CULTIVATING PERSISTENCE IN THE ADULT LEARNER
Principles of Cultivating Persistence in Adults

- Building Learners’ Self-Efficacy
  - Setting Appropriate Goals
  - Offering feedback to build a growth mindset
  - Assisting learners in managing errors
  - Reframing explanations in ways that motivate persistence
  - Modeling literacy and learning strategies
  - Using assessments appropriately

- Using and Inspiring Learners’ Interests
  - Finding value
  - Providing choice and autonomy
  - Encouraging collaboration and cooperation

- Overcoming systemic barriers to persistence
- Addressing negative effects of stereotypes
Setting Appropriate Goals

- Short-term literacy goals
- Long-term literacy goals
- Support learners’ awareness of progress on a weekly basis
Offering feedback to build a growth mindset

- What is your belief about intelligence?
- Do you believe that students’ inherent intelligence is the major cause of their achievement in school?
Fixed Mindset

- Intelligence is a fixed trait.
- Each person has a certain amount of intelligence and that can’t change.
- Student seeks tasks that affirm their intelligence and reject opportunities to learn if they might make mistakes.
- When mistakes occur, students are more likely to hide them.
- If you have the ability, you shouldn’t need effort because the ability will bring success all by itself.
- Students don’t recover well from setbacks.
- Students are less likely to persist with difficult tasks.

(Dweck, 2007)
Growth Mindset

- Intelligence can be developed through effort and education.
- Students focus on tasks that will challenge them and increase their knowledge and skills.
- When the student makes a mistake, he/she corrects it.
- Effort is a positive thing as it causes intelligence to grow.
- Students are more likely to persist with difficult tasks.
- When setbacks occur, the student escalates their efforts and looks for new strategies.

(Dweck, 2007)
Assisting Learners in managing errors

- Lead adults to expect errors as part of the learning process.
- Provide strategies for coping with errors and learning from them.
Reframing explanations in ways that motivate persistence

- What “attributions” do students form in response to success or failure?
- External “attributions” for *failure* are more likely to lead to persistence.
- Internal “attributions” for *success* are more likely to lead to persistence.
Modeling literacy and learning strategies
Using Assessments appropriately

- Present the results of assessments privately.
- Encourage students to focus on effort and improvement whenever possible.
- Allow the student to take an assessment again if he/she doesn’t receive an acceptable score.
Finding value

- Value = learners’ beliefs about whether a domain or task is:
  - Enjoyable (intrinsically interesting)
  - Useful
  - Important to identity or sense of self, and
  - Worth investing time in.
Providing choice and autonomy

- Providing choice on what activities to do and how to do them increases intrinsic motivation.

- Perceived self-control predicts:
  - Engagement in school
  - Academic achievement.

- Providing a rationale for a task or behavior supports perceived autonomy.
WHEN LEARNERS BELIEVE THAT THEY HAVE SOME CONTROL OVER THEIR OWN LEARNING, THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO TAKE ON CHALLENGES AND TO PERSIST WITH DIFFICULT TASKS, COMPARED WITH STUDENTS WHO PERCEIVE THAT THEY HAVE LITTLE CONTROL OVER THEIR OWN LEARNING.”
NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL (2012), PAGE 23
Encourage collaboration and cooperation

- Learning environments and experiences that establish positive relations with others while developing competence fosters engagement, motivation, and persistence.

- Opportunities to collaborate during reading and writing can increase motivation.
Overcoming systemic barriers to persistence

- Child care
- Transportation
- Strong social support network
- Personal goal
Addressing negative effects of stereotypes
Johanna’s Adult Basic Education (ABE) class

- As you listen, reflect on the persistence and motivation strategies discussed before.

- Watch for connections between what the teacher does and student persistence.
What do you think?

1. What problem is Johanna struggling with in her teaching?

2. Consider the two approaches Johanna has tried so far: the stand-alone lesson plan and the lost sheep approach. Why do you think these approaches frustrate both teacher and students?

3. Identify something Johanna could change in her teaching to support persistence more effectively.
Reflections on Johanna’s Class

- The challenges of “attendance turbulence”
- The importance of predictable routines
- Balancing teacher-learner and learner-learner activities
Ricardo’s English Language Learner class

- As you listen, reflect on the persistence and motivation strategies discussed before.
- Watch for connections between what the teacher does and student persistence.
Reflections on Ricardo’s Class

- What did Ricardo do to help students persist in his class?
- What more could he do?
- What motivates learners?
- What motivates me as a person?
Building Learners’ Self-Efficacy

- Set appropriate goals.
- Offer feedback to build a growth mindset.
  - Help learners manage errors.
  - Reframe explanations in ways that motivate persistence (attributions).
- Model learning strategies.
- Use assessments appropriately.
Using and Inspiring Learners’ Interests

- Find value.
- Provide choice and autonomy.
- Encourage collaboration and cooperation.
- Overcome systemic barriers to persistence.
- Address negative effects of stereotypes.
Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Motivation

- What is the difference between “intrinsic motivation” and “extrinsic motivation”?

- In what ways might external rewards or incentives support or hinder adult learning?

- What kinds of rewards or incentives, if any, might you consider using in your own teaching context to boost learner motivation?
Helping Adult Learners Persist

- Identify what learners value in their learning.
- Use and inspire learners' interests.
- Encourage learner collaboration and cooperation.

Andragogy = theory of how adults learn
Treat them as adults who are self-directed and want to be involved in their own learning.

“Learning is more meaningful when topics are relevant to students’ lives, needs, and interests and when students are actively engaged in creating, understanding, and connecting to knowledge.”

McCombs and Whistler
THE USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES – TO EXPOSE LEARNERS TO GENRES AND TOPICS, TO SCAFFOLD THEIR LEARNING WITH PROMPTS AND OTHER SUPPORTS, AND TO HELP THEM PRACTICE – IS LIKELY TO MOTIVATE THEIR INTEREST IN AT LEAST THREE WAYS: TECHNOLOGIES ARE NOVEL, THEY CAN EASE THE UNPLEASANT PARTS OF PRACTICE, AND THEY CAN EMPOWER THE LEARNER THROUGH DEVELOPMENT OF VALUED, RELEVANT DIGITAL LITERACY SKILLS.”
NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL (2012), PAGE 23
Which strategies were best demonstrated in this lesson?