Practical Strategies for Supporting Learner Persistence
Persistence

Most adults’ goals require hundreds of hours of instruction to achieve

“Persistence is adults staying in programs for as long as they can . . . and returning to program services as soon as the demands of their lives allow.” (John P. Comings)

Current ABE system only has resources to serve those who are eager and ready (life circumstances support consistent study)
The Case for 100 Hours

- 100 hours of adult ed instruction = Adults who achieve 100 hours out-earn non-participants by $9,600K/year after 10 years (Reder 2014)
- 100 hours of instruction = Minimum needed to increase one grade level equivalent on a standard reading test
- 75% of ELLs increase one level after 150 hours
- 113 hours = 1/10th of the time a K-12 student spend in class during a year
- Adults are making significant gains in a short amount of time!

Does your org track student hours? What % of your students do you estimate have reached 100 hours?
5 Persistence Pathways

- LONG-TERM
- MANDATORY
- SHORT-TERM
- TRY-OUT
- INTERMITTENT
Force Field Analysis

1996 NCSALL Study on Persistence:

Positive forces
Negative forces

Which forces are strongest?
Which are easiest for us (adult educators and administrators) to affect?
Positive and Negative Forces

Most barriers reported by students were personal (outside of class) or environmental

In interviews with students, positive forces were mentioned more frequently than negative forces

Findings suggest building positive supports can outweigh some negative forces
Positive Supports Orgs Can Offer

1. Support goal development
2. Increase self-efficacy
3. Help students manage + and – forces in lives
Personalized Persistence Support

- Personalized Education Plan (PEP)
- Reminder Texts
- Re-Engagement Calls
- Re-enrollment
What are some of the pros and cons for...?

• controlled enrollment
• rolling enrollment
# The Case for Controlled Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
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<tr>
<td>“Official” sessions increase value of service and student buy-in</td>
<td>Requires training staff on enrollment processes (assessments, education plans, etc.)</td>
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<td>Increases organizational efficiency, allows for long-term planning during semester</td>
<td>Results in waitlists after classes fill</td>
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<td>→ Improves classroom experience for all students (manageable class sizes, fewer interruptions from students joining late)</td>
<td>Students who miss the enrollment period must wait to start class/may not come back</td>
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<td>→ Filters for students who are ready to make a commitment</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Path of a Student</td>
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<td><strong>Greet &amp; Screen</strong></td>
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<td>- Fill out forms</td>
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<td>- Review class schedule/ask questions</td>
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<td><strong>Set Goals &amp; Evaluate Skills</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Personal Education Plan (PEP)</td>
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<td>- Language assessment</td>
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<td><strong>Program Placement</strong></td>
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<td>- Class placement</td>
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<td>- Textbooks and onboarding</td>
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<td><strong>Support during the Semester</strong></td>
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<td>- Attendance and/or reminder calls</td>
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<td>- Re-engagement calls if necessary</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Re-Enrollment</strong></td>
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<td>- Check in about goals</td>
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<td>- Plan for next semester</td>
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Laying the Groundwork

Prepare Resources
- Include staff time for registration and persistence support in grant budgets
- Schedule instructors or volunteers for each role: screening, PEP, assessment & placement
- Train staff/volunteers for their roles

Prepare Staff
- Do a walk-through of your “path of a student” with staff
- Keep key documents, such as rosters and PEPs, in a shared location
- Use fillable templates or forms to increase efficiency

Prepare Students
- Spread the word! Publish registration session times/dates in advance
- Provide context: give walk-ins and callers an overview of your “path of a student”
- Make sure staff inform students of next steps during the session
Student Stories

Javier, 176 hours
Registered Fall 2016

Muya, 162 hours
Registered Spring 2017

Anabel, 83 hours
Registered Summer 2018
Resources

