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.

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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**	Forces that affected persistence **negatively**
Relevance of instruction (63%)	Life demands (transportation, child care needs, home life, work schedules, etc.) (49%)
Relationships (63%)	
Having a goal (57%)	Relationships (unsupportive) (17%)
Teacher and peers (51%)	
Sense of self (44%)	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.

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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.*

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

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Driver 2: Clarity of Purpose
Examples: Goal-Setting Worksheets: Attendance Goals

Attendance Goals

	Week	Goal/ # of days	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Total	Goal Met? Yes/No
Example:	1	4	✓	✓	✓		✓	4	yes
	1								
	2								
	3								

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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.

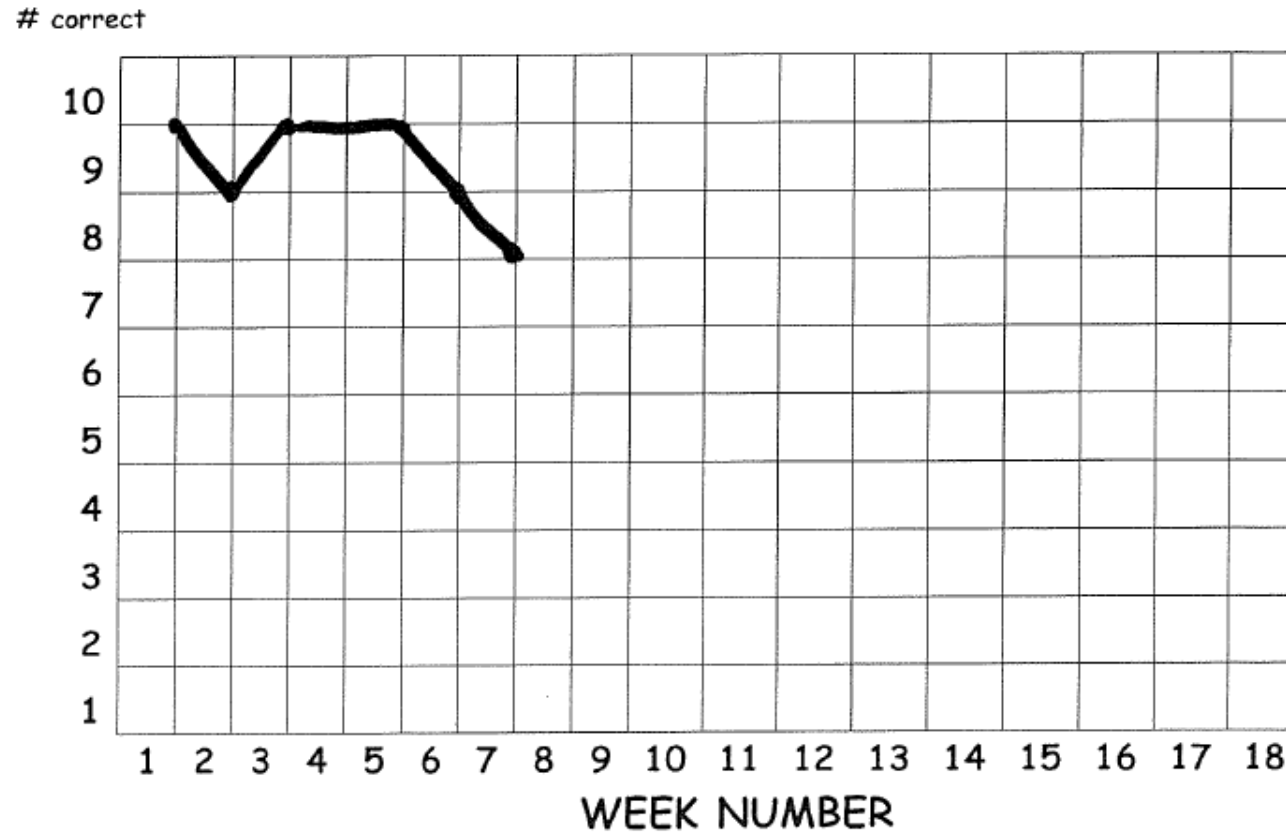- Help students change negative self-talk.

- Build study skills.

Driver 3: A Sense of Competence Examples

- Progress graph

- Study skills

- Use exit tickets

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Student Progress Graph
Weekly Spelling/Grammar/Vocabulary Tests

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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…?

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

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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.

	My Answers		Evaluator's Answers	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
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
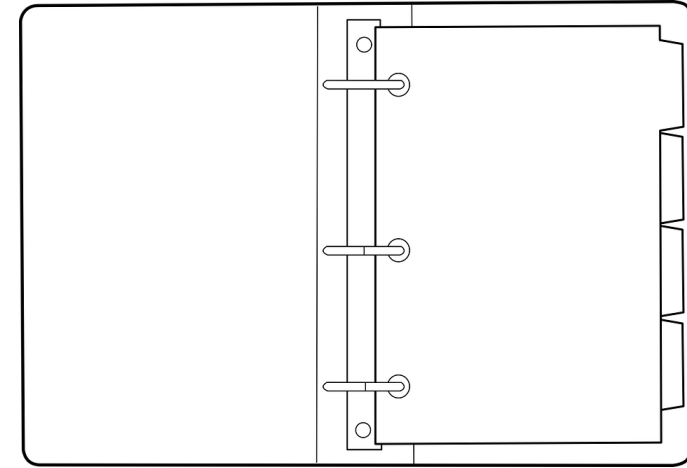
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Driver 4: Stability

- 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?

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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.

Authentic document (adapted)
Hotel maintenance workers weekly job duties

| DUTIES	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa	S	Notes
Help housekeepers move carts up & down stairs	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Clean the entire pool area	X		X		X	X	X	
Clean the entire front lobby area & driveway	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Do a walk-thru of entire building and groups (am & pm)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Clean all parking lots	X		X		X	X		
Clean entire lower level	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

Driver 6: Agency

- Provide clear and accessible information.

- Involve students in decision making.

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Driver 6: Agency Examples

- Provide resources in the community.

- Provide opportunities to problem-solve.

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Problem Solving: Discuss Real Problems
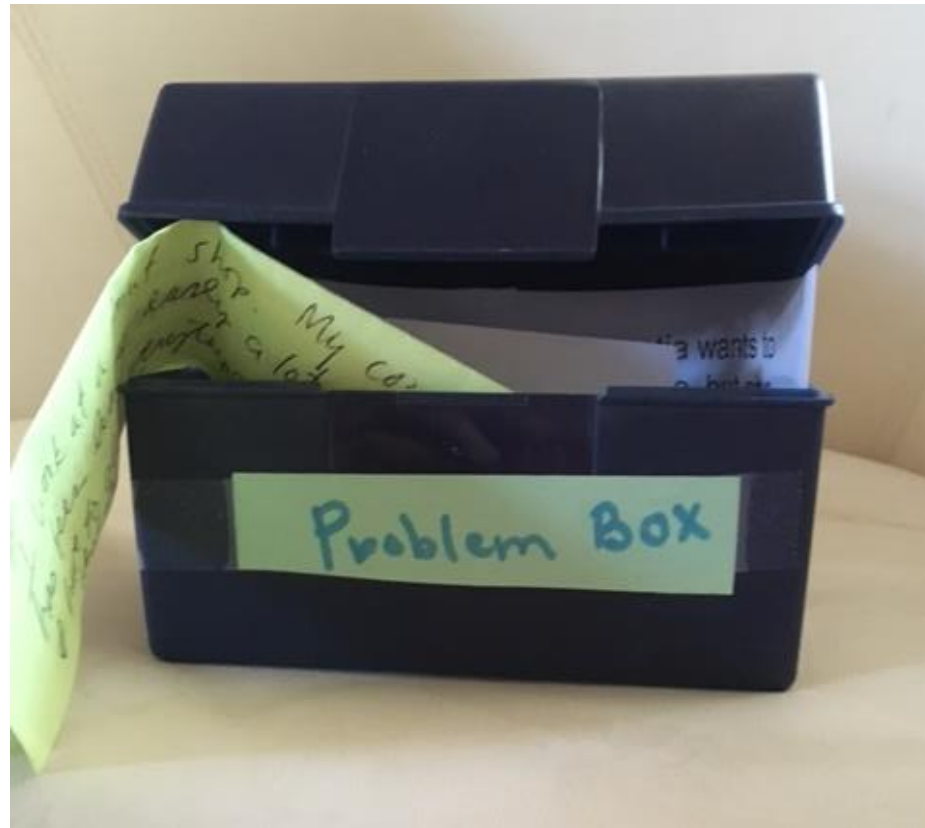
Problem Solving: Template

- What is the problem?

- What can he/she do?

- What will happen?

- What will he/she do?

Problem Solving Template

What is the problem?
_____

A

What can he/she do?

1._____

2._____

3._____

B

What will happen?

Good ☺	Bad ☹
1._____	1._____
2._____	2._____
3. _____	3. _____

What will he/she do?
_____
_____

Why?
_____

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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_____.*

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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. _____