

Maintaining Student Motivation



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Goals of this 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.
- Briefly describe your student (first name only).
- Describe one thing that motivates you to continue tutoring.

The Research



- A few 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.

The Research



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?

The Research



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.

1. Community and Belonging

When we feel welcomed, respected, and offered a sense of belonging, we are more apt to return to that setting or task. For that reason, cultivating a sense of belonging and community from the moment a prospective adult learner comes through the doors or calls is an important persistence strategy.



2. Clarity of Purpose



Clarity of purpose refers to helping students gain clarity about their own purposes for learning – their goals and dreams – and how the instructional approaches of their tutors address those purposes. Knowing this builds trust that the program will meet their needs.

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3. A Sense of Competency

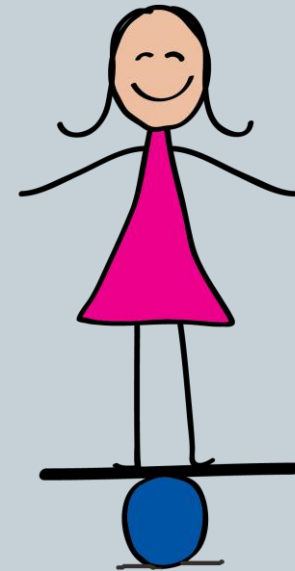
Adults' sense of competence and self-efficacy (beliefs about one's ability to perform in a specific area – cooking, math, languages, etc.) can have a profound effect on their persistence and achievement. Students with more self-efficacy are willing to work harder and persist in the face of adversity to reach their goals.



4. Stability



Learning is difficult in an environment that is chaotic or unstable. This is challenging, especially, for the many adult learners whose lives are marked by instability caused by poverty and trauma. According to Perry (2006), “The major challenge to the educator working with highly stressed or traumatized adults is to furnish the structure, predictability, and sense of safety that can help them begin to feel safe enough to learn.”



5. Relevance

The degree of perceived relevance of instruction to the adult learners' goals, interests and life experience is a key factor in adults' motivation to persist in their studies. Most adult learners juggle many competing priorities that may take precedence if the instructional program does not feel meaningful to their needs and interests.



6. Agency



Agency is the capacity for human beings to make things happen through their actions. As people mature, they move from dependence toward self-direction, and want to be treated as responsible individuals with the capacity to determine things for themselves.



In the Real World



Student Goals



Goals can be long-term...



Student Goals



Goals can be long-term...

- **Citizenship**
- **GED**
- **New Job**
- **Promotion**
- **Driver's License**

Student Goals



Or short-term...



Student Goals



Goals can be short-term...

- **Applying for a library card**
- **Attending a parent-teacher conference**
- **Finishing a workbook**
- **Learning 10 new vocabulary words**
- **Making an appointment over the phone**
- **Asking for directions**
- **Reading to a child or helping with homework**

Student Goals



All Goals should be SMART



Identifying Student Goals



- Consider using a student-generated goal worksheet to help your student focus on what he/she wants to achieve and why.

Identifying Student Goals



- 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.

Identifying Student Goals



- 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.

Identifying Student Goals



- Help your student identify factors that might hinder progress and strategies to overcome them.

Praise and Encouragement



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- 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 to 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 workshops, annual tutor retreat, tutor book group, or other LVCA events to connect with fellow tutors.
- Talk to a member of the staff. We are here to help and support your efforts!

