

Learner Persistence Program Self-Assessment of Intake and Orientation Strategies

This compilation of promising practices in learner persistence draws from the New England Learner Persistence Project, research by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (Comings, Parrella & Soricone, 1999) and the NCSALL Learner Persistence Study Circle Guide (2005), *Equipped for the Future*, the *Stick With It* project of the National Research and Development Centre in the United Kingdom, and others. The evidence for the promising practices comes from research and professional wisdom. Practices in some categories necessarily overlap, such as goal-setting upon entrance and during participation.

We hope that doing the self-assessment is a fruitful experience for you. For more information, please contact the New England Learner Persistence Project Director, Andy Nash at anash@worlded.org

Program self-assessment scale: 1 – Top priority need to address 2 - We should work on this at some point 3 – We’re already working on this but could do it better 4 – We do this adequately 5 – We do this well		
Promising Practices in Learner Persistence	Self- Assmt	Comments, Questions to Explore, Evidence for the Score
Intake and Orientation		
a. Build a trusting, respectful, and caring relationship with students from the beginning by ensuring that the first contact with prospective students is welcoming (e.g. there is someone to greet new students, there is clear signage and information in students’ languages) and informative.		
b. Provide clear and accessible information to enhance students’ ability to make informed decisions.		
c. Allow students to sample program activities before enrolling as well as clarify mutual expectations for students, instructors, and the program.		
d. Assess students’ skill levels and screen them for learning disabilities or other special needs, and make referrals as appropriate. Provide potential students with enough information that they can make an informed decision about enrolling, including a realistic assessment of skill levels and the time and effort required for achieving their goals.		

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e. Build community by holding group orientations (where possible) for new students, during which students can get to know peers, establish rapport with staff and students, and find connections and commonalities across classrooms.		
f. Help students plan for managing the positive and negative forces that will support or hinder their participation by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assisting them in strengthening the positive forces, such as identifying and/or building a support network; - counseling them in addressing critical barriers to participation before placement in instructional services; - referring them to agencies/services for assistance with non-academic needs. 		
g. Discuss students’ persistence, learning and aspirations. Begin the process of exploring and articulating long and short-term goals, and of constructing a learning plan that addresses instructional and support services that move them toward their goals.		
h. Engage students in considering opportunities and reasons for pursuing postsecondary education and training.		
i. Involve current students in orienting new learners to the program, answering their questions, and providing peer guidance.		