

Rountable: Fein & Ross

2003 Midwest Research to Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, and Community Education

Helping Adult Learners Plan for Success

Erich C. Fein
Kirk E. Ross

We recognize there are significant external and internal barriers to effective planning and goal pursuit that are particular concerns for adult learners. Often, these barriers arise from conflicting adult roles (e.g. parent and adult learner), as well from a real or perceived lack of resources. We begin this session by reviewing common barriers to goal pursuit within the adult education environment, and we will explain how these barriers serve as a starting point for the ideas presented in this session. We will address several specific barriers, which include:

- Conflicting goals
- Lack of sufficient resources to accomplish multiple goals
- The inability to categorize and identify resources for goal pursuit
- The inability to prioritize goals
- Difficulty in identifying and overcoming barriers to goal attainment

Currently, adult education practitioners in Ohio help individuals set goals, review progress towards goals, and diagnose reasons for failure during goal pursuit. However, less attention is devoted to ways in which adult learners process feedback, habitually revise goals, and develop arrays of subgoals that link to higher-level focal goals. There is plentiful conceptual and empirical literature on self-regulation that can offer informed, strategic points of intervention to address limitations found in many educational models. In the second part of the session, we suggest a process model that can help practitioners address deficits in goal prioritization and resource allocation. We first introduce the model on a conceptual level, and then we will walk participants through an interactive activity designed to illustrate how educators may apply self-regulation principles when working with individual adult learners. We use handouts to illustrate a process model educators can use to guide individuals through discovering and clarifying key educational and life goals, identifying higher-level goals that serve as motivating factors in the pursuit of goals, and establishing a networking of appropriate subgoals that can lead to attaining long-range educational goals.

Erich Fein, Center on Education and Training for Employment, The Ohio State University, 1900
Kenny Road, Columbus, OH 43210; 614-688-4213; fein.5@osu.edu
Kirk Ross; ross.527@osu.edu

Paper presented at the Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, and
Community Education. The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, October 8-10, 2003.