Building Persistence & Maintaining Motivation

Catherine McCall

catherine@literacyforall.org

Literacy Volunteers of Charlottesville/Albemarle

June 24, 2023

Questions we will explore

❖ What does research tell us about persistence and motivation in adult learners?

❖ How do those research findings mesh with our experiences working with adult learners?

❖ What strategies enable us to build persistence in our students and help them maintain motivation to tackle the incredibly challenging work of learning English?
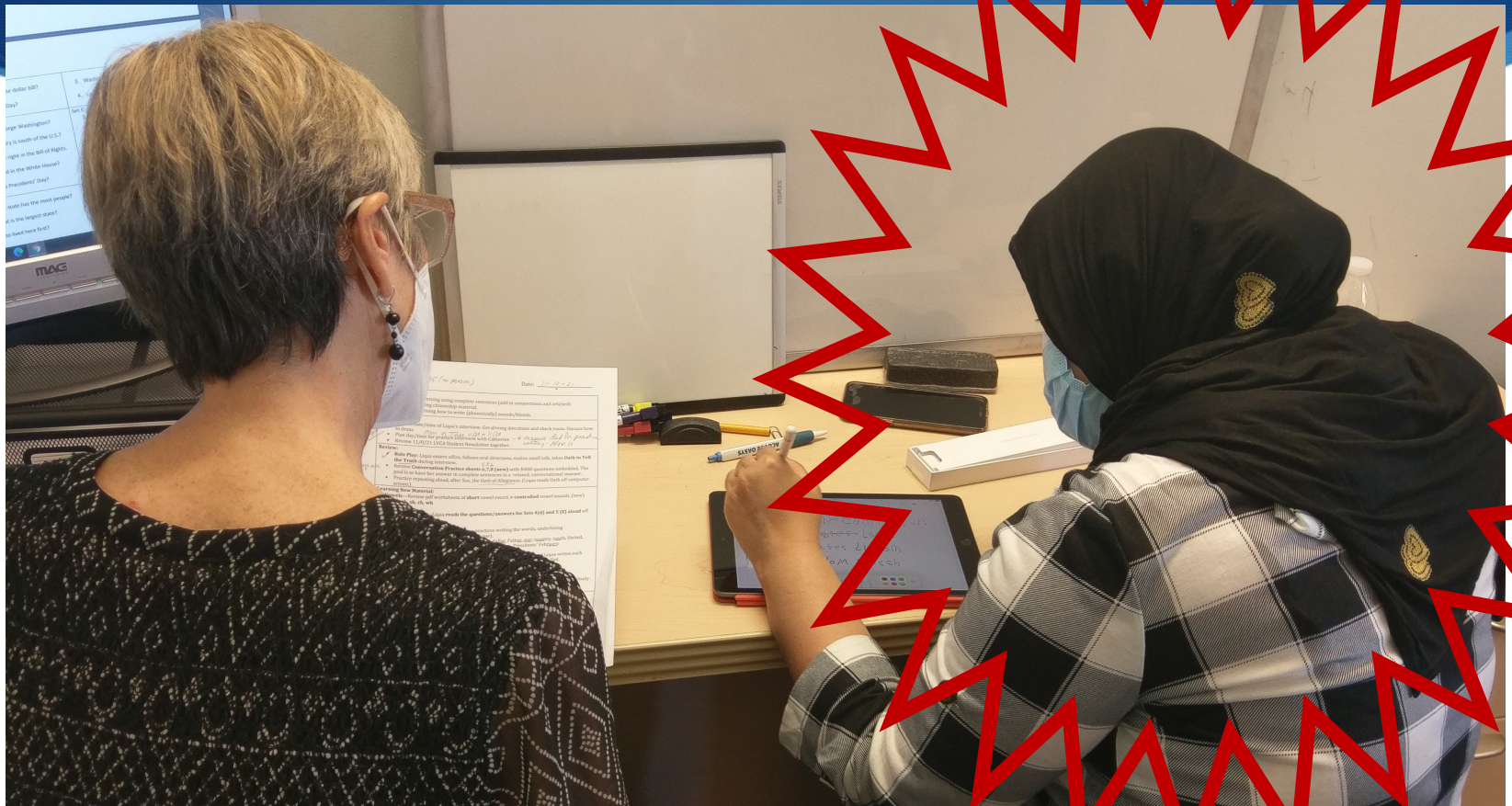
Motivation: the desire to do something
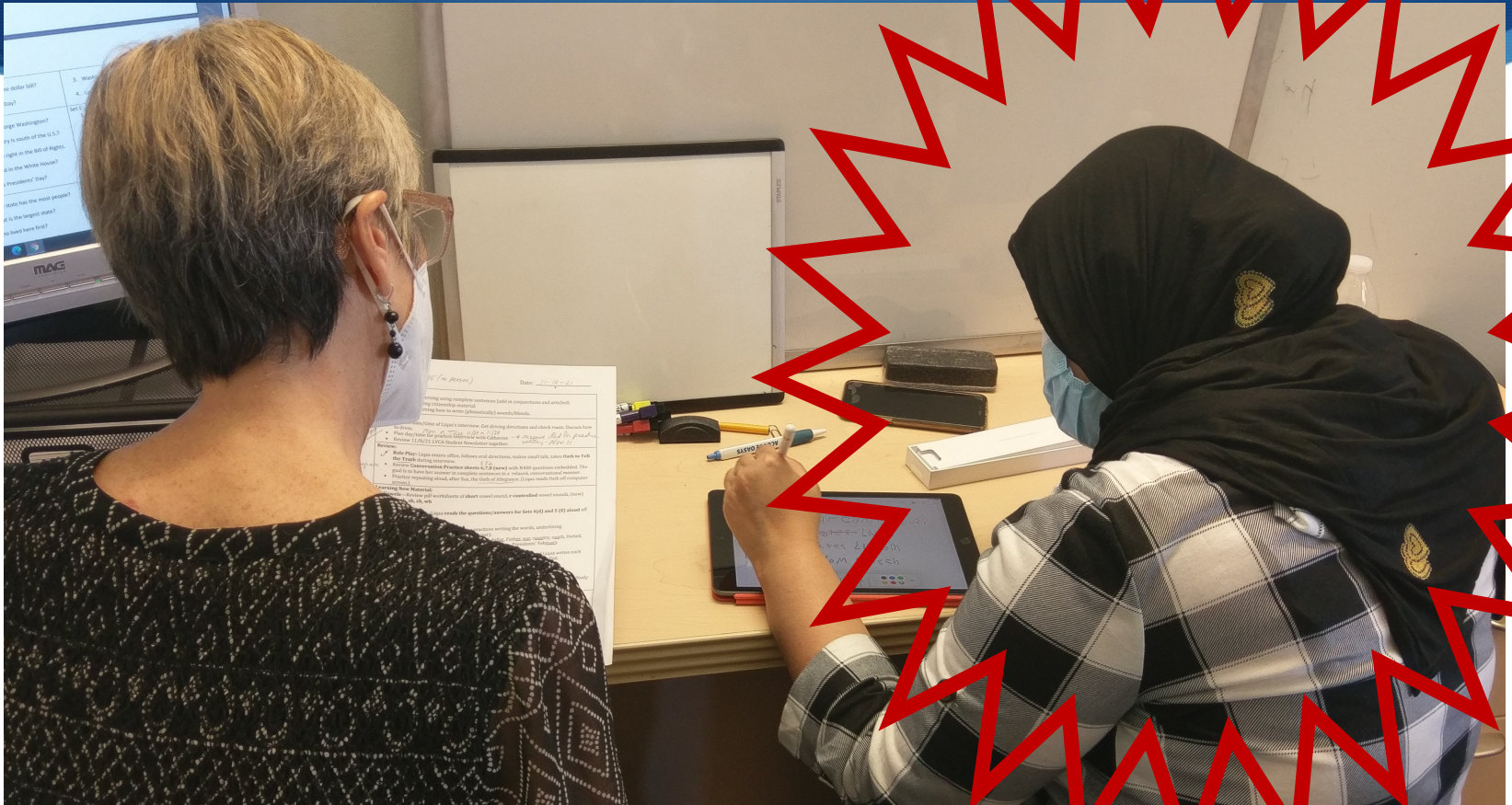
Motivation: the desire to do something

Persistence: continued effort to do it, in spite of difficulty

What does research tell us about **persistence** and **motivation** in adult learners?

- ProLiteracy
  - Research Briefs & Webinar
  - Adult Student Persistence course

- Making it Worth the Stay: Findings from NEALPP

- Adult Literacy Book Chapter: Motivation, Engagement & Persistence

- Psychology Today

Disproportionately Adult Basic Education Students

Demographic characteristics of students more likely to stay in a program until they reach their goal

- Immigrants

- Learners older than 30 & with older kids

- Learners involved in previous education/training

- Learners with lower reading scores at intake

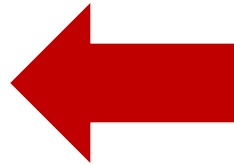| NCSALL	NEALPP
Key Supports:	**Affective Needs:**
1. Managing positive and negative forces	1. Agency
2. Establishing goals	2. Sense of belonging and community
3. Building self-efficacy	3. Stability
4. Seeing progress toward reaching those goals	4. Clarity of purpose
	5. Relevance
	6. Competence

NCSALL

Key Supports:

1. Managing positive and negative forces

2. Establishing goals

3. Building self-efficacy

4. Seeing progress toward reaching those goals

Managing positive and negative forces

+

Life Circumstances

Family/friend support

Self-determination

Teacher & students

Goals

—

Life Demands

Lack of F/F support

Poor Self-determination

Managing positive and negative forces

+

Life Circumstances

Family/friend support

Self-determination

Teacher & students

Goals

−

Life Demands

Lack of F/F support

Poor Self-determination

Which positive and negative forces appear to be most relevant to your student's motivation and persistence?

Managing positive and negative forces

+

Life Circumstances	Life Demands
Family/friend support	Lack of F/F support
Self-determination	Poor Self-determination
Teacher & students	
Goals	

−

Managing positive and negative forces

$+$

Self-determination

Teacher & students

Goals

NCSALL

NEALPP

Managing positive and negative forces

+

Self-determination

Teacher & students

Goals

Affective Needs:

1. Agency

2. Sense of belonging and community

3. Stability

4. Clarity of purpose

5. Relevance

6. Competence

Self-determination

In the NEALPP study, they modified intake, orientation, counseling and peer support, and instruction. **Instructional changes showed the greatest effect on persistence.**

Instructional changes included:

- Providing learning options

- Providing opportunities for students to be included in decision-making

- Engaging students in dialogue about their own learning

Managing positive and negative forces

+

Self-determination

Teacher & students

Goals

NCSALL

NEALPP

Managing positive and negative forces

+

Self-determination

Teacher & students

Goals

Affective Needs:

1. Agency
2. Sense of belonging and community
3. Stability
4. Clarity of purpose
5. Relevance
6. Competence

Teacher & students

What do you do / what can you do
to help ensure that your student's experience with
tutoring helps meet their affective need
for a sense of:

- belonging and community?

- stability?

Managing positive and negative forces

+

Self-determination

Teacher & students

Goals
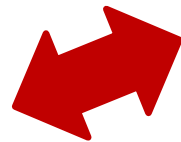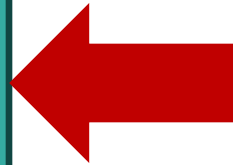
NCSALL

NEALPP

Managing positive and negative forces

+

Self-determination

Teacher & students

Goals

Affective Needs:

1. Agency

2. Sense of belonging and community

3. Stability

4. Clarity of purpose

5. Relevance
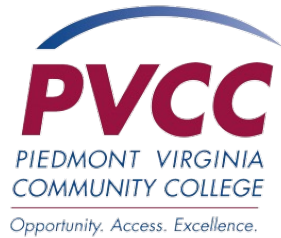
6. Competence

NCSALL

Key Supports:

1. Managing positive and negative forces

2. Establishing goals

3. Building self-efficacy

4. Seeing progress toward reaching those goals

Establishing Goals

Adults who were able to clearly identify their specific learning goals were more likely to persist and to persist longer.

Longer Term Goals

Shorter Term Goals

- Applying for a library card

- Attending a parent-teacher conference

- Making an appointment over the phone

- Asking for directions

- Reading to a child or helping with homework

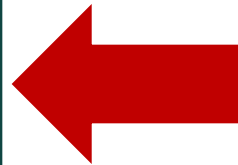- Improve English at work

- Learning 10 new vocabulary words

Establishing Goals

…which our student believes they can achieve & which they will be able to readily see progress toward
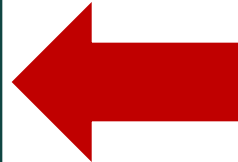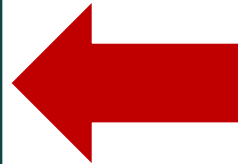
NCSALL

Key Supports:

1. Managing positive and negative forces
2. Establishing goals
3. Building self-efficacy
4. Seeing progress toward reaching those goals

NEALPP

Affective Needs:

1. Agency
2. Sense of belonging and community
3. Stability
4. Clarity of purpose
5. Relevance
6. Competence

Establishing Goals

…which our student believes they can achieve &
which they will be able to readily see progress toward
& which will meet thier affective needs for
clarity of purpose and relevance

Specific

Useful

Measurable

Establishing Goals

…which our student believes they can achieve & which they will be able to readily see progress toward & which will meet thier affective needs for clarity of purpose and relevance

Specific

Useful

Measurable

Establishing Goals
…which our student believes they can achieve &
which they will be able to readily see progress toward
& which will meet thier affective needs for
clarity of purpose and relevance

Specific

Useful

Measurable

Establishing Goals

…which our student believes they can achieve & which they will be able to readily see progress toward & which will meet thier affective needs for clarity of purpose and relevance

🟢**S**pecific

🟢**U**seful

🟢**M**easurable

Establishing Goals

⭐ Break goals down into smaller, more readily achieveable incremental goals

"Opportunities to achieve short-term goals are especially motivating in complex domains such as reading and writing, in which substantial time and effort are required and reaching long-term goals can take months or even years."

- Improving Adult Literacy Instruction:
Options for Practice & Research

Establishing Goals

⭐ Break goals down into smaller, more readily achieveable incremental goals

Improve English at work

➢ Understanding work hours orally

➢ Reading work schedule

➢ Greeting customers

➢ Taking messages

➢ Telling my boss I need to miss work
    ➢ Because I am sick
    ➢ Because I have an appointment

Self-determination

Establishing Goals

⭐ Break goals down into smaller, more readily achieveable incremental goals

Get a Driver's License	Become a Citizen	Read to Child	Improve English at work	Make Appt by Phone	Apply for Library Card

Establishing Goals

⭐ Break goals down into smaller, more readily achieveable incremental goals

1. Pick a goal
2. Break it down into possible smaller step-stone goals

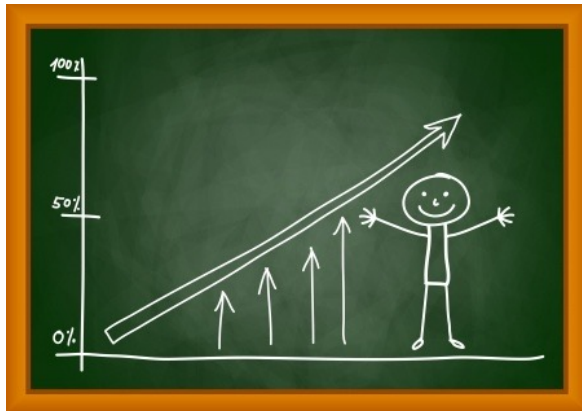| Get a Driver's License	Become a Citizen	Read to Child	Improve English at work	Make Appt by Phone	Apply for Library Card

Establishing Goals

- Create & talk with your student about goals for short intervals, such as this week, this month, this season

- Try to focus on developing learning or mastery goals which enable your student to monitor improvement instead of only results

Establishing Goals

If possible, engage your student in one or more of the following:

- Prioritizing their goals

- Identifing benefits and barriers to reaching their goals

- Creating a plan with steps to work toward their goals

Establishing Goals

🟢**S**pecific

🟢**U**seful

🟢**M**easurable

- Break goals down into smaller incremental goals

- Create goals for short intervals

- Try to focus on developing learning or mastery goals

NCSALL

Key Supports:

1. Managing positive and negative forces

2. Establishing goals

3. Building self-efficacy

4. Seeing progress toward reaching those goals
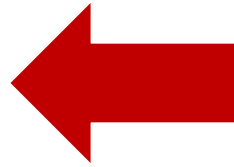
NCSALL	NEALPP
Key Supports:	**Affective Needs:**
1. Managing positive and negative forces	1. Agency
2. Establishing goals	2. Sense of belonging and community
3. Building self-efficacy	3. Stability
4. Seeing progress toward reaching those goals	4. Clarity of purpose
	5. Relevance
	6. Competence

Building Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is the belief that you can accomplish a particular task

It impacts:
- Willingness to try a task
- Willingness to put in increased effort
- Likelihood of giving up when you encounter difficulty

Strategies for Building Self-Efficacy

1. Mastery Experiences

2. Vicarious Experiences

3. Positive Support

1. **Mastery Experiences:** Early opportunities for and tangible evidence of success

Provide tasks students can do, provide scaffolding as needed to ensure success

Provide specific feedback & opportunities to try again with increased success and/or ease

Gradually increase task difficulty

1. **Mastery Experiences:** Early opportunities for and tangible evidence of success

"Generating Momentum"

- Do 2 or 3 quick tasks that are less demanding before attempting the more difficult task

- Help your student use this strategy on their own when they are working on English independently

2. <u>Vicarious Experiences</u>: help students picture success by seeing & learning about the success of other students, particularly those who may be social models

My Time in the United States
by Juan Valle

I came to the United States from El Salvador in 2008. I was seventeen. I went to Los Angeles to live with my mother. I did not like California. It had too many cars, houses, buildings and people. I like trees and grass.

After 8 months, I moved to Texas and lived with my aunt. I cleaned machines after work hours for a chicken processing company.

After 6 months, I moved to Virginia to be with my wife Ana. Our son Carlos Daniel was born in 2011. We call him Dani.

In Virginia I worked for my uncle in construction. I moved building trash into the dumpster. I was very tired at the end of the day. I told everyone I was a mechanic. The other workers brought me cars to fix. I worked in construction for 3 or 4 years. Then I became a full-time mechanic. I worked for myself.
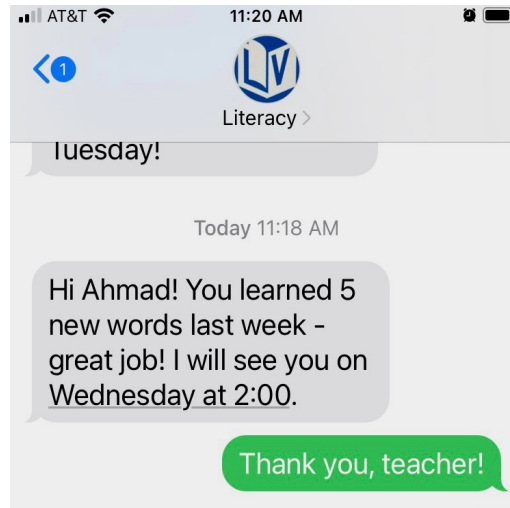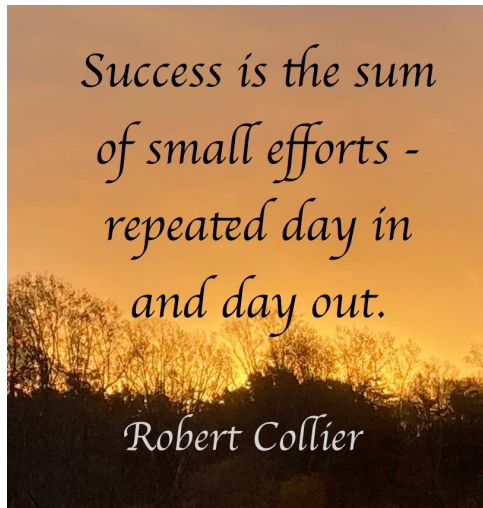
Our daughter Nathaly was born in 2018.

I wanted to learn English for my work and to speak with other people in stores in English. I wanted to be able to understand the teachers at my son's school. A friend told me about a program at Jefferson School. It was called Literacy Volunteers. ◆

3. <u>Positive Support:</u>

*Success is the sum
of small efforts -
repeated day in
and day out.*

Robert Collier

.ıl AT&T 🛜   11:20 AM

LV
Literacy

Tuesday!

Today 11:18 AM

Hi Ahmad! You learned 5
new words last week -
great job! I will see you on
<u>Wednesday at 2:00.</u>

Thank you, teacher!

Charlottesville is Good

by Marina Azizi

I came to Charlottesville in 2016. I came here with my daughters and my husband. It is good because we are safe. The weather is good, and we have electricity. My daughter can go to school. I can leave the house and go shopping. I have met many different people. One day I will be a citizen. ◆

Marina's daughters.

Share
inspirational
messages

Text
encouragement

Let them see
their success

Building Self-Efficacy

1. Mastery Experiences
2. Vicarious Experiences
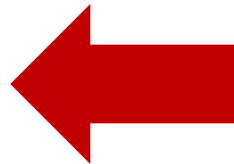3. Positive Support

Setting, monitoring & meeting goals

Self-efficacy

NCSALL

Key Supports:

1. Managing positive and negative forces

2. Establishing goals

3. Building self-efficacy

4. Seeing progress toward reaching those goals

NCSALL	NEALPP

Key Supports:

1. Managing positive and negative forces
2. Establishing goals
3. Building self-efficacy
4. Seeing progress toward reaching those goals

Affective needs:

1. Agency
2. Sense of belonging and community
3. Stability
4. Clarity of purpose
5. Relevance
6. Competence

Seeing progress toward reaching goals

1. Actively monitoring progress

2. Receiving effective feedback

3. Attributing success to effort

1. Actively monitoring their own progress

Self-determination

Word List

MONTH _____ YEAR _____

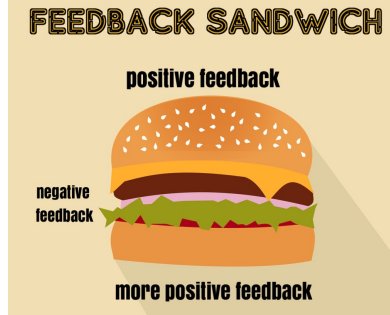| SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

Book Title and Number of Pages	Date	Genre	Write comments or interesting quotes you found. Then write why you chose them.

K	W	L

2. Receiving Effective Feedback

FEEDBACK SANDWICH
positive feedback
negative feedback
more positive feedback

Timely

Kind

Specific

7 Qualities of Effective Feedback

Positive

Brief

Honest

Useful

" Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new.

Albert Einstein

3. Attributing success to effort

"A learner who experiences success at a task will be more likely to persist if progress is attributed to something internal and controllable."
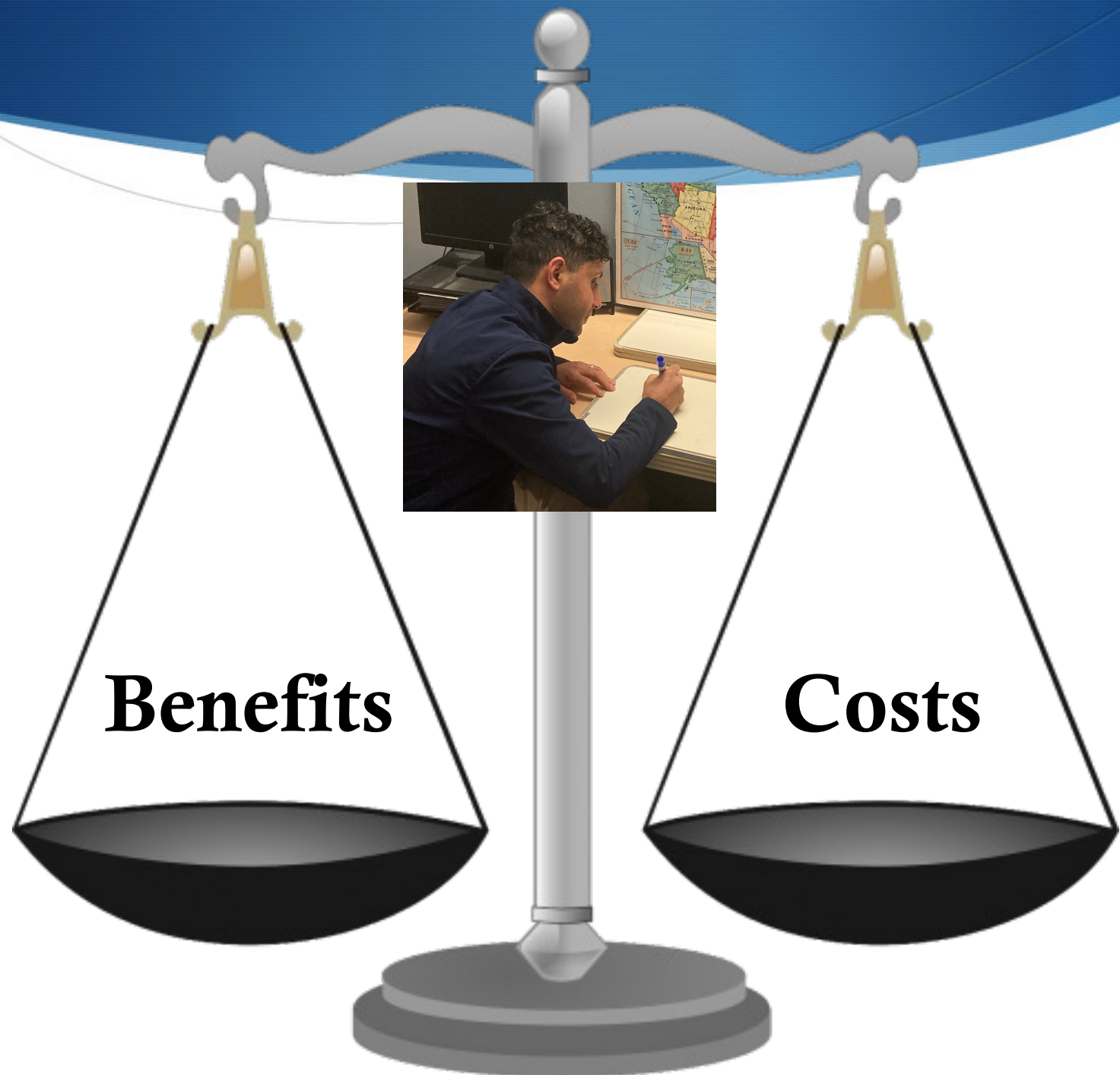
- Improving Adult Literacy Instruction

Seeing progress toward reaching goals

1. Actively monitoring progress

2. Receiving effective feedback

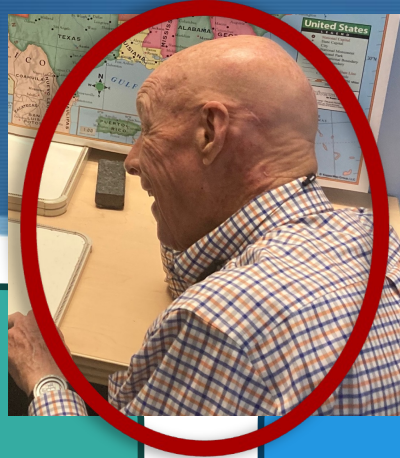3. Attributing success to effort

Setting, monitoring & meeting goals

Self-efficacy

Benefits   Costs

We are adult learners too!
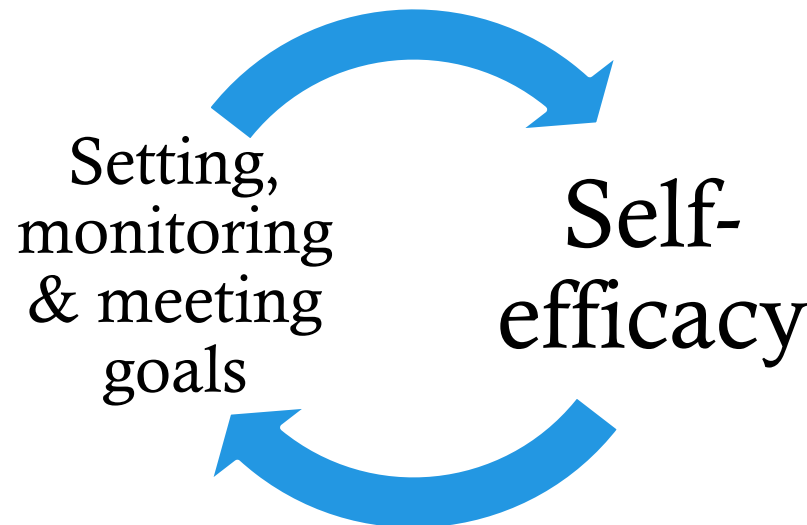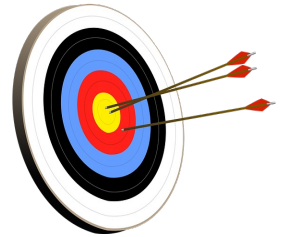
Motivation: the desire to do something

Persistence: continued effort to do it, in spite of difficulty

NCSALL

NEALPP

Key Supports:

1. Managing positive and negative forces

2. Establishing goals

3. Building self-efficacy

4. Seeing progress toward reaching those goals

Affective Needs:

1. Agency

2. Sense of belonging and community

3. Stability

4. Clarity of purpose

5. Relevance

6. Competence

Sources

- **ProLiteracy Research Brief, Nov 2020 - Perspectives on Persistence: A Review of the Research**
https://www.proliteracy.org/Portals/0/pdf/Research/Briefs/ProLiteracy-Research-Brief-05_Persistence-2020-11.pdf & accompanying webinar: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_40-26u0LTU

- **ProLiteracy Research Brief, January 2022 - Motivation and Adult Learners**
https://www.proliteracy.org/Portals/0/pdf/Research/Briefs/ProLiteracy-Research-Brief-07_Motivation-2022-01.pdf

- **Making it Worth the Stay: Findings from the New England Adult Learner Persistence Project**
https://nelrc.org/persist/pdfs/Making%20it%20worth%20the%20stay.pdf

- **ProLiteracy Courses:**
  - Adult Student Persistence: An Overview
  - Adult Student Persistence: Retention Through Demonstrated Success
https://proliteracy.csod.com/catalog/CustomPage.aspx?id=221002014&tab_page_id=221002014&tab_id=221002018

- **Improving Adult Literacy Instruction: Options for Practice & Research. Chapter 5: Motivation, Engagement, and Persistence**
https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/13242/chapter/7#132

- **Psychology Today**, various articles
  - https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-athletes-way/202107/the-neuroscience-motivation-and-persistence
  - https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/motivation
  - https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/fostering-freedom/201910/how-generate-momentum