Instructional Strategies: Learner Goal Setting in Adult Education

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Objectives

You will be able to:

• Identify key findings from research on goal setting and persistence.
• Identify practical strategies that address six “drivers of persistence.”
• Identify at least two strategies that you will implement in your program.
Brainstorm with a partner:
Think about your (our) students. What most affects persistence, either in a positive or negative way?

Example:
The teacher affects persistence in a positive way; work schedules affect persistence in negative ways.

Courtesy: Simple Phrases for Leaving

• It was nice talking to you.
• Thanks for your time.
• Thanks for your help.
• See you later.


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National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) Persistence Study

Forces that affected persistence positively

- Relevance of instruction (63%)
- Relationships (63%)
- Having a goal (57%)
- Teacher and peers (51%)
- Sense of self (44%)

Forces that affected persistence negatively

- Life demands (transportation, child care needs, home life, work schedules, etc.) (49%)
- Relationships (unsupportive) (17%)
- Sense of self (negative) (11%)
Four Supports to Persistence

Manage positive and negative forces that help and hinder persistence.

• Help students establish goals.
• Show progress toward the goals.
• Build self-efficacy (the feeling that you can reach a goal).

Source: Comings, Parella, & Soricone, 1999.
The New England Learner Persistence Project

- Eighteen New England programs experimented with promising persistence strategies. Half were English as a second language (ESL).

- They focused on strategies that addressed:
  - Intake and orientation
  - Instruction and learning options
  - Counseling and peer supports
  - Re-engagement
Drivers of Persistence: Adults’ Needs

• A sense of belonging and community
• Clarity of purpose
• A sense of competence
• Stability
• Relevance
• Agency
Driver 1: A Sense of Belonging and Community

• Make the first interaction one that welcomes and builds community.

• Engage in group projects, recognitions, and celebrations.

• Establish personal relationships.
Driver 1: A Sense of Belonging and Community Examples

• Assign a trainer.

• Do a mixer (find someone who) activity for students to get acquainted.

• Set up a private Facebook class page.

p. 3-4 in handout
Trainers

TRAINERS

Duties:
• Help new students. Help students who are late or have been absent. Show them the agenda or the page in the book the class is using.
• Show the new students around the school. Show them the restroom, cafeteria, bookstore, and other important places.
• Help the teacher.
• Help anyone who doesn’t know how to use the equipment.

LANGUAGE YOU NEED TO DO THESE JOBS:
• Hi. Welcome to the class. My name is _______
• The agenda is on the board. We are doing ______ now.
• Can I show you some things around the school?
• Do you need some help?

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Classroom Roles and Duties

• **Materials Managers**—They pass out handouts to their classmates. They say: *Here you are. Did everyone get a handout? Who needs one?*

• **Trainer**—They are in charge of students who come late or new students. They say: *Hello, my name is ______. We are on p. ________.*

• **Cell Phone Monitor**—This person reminds the class that ringing of cell phones is disruptive to everyone. They say: *Please turn your cell phone to vibrate, or turn off your cell phone.*
A Sense of Belonging and Community: Do a Mixer

FIND YOUR CLASSMATE! Practice speaking English to your classmates.

**Rules:**
You can only ask the same student two questions.
You must write down the student's name. If you can't spell it, ask.
Use the correct grammar to make and answer questions.
For extra homework and writing practice, write 10 sentences about different classmates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>STUDENT'S NAME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did you...</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) teach school in your country?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) study at the university in another country?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) work as a cashier before?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) get a job recently?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) study at Chavez last semester?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) take a trip last year?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WERE YOU... in your country?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) a healthcare provider?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) a teacher?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) a computer programmer?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) a secretary?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DO YOU...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) like to write in English?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) want to continue studying at a college?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) work in a restaurant?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Driver 2: Clarity of Purpose

• Help participants consider goals.
• Make the connection between what’s being taught and students’ goals explicit.
• Make what you’re teaching transparent to learners.
Driver 2: Clarity of Purpose
Examples: Goal-Setting Worksheets

1. My Semester English Language Goals
2. Making and Revisiting Short-Term Goals
3. Attendance Goals

pp. 5–7 in handout
Driver 2: Clarity of Purpose

Examples: My Semester English Language Goals

My Semester English Language Goals
Beginning Level

Check (✓) the goals for you:

___ I will speak English 5 – 10 minutes every day.
___ I will speak English 10 – 15 minutes every day.
___ I will read 5 – 10 minutes in English every day.
___ I will read 10 – 15 minutes in English every day.

Celery, Green Beans, Sweet Potatoes

___ I will learn 3 new English words every week.
___ I will learn 5 new English words every week.
___ I will learn 7 new English words every week.
___ I will do my homework.
___ I will review our class lessons at home.
Driver 2: Clarity of Purpose
Examples: Making and Revisiting Short Term Goals

### Making and Revisiting Short-Term Goals

Complete the following survey at the beginning of the semester.

#### My Short-Term Goals

**Put a check ✓ next to your goals for this school year:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Personal/Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>get a job</td>
<td>visit my children’s school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stay at my current job</td>
<td>volunteer in my child’s school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enter job training</td>
<td>read to my children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get a promotion at my job</td>
<td>help my children with homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get more work skills</td>
<td>take my children to the library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>volunteer</td>
<td>go to school meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other work goal:</td>
<td>other personal goal:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>enter a Citizenship class</td>
<td>go to the next ESL level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get my U.S. Citizenship</td>
<td>go to a Basic Skills class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>register to vote</td>
<td>get my GED or HS diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vote in the next election</td>
<td>enter college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get involved in the community</td>
<td>enter another training class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other community goal:</td>
<td>learn computer skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>other educational goal:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### My Short-Term Goals

Complete the following survey at the end of the semester. **Put a check ✓ next to the goals that you accomplished this semester.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Personal/Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>volunteer</td>
<td>go to school meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other work goal:</td>
<td>other personal goal:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>enter a Citizenship class</td>
<td>go to the next ESL level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get my U.S. Citizenship</td>
<td>go to a Basic Skills class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


p. 6 in handout
### Driver 2: Clarity of Purpose

Examples: Goal-Setting Worksheets: Attendance Goals

#### Attendance Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Goal/ # of days</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tues</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thur</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Goal Met? Yes/No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| 3 |

p. 7 in handout
Progress Toward Goals

- **Revisit goals** individually or as a classroom activity.
- Ask students to **identify ways** to know they have **met their goal** to acknowledge success.
- Find ways to **celebrate** progress.
- Provide ways for students to **see success early** in program participation.
Clarity of Purpose: Transparency

• “I make notes when someone is giving me directions because I know I won’t remember and the notes help me. What do you do to remember what you’ve learned? When might you have to take notes at school or at work?”

• “Today I asked you to sit with a partner and read the paragraphs you wrote to each other and check each other’s writing. Why did I ask you to do that?”
Driver 3: A Sense of Competence

- Recognize student success.
- Help students learn to self-assess progress.
- Help students change negative self-talk.
- Build study skills.
Driver 3: A Sense of Competence Examples

• Progress graph
• Study skills
• Use exit tickets

pp. 8–9 in handout
Student Progress Graph
Weekly Spelling/Grammar/Vocabulary Tests

# correct

p. 8 in handout
Study Habits to Help You Reach Your Goals

Read the sentences. Answer Y for Yes and N for No about you. Then interview your partner. Example: I come to class on time. Do you...?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>You</th>
<th>Partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I come to class on time.</td>
<td>____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I come to class as often as I can.</td>
<td>____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I turn off my cell phone in class.</td>
<td>____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I do my homework and bring it to class.</td>
<td>____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I write new words in my notebook.</td>
<td>____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>I work with my classmates. I help my classmates.</td>
<td>____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>I bring my book and supplies to class.</td>
<td>____</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Management/Organization Strategy:**
**Student Binder Checklist**

Student's Name ____________________  
Date ____________________________

Check “Yes”✔ if the answer is correct.  
Check “No” ❌ if the answer is not correct.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Answers</th>
<th>Evaluator’s Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. My name and class name are on the binder.  
2. I have lined paper in the binder.  
3. I have five dividers.  
4. I have all my papers in the correct divider sections.  
5. I have only papers from this class in the binder.  
6. I can find my papers easily.

Number of **YES** checks: ________

Evaluator’s Name ____________________

D. Price/S. Gaer

p. 10 in handout
Driver 4: Stability

• Establish clear schedules and routines.
• Check in regularly with individual students to provide support.
Driver 4: Stability Examples

• Write an agenda on the board every day.
• Follow a syllabus.
• Create a class webpage.
Driver 5: Relevance

• Make explicit the connection between what’s being taught and participants’ goals.

• Use authentic materials.

• Make what you are teaching transparent to learners (similar to clarity of purpose driver).
Driver 5: Relevance Examples

• Reflection poster
• Authentic materials from workplace
Reflection: What did you do in class today?

Did you . . .

- Work in teams?
- Teach other students?
- Make decisions?
- Find solutions to problems?
- Organize your papers?
- Volunteer to ask or answer questions?
- Check your work and correct your errors?
- Use every minute of your time in class?
- Feel good about yourself?
- And, of course, speak, write, and understand English?
Alignment With the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: Tips to Consider

“Ask students to bring in authentic documents from their jobs, such as work schedules, memos, cleaning checklists, etc., and use them in class in scaffolded lessons.”

Source: Coleman, 2015.
# Hotel maintenance workers weekly job duties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DUTIES</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>Th</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sa</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Help housekeepers move carts up &amp; down stairs</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean the entire pool area</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean the entire front lobby area &amp; driveway</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do a walk-thru of entire building and groups (am &amp; pm)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean all parking lots</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean entire lower level</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Driver 6: Agency

- Provide clear and accessible information.
- Involve students in decision making.
Driver 6: Agency Examples

• Provide resources in the community.
• Provide opportunities to problem-solve.
Problem Solving: Discuss Real Problems
Problem Solving: Template

- What is the problem?
- What can he/she do?
- What will happen?
- What will he/she do?
Problem Solving: Useful Phrases

• I think he/she should do _____ because____.
• The problem is__________, so I think that___.
• What will happen if she does__________?
• If she/he does __________, then____________.
Goal-Setting Summary

• Adult learners who have specific goals are more likely to persist in their studies.

• The primary incentive to learner retention is learners being able to set a goal and realize some progress in reaching that goal.

Source: Comings et al., 1999.
My Commitment

I will implement the following two things I learned in this workshop in the next month.

1. ______________________________________

2. ______________________________________