

## Educational Interviewing

Support services that are tailored to target populations includes logistical elements, like transportation and childcare, but also the services that prepare students to succeed in education, like orientation, study skills development, barrier removal, and goal-setting. These preparation activities have been seen to have substantial impact on learner retention and achievement. Intentional goal-setting with students has been elevated on the national level to a mandatory requirement, meaning that only those goals that are identified in advance will be counted as successes in year end federal reports.

Research and best practices demonstrate that students persist longer, attend more regularly, focus better on achieving their goals, and achieve better when:

- They understand how their goals and learning plan fit into their real reasons for trying out the basic skills program,
- They know what the expectations and criteria are for “success” and are involved in their own assessment,
- The learning design is adjusted for their individual life circumstances and learning styles, and
- The learning setting is comfortable and familiar.

The Educational Interviewing process is designed to give extra emphasis to these adult learning success factors. It can be a separate course closely tied to instruction or it can be integrated into instruction. It can be done with individual students one-at-a-time, or with small groups, or in larger groups. Different components of the Educational Interviewing process could happen in any combination of settings and learner group size.

The purpose of these Educational Interviewing activities is to improve learner retention, persistence and performance through research-proven goal setting, problem solving, evaluation and intervention, and self-awareness strategies. They also will enable basic skills practitioners to collect accurate data needed to:

- design appropriate educational offerings,
- predict student performance outcomes more accurately, and
- gather accurate demographic, characteristic and performance information for reporting purposes.

Educational Interviewing activities therefore focus on:

- Orientation to the program, its resources and services;
- Current adult learner abilities, characteristics, styles and readiness to learn;
- Personal, educational and employment background and interests;
- Skill gaps, learning deficiencies and difficulties, barrier identification with strategies, recommendations and interventions for improvement;
- Specific long- and short-term learner goals;
- The skills needed to reach those goals, and
- A plan of action to reach those goals (personal learning plan or contract).

Research and successful practices also suggest that adult learners want and need to review their progress, goals, barriers, behaviors and learning plan design fairly often, i.e., at least every week or two, and that feedback, too, is part of learning: “You can’t learn without feedback,” notes Grant Wiggins. “It’s not teaching that causes learning. It’s the attempts by the learner to perform that cause learning, dependent upon the quality of the feedback and opportunities to use it.”

If these activities are offered as a course in a community or technical college, they can generate 1-3 credits per enrolled student with a maximum three credits per learner per year. Students could register for three consecutive 1-credit courses. If offered as a CTC course, this activity must meet for at least 11 hours per quarter.

# Educational Interview

