

Maintaining Student Motivation

Facilitator: Paige Zelikow (paige@literacyforall.org)

Goals of Workshop

- To understand what the research tells us are drivers of persistence and motivation.
- To develop ways to support students in identifying their learning goals and recognizing their successes.
- To explore ways we can help our students stay focused on learning and improving.

Your Experience

- Introduce yourself
- Describe your student (first name only)
- Describe one thing that motivates you to continue tutoring

The Research

Some years ago, the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy conducted a study and did extensive interviews to better understand the supports and barriers to persistence in adult literacy programs.

Here are some factors that most strongly characterized “persistors”:

- Immigrant Status
- Age of the student’s children
- Having a goal
- Involvement in previous education or training
- Age (over 30)

As tutors, which of these factors can we impact or influence?

Here are some forces that affected persistence positively in adult learning programs:

- The teacher and peers
- Relevance of instruction
- Having a goal
- Relationships

As tutors, which of these factors can we impact or influence?

Six Drivers of Persistence

The New England Literacy Resource Center also conducted research into what factors influence adult learners to “persist” or stay in education programs and keep studying. They came up with six drivers of persistence:

- **Community and belonging**

- **Clarity of purpose**

- **A sense of competence**

- **Stability**

- **Relevance**

- **Agency**

Goals

- Goals should be SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely.
- Goals can be big: Citizenship, driver's license, GED, new job or promotion
- Goals can be small: applying for a library card, asking for directions, learning 10 new vocabulary words, making an appointment over the phone, going to a teacher conference, finishing a chapter in a workbook, reading a book in English.

Identifying Goals

- Consider using a student-generated goal worksheet to help your student focus on what he/she wants to achieve and why.
- Encourage your student to talk about why he/she wants to improve English skills and ways he/she will know progress is being made. Make notes and review periodically.
- Encourage your student to talk about ways he/she is using English in real life and incorporate related real-life materials into lessons to support these activities.
- Help your student identify factors that might hinder progress and strategies to overcome them.

Praise and Encouragement

- Offer frequent, authentic, specific praise for effort and achievement.
- Track achievements and measure progress by using past lesson plans, notes, and tutor reports and share with your student.
- Use materials such as LVCA's Joy of Writing that tell stories of other adult learners who have faced and overcome obstacles.

If motivation is lagging, here are some things you might try....

- Try more praise.
- Try fewer corrections.
- Try new ways of presenting instruction such as using videos, apps, newspapers, short novels, or a different workbook.
- Try using materials and instruction more closely related to your student's life.
- Try talking to your student about his/her source of discouragement and perhaps using the situation as a writing prompt.
- Try learning something about your student's home country and then asking questions.
- Try varying your routine by planning a field trip and role-playing ahead of time.
- Try starting a list of accomplishments and sharing it each month.

You are not alone....

- Attend the monthly tutor roundtable or other LVCA event to connect with other tutors.
- Talk to a member of the staff. We are here to help and support your efforts!