



**Texas Center for the Advancement of
Literacy and Learning**

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**Suggestions for Improving Learner Persistence:
A List Generated by Texas Adult Education Program Directors,
Coordinators, & Supervisors who Participated in the NCSALL/TCALL
Study Circle Meetings on Learner Persistence**

From January 2005 through August 2005, twelve adult education program administrators from across the state of Texas participated in a study circle on learner persistence. The Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning (TCALL) in conjunction with the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) specifically facilitated the study circle meetings for adult education program administrators.

During the course of the study circle meetings, participants read and actively discussed research related to learner persistence. Throughout the meetings the participants were encouraged to develop specific suggestions for ways that adult education programs could improve learner persistence. The following is a list of techniques and suggestions developed by the group. These suggestions are not endorsements. The fact that a technique is listed here does not imply that it has been endorsed by TCALL staff, NCSALL staff, or by study circle participants as a whole.

* For more information on NCSALL's study circle guide on learner persistence see "[Learner Persistence in Adult Basic Education](http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/lp.pdf)." URL:
<http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/lp.pdf>

- 1) Have students in the class use a cell phone to call the students who are absent to tell them they are missed. Do this while the class is in session.
- 2) During orientation stress that attendance is important not just to the individual student, but also for the welfare and continuation of the program.
- 3) Create a policy that requires 10 students to "make" a class.
- 4) Inform the students that if they do not attend classes regularly, the class may have to close and the students will be merged with another class.

- 5) Focus on the quality of class instruction.
- 6) Have social service agents come to adult education centers.
- 7) Offer special Friday classes. Examples of classes could include free tax preparation, health education, financial literacy and credit predator awareness.
- 8) Have drop-in classes once a week that serve as make-up classes or extra hours for currently enrolled students.
- 9) Open the computer lab at night to allow for make-up hours. Allow the computer lab to open every Friday for 8 hours so the students can make up hours they have missed.
- 10) During non-term periods, for instance during the summer, have Enrichment Classes for currently enrolled students that have shown gains on the progress test. Examples of classes include: job-related/interviewing, book club, citizenship, and/or field trip classes that include trips to area museums and libraries.
- 11) Bring Community Liaisons to the class once a month. Have students complete a learning interest survey on topics covering career skills, transition to college, parent education, and personal management and communication skills. Have individuals from the community do presentations on topics of high student interest.
- 12) Allow early registration for those students who have taken the progress test. Set up automatic registration so they don't have to stand in line to register.
- 13) Help with job placement. Offer a job readiness class. For example, recruit from the upper level ESL class. Seeing that job readiness classes are offered to upper level ESL students will help serve as an incentive to lower level ESL students to stay with the program. Have specific employers from the community partner to come in and speak with the students about obtaining jobs with them. Have job fairs and a job club for students to join.
- 14) In addition to phone calls to students who miss class, send students a postcard with the actual classroom picture on it saying, "We miss you."
- 15) Identify tracks of students and place them according to their interest. Examples include an Academic (GED) track or an Employment track.
- 16) Engage the students in project-based learning.
- 17) Have a comprehensive orientation process.
- 18) Hire an intake specialist.

- 19) Limit open enrollment, but still allow court-mandated students to join a program as needed.
- 20) Have Cultural Sharing/Awareness activities inside the classroom and sponsored by the program to help build rapport between students.
- 21) Collaborate with agencies such as Head Start and Even Start.
- 22) Approach orientation as a process not a one-time event. Utilize classroom time to revisit goals and challenges as well as celebrate achievements.
- 23) Allow for activities that will promote classroom community, a sense of ownership and camaraderie among students.
- 24) Develop a buddy system among students so they can communicate with each other about work missed and encourage each other to attend.
- 25) Survey students more than once a year.
- 26) Have former students as guest speakers at various events from orientation through graduation.