Management of Student Retention & Persistence

Presented by:
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Persistence & Retention

- How do we define persistence?
- What are the barriers to students’ persistence?
- What factors support persistence and retention?
- What do you currently do to support student persistence & help them overcome those barriers?
- What actions can we take to further improve student persistence & retention rates?
- What resources will we need to implement this plan?
OBJECTIVES

At the end of the session, participants will:

▶ Identify the barriers to student persistence
▶ Learn about 4 supports for persistence
▶ Learn about some strategies/activities that support for persistence
▶ Reflect on their current practices
▶ Identify 3 strategies/or activities that their programs could work on to improve current practices
Welcome /Introductions/Expectations

Define Persistence

Barriers to Student Persistence

Factors that Support Persistence

Strategies /Activities to Support Persistence

Reflection on Practice

Program Improvement Plan

Evaluation
Define: "Persistence"

- Most literature in adult education define persistence as:

  *The length of time an adult attends a class or tutoring session.*

- In a NCSALL study by John Comings, Andrea Parrella, & Lisa Soricone, persistence is defined:

  *Adults staying in programs for as long as they can, engaging in self-directed study when they must stop out of their programs, and returning to a program as soon as the demands of their lives allow.*
Persistence vs. Retention (What’s the difference?)

- According to Innovative Educators, an organization that supports academic and professional growth in higher education: (http://www.innovativeeducators.org)

- Retention refers to an institution's ability to retain students from one performance period to the next.

- Persistence is the student's ability to continue enrollment from one term to subsequent terms.
What are the barriers to students’ persistence? (Why don’t students stay around longer?)

- Child-care issues
- Transportation issues
- Work schedule conflicts
- Lack of time
- Health issues
- Others?........
# Barriers to Students’ Persistence

- **Situational**
  - Transportation
  - Family responsibilities
  - Financial challenges

- **Institutional**
  - “Red Tape”
  - Schedule problems
  - Intake processes

- **Dispositional**
  - Learners’ Attitudes
  - Values
  - Perceptions
Reflection on your current practice

- How do you or your organization currently identify barriers to students persistence?

- How do you/your organization to help students overcome these barriers?

- Do we engage the students in conversation? Do we follow up? Do students feel comfortable enough to respond honestly?

- What are you prepared to do? What area do you have control over?

- What factors have you identified that contribute to students’ persistence?
Which indicator characterizes a persistent student in this NCSALL study?

- Gender
- Immigrant Status
- Age of children
- Employment status
- Working hours
- Goals
- Negative school experience
- Parents’ education
- Involvement in previous training
- Single parent status
Adult Student Characteristics that Support Persistence

- Immigrant status, age over 30, and parents of teen and/or adult children

- Involvement in previous efforts at basic skills education, self study, or vocational skill training

- Specific goal
Management of Positive & Negative Forces

3 Key Strategies

▶ **Strategy 1**: Student Needs Assessment

▶ **Strategy 2**: Sponsorships

▶ **Strategy 3**: Building a Sense of Community
Strategies to incorporate sponsorship

Upon intake, ask students to

- Identify someone who can be their sponsor
- Define their expectations of the sponsor’s role
- Give you permission to get a sponsor for them if they need one
- Ask student leaders to become sponsors.
- Assign as staff or volunteer as a student persistence coordinator
- Set up a Student Retention Team to reach out to at-risk students
Building Self-Efficacy

► What is “Self-Efficacy?”

“A belief by learners that they can be successful when attempting new activities as learners.

► How can teacher help build students’ self-efficacy?”
Final Reflection

- Which top 3 factors will have the greatest impact upon your students’ persistence and your program’s retention rate?

- How will it affect your approach to learner persistence?

- What are you willing to change and improve upon? How?
Bibliography

- McLendon, Dr. Lennox and Polis, Kathi, *Here Today, Gone Tomorrow…Strategies for Motivating and Retaining Adult Learners*, Leadership Excellence Academies (an NAEPDC and ProLiteracy America Joint Initiative)