



Here Today—Gone Tomorrow

Student Persistence Resource Packet

Research, Articles, Strategies, and Tips



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Student Persistence Research and Articles

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

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

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

[Getting to Class and Completing a Semester is Tough](http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/lp_c.pdf), 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](http://literacy.kent.edu/Oasis/Pubs/0600-3.htm) (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](http://www.ncsall.net/?id=663) (Comings, J. Parrella, A, & Soricone, L. 1999)
<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=663>
- [Helping Adults Persist: Four Supports](http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/lp_d.pdf), pg. 6 (Comings, J. Parrella, A, & Soricone, L. 2000)
http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/lp_d.pdf
- [Sponsors and Sponsorship](http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/lp_d.pdf), 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](http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/lp_c.pdf), pg. 4 (Reder, S. & Strawn, C. 2001)
http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/lp_c.pdf
- [Stopping Out, Not Dropping Out](http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/lp_c.pdf), pg. 7 (Belzer, A. 1998)
http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/lp_c.pdf

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

[Staying in a Literacy Program](http://www.ncsall.net/?id=418) (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://adulthood.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

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 this person will listen quietly.
- 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

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

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. 2.	1. 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

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

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.

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
<p>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.</p>	<p>Greater possibility of meeting learners' needs so they can attend class</p>
<p>Enrollment and Attendance Policies: Changing policies to reduce chaos in the classroom resulting from constant entering and exiting of students</p>	<p>Greater consistency of attendance and sense of community, stability and routine in classroom where students</p>
<p>Flexible Scheduling: Changing class schedules to accommodate learners' needs</p>	<p>Greater likelihood that learners will be able to attend when it is most convenient for them (e.g., Saturdays)</p>
<p>Advocacy: Engaging in actions that promote adult literacy funding</p>	<p>Greater resources for providing direct services to learners (e.g., day care, transportation, etc.) that increase the accessibility of the program</p>

Sample Activities for Building Self-Efficacy

E

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

SAMPLE ACTIVITY	EXPECTED RESULT
<p>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.</p>	<p>Greater commitment among learners to the program and a greater feeling that their participation is needed by the program and community</p>
<p>Learning Histories: Using a technique for you and learners to reflect on and discuss your educational experiences (see “Safety” for a description of activity)</p>	<p>Greater understanding by learners of how their educational history affects them and of what they have already achieved</p>
<p>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., <i>Prior Schooling and Self-Perception Inventory</i>)</p>	<p>Greater understanding among learners about their progress</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>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</p>
<p>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.)</p>	<p>Greater feeling of accomplishment by being recognized for their achievements</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>Greater understanding of their own and others’ path toward reaching their educational goals</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Greater feeling of their strengths and accomplishments</p>

SAMPLE ACTIVITY	EXPECTED RESULT
<p>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</p>	<p>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</p>

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 their 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 <i>Considerations for Realistic NRS Goal Setting</i> to determine goals attainable within the program year	Better chance of meeting program performance benchmarks

Sample Activities for Students to Experience Progress

G

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