Learner Persistence at Adult Education Programs

Nadeen Lester & Chelsea Stewart

Northern Colorado Professional Development Resource Center

ncpdc@svvsd.org

- I would rate my knowledge of this topic as
  - 1. none
  - 2. some
  - 3. proficient
  - 4. expert

- My familiarity with practices to improve student persistence is
  - 1. none
  - 2. some
  - 3. proficient
  - 4. expert

Summer Institute **2012**

1

- *Persistence and standards of quality*
- *Defining persistence*
- *Persistence drivers*

2

- *Applications of persistence research*
- *Strategies to enhance learner persistence*

1

What is persistence?

*How do persistence
and retention
differ?*

2

*What are
the
6 drivers
of persistence?*

3

*What persistence-
enhancing strategies can
programs use?*

*What strategies can
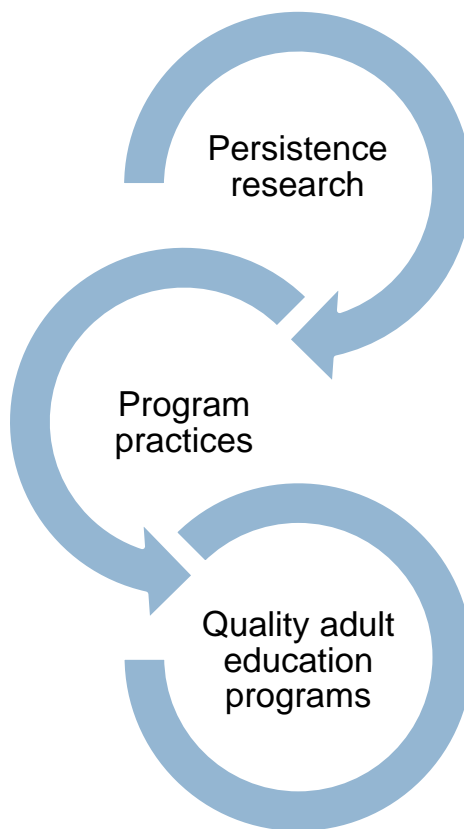teachers use?*

Program quality standards

Colorado Standard 6:

Learner Support and Retention

"Program helps learners persist in their learning until they reach their educational goals."

Standards of Quality for Adult Education Programs:

http:www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/SoQ.htm

6.1 Identify persistence forces and barriers	6.2 Offer supportive environment	6.3 Provide sufficient intensity and duration	6.4 Address learner absences
6.5 Share personal/family community resources	6.6. Recognize progress and achievement	6.7 Advise about next steps	6.8 Update learner eligibility status

Persistence and program quality

Persistence research

Program practices

Quality adult education programs

What is persistence?

What is persistence?

Springfield MA
Read Right Now: Marta

"Well, at first I wanted to come to learn how to read and write 'cuz of my kids and my grandkids, but now I enjoy coming here and I learned a lot. And it's helped, it's helped me, just gave me my self-esteem back and everything."

What is persistence?

Persistence is continuing to do something, an effect that continues even after the initial impetus has been removed.

What is persistence?

Springfield MA
Read Right Now: Bree

"Well. Um. Being a teenage mom, I had my son; I was 15 when I had my son, so my focus was on him. And OMG. So I really didn't have the time to go to school. I only got as far as the 8th grade. And I know that it was the time for me now to do something for myself, to better myself."

What is persistence?

Persistence is continuing to do something, an effect that continues even after the initial impetus has been removed.

Persistence is returning to the classroom when the time is right.

Reflection

What forces or conditions could affect this student's persistence?

What is persistence?

Persistence is continuing to do something, an effect that continues even after the initial impetus has been removed.

Persistence is returning to the classroom when the time is right.

What is persistence?

Persistence is continuing to do something, an effect that continues even after the initial impetus has been removed.

Persistence is returning to the classroom when the time is right.

Persistence is driven by an individual's responses to positive and negative forces that are not necessarily under the school's control.

Persistence vs. Retention

Students persist, programs retain.

Persistence allows that learning and growth can take place in people's lives even when learners are not in school.

Persistence vs Retention

Student Profile: Edward
Adult Literacy Action

"Now I know I'm getting older now but I still have dreams. You know, I still have dreams that may be opening my own business. I'm a good painter. I could do drywall and stuff like that."

"You mostly remember anything and everything. That's how I got through life, you know – remembering little details."

In your opinion. . .

. . .what's driving Edward's persistence?

. . .what did Edward's program do to enhance his persistence?

1	*2*	*3*
What is persistence?	*What are the 6 drivers of persistence?*	*What persistence-enhancing strategies can programs use?*
How do persistence and retention differ?		*What strategies can teachers use?*

Drivers of Persistence

Sense of Belonging & Community	Clarity of Purpose	Agency
Learners experience a sense of belonging and community at the program or class.	Learners have established concrete goals. Learners see measurable progress toward goals.	Learners feel capable of initiating actions to benefit themselves.
Competence	Relevance	Stability
Learners want to build competence in areas which more schooling can address. Learners believe their efforts will lead to success.	The instructional program is meaningful to the learners' needs and interests.	The program offers the structure, predictability and sense of safety that learners need in order to feel confident about their progress.

Positive

- The learner experiences a sense of belonging and community at the program or class.

Negative

- The learner does not experience a sense of belonging and community at the program or class.

Positive

- The learner has established concrete goals.
- The learner sees measurable progress toward reaching goals.

Negative

- The learner has not established concrete goals.
- The learner does not see measurable progress toward goals.

Sense of Belonging & Community	Clarity of Purpose	Agency
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Focus on a student. . .

Think of a successful adult learner you have known.

Describe the student to a partner.

What was driving his/her persistence?

What did the program do to help?

1

- *Persistence and standards of quality*
- *Defining persistence*
- *Persistence drivers*

2

- *Applications of persistence research*
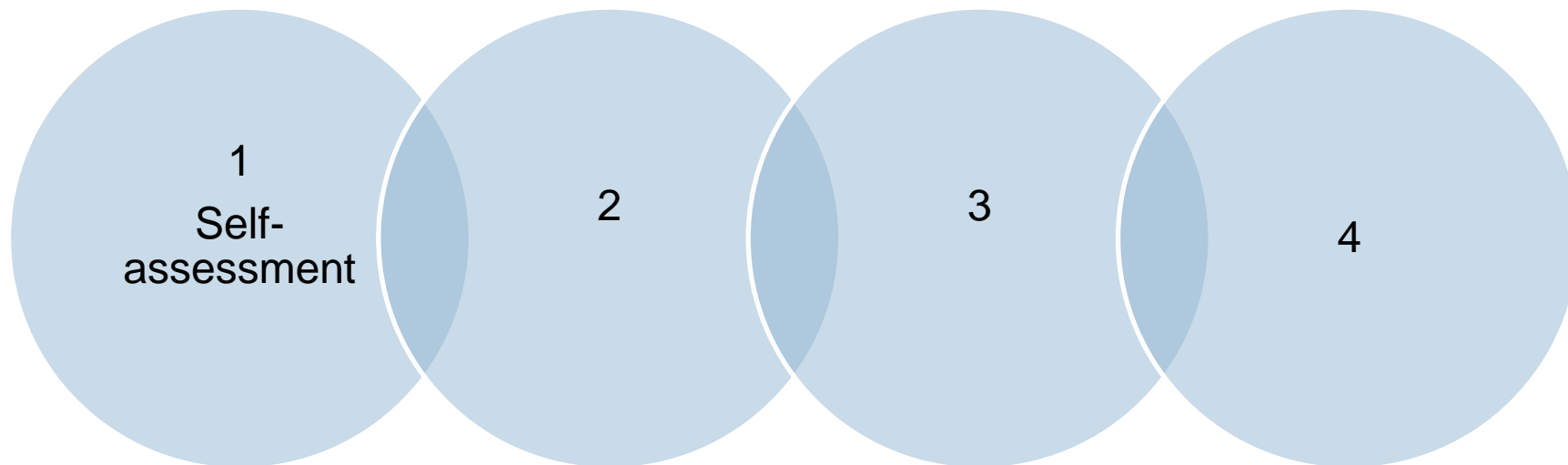- *Strategies to enhance learner persistence*

NELRC program self-assessments

Tools to guide program design.

Recommend best practices.

Staff members can complete rubrics individually.

Staff members compare ratings and comments to identify priority areas for improvement.

1
Self-assessment

2

3

4

Intake & Orientation	Program Design & Management	Instruction
Seeing Progress	Counseling & Support	Student Involvement

Sense of Belonging & Community	Clarity of Purpose	Agency
Competence	Relevance	Stability

Program self-assessments

Promising Practices in Learner Persistence   **Self-Assessment by PROGRAM AREA**

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		
Intake and Orientation - --- 9 promising practices		
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. Etc.		

Self-Assessment by DRIVER OF PERSISTENCE

Promising Practices in Learner Persistence		

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

| Stability – 10 promising practices		
a. Have a system for identifying students' needs for support services; determine which needs the program is equipped to address and which cases should be referred to other agencies; document counseling activities and referrals; and follow up on each case.		
b. Promote a support network within the program where staff, volunteers, or peer mentors make personal connections with specific students on a regular basis.		
c. Develop student "cohorts" – groups of students who participate together in program activities (e.g. study groups, goal-related workshops, classes) as a learning community.		
d. Implement a formal system for staying in contact with and supporting the continuous learning of students who are absent or stopping out, including admission policies that enable easy and timely re-entry to classroom instruction. (Etc. – 6 more on the list)		

Discussion

Read and discuss **one** of the self-assessment rubrics.

Talk about promising practices your program does well.

Which practices need to be addressed?

1
Self-assessment

2
Identify areas for improvement

3

4
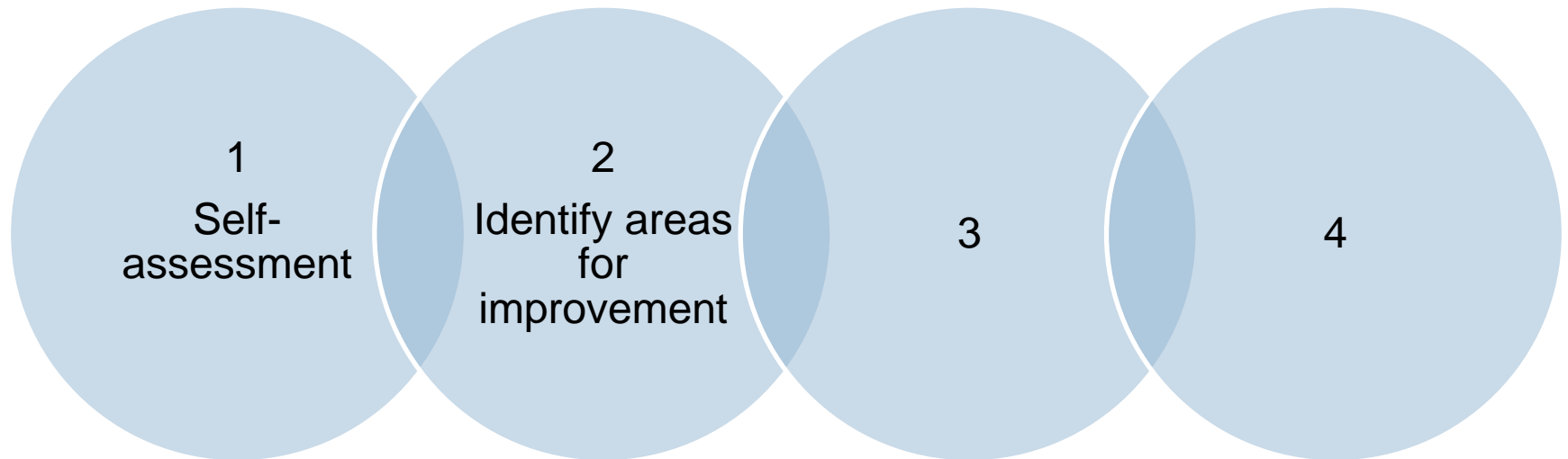
Techniques for Improving Learner Persistence - Summary of Participant Suggestions

Schedule drop-in classes once a week that serve as make-up classes or extra hours for currently enrolled students.

Hire an intake specialist.

Survey students more than once a year.

Offer a job readiness class. Have employers from the community come in and speak with the students about jobs.

Create a wall of graduates. Create a wall of photos and cards from students.

California Adult Learner Persistence Project

Choosing strategies

Building Community in the Classroom to Support Learner Persistence

Dialogue: Building Community

Plan a procedure to welcome new students to the class without putting the students on the spot or embarrassing them. Be careful about personal questions.
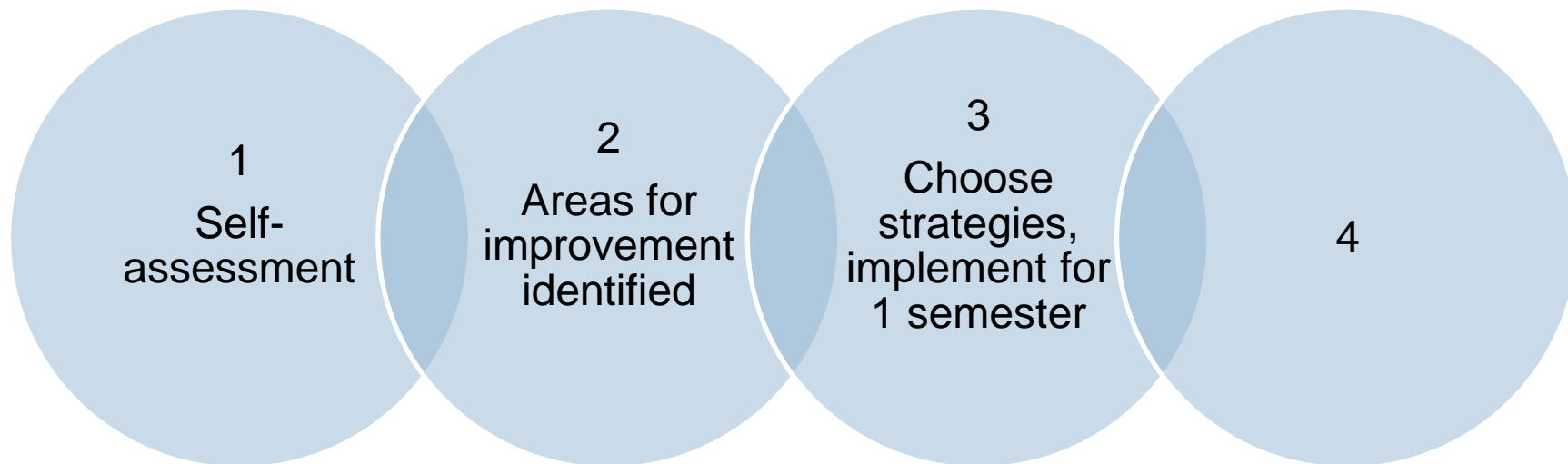
Assign class jobs, e.g. managing attendance, handouts, passing out books, lending supplies, welcoming new students. This encourages student-to-student interactions.

Get to class before students and greet them as they arrive. Learn their names quickly.
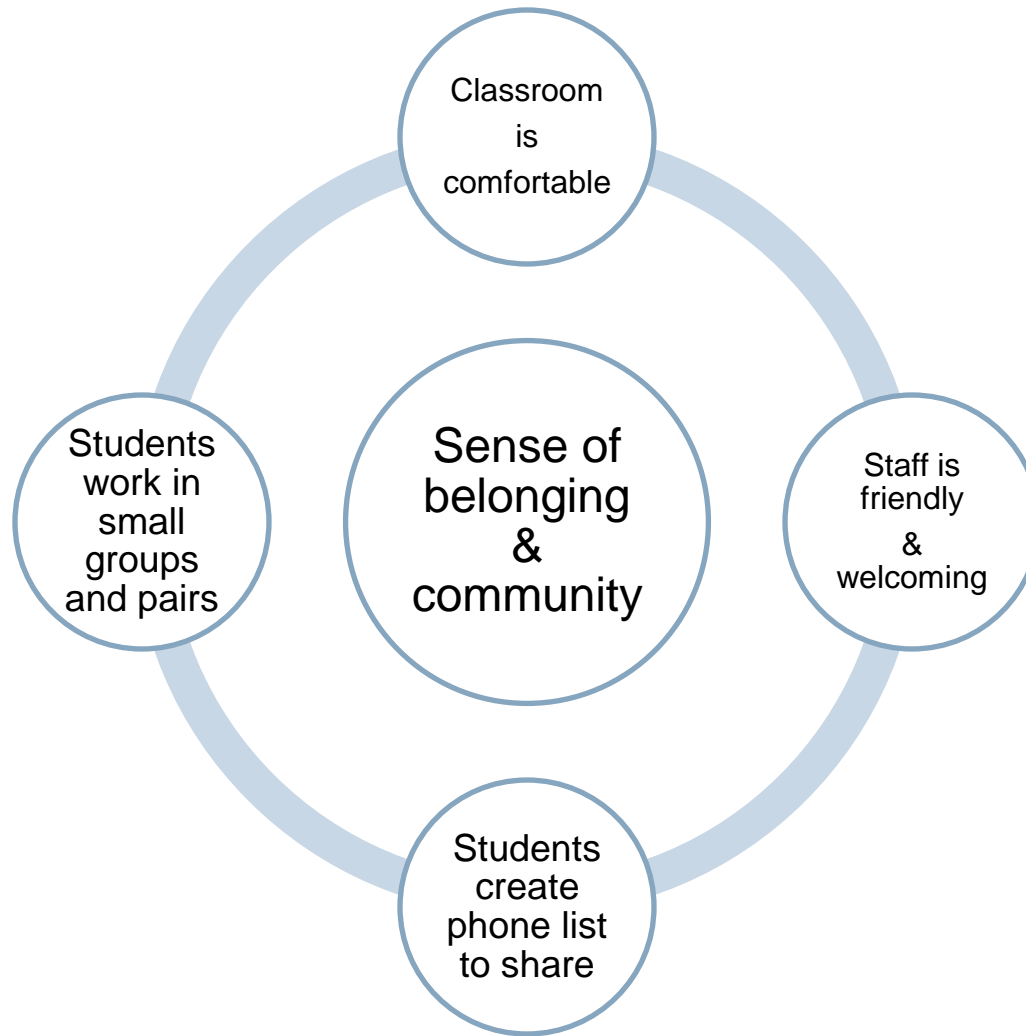
Rearrange desks so they face each other.

Periodically check to see that students know each others' names. Put up questions at the beginning of class about people's names, e.g. Name 4 students from Somalia.
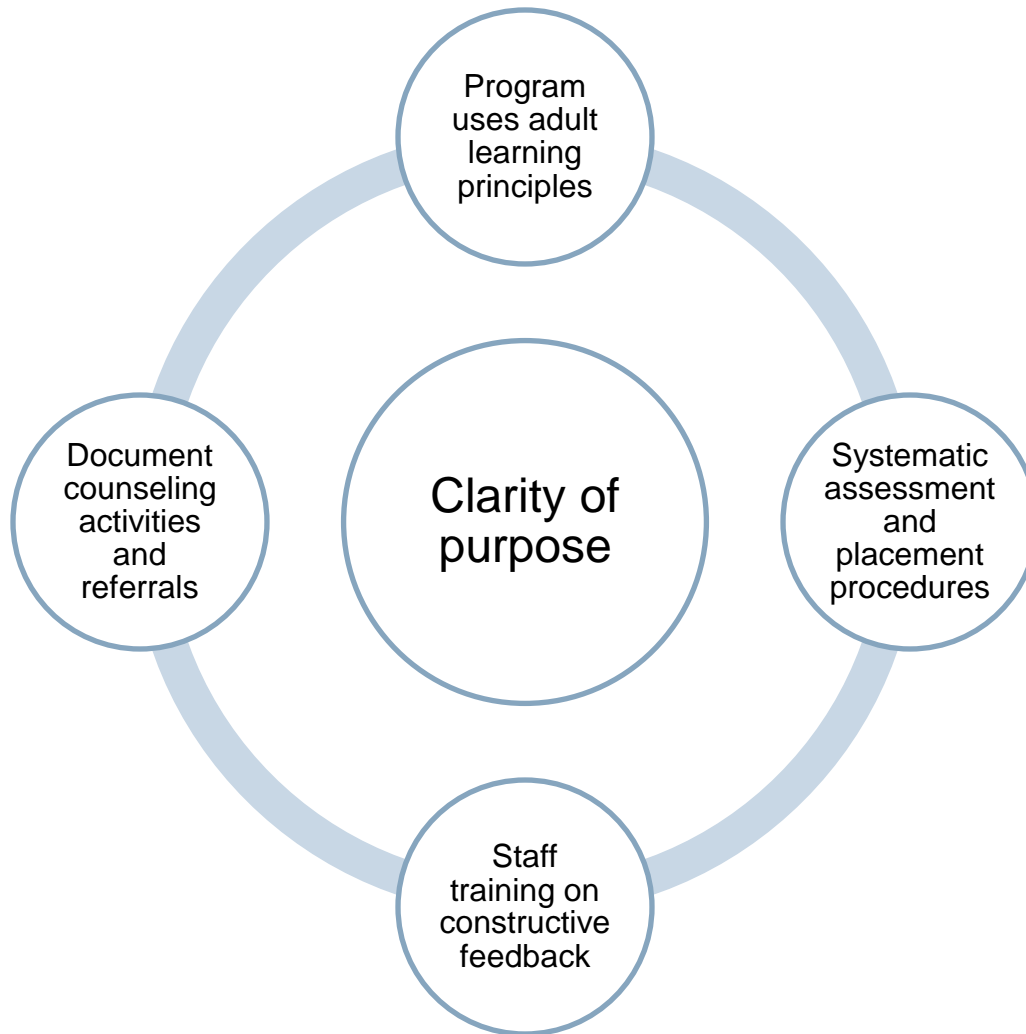
Use a variety of grouping strategies that allow students to practice with different students every day.
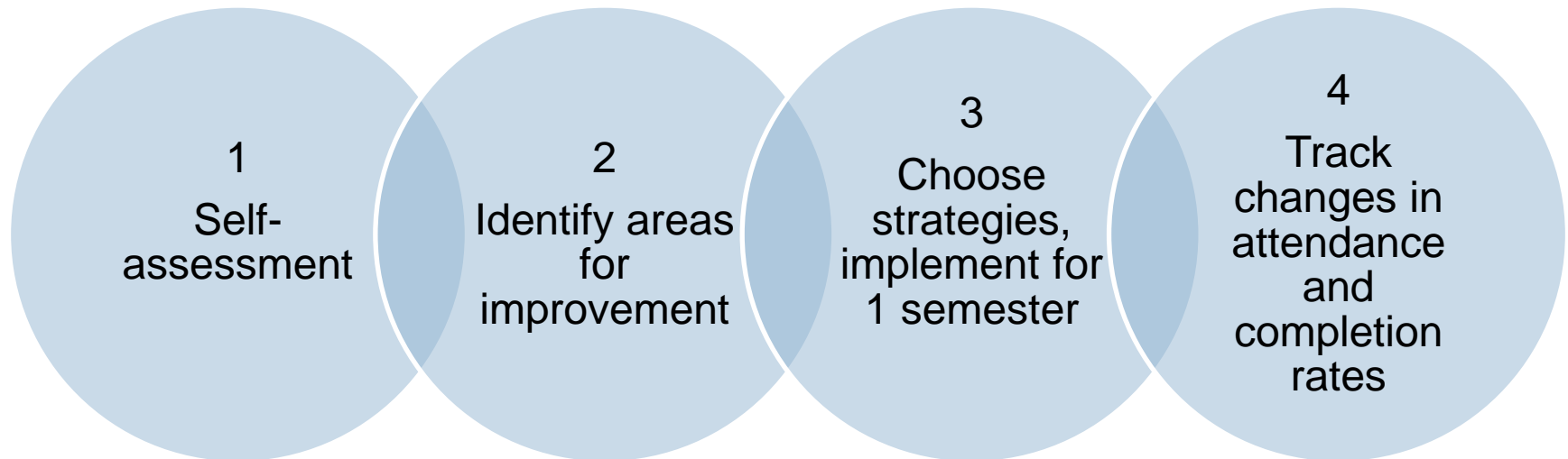
1
Self-assessment

2
Areas for improvement identified

3
Choose strategies, implement for 1 semester

4

Implementing promising practices

Implementing promising practices

1
Self-assessment

2
Identify areas for improvement

3
Choose strategies, implement for 1 semester

4
Track changes in attendance and completion rates

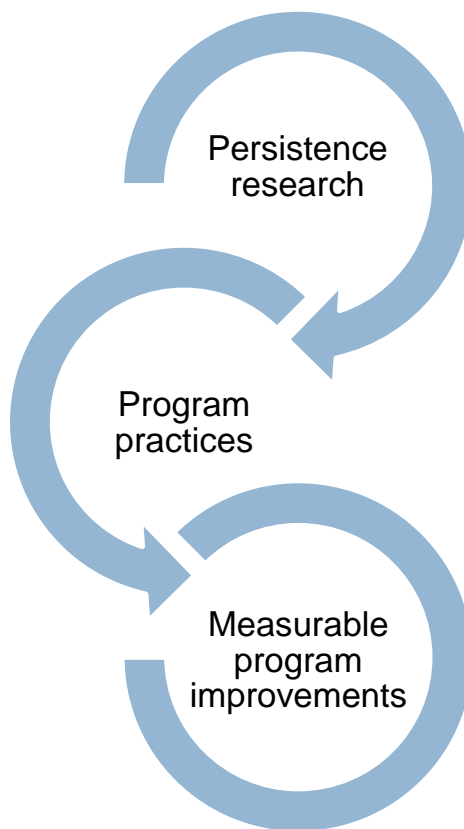# Persistence and program quality

Persistence research

Program practices

Measurable program improvements

New student orientation

How is this guest speaker enhancing the persistence of new students?

Adult education providers can boost learner persistence by intentionally addressing the drivers through all facets and phases of their programs.

New England Literacy Resource Center
http://www.nelrc.org/persist/

For example, an informative and welcoming student orientation that *begins the goal-setting process* and that *involves enrolled students as presenters* can address various needs for

✓ a sense of belonging
✓ clarity of purpose
✓ competence
✓ relevance
✓ and agency.

1	*2*	*3*
What is persistence? *How do persistence and retention differ?*	*What are the 6 drivers of persistence?*	*What persistence-enhancing strategies can programs use?* *What strategies can teachers use?*

We value your feedback!
- Please fill out the evaluation form.
- Return the evaluation to your presenter.