative forces.
• The "positives" go to the side of the table with the positive forces, and the "negatives" go to the negative forces.
• The representative learner sits at the head of the table.

STEP 7:   Once everyone is in the right place, ask learners to choose the strips of paper with the forces that stand out for them, trying to evenly distribute all the forces among the learners until all the paper strips are taken.

STEP 8:   Ask learners to spontaneously act out one force at a time, going back and forth between positive and negative forces, trying to build on what was said before them, until all the forces are voiced. The representative learner's job is to sit quietly and listen to all the forces as if they are voices within him or herself.
Explain that they are all acting out roles, and that what they say does not necessarily represent their own views. They are to try to understand and bring to life the forces they have chosen and should feel free to add words and feeling to their role.

STEP 9:   Once all the forces have been acted out, ask the representative learner what comments or reactions s/he has and what s/he feels. Be sure to give this learner the opportunity to speak first about his/her experience; then ask the rest of the group what it was like to act out the forces.

STEP 10:   Then facilitate a discussion with the whole group, asking guiding questions that encourage the learners to reflect on (1) insights they gained about the issue and (2) questions they now have.

STEP 11:   Give each learner an index card or a blank piece of paper. Ask each learner to write down the answer to this question: *What two forces from the list do you most want us to work on in class?* Point out that they can take their forces from the positive force list (forces they would want to work on strengthening/increasing), from the negative force list (forces they would want to work on weakening/decreasing), or from a combination of the two.

STEP 12:   Ask learners to get into pairs and discuss their two forces, coming to agreement about the two forces they feel are most important to work on in class. One person in each pair should write their new list of two forces on another piece of paper or card.

STEP 13:   Have two pairs join to form a group of four. Have each pair share its list of two items with the other pair. The group of four now has several minutes to come up with a new list of two forces upon which all four can agree. Ask a volunteer to write their new list of two forces, representing their "consensus," on a piece of newsprint to hang in front of the class.

STEP 14:   Then ask a member from each group to post their newsprint and read the two

forces the group listed. Instruct the whole class to examine the newsprints, looking for similarities, and ask: *Are there any forces that appear on everyone's list?* If so, write these on a fresh sheet of newsprint (which will represent the whole class consensus).

STEP 15: Continue until all of the items listed on more than one newsprint are rewritten on the fresh newsprint. Then ask the class to consider which items still remaining on the original newsprints are important enough to include on the fresh newsprint. When completed, the fresh newsprint represents a list of all the forces that the class wants to work on in the coming semester or year.

STEP 16: If at this point, there are only two forces listed on the "consensus newsprint," skip to Step 17. If there are more than two forces, give out two dot stickers to each learner. Ask each learner to come up to the newsprint and place his/her two dots on the forces s/he feels are the most important to work on in class.

STEP 17: The class has now whittled their forces down to the two which they most want to work on and influence in class. The next step is to brainstorm with the class, the various ways in which the class can work together to address these forces.

Classroom Discussion
A Needs Assessment Activity
Developed by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy

This activity is one way to organize a discussion and then use the fruits of that discussion as a way to address persistence.

(Note: To adapt this activity to a one-on-one teaching situation, pose the questions in Step 1 to a student in a dialogue journal. Then respond to the learner's answers to these questions in the journal. Together you and the learner can explore ways to help increase persistence that fit that learner's particular context.)

STEP 1: Use the following questions addressing learner motivation, retention and persistence to guide the discussion. Write the questions on newsprint to hang at the front of the room.

What Brings You Here?
- What makes it easy for you to come to this program?
- What makes it hard for you to come to this program?
- What keeps you interested while you are here?
- What would make it more interesting?
- Imagine that for some reason you decide to stop coming to this program. How do you think you would feel?
- Do you think you would return to this or another program at some point? Why or why not?
- What, if anything, would help you to return?

STEP 2: Set ground rules as a group, if these have not already been done. Ask learners what they need to feel safe talking in pairs or a group. Write down the ground rules and post them.

STEP 3: Ask learners to work in pairs. Give each learner a handout with questions that mirror those on the newsprint. Ask that one learner in each pair be the recorder who will later report back to the whole group key points in their discussion.

STEP 4: Give the pairs 15 minutes to discuss the questions and record their answers. For classes with very low literacy skills, learners can simply discuss the questions and not record their thoughts.

STEP 5: After 15 minutes, ask the recorder in each pair to report their discussion to the whole group. Record on newsprint their responses to the questions: *What makes it easy for you to come to this program? What makes it hard for you to come to this program. What keeps you interested while you are here? What would make it more interesting?* This will be your record of the conversation.

STEP 6: After hearing from all the pairs, open up the discussion to the group at large. Ask them such questions as: *Are there other things that people would want to add? What similarities and differences do you see? Are there things that surprise you? What questions do you now have.*

STEP 7:   Then ask learners to look at the issues raised on each of the newsprints. Point out that they have written about forces that both help them to continue coming to class and forces that hinder them or get in the way of their coming to class. Ask them the question: *Of all the points written on these newsprints, which two points do you want to work on in class*? (Some possible answers would name something that the class could work on to strengthen or increase the positive forces, something the class could work on to weaken or decrease the negative forces, or an idea for how to make the class more interesting.)

STEP 8:   Put up a fresh piece of newsprint. Ask each learner to come up and write two forces from the discussion that they most want the class to work on together. Tell them that if someone else has already written a point that they agree with, they can simply make a check mark next to that point on the newsprint. Continue until each learner has written his/her two forces on the newsprint.

STEP 9:   Give each learner two dot stickers. Ask each learner to read through the list on the newsprint and decide which two areas s/he would like the class to work on together. Tell them to place their dots next to those items.

STEP 10: The class has now whittled their forces down to the two which they most want to work on and influence in class. The next step is to brainstorm with the class, the various ways in which the class can work together to address these forces (strengthen the positive; weaken the negative).

Snowball Consensus
A Needs Assessment Activity
Developed by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy

This activity guides a group to develop a list of ideas or course of action with which all can agree.

STEP 1: Pose a question to the whole group related to the ideas wanted: *What are the two forces that most help you in continuing to pursue your educational goals, and what are the two forces that most hinder you?* (It's best to give people a specific number of ideas to state, e.g., what *two* forces...)

STEP 2: Have learners get into pairs and discuss these questions, coming to agreement about the two helping and two hindering forces that affect both of their lives. Have one of them write these four forces on a piece of paper.

STEP 3: Have two pairs join to form a group of four. Have each pair share its list of four items with the other pair. The group of four now has several minutes to come up with a new list of two helping and two hindering factors upon which all four can agree. One of them should now write their new list of four forces, representing their consensus, on a sheet of newsprint, divided like this:

Most Important Forces That…	
Help us continue:	**Make it hard to continue:**
1.	1.
2.	2.

STEP 4: Have groups post their newsprints on the wall and take turns reading aloud the helping and hindering forces listed on their newsprint. Then ask the whole class to look at the newsprints for similarities, asking: *Are there any helping forces that appear on everyone's list?* If so, then write these on a fresh newsprint sheet (which will represent the whole class consensus).

STEP 5: Continue until all of the items listed on more than one newsprint are rewritten on the fresh newsprint. Then ask the class to consider which items still remaining on the original newsprints are important enough to include on the fresh newsprint. When

completed, the fresh newsprint represents the whole group's consensus about the most important forces, supporting and hindering, that affect learners continuing their learning.

STEP 6: The next step is to brainstorm with the class, the various ways in which the class can work together to address these forces (strengthen the positive, weaken the negative).

Affinity Diagramming
A Needs Assessment Activity
Developed by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy

This activity guides a group to develop a list of categories or key ideas.
(Note: This activity works well with smaller groups up to six in size.)

STEP 1: Give each individual in the class a number of small (3" x 3") sticky notes. People can either work individually or in pairs (especially if reading skills are low). Ask each individual or pair to list a number of forces that help them to or hinder them from continuing to pursue their educational goals, writing each force separately on a sticky note. They should indicate with a + (positive sign) those forces that help and a - (negative sign) those forces that make it harder.

STEP 2: Divide people into small groups of four to six. For each group, place a large sheet of newsprint in the middle of the table or on the wall. Ask the members of each group to stick their sticky notes on their newsprint, in no particular order.

STEP 3: When all sticky notes are on the newsprint, ask each small group to take 10 minutes to read the sticky notes and rearrange them according to ones that are similar. (Note: Sticky notes can be read aloud by one member of the group to others with less reading skill.) At first, they could clump all the positives together and all the negatives together. Then they could try to find sticky notes that go together by content (all the sticky notes that have to do with transportation, say). They can do this by simply pulling up and replacing the sticky note near others that are similar in nature. Duplicate sticky notes can be pasted on top of one another.

STEP 4: After sticky notes have been placed near each other in several bunches, ask students to draw a line around each set of sticky notes so that the separate bunches of sticky notes that are alike are clearly outlined. Then ask each group to choose a name or title for each bunch of like sticky notes and label the categories on their newsprint.

STEP 5: Ask each small group to put up their newsprint on the wall so that everyone can see the newsprints from all the groups. Ask a reporter from each group to read aloud the category names from his/her newsprint. Ask the whole class what categories they see that are similar across all the newsprints. Facilitate a discussion about what this means to the students: *Do these categories represent the forces that help or hinder them in continuing to pursue their educational goals? What does this mean to them?*

STEP 6: Ask each learner to think about which two categories s/he would most want to work on together as a class in order to make it easier to continue to come to class. Give each student two dot stickers. Ask them to come up to the newsprints and "vote" on the two categories they would most want the class to address together.

STEP 7: In future classes, use the two prioritized categories as guides to the curriculum. Brainstorm with learners ways the class can address these categories as a group in order to increase learner persistence (strengthen the positive, weaken the negative).

Learner-To-Learner Interviews
A Needs Assessment Activity
Developed by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy

This activity is helpful for gathering information with and from learners, especially those who are uncomfortable talking in a large group. It may take some practice and guidance for learners to be able to interview each other.

STEP 1: Explain that you will model an interview with a volunteer from the class. You will be the interviewer and the learner will be the one interviewed. The questions which you model should be the same ones the learners will be given when they do interviews with each other.

Use the following questions that address learner motivation, retention and persistence. (Note: If learners are new to the program, these questions can be modified to ask about prior learning experiences.)

- *What made it easy for you to come to this program?*
- *What made it hard for you to come to this program?*
- *What keeps you interested while you are here?*
- *What would make it more interesting?*
- *Imagine that for some reason you decide to stop coming to this program. How do you think you would feel?*
- *Do you think you would return to this or another program at some point? Why or why not?*
- *What, if anything, would help you to return?*

STEP 2: Conduct the interview, being careful to use good interview techniques (see the list below). Ask learners to take notes or remember what they observe.

STEP 3: Process the activity. Ask learners what they observed and what questions they have about interviewing. Pose the question: *What makes a good interview?*

STEP 4: Record learners' responses on a newsprint titled, "Tips for Good Interviewing." Following are some tips to include if they don't come up during the discussion.

McLendon and McLendon, 2014

Tips for Good Interviewing

- Listen carefully.

• Take notes to help you remember what the other person says.
(If the class is at a low writing level, ask them to report on what they remember.)

• Allow the person being interviewed plenty of time to speak.

• Don't share your own ideas and experience. An interview is not a discussion.

• Both the interviewer and interviewee will have a time to speak.

• Encourage the other person to talk by asking him/her to explain things s/he say.
• Repeat what the other person says to be sure you understood it correctly. This will also help you remember what s/he said.

• Show that you are interested. Make eye contact.

STEP 5: Give each pair one set of the interview questions. Allow 20 minutes for the interviews, ten minutes for each person. Monitor the time to let the first interviewer know that in just a few minutes it will be the other person's turn.

STEP 6: Ask each pair to report out. Each person will report on what was learned from the person s/he interviewed. As the learners report out, the teacher should record the responses on newsprint to the questions: *What made it easy for you to come to this program? What made it hard for you to come to this program?* The newsprint will represent the entire group's responses.

STEP 7: Talk about both the process of interviewing and the questions themselves.
  • *Were there any surprises in the interview process?*
  • *Which role – interviewer or interviewee – did people enjoy more? Why?*
  • *What similarities and differences do you see in each other's responses?*
  • *Were there any surprises? What questions do you now have?*
  • *What would you like to know more about?*

STEP 8: Then, together look at the answers on the newsprint questions*: What made it easy for you to come to this program*? *What made it hard for you to come to this program*? *What keeps you interested? What would make it more interesting? What would help you return?* Ask each learner to think about which two items on the newsprints they want the class to work on in order to increase their chances of staying in the program. Point

out that they can choose one answer from each of the questions, or they can choose both of their answers from one of the questions. Give learners two dot stickers and ask them to come up to the newsprints and place their dots next to the two they have chosen. After everyone has "voted," count up to see which ones receive the most votes.

STEP 9: Brainstorm with learners, possible next steps for addressing the issues that received the most votes.

Sample Activities for
Management of Positive and Negative Forces

Adapted from NCSALL's Study Circle Guide: Learner Persistence in Adult Basic Education

SAMPLE ACTIVITY	EXPECTED RESULT
Student Needs Assessments: Involving students in examining their supporting and hindering forces to achieving their goals (e.g., brainstorming, acting it out, snowball consensus, affinity diagramming)	Greater communication and understanding by students of the role of their support system and the availability of services to assist with hindering forces
Learning Histories: Using a technique for you and learners to reflect on and discuss your educational experiences	Greater understanding of what learners have faced in the past, or how this influences their present learning situation, and of the possible difference between your view of education and theirs
Affirming Diversity: Developing a plan of action, including staff training and possibly classroom activities, for addressing racism and other forms of oppression in the program	Greater respect for all learners' needs and greater appreciation for the commonalities and differences among people in the program
Orientation to the Program: Developing a thoughtful, formal process for helping learners understand what the program and class are all about	Greater understanding among learners of what the program can and cannot do for them, their responsibilities, and the structure of the program and class
Policies and Protocols for Ensuring Physical Safety: Establishing clear rules and policies for ensuring privacy and a safe environment in which learners can participate and learn	Greater comfort and assurance that learners' concerns about privacy and physical safety will be respected and met
Sponsorship: Identifying personal, official, and/or intermediate individuals who support the student's enrollment and continued participation in the program.	Increased assistance, support, and encouragement to promote persistence and help if negative forces hinder participation
Out-of-Class Activities: Organizing orientations, potluck, field trips, extracurricular activities that bring learners together in different ways	Greater understanding among learners about each other and greater comfort when working together
Project-Based Learning: Implementing a curriculum that helps learners as a group identify and address community issues that are of concern to them (see "Accessibility" and "Quality of Service" for additional examples)	Greater cohesiveness among learners working together towards a common goal and enhanced belief among learners that they can work together to solve problems

SAMPLE ACTIVITY	EXPECTED RESULT
Student-Run Activities: Providing opportunities for students to work together to lead activities inside and outside of the classroom	Greater cohesiveness among learners working together towards a common goal
Small Group Instruction: Organizing class activities so that learners work together rather than alone	Greater sense of being needed by others and of having something worthwhile to share and contribute
Ground Rules: Providing opportunities for learners together to set the rules for the class	Greater understanding of their roles and responsibilities for participating in class and in having a voice to improve the class
Affirming Diversity: Developing a plan of action, including staff training and possibly classroom activities, for addressing racism and other forms of oppression in the program (see "Safety" for a description of activity)	Greater feeling of community and inclusion for all people in the program
Student-to-Student Dialogue Journals: Pairing students to write and share thoughts, feelings, accomplishments with each other (see "Safety" for a description of activity)	Greater communication between learners
Creative Writing: Using teaching techniques that allow learners to express themselves	Greater communication and understanding among learners
Buddy System: Establishing a process whereby learners can work in pairs to help each other address issues of concern to them, possibly between new and returning learners	Greater bonding between learners and greater connection to the program
Learner Address Lists: Developing a contact list (with learners' permission) and encouraging learners to contact each other if one of them has "stopped out" to follow up and provide help	Greater likelihood that learners stopping out will feel a connection to the program and return at some future date
Managed Intake and Enrollment: Using a scheduled structure for new student orientation and class schedules in cycles with beginning and ending dates	Greater sense of community and connection to a support structure among students who begin the class together and attend as a group.
Intake Process: Using a mechanism for finding out what potential hindering forces may be and providing assistance (directly or through referral) for learners to address those forces	Greater consistency in helping learners access program and other services that reduce hindrances to attendance

SAMPLE ACTIVITY	EXPECTED RESULT
Support Services: Changing program structure to include resources for day care, transportation, etc. and network with community agencies to provide needed services for learners which the program is not able to offer.	Greater possibility of meeting learners' needs so they can attend class
Enrollment and Attendance Policies: Changing policies to reduce chaos in the classroom resulting from constant entering and exiting of students	Greater consistency of attendance and sense of community, stability and routine in classroom where students
Flexible Scheduling: Changing class schedules to accommodate learners' needs	Greater likelihood that learners will be able to attend when it is most convenient for them (e.g., Saturdays)
Advocacy: Engaging in actions that promote adult literacy funding	Greater resources for providing direct services to learners (e.g., day care, transportation, etc.) that increase the accessibility of the program

McLendon and McLendon, 2014

Sample Activities for
Building Self-Efficacy

Adapted from NCSALL's Study Circle Guide: Learner Persistence in Adult Basic Education

SAMPLE ACTIVITY	EXPECTED RESULT
Student Leadership: Providing opportunities for learners to take a leadership role through conducting peer orientations, peer teaching, serving on program board, advocating in the community, etc.	Greater commitment among learners to the program and a greater feeling that their participation is needed by the program and community
Learning Histories: Using a technique for you and learners to reflect on and discuss your educational experiences (see "Safety" for a description of activity)	Greater understanding by learners of how their educational history affects them and of what they have already achieved
Assessment: Changing assessment strategies to involve learners more e.g., portfolio assessment, conferencing, goal-setting activities, etc.; use of at-risk identification instruments, e.g., *Prior Schooling and Self-Perception Inventory*)	Greater understanding among learners about their progress
Dialogue Journals: Using a process for learners to share thoughts and feelings about their accomplishments and setbacks with you, and for you to provide encouragement	Greater understanding among learners of the natural process of learning through reflection about their achievements and difficulties and a greater appreciation for their strengths and future possibilities
Recognition and Incentives: Establishing formal mechanisms for learners to be recognized for their achievements (e.g., graduation ceremonies, end-of-the-month class celebrations, incentive store, perfect attendance recognition, National Adult Honor Society, etc.)	Greater feeling of accomplishment by being recognized for their achievements
Learner-Generated Materials: Using a technique for learners to write and publish their learning histories or to read other learners' writings about their educational progress	Greater understanding of their own and others' path toward reaching their educational goals
Adult Multiple Intelligences: Applying the theory of multiple intelligences in your classroom using alternative techniques (e.g., learning through music, art, movement, etc.) that help learners capitalize on their strengths.	Greater feeling of their strengths and accomplishments

SAMPLE ACTIVITY	EXPECTED RESULT
Learning Styles and Special Learning Needs: Administering learning style inventories and using the results to help students understand how they learn best; administering special learning needs screening instruments to determine if some students would benefit from further diagnosis to increase their learning potential	Feeling of satisfaction (and relief in some cases) when students realize that they learn best using one particular modality over another or when they realize that special learning needs, not low intelligence, may have hindered prior educational success

Sample Activities for
Setting Clear Goals

Adapted from NCSALL's Study Circle Guide: Learner Persistence in Adult Basic Education

SAMPLE ACTIVITY	EXPECTED RESULT
Goals in Envelopes: Asking learners to state their goals and thoughts at the beginning of cycle, in order to present them again at end of cycle for them to reflect on their progress	Greater feeling of accomplishment by seeing how they have progressed towards the goals they set for themselves
Fears and Hopes: Using an activity to help learners articulate their fears and expectations related to learning	Greater ability among learners to talk about internal barriers that may be preventing them from reaching their goals, and greater likelihood that you may be able to reduce their fears and meet their expectations
Goal Setting through Metaphors: Using a classroom technique for learners together to articulate their individual goals and the steps needed (including education) for reaching them	Greater clarity of goals learners have and increased ability to set up a plan for reaching goals
Conferencing: Establishing a process for you and individual learners to meet individually to discuss short- and long-term goals, realistic timelines, and interim success benchmarks that will need to occur in pursuit of the goal/s.	Greater likelihood that learners will be able to set realistic goals based on the progress they are making
Intake Process: Developing a comprehensive process for finding out what learners' goals, skills and needs are as they enter the program by beginning with preliminary goal setting activities and informed by academic assessment results	Greater ability by staff to understand how to help learners set clear goals
Learning Histories: Using a technique for you and learners to reflect on and discuss your educational experiences	Greater ability of learners to articulate goals for further education based on an understanding of their past
Student Mentors/Testimonials: Establishing a process for more experienced learners to talk with new learners about their educational path	Greater sharing among peers about the different options available as a result of acquiring further education
Equipped for the Future: Using the EFF framework to help guide learners in clarifying their goals as workers, family members, and community members	Greater match between curriculum and what learners identify as their goals (what they want to know and be able to do)

SAMPLE ACTIVITY	EXPECTED RESULT
Creative Writing: Using teaching techniques that allow learners to express themselves	Greater communication and understanding of th accomplishments and challenges
Bridge to Next Steps: Providing opportunities for learners to become familiar with options for further education or work (e.g., field trip to community college, intern program with local company, etc.)	Greater likelihood that learners will clarify long-term goals by understanding
NRS Goal Setting: Using the *Considerations for Realistic NRS Goal Setting* to determine goals attainable within the program year	Better chance of meeting program performance benchmarks

Sample Activities for
Students to Experience Progress

Adapted from NCSALL's Study Circle Guide: Learner Persistence in Adult Basic Education

SAMPLE ACTIVITY	EXPECTED RESULT
Mail Activities for Students: Developing a system for sending fun and challenging activities to learners after "stopping out"	Greater likelihood that learners will remain involved in learning and re-enter the program
Small Group Instruction*:* Using an approach to instruction that supports learners to teach each other and not learn in isolation	Greater feeling of belonging and assistance from peers
Follow-up: Developing a system for contacting learners after they have "stopped-out" or dropped out to see if the program can help them resolve issues that might have lead to them dropping out	Greater feeling of belonging by learners to the program and greater likelihood that learners may be able to return
Relevance of Instruction*:* Using curriculum that corresponds closely to the lives, needs and goals of the learners in your classroom (not just the generic learner)	Greater sense by learners that the costs of attending the program are worthwhile in helping them meet their short- and long-term needs
Counseling Services: Providing chances to all learners to receive support and advice on careers, lives, and further learning	Greater likelihood that learners will articulate, focus on, and be able to reach their goals
Enrollment and Attendance Policies: Instituting policies that are both flexible to learners' needs and encourage learners to commit to attending the program on a regular basis	Greater consistency in the classroom and better understanding by learners that what is expected of them is realistic
Teacher Evaluation: Developing a system whereby teachers receive clear and constructive feedback from all stakeholders (e.g., supervisors, learners, other teachers, etc.)	Greater opportunities for improvement in curriculum, instruction and support to learners
Professional Development: Participating in activities that help teachers and other staff to questions their assumptions and adopt new attitudes and new practices	Greater ability of staff to deliver high-quality, relevant instruction and services to learners
Assessment Strategies: Using a variety of methods to allow students to see their progress (e.g., portfolios, checklists, technology-based tracking mechanisms)	Greater awareness of actual progress being made by students; increased involvement in self evaluation
Conferencing: Setting regularly scheduled sessions between teacher and student to review student progress and evaluate materials, methods, etc. being	Increased student ownership for his/her own learning; greater awareness of actual progress being made and barriers

SAMPLE ACTIVITY	EXPECTED RESULT
used (e.g., Student Teacher Evaluation Process – STEPS)	that may be preventing progress
Dialogue Journals: Using a process for learners to share their accomplishments and setbacks in a private way and for you to provide encouragement	Greater understanding by you of the sense of purpose learners have and of what you can do to help them believe that they are able to set and reach their goals
Student Mentors: Using experienced students to encourage and support students in pursuing their goals	Increased comfort level of struggling students to discuss barriers to progress

Self-Assessment

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. List three things you liked and disliked about school in the past:

Likes	Dislikes

2. List a few of your short-term and long-term personal goals/objectives in life.

Short Term Goals/Objectives	Long Term Goals/Objectives

3. What is your main reason for deciding to attend this class? What do you hope to learn or accomplish before you leave the program?

4. Do you have any hobbies? What is something you like to do and can do well?

5. For each description of how you learn, check if you like it, it's OK, or you dislike it.

Learning Style	Like	OK	Dislike
Working with my hands	❏	❏	❏
Saying things out loud I want to remember	❏	❏	❏
Writing things down I want to remember	❏	❏	❏
Studying alone	❏	❏	❏
Working with another person	❏	❏	❏
Working in a group of students	❏	❏	❏
Figuring out what to do by myself	❏	❏	❏
Listening to someone explain how to do something	❏	❏	❏
Having someone show me how to do something	❏	❏	❏
Reading to myself	❏	❏	❏
Hearing someone else read out loud	❏	❏	❏
Watching a movie or video to learn	❏	❏	❏
Using programs on the computer	❏	❏	❏
Doing worksheets	❏	❏	❏

6. What might keep you from coming to class or completing your goals in this program?

Please check all that apply to you:
- ❏ I sometimes have transportation problems.
- ❏ I have some health problems.
- ❏ I have a family member with health problems
- ❏ I have childcare problems.
- ❏ I have elderly people to take care of at home.
- ❏ My work schedule sometimes changes or conflicts with class times.
- ❏ I am sometimes very tired because of working long hours.
- ❏ I have a lot of responsibilities.
- ❏ I'm always thinking about problems at home.
- ❏ I have family members or friends who don't think I should go to school.
- ❏ Other: _____

7. What kinds of learning activities do you find difficult, if any?

Please check all that apply to you:
- ❏ It's hard for me to speak up in class.
- ❏ It's sometimes hard for me to understand what people are saying.
- ❏ I have trouble hearing sometimes.
- ❏ It's hard for me to work by myself.
- ❏ It's hard for me to work with other people.
- ❏ I get nervous taking tests.
- ❏ I get distracted easily.
- ❏ I have trouble finishing what I start on.
- ❏ Too much noise or activity bothers me.
- ❏ It's hard for me to work when it's too quiet.
- ❏ I have a lot of things on my mind, so sometimes it's hard for me to concentrate.
- ❏ I sometimes have trouble seeing the board.
- ❏ My eyes get tired from reading small print.
- ❏ Other: _____

8. Have you ever received special help in school?   ❏ Yes   ❏ No
   If yes, please describe:

9. Do you feel that you have difficulty learning?   ❏ Yes   ❏ No
   If yes, please describe:

Adapted from Cabell County, WV
 ABE Program

McLendon and McLendon, 2014

http://wvabe.org/tcher_handbook_pdf/section14.pdf

English as a Second Language Needs Assessment

Name _____   Date _____

Please ☑ check all situations in which you need to use English.

☐ I want to get a job.

☐ I want to read menus in restaurants.

☐ I want to read English.

☐ I want to write letters in English.

☐ I want to talk with a doctor or nurse.

☐ I want to learn to use computers.

☐ I want to get a driver's license.

McLendon and McLendon, 2014

☐ I want to travel in the USA.
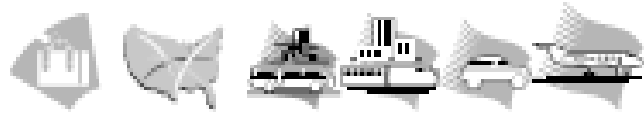
☐ I want to talk with Americans.

☐ I want to read and understand signs.

☐ I want to understand weather reports.

☐ I want more education.

☐ I want to become a U.S. citizen.
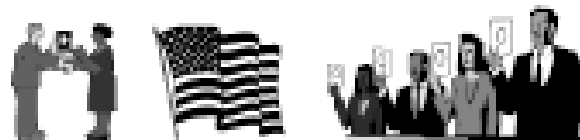
☐ I want to speak and understand on the telephone.

☐ I want to understand and talk with my children's teachers.

☐ I want to understand bills and notices.

McLendon and McLendon, 2014
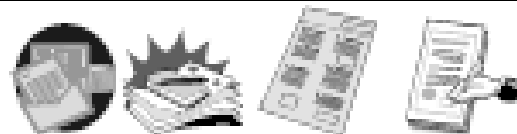
☐ I want to understand _emergency information_.

☐ I want to _learn English grammar_.

I am   We are
You are   You are
He is   They are
She is
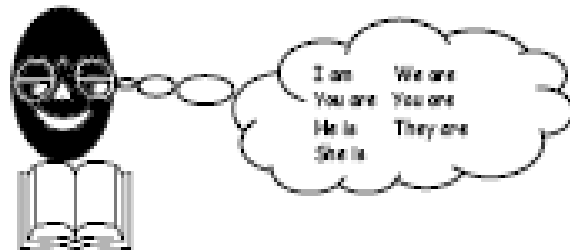
☐ I want to _learn pronunciation_.

/f/ /ð/ /æ/

☐ I want to _understand and use_
    English words for my religion.

☐ I want to _understand songs_ in English.

☐ I want to _understand television and movies_.

☐ I want to _understand American sports_.

Created by: Cheryl Rowan, Garnet Adult Learning Center, 2001.
Revised by: Cathy Shank, 2003

McLendon and McLendon, 2014

C.I.T.E. LEARNING STYLES INSTRUMENT
Babich, A.M., Burdine, P., Albright, L., Randol, P.
Wichita Public Schools, Murdoch Teachers Center

Name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Read each statement carefully and decide which of the four responses agrees with how you feel about the statement. Put an X on the number of your response.

Questions	Most Like Me		Least Like Me	
1. When I make things for my studies, I remember what I have learned better.	4	3	2	1
2. Written assignments are easy for me.	4	3	2	1
3. I learn better if someone reads a book to me than if I read silently to myself.	4	3	2	1
4. I learn best when I study alone.	4	3	2	1
5. Having assignment directions written on the board makes them easier to understand.	4	3	2	1
6. It's harder for me to do a written assignment than an oral one.	4	3	2	1
7. When I do math problems in my head, I say the numbers to myself.	4	3	2	1
8. If I need help in the subject, I will ask a classmate for help.	4	3	2	1
9. I understand a math problem that is written down better than one I hear.	4	3	2	1
10. I don't mind doing written assignments.	4	3	2	1
11. I remember things I hear better than I read.	4	3	2	1

12. I remember more of what I learn if I learn it when I am alone.	4	3	2	1
13. I would rather read a story than listen to it read.	4	3	2	1
14. I feel like I talk smarter than I write.	4	3	2	1
15. If someone tells me three numbers to add I can usually get the right answer without writing them down.	4	3	2	1
16. I like to work in a group because I learn from the others in the group.	4	3	2	1
17. Written math problems are easier for me to do than oral ones.	4	3	2	1
18. Writing a spelling word several times helps me remember it better.	4	3	2	1
19. I find it easier to remember what I have heard than what I have read.	4	3	2	1
20. It is more fun to learn with classmates at first, but it is hard to study with them.	4	3	2	1
21. I like written directions better than spoken ones.	4	3	2	1
22. If homework were oral, I would do it all.	4	3	2	1

Questions Most Like Me Least Like Me

	4	3	2	1
23. When I hear a phone number, I can remember it without writing it down.	4	3	2	1
24. I get more work done when I work with someone.	4	3	2	1
25. Seeing a number makes more sense to me than hearing a number.	4	3	2	1
26. I like to do things like simple repairs or crafts with my hands.	4	3	2	1
27. The things I write on paper sound better than when I say them.	4	3	2	1
28. I study best when no one is around to talk or listen to.	4	3	2	1
29. I would rather read things in a book than have the teacher tell me about them.	4	3	2	1
30. Speaking is a better way than writing if you want someone to understand it better.	4	3	2	1
31. When I have a written math problem to do, I say it to myself to understand it better.	4	3	2	1
32. I can learn more about a subject if I am with a small group of students.	4	3	2	1
33. Seeing the price of something written down is easier for me to understand than having someone tell me the price.	4	3	2	1
34. I like to make things with my hands.	4	3	2	1
35. I like tests that call for sentence completion or written answers.	4	3	2	1

36. I understand more from a class discussion than from reading about a subject.	4	3	2	1
37. I remember the spelling of a word better if I see it written down than if someone spells it out loud.	4	3	2	1
38. Spelling and grammar rules make it hard for me to say what I want to in writing.	4	3	2	1
39. It makes it easier when I say the numbers of a problem to myself as I work it out.	4	3	2	1
40. I like to study with other people.	4	3	2	1
41. When the teachers say a number, I really don't understand it until I see it written down.	4	3	2	1
42. I understand what I have learned better when I am involved in making something for the subject.	4	3	2	1
43. Sometimes I say dumb things, but writing gives me time to correct myself.	4	3	2	1
44. I do well on tests if they are about things I hear in class.	4	3	2	1
45. I can't think as well when I work with someone else as when I work alone.	4	3	2	1

C.I.T.E. LEARNING STYLES INSTRUMENT WORKSHEET

Name: _____   Date: _____

Directions: Look at each statement number on the worksheet below. Find the statement number on the Learning Styles Inventory and get the "most like/least like" number of the response you selected for each statement. Write the number (1-4) in the blank provided. Total the numbers under each heading. Multiply the total by two. Look at the scores to decide if this is major, minor or negligible.

Visual Language
5 _____
13 _____
21 _____
29 _____
37 _____
Total _____ X 2 = _____ (Score)

Visual-Numerical
9 _____
17 _____
25 _____
33 _____
41 _____
Total _____ X 2 = _____ (Score)

Auditory-Language
3 _____
11 _____
19 _____
36 _____
44 _____
Total _____ X 2 = _____ (Score)

Auditory-Numerical
7 _____
15 _____
23 _____
31 _____
39 _____
Total _____ X 2 = _____ (Score)

Auditory-Visual-Kinesthetic
1 _____
18 _____
26 _____
34 _____
42 _____
Total _____ X 2 = _____ (Score)

Social-Individual
4 _____
12 _____
20 _____
28 _____
45 _____
Total _____ X 2 = _____ (Score)

Social-Group
8 _____
16 _____
24 _____
32 _____
40 _____
Total _____ X 2 = _____ (Score)

Expressiveness-Oral
6 _____
14 _____
22 _____
30 _____
38 _____
Total _____ X 2 = _____ (Score)

Expressiveness-Written
2 _____
10 _____
27 _____
35 _____
43 _____
Total _____ X 2 = _____ (Score)

Score: 34-40 = Major Learning Style

20-32 = Minor Learning Style

10-18 = Negligible Use

Definitions and Teaching Techniques for Learning Styles

The following are descriptions of learning styles identified by the *C.I.T.E.* and found in every learner to a major, minor, or negligible extent and teaching suggestions related to each learning style.

Learning Style	Teaching Techniques
Visual-Language: This is the student who learns well from seeing words in books, on the chalkboard, charts or workbooks. He/she may write words down that are given orally in order to learn by seeing them on paper. He or she remembers and uses information better if it has been read.	This student will benefit from a variety of books, pamphlets, and written materials on several levels of difficulty. Given some time alone with a book, he or she may learn more than in class. Make sure important information has been given on paper, or that he or she takes notes if you want this student to remember specific information.
Visual-Numerical: This student has to see numbers on the board, in a book, or on paper in order to work with them. He or she is more likely to remember and understand math facts if he or she has seen them. He or she does not seem to need as much oral explanation.	This student will benefit from worksheets, workbooks, and texts. Give a variety of written materials and allow time to study it. In playing games and being involved in activities with numbers and number problems, make sure they are visible, printed numbers, not oral games and activities. Important data should be given on paper.
Auditory-Language: This is the student who learns from hearing words spoken. You may hear him or her vocalizing or see the lips or throat move as he or she reads, particularly when striving to understand new material. He or she will be more capable of understanding and remembering words or facts that have been learned by hearing.	This student will benefit from hearing audio tapes, rote oral practice, lecture, or a class discussion. He or she may benefit from using a tape recorder to make tapes to listen to later, by teaching another student, or conversing with the teacher. Groups of two or more, games or interaction activities provide the sounds of words being spoken that are so important to this student.
Auditory-Numerical: This student learns from hearing numbers and oral explanations. He or she may remember phone and locker numbers with ease, and be successful with oral numbers, games, and puzzles. He or she may do just about as well without a math book, for written materials are not as important. He or she can probably work problems in his or her head. You may hear this student saying the numbers aloud or see the lips move as a problem is read.	This student will benefit from math sound tapes or from working with other people, talking about a problem. Even reading written explanations aloud will help. Games or activities in which the number problems are spoken will help. This student will benefit from tutoring another or delivering an explanation to his or her study group or to the teacher. Make sure important facts are spoken.

Learning Style Teaching Techniques
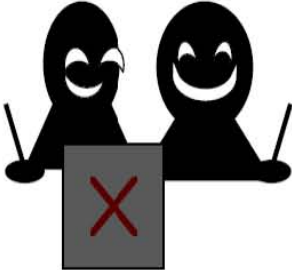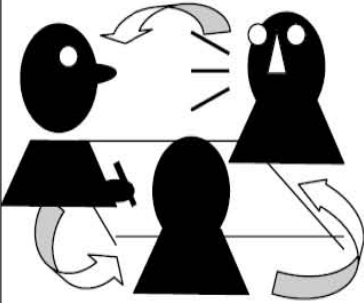
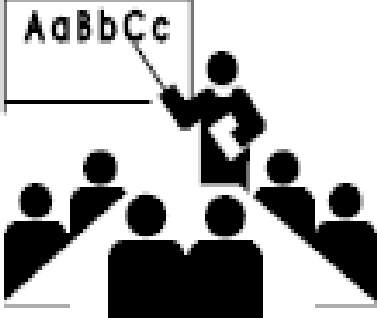|	
Auditory-Visual-Kinesthetic: The A/V/K student learns best by experience and self-involvement. He or she definitely needs a combination of stimuli. The manipulation of material along with the accompanying sights and sounds (words and numbers seen and spoken) will make a big difference to him or her. This student may not seem able to understand, or keep his or her mind on work unless he or she is totally involved. He or she seeks to handle, touch and work with what is being learned. Sometimes just writing or a symbolic wriggling of the fingers is a symptom of the A/V/K learner.	This student must be given more than just a reading or math assignment. Involve him or her with at least one other student and give him or her an activity to relate to the assignment. Accompany an audiotape with pictures, objects, and an activity such as drawing or writing or following directions with physical involvement.
Social-Individual: This student gets more work done alone. He or she thinks best and remembers more when he or she has learned alone. He or she cares more for his or her own opinions than for the ideas of others. You will not have much trouble keeping this student from over-socializing during class.	This student needs to be allowed to do important learning alone. If you feel he or she needs socialization, save it for a non-learning situation. Let him or her go to the library or back in a corner of the room to be alone. Do not force group work on him or her when it will make the student irritable to be held back or distracted by others. Some great thinkers are loners.
Social-Group: This student strives to study with at least one other student and he or she will not get as much done alone. He or she values others' ideas and preferences. Group interaction increases his or her learning and later recognition of facts. Socializing is important to this student.	This student needs to do important learning with someone else. The stimulation of the group may be more important at certain times in the learning process than at others and you may be able to facilitate the timing for this student.
Expressive Oral: This student prefers to tell what he or she knows. He or she talks fluently, comfortably, and clearly. The teacher may find that this learner knows more than written tests show. He or she is probably less shy than others about giving reports or talking to the teacher or classmates. The muscular coordination involved in writing may be difficult for this learner. Organizing and putting thoughts on paper may be too slow and tedious a task for this student.	Allow this student to make oral reports instead of written ones. Whether in conference, small group or large, evaluate him or her more by what is said than by what is written. Reports can be on tape, to save class time. Demand a minimum of written work, but a good quality so he or she will not be ignorant of the basics of composition and legibility. Grammar can be corrected orally but is best done at another time.

http://wvabe.org/tcher_handbook_pdf/section14.pdf
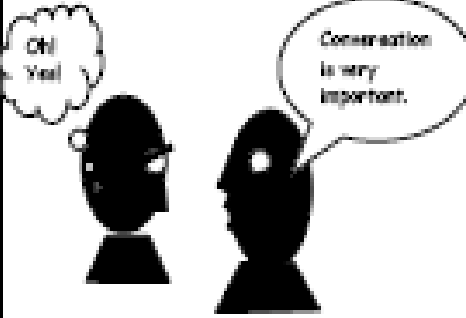
English as a Second Language Learning Styles Questionnaire
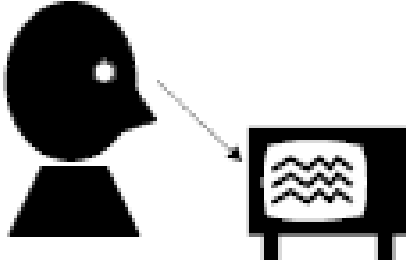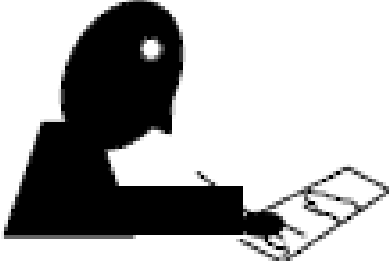
Name _____   Date _____

Circle the face that **best** describes **how much you like learning using each activity.**

Work by myself.	Always Do Not Like	Sometimes Do Not Like	OK	Sometimes Like	Always Like A Lot
Work with a partner.	Always Do Not Like	Sometimes Do Not Like	OK	Sometimes Like	Always Like A Lot
Work in a small group.	Always Do Not Like	Sometimes Do Not Like	OK	Sometimes Like	Always Like A Lot

Polis**, 2006**

	Always Do Not Like	Sometimes Do Not Like	OK	Sometimes Like	Always Like A Lot
AaBbCc Work with a teacher.	😞	😕	😐	🙂	😊
Listen to audiocassette tapes.	😞	😕	😐	🙂	😊
/ā/ /æ/ /bād/ /bæd/ Practice English pronunciation.	😞	😕	😐	🙂	😊
Oh! Yes! Conversation is very important. Practice conversations.	😞	😕	😐	🙂	😊

Polis**, 2006**

	Always Do Not Like	Sometimes Do Not Like	OK	Sometimes Like	Always Like A Lot
Use a computer program.	☹	☹	😐	🙂	😊
Watch an English language video.	☹	☹	😐	🙂	😊
Write my assignments.	☹	☹	😐	🙂	😊
Read books.	☹	☹	😐	🙂	😊

Considerations for Setting Realistic NRS Goals

Helping students set realistic goals is critical to reporting program performance. Many students enroll in adult education programs with multiple long range goals. Other learners have very specific goals which can help inform instruction—being able to maintain a checkbook, understand what a supervisor is saying, or read to a child. In addition, some learners may identify one of the **four core performance goals** tracked by the National Reporting System (NRS):

- **entering employment**
- **retaining employment**
- **attaining a GED or adult high school diploma**
- **entering college or job training program**

It is very important that a well-trained adult education administrator, teacher, or counselor talk with each new student about setting realistic, achievable goals. **All** participants are assumed to have the goal of improving their educational functioning levels. **The four core performance goals tracked by the NRS** should be designated **only** in cases in which *learners and educational staff members agree that the goals can realistically be attained during the current program year.*

Here are some considerations for determining realistic goals.

Goal	Considerations	For instance
Post secondary or job training	- Entry level at or near adult secondary for college enrollment - Month of entry - Hours/week of attendance - Special learning needs - Proposed start date/schedule of postsecondary ed or job training program	1. Mildred enrolled in April with math and reading scores at 9.0 on TABE. She works during the day and attends class on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. She does not seem to have hindrances to learning except missing class occasionally to go to PTA with her kids. 2. Jacob enrolled in November with reading and math scores around 10.0. He attends the center from 8:30 till noon, Monday through Thursday.

Goal	Considerations	For instance
Obtain employment	• Class has a pre-employment curriculum to integrate with basic skills. • Student is connected to One-Stop or other job placement services. • Student's prior work history • Student knows what kind of job he/she wants. Those jobs are available. There are no or minimal gaps between student's skills and job requirement skills. • Entry functioning level • Month of entry • Hours/week of attendance • Special learning needs	1. Raleigh really wants a job. Other than doing odd jobs for his uncle, he has no job skills. His reading and math skills are at 5.1 and 6.2 respectively. He was enrolled in special education classes in school. You do not have a pre-employment curriculum nor do you have a strong link with job placement services. Raleigh wants to attend evening classes. Raleigh says that his reason for enrolling is to get a really good paying job so he can become independent. 2. Jesus just arrived in the country last month, January, and has been staying with his sister. His verbal English is passable but needs work. His reading is 2.0, but his math is 8.5 without word problems. He can attend class full time—8:30 till noon Monday through Friday. Jesus worked as a laborer in El Salvador. You have a pre-employment curriculum and a good connection with the One-Stop job placement service.
Retain a job	• What skills does the job require? • What is the gap between his/her skills and the required job skills? • Is passage of an employment exam required for job retention? • Can you customize your basic skills program to job specific tasks or the employment exam? • How much time do you have? • Entry functioning level • Month of entry	1. Wilma works in a textile plant that is replacing the "gears, pulleys, and levers" with jet air looms. All of the old jobs (doffer, weaver, and fixer) are going away. Management has told her if she can demonstrate reading and math skills at the 10th grade level necessary to be trained on the new looms, they would love to consider her for one of the new jobs. She has been a good employee and they want to hang on to her. She enrolled in May and has until November to reach the skill level. Her reading and math are about 8th grade level. The plant will give her release time to come to class Monday and Thursday mornings, and she wants to come Tuesday and Thursday evening on her own.

Goal	Considerations	For instance
	• Hours/week of attendance • Special learning needs	2. Palos is a fork lift driver. As a part of his job, he has to count and document the number of cases of peanuts that are on each pallet. He cannot do multiplication but has devised his own system using "sets" to determine the number of cases per pallet. Because his supervisor assumed Palos was using multiplication, he has given Palos additional responsibilities in inventory with an accompanying significant pay raise. However, now Palos must use multiplication. His math skills are basic addition and subtraction. He enrolls in October in a panic wanting to learn the skill before his boss finds out.
GED	• Entry level at or near adult secondary • Month of entry • Hours/week of attendance • Special learning needs	1. Evelyn enrolls in March. Her work schedule and family responsibilities allow her to attend only two nights or two mornings per week. Her reading and math scores are 6.5 and 8.9 respectively. She does not seem to have any special learning needs. 2. Bob brags that he will accomplish his life goal of a GED this year. At enrollment in September his reading and math scores are 3.4 and 4.7 respectively. On initial interview he reports a diagnosed learning disability--dysgraphia. He works a swing shift as a security person so his schedule will be mornings two weeks and evenings two weeks.

Technology-Based Strategies for the Four Supports for Learner Persistence

Managing Positive and Negative Forces
Sense of Community
Wikis - http://pbwiki.com/
http://www.wikipedia.org/
http://wiki.literacytent.org/index.php/Topics

Blogs - http://www.blogger.com/start

Class Website - http://www.expage.com/ - free
http://www.homestead.com/ - $5.00/mo

Building Self-Efficacy
Electronic Newspaper
Learner created online activities –**Jeopardy! -**
http://www.hardin.k12.ky.us/res_techn/countyjeopardygames.htm

Use of Webquests
http://webquest.org
http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/donner/index.html

MOS training by distance
actDEN Tutorials - http://www.actden.com/

GCF Global Learning Tutorials -
http://www.gcflearnfree.org/Tutorials

Clear Goals
Computer Self-Efficacy Pre-Assess
E-folios

Progress
E-folios
Tutorials and Classes http://www.gcflearnfree.org/Tutorials/
Computer Self-Efficacy Assessment Post-Assess

Professional Development
http://www.floridatechnet.org/inservice/retention2005/retention2005.htm
http://www.aceofflorida.org/inservice/region3/retention/indexa.html

Self-Efficacy with Computer Technologies

Adapted from Murphy, Coover & Owen, 1988 with permission

This section has 25 statements about your confidence with computer technologies. After reading each statement, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree, by circling the number to the right of each sentence. Your responses should reflect your current level of confidence with the activity described in each statement. For example:

I feel confident…	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Formatting a computer diskette.	1	2	(3)	4

By circling number 3, you indicate that you have some degree of confidence in formatting a diskette.

Word Processing:

I feel confident…

	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Using a word processing program to write a letter or a report.	1	2	3	4
2. Making corrections while word processing.	1	2	3	4
3. Formatting text (e.g., bold, underlining) while word processing.	1	2	3	4
4. Moving blocks of text while word processing.	1	2	3	4
5. Using the spelling checker while word processing.	1	2	3	4
6. Using the *find and replace* feature in a word processing program.	1	2	3	4
7. Printing out files I've written while word processing.	1	2	3	4
8. Saving documents I've written with a word processing program to my desktop or hard drive.	1	2	3	4
9. Saving documents I've written with a word processing program to a disk or external drive.	1	2	3	4

	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
10. Renaming a word processing file to make a back-up copy.	1	2	3	4

	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
11. Opening and converting a document in a different format (i.e., Word to Word Perfect).	1	2	3	4
12. Saving a document I've written in a word processing program in different formats (i.e., Word to Word Perfect).	1	2	3	4
13. Retrieving a document from my desktop or hard drive.	1	2	3	4
14. Retrieving a document from a disk or external drive.	1	2	3	4

Electronic Mail:

I feel confident…

15. Logging on to e-mail.	1	2	3	4
16. Reading mail messages on e-mail.	1	2	3	4
17. Responding to mail messages on e-mail.	1	2	3	4
18. Deleting messages received on e-mail.	1	2	3	4
19. Sending messages on e-mail.	1	2	3	4
20. Sending the same mail message to more than one person on e-mail.	1	2	3	4
21. Responding privately to messages originally sent to more than one person on e-mail.	1	2	3	4
22. Forwarding messages received on e-mail.	1	2	3	4
23. Exiting e-mail.	1	2	3	4
24. Opening attachments received on e-mail.	1	2	3	4
25. Sending e-mail with attachments.	1	2	3	4

Research

Practice

**Here Today...
Gone Tomorrow**

**Strategies for Motivating
and Retaining
Adult Learners**
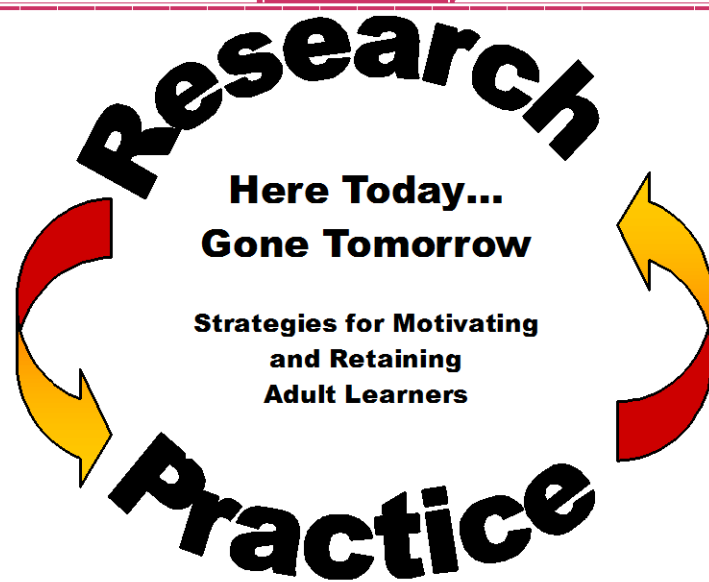
RESEARCH BRIEFS

Classroom Dynamics in Adult Literacy Education
A NCSALL Research Brief

Hal Beder • *Patsy Medina*

This, the first major study in a quarter century to investigate classroom behavior in adult literacy education, considers questions critical to adult literacy education: How is instruction delivered? What is its content? What processes underlie teaching and learning? And what external forces shape classroom behavior? The findings can help policymakers, teachers, and researchers better understand these important issues.

The researchers observed 20 adult literacy classes in eight states and interviewed the teachers of these classes. Although the sample size is limited and findings are not meant to be generalized to an entire population, the study generates new understanding and propositions for future research.

The Content and Structure of Instruction

The content and structure of instruction fell into two general types: discrete skills instruction (found in 16 of the 20 classes), characterized by teacher-prepared and teacher-delivered lessons conveying factual information and emphasizing basic skills development, and making meaning instruction, focused on developing higher-level abilities and teacher-learner collaboration. If the essence of becoming literate is the acquisition of concrete skills and factual knowledge, this norm has merit. If, however, literacy also entails critical thinking, problem-solving ability, oral as well as writing proficiency, creativity, and an understanding of how society works, the norm is substantially deficient.

Despite teachers' proclaimed desire to meet learners' needs, the researchers found little evidence that teachers systematically assessed learners' needs or evaluated whether instruction met individual or group needs. However, the researchers found that teachers behaved in learner-centered ways in their affective relationships with learners.

Social Processes in the Classroom

The researchers identified seven classroom processes important to understanding the adult literacy education classroom: sanctioning, engagement, directing, correcting, helping, expressing values and opinions, and community.

Across the sample, they observed considerable tardiness and tuning out, which, unlike in other educational settings, were almost universally tolerated rather than negatively sanctioned. The greatest significance of these behaviors is that they may signal an intention to drop out, an endemic problem in adult literacy education.

Key Findings

- Most classroom instruction focuses on developing basic skills, not higher-level abilities.

- Although teachers rank learners' needs as their top priority, their teaching doesn't reflect this goal.

- Seven classroom processes—sanctioning, engagement, directing, helping, expressing values and opinions, and community—are important in understanding adult literacy education classrooms.

- Class composition, enrollment turbulence, and funding pressure shape classroom dynamics.

Implications for Practice

- If literacy entails acquiring higher-level as well as basic skills, current instruction is deficient.

- Lack of open discussion may impede development of important oral literacy skills.

- Inclusion activities could help teachers increase community in the classroom, at little expense.

Implications for Policymakers

- Relatively homogenous classes seem to promote sharing and community.

- Continuous enrollment and mixed skill levels are serious and understated problems in the adult literacy classroom.

- How funds are allocated is as much an issue as the amount of available funds.

- Staff development should be mandated, and funding for it should increase.

Implications for Researchers

- How tardiness and tuning out relate to dropping out should be better understood.

- The relationship between community and key instructional outcomes requires further study.

- Best practices in managing continuous enrollment and mixed skill levels should be identified.

Understanding how tardiness and tuning out relate to dropping out could help teachers identify at-risk learners and successfully intervene. It might also lead to new teaching methods that reduce the likelihood of learners' dropping out.

The researchers also observed that teachers rarely asked learners about their feelings, opinions, or beliefs, which may impede development of important oral literacy skills. In only about a quarter of the classes was community pervasive. Assuming that community is important in producing desired educational outcomes, teachers need additional training, beginning with brief inclusion activities they could use with new learners to provide valuable gains with little expenditure of resources.

Shaping Factors

Classroom dynamics were shaped by three strong forces: class composition, enrollment turbulence, and funding pressure.

Relatively homogenous classes seemed to promote community, with gender, age, and ethnicity being the most important elements. Continuous enrollment made it difficult to create a sense of community because class membership was always in flux. It also made it difficult for teachers to use complex teaching methods, such as project based learning or peer coaching.

The researchers concluded that continuous and enrollment and mixed skill levels are among the most serious and understated problems in adult literacy education. Better ways to manage these problems are possible, however, and they propose a systematic search for best practices, which should then be shared with teachers and program administrators.

Funding source regulations and eligibility requirements often determine what kinds of learners are served and the content and length of their instruction. How funds are allocated is as severe a problem as the amount of available funds. When all means of improving instruction quality are considered, professional development stands out as the most important. Leadership, strategic planning, and resources are required. Finally, if professional development is to receive the resources it needs, the 1998 law permitting but not requiring expenditures for professional development must be changed. Staff development must once again be a mandated function and the funds allocated to it increased.

Hal Beder is a professor of adult and continuing education and chair of the Department of Educational Theory, Policy, and Administration at Rutgers University. Patsy Medina is a research analyst at Rutgers University.

Stopping Out, Not Dropping Out
by Alisa Belzer

> *Students and teachers may perceive withdrawing from a program differently. To plan this issue, I read many research studies, some quantitative, some qualitative, some teacher research, others done by academics. Alisa Belzer's examination of the process that learners go through in deciding to stay or leave a program and the many factors that influence them presented many findings worthy of discussion, but one in particular intrigued me. She found that some students who were defined as "drop outs " by their literacy programs did not consider themselves as such. This difference in perception can have strong implications for the services we deliver. I asked Alisa to share this aspect of her research with us.*
>
> <div align="center">Barbara Garner</div>

When I was teaching and students stopped coming to class or to tutoring sessions, I never really knew quite what to think. Sometimes I blamed myself: "If only I were a better teacher." Sometimes I felt angry at the student, "If only she could get her life together." And sometimes I offered myself a structural interpretation related to the challenges that learners face: "No wonder she can't keep coming, look at what she is contending with...." In fact, I really couldn't explain it.

In 1991, I had the opportunity to lead a systematic exploration of the issue.1 Although I did not conduct the study in my own classroom, the questions I asked and methods I used grew out of my experiences as a teacher and coordinator as well as those of my colleagues in a large, urban literacy program.

It seemed unlikely to me that a learner left or stayed in a program based on any one factor. It seemed more likely that a feeling or attitude about leaving the program developed and a decision got made over time. I designed a study aimed at understanding this complex process better. I was particularly interested in the interaction between the expectations learners brought to a program, their life experiences, and what the program had to offer. I gathered data on the expectations the learners brought, obstacles they and their teachers and tutors encountered, ways in which learners and teachers perceived staying in or leaving a program, and the strategies teachers and tutors employed to promote retention in the program.

One of the assumptions I had, which this article will focus on, was that if students feel badly about leaving a program, it may be difficult for them to return at a later date. This raised the question: How do students feel about leaving? In gathering and analyzing data, I focused in on this issue.

Sample
To carry out the study, I used qualitative research methods to gain multiple perspectives on the process of participation in an adult literacy program from the point of view of learners, staff, and tutors over time. Four educators -- two teachers and two volunteer tutor coordinators -- randomly recruited two to three learners each to participate in the study. The only criteria for selection that they used were that the learners have phones and be willing to be interviewed. The group of students consisted of five individuals

participating in three different classes and five individuals receiving tutoring in two different areas of the city. Beyond stratifying for type of learning context, the sample was one of convenience.

Process
The study followed ten students from entry into the program for up to four months or until they dropped out. A former staff member and I gathered the data. We planned periodic contact in the form of face-to-face or telephone interviews with students, as well as with their teachers for those in classes, and with the tutors and coordinators of those receiving tutoring, conducting a total of 102 interviews. The ten students were interviewed 47 times, the four volunteer tutors -- one tutor became inactive almost immediately after the study began -- were interviewed 19 times, and teachers and coordinators were interviewed 36 times. One tutor remained active in the program only briefly and did not make himself available for an interview. Of the ten adult learners who participated in the study, five of them were still participating regularly in the program at the end of the study.

Perceptions of Stopping
When students stop coming to a program, how do they perceive this action? This was one of the questions in which I was interested. We were surprised to find that the students who left the program did not seem to consider themselves "drop outs." No one would go so far as to say that she had quit the program. Each of those who left planned to return in the future. While they had stopped coming, their intentions to participate had not ended. Although they did not necessarily know when they would be able to return, they all believed it would be possible and desirable to do so. Of perhaps even greater importance to me was that no one expressed a sense of personal failure because of leaving the program. Rather, each simply felt that it was no longer possible for them to continue at that time. They attributed this to factors beyond their control a job, health problems, financial problems, legal problems, or other personal and family problems that would have to solve themselves.

This raises questions for educators who work hard to help learners avoid a feeling of failure. For the most part, the learners we interviewed who stopped coming neither felt they had failed, nor did they feel the program had failed. Instead, they communicated a feeling that the circumstances of their lives had made it impossible to continue. The learners sense that they have little or no control over circumstances seems in some ways destructive. It implies to me a certain sense of powerlessness and suggests that these learners, at least, may feel unable to get around obstacles not necessarily insurmountable to others. It is also, however, a protective stance. It means that students can leave a program without feeling bad about themselves for being "drop-outs." This, in turn, seems to leave the door open for a return to the program in the future. The fact that nine out of the ten adults in the study had participated in some kind of adult education at least once before and chosen to begin anew seems to bear this assumption out. Students expressed the belief that they have not "completed" the program until they reached their goals. Yet, stopping periodically was not viewed as quitting. Most focused on what they had been able to accomplish during their time in the program, however

brief. For example, one student, who had stopped for health reasons, reported that after her time in the program, she was doing more reading and comprehending better. "I feel good about myself...I'm accomplishing something," she said. Another student who remained in the program throughout the study stated that had she been forced to drop out, she would not have felt like a failure. Rather, she would feel good about the fact that she had made the effort and "I would just go to class the next year or to some other class." A student who was re-entering the program for the third time when the study began explained that she had never felt like a failure when she left in the past because she always knew that she would return. She believed that this in-and-out pattern of participation would serve her until she is able to reach her goals. Two students did admit that if they quit, they would feel unhappy. One said, "If I quit, I wouldn't like myself. This time I'd rather finish all the way." The other said that if she dropped out she "would feel blue for a while." Fortunately both of these students persisted despite severe obstacles."

Implications

If one agrees with the study participants' perceptions that departure from a program should not necessarily be viewed as a failure, but rather as a temporary hiatus, the question then arises: what implications does this have for programs? Teachers and tutors could make sure that students have materials they can work on outside of class or tutoring; they should also ensure that learners know how to use those materials. Program staff could emphasize life-long learning skills, such as encouraging the habit of reading and writing every day, so that students continue practicing their literacy skills when they are unable to attend. In addition, programs might want to consider printing and distributing class lists for students to encourage contact between students outside of class. On a broader scale, teachers and program managers should plan their program structures, curricula, and assessment procedures on the assumption that even under the best of circumstances, students will come and go, and, hopefully, come again.

Many of the other findings from this study, not detailed here, affirm the notion that attempts to increase retention based on a cause and effect explanation, to frame the issue in terms of single differentiated obstacles, or to assume that decisions around dropping out come at a single point in time, are missing out on much of the complexity of the issue. The question of how to improve student retention cannot be solved with simple or single answers. The same obstacles or supports can create different outcomes for different students. Since often many complicated and interrelated factors are involved in the decision to continue participation in a program, a simple or single solution may make no difference. It is, however, still useful to try to identify potential obstacles, whether they arise during the recruitment and enrollment phase or as a student participates in a program, and to seek strategies that can help retention.

The sample size of this study was small and the time for data collection was relatively short. As with all qualitative studies, the findings here are not necessarily generalizable to an entire population. Rather, they are meant to be suggestive and provocative. I am hoping that this study can help practitioners reconsider a familiar problem in a new way and that it can help clarify understandings of a complex issue through learning about the

perspectives of a small group of students and the literacy practitioners with whom they worked. It can neither provide the field with definitive answers of how to cure retention problems nor suggest how to motivate all students. It can help us to think hard about how we formulate programs, curricula, and learning contexts that best respond to the realities of adult learners' lives.

Other Questions

Many retention questions remain to be investigated, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Although this study has strongly suggested that no single answers to improving retention exist, data on various program factors would certainly aid programs in their efforts. Here are some of the questions in which I am interested. Is there a relationship between tutor or teacher retention and student retention? Do students participating in classes, on average, have retention rates different than those who participate in one-to-one tutoring? What happens to students when they leave the program? Do they go to other programs? How often do they return? How long do they stay away? How do the retention rates of open-entry open-exit programs compare with programs that use semester systems, and what does that suggest? Programs might develop their own questions about retention and use their investigations as a way to help them develop retention strategies and set policy. They should also think about how to best structure themselves to address reality: some students will always be coming and going.

Endnote

1 The study was funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education, with funds from the U.S. Department of Education.

About the Author

Alisa Belzer is project director of the Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network (PALPIN) and a doctoral student at the University of Pennsylvania. She has worked as a ABE/GED teacher, tutor, volunteer coordinator, and trainer.

NCSALL Home > Publications > Focus on Basics > Learner Motivation > The First
Three Weeks: A Critical Time for Motivation
This page is located at: http://www.ncsall.net/?id=420

The First Three Weeks: A Critical Time for Motivation

by B. Allan Quigley
"Isn't there anything I can do to keep my students motivated?" This is the question I asked back in 1972, when I lost two students from my first adult basic education (ABE) class. At the time, my reaction was: "I must do better." I tried harder. I searched for more and better materials. I employed the best techniques I could find. I was as supportive as any teacher could be. But, somehow, even with my best efforts, things didn't change much. Some students stayed. Some didn't. I just couldn't get a handle on it. My best wasn't enough."

In the late 1970s, as an ABE program director, my staff and I tried everything we could think of to improve our retention rates. We had full-time, part-time, and drop-in courses. We had block and continuous intake. We had centralized and decentralized classes around the city. We had large individualized classes, team-taught classes, childcare in some, computers in others. Still, even with our best ideas and best efforts, some students dropped out while others persisted. Our collective best still wasn't enough.
Entering doctoral studies in 1984, I believed the books in the library would hold the answers. However, after working on this issue for almost 11 years as a professor and researcher, I still don't have the answer. A quarter century of worrying about the same question is a long time. I nevertheless think the contemporary literature and some of what I have found recently may be taking me closer to a better understanding of how to keep students motivated. While others may disagree, I like to think we are getting closer to answers. Let's see.

Different Perspectives
Looking back, I think neither my excellent co-workers nor I were really able to analyze our world because -- and here's the conundrum -- we saw it as our world. You might notice in the above story that at no point did my co-workers and I draw upon the perspective of the learners. I think this is a serious self-limiting condition in ABE. As educators, we often seek to reproduce the experiences that worked for us. Most of us basically liked school and succeeded at the schooling process. Educators have a common experience that separates us from our students. The culture of school that we so enjoyed is not necessarily a culture into which our students fit. We must keep that in mind when we design programs and instruction.

Our learners are not a "different species," as some would have us believe (Quigley, 1997), and I must say immediately that I hate the negative stereotypes of our learners.

Yet the common characteristics within our learner population, the one that distinguishes it from other populations in the educational spectrum, is that most of our students dropped out of school. Furthermore, most did so under unhappy circumstances. While our learners have many characteristic in common with mainstream adult students, they also have some radical differences. We can certainly learn from theories and research done with the larger adult population in mind, but we cannot extrapolate freely.

A Framework

That said, a model provided by Patricia Cross in 1982 suggests that ABE learners -- like all adult learners -- must overcome three barriers to enroll and stay in ABE classes. First, ABE learners, like all the rest, must negotiate family, financial, health, transportation, and other problems if they are to come and to stay. These are the situational barriers; they arise out of learners' day-to-day lives. Many researchers have identified and discussed these barriers in ABE (see, for instance, Hayes, 1988; Malicky and Norman, 1994; Wikelund, Reder, & Hart-Landsberg, 1992). Second, ABE learners, like adult learners everywhere, must confront the institutional barriers our agencies seem inevitably to create. Which adult students don't have to deal with some type of institutional red tape, or program fee, or scheduling inconvenience at their learning institutions? Our learners face institutional rules and procedures that too often seem to serve the institution, not the learners. So, when we add up the problems that may cause learners to leave, we can separate some of them into these two categories, situational and institutional.

We can try to help our students with the situations they face by referring them to resources. But we can only refer them, we can't be the resources. Situational barriers are often those about which we in ABE can do very little. This is an area where we need to realize our limitations and reduce the personal guilt we feel when we see our students floundering in the face of these barriers.

Likewise, we can and should keep chipping away at institutional barriers -- we do have some control over these -- but, again, I don't think this is where we should expend most of our energy. I have become convinced that the third barrier holds the most promise. The third -- and most enigmatic by far -- is the area of dispositional barriers. Herein lies the curious inner world of unique attitudes, personal values, and unstated perceptions. Our learners often carry into our programs mixed emotions, many of which are negative, born of past schooling experiences. These may take up more space in their dispositional baggage than we usually want to acknowledge or are willing to explore.

Our students come to our programs with hopes, fears, and expectations, just like other adult learners. But, as I have said, our students' feelings grow from negative schooling experiences. The "answers" we offer may exacerbate the problems they bring. Faced with students who show low self-esteem or an apparent lack of confidence in ABE programs, Fingeret (1985) found that ABE teachers often "try to be all things to each individual student&334 (p. 112). But, as Fingeret concludes, even the total devotion of a caring teacher in the face of apparent low self-esteem may not be enough. While Fingeret agrees that such "are admirable aspirations it is possible that instructors ... may actually undermine the adult student's ability to use the program as an area for risk-taking,

growth, and learning" (p. 112). As Fingeret found: "Many students do not simply remain in a program because it feels good' to them. They remain because they see the potential for meeting their goals" (p. 112). I would add, despite the unquestionable value of a caring teacher and learner-centered approaches, these are not the singular answers for retention. If they were, the dropout rate in the U.S. would not have been a staggering 74 percent in the 1993-94 year (U.S. Department of Education, 1995).

I now believe that the gap in perception created by our school-based experiences, when contrasted with those of our students, is a source of serious unseen, under-researched problems. I think that if we can understand dispositional barriers better, if we can see the differences between our dispositions and theirs more clearly, we can become more effective at our tutoring, teaching, counseling, and retention.

Dispositional Barriers
As I noted earlier, schooling experiences in the formative years have a lifelong effect on learners. Cervero and Fitzpatrick (1990) found, through a longitudinal study of 18,000 students from 1,200 U.S. schools, that adults who had been early school-leavers -- drop outs -- had extremely mixed feelings toward past schooling. Early school leavers participated in credit and non-credit adult education opportunities at a rate well below the norm for mainstream adults who had completed school. The researchers concluded that those who quit school are "shaped...by a powerful set of social circumstances" (p. 92). Taking the same point further, Wikelund, Reder, & Hart-Landsberg (1992) found that undereducated adult "participants and potential participants tend to perceive and experience the adult education programs...as extensions or continuations of the school programs in which they have previously experienced failure, loss of self-esteem, and lack of responsiveness to their personal needs and goals" (p. 4). This is another important conclusion that can help us think more critically about our programs.

In a study I conducted in 1992, we held in-depth interviews with potential students who chose not to attend ABE programs even though they knew they were probably eligible to attend. We found that the terms education' and learning' were understood positively if applied to the children and the friends of the resisters. These two constructs implied absolute good. When we mentioned ABE' or literacy' -- when we flat out asked if they would go to the local ABE programs and register -- they heard school.' They said they did not want to "go back to school" although we had never used that word.

Theories of Participation
If we turn to research on the psychological and socio-cultural and socio-economic factors that go into motivation, we come away disappointed. But we have no lack of advice. In the past, our field was advised to address motivation and participation using mainstream adult education models. Boshier (1973), and Rubenson and Hogheim (1978), for instance, have argued that mainstream adult education theories should be used in ABE settings. In 1986, Gordon Darkenwald wrote that if we would just use such mainstream adult theories "The quality of ABE participation and dropout research would be vastly improved" (p. 12). Maybe, but, given the differences in learner populations, it does not necessarily follow that mainstream adult education research applies to ABE.

Another model we could consider is Miller's 1960's force field analysis (1967), which says that certain influences pull adults towards a desired goal as other influences push them away. In the classic Miller force-field theory, we need to research the forces acting on students via a force-field analysis. Miller's theory is, however, constructed on socio-economic status, ignoring prior education and its effects.

Peter Cookson's (1987) ISSTAL model argues that an individual's social background and roles, combined with a list of other external and internal elements, can act as a series of filters. These either discourage or challenge the learner to the point where she will either engage in further education or choose not to participate. Actually, Patricia Cross (1982, p. 124) had much the same idea in her chain-of-response (COR) model a few years earlier. For Cross, the adult's decision process begins with self-evaluation and moves through a predictable sequence of links. So, according to Cookson and Cross, if we can just know the filters and links in the sequence, we can predict who will participate. Neither Cookson nor Cross explicitly includes the powerful effects of pre-adult factors such as past educational experiences in their equations.

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) created a model that does allow for several pre-adult influences. Their model takes into consideration eight groups of factors from the prospective learner's experience. This seems relevant until we notice that all types of educational goals and participation are lumped together. Credit-bearing, noncredit-bearing, and variations of both are assumed to be essentially the same, and labeled further adult education. Where does ABE fit into this mix of mainstream goals? Does this theory really do justice to the formative experiences of our learners? More recent research by Roberta Uhland (1995) and researchers at the Center for Literacy Studies (1992) tells us this adult mainstream view of educational attainment can vastly oversimplify the ABE learner's decision process (and see Beder, 1990).

Perhaps the theory that, more than any other, perpetuated stereotyping in ABE was Roger Boshier's congruence model (1973, 1977). It classes all potential participants into growth-oriented and deficiency-oriented learners. Boshier effectively says that low-literate adults are at the rock bottom of any Maslowian hierarchy of needs based on 48 motives. They are so seriously deficiency-oriented in the motives department that it would seem almost impossible for our learners to be motivated at all. As Beder (1990) says, Boshier "perpetuates the very social stigma attached to low literacy which limits life success and reduces motivation (p. 44).

On the other hand, perhaps the most promising theory for our field from mainstream higher and adult education is the Vroom (1964) expectancy-valence model. It promotes research on two levels of inquiry. First, it asks what the learners' expectations are of the upcoming experience, or program, in this case. Second, it tries to measure the inherent valence -- or worth -- of a program as the learner sees it. The strength of these two, says Vroom, will determine participation and success. While expectancy- valence theory has been used with some success in our field (e.g., Van Tilburg & DuBois, 1989; Quigley, 1992, 1993), we are not sure how dispositional barriers interact with what learners find in

programs. We don't really know how expectancy and valence interacts with dispositional barriers. And note that all of the above are theories of participation. They are asking: What influences adults to join programs? They are not explicitly focused on retention: "What influences them to stay or quit?

The Drop-Out Weeks
We need to go beyond participation theory and find a way to understand what our learners actually experience during the first three critical "drop-out weeks." We do have some understanding of this period, and we have some strategies worth using.
An interesting study by Christophel and Gorham (1995) may be appropriate for us, even though it is based on college students. This study has to do with in-program, not before-program, questions. The researchers found that among young adults in college, motivation "is perceived by students as a personally-owned state, while demotivation is perceived as a teacher-owned problem" (p. 303).

While this finding has yet to be tested in ABE settings, it does make a potentially useful contribution. It introduces the demotivation side of learner experience. And it does square with ABE retention and persistence work (e.g., Bean et al, 1989; Diekhoff & Diekhoff, 1984), which indicates that our learners tend to come to ABE with sufficient motivation to succeed, but things happen that, through their eyes at least, "demotivate" them. It gives us language and a framework to continue the line of reasoning that persistence and motivation are not ultimately "their" problem.

This line of demotivation research also indicates that "motivation is modifiable" (Christophel & Gorham, p. 304). Squaring with the nascent ABE retention research, it suggests that teachers can do something. One positive way intervention can occur, according to Chrisophel and Gorham, is if teachers respond to student needs right away. They call this teacher-immediacy. As they learned, "teacher immediacy affects motivation." (p. 304). My own research suggests that "nonverbal immediacy relationships are more slowly established than are verbal immediacy relationships" (p. 304). The point here is that early verbal connections with new learners are critical in sustaining motivation.

The value of teacher immediacy was also demonstrated by a study I conducted in 1993. Through in-depth interviews that contrasted persisters with dropouts, two interviewers found that a randomly selected group who had dropped out of an ABE program in the first three weeks due to evident dispositional barriers had chosen not to talk with their teachers about their decision to quit during the decision period. Instead, they had all gone to the intake counselor. One had done do so up to seven separate times prior to dropping out. This is potentially disconcerting for teachers. In contrast, those in the study who persisted for months did not go to the counselor once in the same critical period. Instead, persisters talked to their ABE teachers regularly. Thus, the "immediacy" role of the intake counselor or intake person may be at least as important as the role of the teachers among the potential dropout population.

Those learners asking for counselor assistance were not the ones who, to the teacher, appeared to need assistance. They were basically invisible in the classrooms. It was the potential persisters who squeaked and seemed to get noticed.

As time goes by, say Christophel and Gorham, the teacher-learner relationship becomes increasingly important in sustaining student motivation. They make it clear that the first few weeks are crucial. If teacher immediacy is not established early, the odds that students will drop out increase. It is imperative that we figure out who needs such attention.

Identification

Most programs have an intake person. It may be a counselor, a teacher, a receptionist, or the program administrator. Research I have done (Quigley, 1997) suggests that some new learners -- not all -- will need more attention than others, both inside and outside the classroom. I believe it is worth building a sensitive interviewing process for new learners at initial contact, and right after intake, and to use the same personnel to follow up with learners who need more attention. It is also advisable that this person, or persons, not be the same as those actually teaching the learner. As I will explain, some learners may need a safety valve. To make this degree of interview and follow-up manageable, consider ways for staff -- not only the teachers -- to look systematically for "at-risk indicators" (Quigley & Kuhne, 1997). "At risk" here means those learners who probably have the highest chance of dropping out in the first few critical weeks by virtue of the dispositional barriers they must overcome. The overall logic here is that some new students have more significant dispositional barriers than others. These "at-risk" learners can often be identified and assisted to stay in programs longer.

The study we conducted involved 20 at-risk learners and a control group. The intake counselor, a male, looked for body language and verbal cues that suggested dispositional barriers were at work, barriers sufficient to cause the applicant to drop out early on. These cues included skepticism, hostility, hesitancy, and uncertainty. This observation occurred during a meeting at the beginning of the program. The second meeting was the student intake, about two weeks later, during which the counselor once again looked for the same behaviors and attitudes. At this point, if he saw the same behaviors or attitudes, he referred the student to another counselor, a female. She conducted a more in-depth interview with the new learner about her past schooling experiences. Having toured the program by now, the student was asked to compare the past with her future expectations for this program. The Prior Schooling and Self-Perception Inventory, which contrasts aspect of past performance and relations with peers with what the potential learner was anticipating in this program, was created and used for this more lengthy interview (Quigley, 1997, pp. 245- 246).

With these three procedures, we had identified an at-risk group: learners we hypothesized were especially susceptible to demotivators. But now what? Remember how we usually place so much emphasis on a caring teachers' ability to raise self-concept? Other possibilities were tested. Those who now appeared to be at-risk were referred at random to four separate classroom settings. None were aware they were part of a study. The first randomly selected group was referred to the mainstream just like the others that came to

the center. This control group was placed among the usual classes of anywhere from 15 to 20 students, taught by one teacher. Another randomly selected group received team support. This meant their teacher was made aware they were at-risk students and the female counselor visited each in this group at least once per week. The counselor and teacher used the Inventory as a baseline to see how the learner was progressing. So, this "team-supported group" received all the support that a teacher and a counselor could possible give within the program's structure. We hypothesized that if caring teachers and counselors are vital to retention, this approach would result in the highest student retention rate. The third randomly selected group went to small classes of five or six students. This option played down the teacher's importance; we hypothesized that more peer attention, not just more teacher attention, would have a positive impact on retention. The final randomly selected group were assigned to one-on-one volunteer tutors rather than to a classroom, giving them the most teacher attention one could ever get in ABE. What happened? All three special treatment groups retained students past three weeks and beyond the control group. Our goal was met. The small group option held the most students the longest. This suggests that increased peer support as well as enhanced teacher support for the at-risk, through the small group setting during the first three weeks, may provide an "absence of negatives" sufficient for many at-risk learners. In all events, any of the three treatments were an improvement over the traditional classroom for the at-risk.

Implications
What does this suggest for program design? First, identify those least likely to stay. The at-risk group should be identified by an experienced intake person in the first one-on-one meeting. These observations should be verified during a second interview, using the Prior Schooling and Self-Perception Inventory (Quigley, 1997). Although using this instrument hardly constitutes scientific prediction, it at least provides a profile based on the new students' own expressed expectations and personal concerns. And it grounds observed behaviors and learner self-perceptions in dispositional barriers. I recommend also using the Witkin Embedded Figures Test (Quigley, 1997; Witkin et al, 1971). This test assesses learners' field dependence and field independence, which, simply put, means levels of needing to belong.

This means making informed judgments early on in programs. Some programs will be able to place the at-risk in classes of five or six students. Some will not. Most programs can have the intake person act as follow-up support to the at-risk by meeting with these students individually at least once a week to go over their progress, using the Inventory as a baseline. The follow-up should include informing the teacher that these students will need more support than others, even if they do not always request it. Finally, the intake person and the teachers can meet and work as a team. In any case, the intake person should be someone other than the teacher so that another interested person is available to the students. This provides a second, less symbolically authoritative figure with whom the at-risk can consult.

Other team support techniques suggest themselves here. Groups within classrooms can be formed to create a smaller peer support group for the at-risk. After-class support groups

can be created and the at-risk can be encouraged to attend. Approaches such as mentoring and "buddy systems" can be used with good effect. The idea is to build more support for the at-risk using peers as well as teachers and intake personnel. Finally, many programs can add volunteer tutors to ABE programs, either in or outside of ABE classrooms. The last model tried in the study was to give fuller attention through tutors. It worked better than nothing did. Why not add a tutor to help the at-risk in ABE if this is the approach available?

No one is suggesting that situational and institutional barriers will not creep up on many learners during or after the critical three weeks. We are dealing with adults here. Little is predictable; less is "controllable." But, based on this study and the success of programs that have acted on these same suggestions, we know that we can: 1) understand the time frame in which we must identify the at-risk, 2) identify an at-risk group upon which to focus energy, and 3) employ various groupings found to provide support for the at-risk. Above all, we can at least begin to untangle some of the complex issues of retention and make a better, more informed start. Yes, there is something I can do.

The Answer
If I knew how to enhance motivation, I would have done it 20 years ago. I only wish I had taken the time to question, to analyze, and to be more self-critical in ways that allowed for greater learner input. The efforts of recent researchers, and emerging trends such as action research for the classroom (Quigley & Kuhne, 1997) are positive.
Here are some questions I think we should be asking. What are the differences -- dispositional, cognitive, age, gender, and cultural -- between those who stay and those who do not? What is the actual process of disengagement? Are there stages of dropout? Do demotivators -- especially things done or not done by the teacher -- trigger them? What role does learning style play in motivation? And how can we -- practitioners, researchers, and learners alike -- share and learn from our experiences so that, as a field, we are not reinventing the same disjointed solutions? In my view, just being able to communicate and share ideas through such means as Focus on Basics is a major step forward.

NCSALL Home > Publications > Research Briefs > Persistence Among Adult Basic Education Students in Pre-GED Classes
This page is located at: http://www.ncsall.net/?id=663

Persistence Among Adult Basic Education Students in Pre-GED Classes

John P. Comings, Andrea Parrella, and Lisa Soricone
Harvard Graduate School of Education
NCSALL REPORT #12
December 1999

A key difference between adult and child learners is that adults choose to participate in educational programs while children participate because of legal mandates and strong social and cultural forces that identify schooling as the proper "work" of childhood. Adults must make active decisions to participate in each class session and often must overcome significant barriers to attend classes. Every adult education program should help adult students persist in their learning until they reach their educational goals.

NCSALL is engaged in an ongoing study designed to:
1) develop and test advice for adult basic education practitioners on how to help adult learners persist in their studies; and
2) develop and test advice for policy makers on how to structure funding and accountability systems in ways that will support learner persistence.

In the first phase of the study, four key supports to persistence were identified:
The first support is management of the positive and negative forces that help and hinder persistence. Understanding the forces, identifying which are strongest, and deciding which are most amenable to manipulation provides an indication of how to help someone reach an educational goal. Any intervention meant to increase persistence must help adults strengthen the positive forces and lessen the negative forces. The first step is to identify all the forces that are acting upon an individual. The next step is to identify which forces can have a significant effect on an individual's path. Of these strong forces, a determination must be made as to which ones can actually be managed or, rather, which positive forces can be made stronger and which negative forces can be made weaker.

The second support is self-efficacy. The educational program must help adult students build self-efficacy about reaching their goals. The term self-confidence is used more often in adult education literature, but self-efficacy is a more useful term to describe this support. Self-confidence is a global feeling of being able to accomplish most tasks. Self-

efficacy is focused on a specific task and represents the feeling of being able to accomplish that task, which here is successful learning in ABE, ESOL, or ASE programs.

The third support to persistence is the establishment of a goal by the student. This process begins before an adult enters a program. Adults who could be classified as potential ABE, ESOL, or ASE students experience events that cause them to enter educational programs. The events might be dramatic or subtle. They provide potential adult students with goals they hope to accomplish by entering an ABE, ESOL, or ASE program. The staff of educational programs must help the potential adult students define their goals and help them understand the many instructional objectives that must be accomplished to meet the goals. Teachers must then use those student goals as the context for instruction, and the goals should be continuously revisited since they may change over time.

The fourth support is progress toward reaching a goal. Adult students must make progress toward reaching their educational goals, and they must be able to measure that progress. Programs must provide services of sufficient quality that students make progress, and programs must have assessment procedures that allow students to measure their own progress.

Policy Support to Persistence. Aspects of the four supports presented here already exist in some programs, but a combination of the four may provide a more supportive environment to persistence. These supports are more likely to be built if persistence becomes a more important measure in program accountability, and if funding agencies provide the technical assistance and training needed for programs to put these supports in place. Policy makers should then hold programs accountable for the quality of the intake, orientation, instruction, and program approaches that support persistence. They should use an expanded definition of persistence: adults staying in programs for as long as they can, engaging in self-directed study when they must drop out of their programs, and returning to programs as soon as the demands of their lives allow. Using only attendance in class or in tutoring sessions as a measure of persistence undervalues effective learning activities that should be encouraged. The wider definition of persistence would allow practitioners to focus on helping adults become persistent learners who use episodes of program participation as critical parts of a comprehensive learning strategy that employs other forms of learning.

Study Findings. This study found that the many ways in which we can classify adult students (by gender, ethnicity, age, employment status, number and age of children, previous school experience, and educational background of other adults in their lives) do not tell us much about how to help them persist in their education.

The only significant findings were that immigrants, those over the age of 30, and parents of teenage or grown children were more likely to persist than others in the study. The greater likelihood of persistence by immigrant students in ESOL classes is well documented, and the findings of this study suggest that this effect continues as immigrants learn English and move on to ABE and GED programs. Grown children might encourage their parents to join and persist in a program. On the other hand, adults
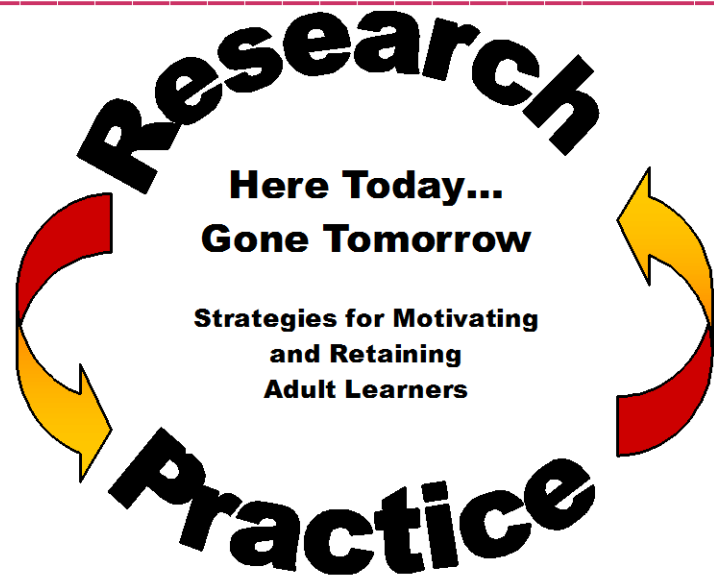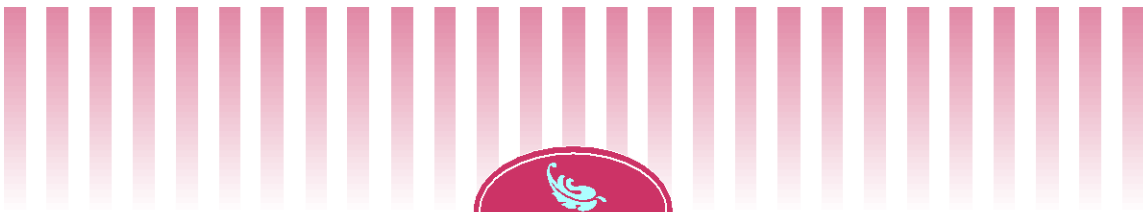
who are over 30 are more likely to have teenage or grown children than those under 30. These findings might point to older students persisting longer because they benefit from the maturity that comes with age and they no longer have the responsibilities of caring for small children.

Two aspects of educational experience were also associated with persistence. Adults who had been involved in previous efforts at basic skills education, self-study, or vocational skill training were more likely to persist than those who had not. The strongest relationship was with those who had undertaken self-study. Adults who, when asked why they had entered a program, mentioned a specific goal (such as 'help my children or 'get a better job') were more likely to persist than those who either mentioned no goal or said they were doing it for themselves. These findings suggest that experience with education may increase an adult's self-confidence about learning and that motivation, especially as demonstrated by undertaking self-study or by being clear about the goal for attendance, is a support to persistence.

Full Report Available
To receive a copy of the full report, send a request indicating the report number or title along with a check or money order in the amount of $10, payable to World Education, to:
    Caye Caplan
    NCSALL *Reports*
    World Education
    44 Farnsworth Street
    Boston, MA 02210
    or call: (617) 482-9485

Research

Practice

Here Today…
Gone Tomorrow

Strategies for Motivating
and Retaining
Adult Learners

ACTIVITY PACKET

Activity 1: Indicators of Persistence

Place a checkmark by the characteristics of the "persistors" in the NCSALL study?

☐ **Gender**

☐ **Immigrant status**

☐ **Age of children**

☐ **Employment status**

☐ **Working hours**

☐ **Goal**

☐ **Negative school experience**

☐ **Parent's education**

☐ **Involvement in previous training**

☐ **Single parent status**

Activity 2: Does it Jive?

STEP 1. Select one of the four research briefs:
- **P.69**--Persistence Among Adult Basic Education Students in Pre-GED Classes (Comings, et al)
- **P.61**--The First Three Weeks: A Critical Time for Motivation (Quigley)
- **P.57**--Stopping Out, Not Dropping Out (Belzer)
- **P.55**--Classroom Dynamics in Adult Literacy Education (Beder and Medina)

STEP 2.   Read the research brief for your designated study. With your table partners, discuss the following questions:

- Do the research findings jive with your experiences?

- If yes, what in particular?

- If no, what seems out of place?

- Was there anything missing that you think impacts learner persistence?

Activity 3: Creating a Vision

Reflect on what you learned from the research and complete the following sentence:

Finish this sentence:

Learner persistence will be working well in my program when…

_____

_____

_____

Activity 4: What are you doing now?

What are you doing now?	Managing Positive and Negative Forces	Building Self Efficacy	Setting Clear Goals	Showing Progress	Episodic Learning
Classroom Practice					
Policy and Procedures					
Professional Development					

Learner Persistence Plan
"The Wisdom of the Crowd"

If you are interested in improving student persistence in your program, here are some options for getting there.

We believe in "The Wisdom of the Crowd" – a group of knowledgeable folks make better decisions than a few experts.

Steps for engaging your staff, your fellow teachers, or others in developing a Student Persistence Initiative:

Date to Complete:	Activity	Completed: ✔

	1. Review the persistence material with your staff/colleagues (some or all).
	    • Resources
	        o PowerPoint
	        o Support packets (strategies for the four supports)
	        o Resource packet
	OR
	2. Organize a learner persistence study group to explore the information in more depth.	

	3. Review what you identified as being done right now in each of the four support areas. Validate your responses with your staff/colleagues and make any necessary additions/changes to the chart.
	    • Resources
	        o Activity 3 Chart
	    • Components
	        o Practice
	        o Policy and procedures
	        o Professional development	

	4. Select one to four of the four Supports. • Which of the four would have the most impact on student persistence in your program?	

	5. For each selected Support, which strategies seem like they would contribute to student persistence?
	    • Criteria for selecting strategies
	        o It seems to hold promise to positively effect student persistence.
	        o It fits with other things we are doing now.
	        o It is not too complex.
	        o It is "trialable."	

	6. Who is willing and suited to pilot test the selected strategies?	
	7. How long will it take to see results from the pilot tests?	
	8. What data will the pilots collect to prove or disprove the effectiveness of the strategy?	
	9. When will the pilots present their findings?	