Summary of Input from Adult Education Classes

United Way prepared a lesson planning template[[1]](#footnote-1) for learners in adult education classes to provide input and context for the Adult Education Convening project. This template was adaptable for ESOL and ABE/ASE classes, and was designed to be implemented flexibly. An estimated 103 ESOL learners, and 29 ABE/ASE and vocational training learners participated from five agencies in April and May. Roughly half the participants were from one agency whose primary focus is ESOL. Questions included

* “Why am I here? I come to this program because…”
* “Digging Deeper: What services are out there? What are their purposes?”
* “School: One thing I want to tell people [who organize adult education]…”

The responses were heavily weighted towards explaining learners’ purposes in attending adult education, and their reasons for selecting the program.

**Summary of Input from ESOL Learners:**

By far the biggest purpose cited for attending ESOL classes was to learn English. Speaking, learning or improving the language were most commonly mentioned in the responses. Reading and writing English was also mentioned. The most common reason mentioned for wanting to learn English was getting a job or a better job. A broad range of other reasons were mentioned: going to college, becoming a citizen, communicating with medical staff, getting a GED, interacting with other members of the community, English for everyday functions, improving computer skills, helping children with homework and reading, and entering job training. Respondents also mentioned an interest in self-improvement, in socialization and making new friends, and that they enjoyed the activity of learning.

Of the reasons cited for selecting a particular program, instructional and program quality (highlighting teacher quality in particular) was most frequently mentioned. Geographic and scheduling accessibility, rapport with staff, low cost of the program, and good reputation were also noted.

**Summary of Input from ABE, ASE/GED and Vocational Training Learners:**

Context and purposes provided by respondents in these classes tended to cite life events and difficulties that led them to class. These included family issues and struggles with prior education. Positive interactions such as inspiring students and teachers, wanting to be role models for children, and personal motivation were noted as reasons respondents remained motivated to participate in programs. Respondents also cited getting a GED and training, continuing their education, and obtaining better jobs as goals. There was praise for teacher and program quality and supportive environments. Concerns were mentioned about transportation and accessibility. The most common concern was the difficulty and expense of the new GED.

**For More Information:**

The full text of transcribed responses have been made available on the Adult Ed project website and can be found here: <http://adultedri2015.weebly.com/>

1. Special thanks to Janet Isserlis for her support in designing the lesson planning template. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)