



Satisfaction-Priorities Surveys

Interpretive Guide Addendum:
Adult Learner Inventory™



Contents

- Addendum: The Adult Learner Inventory™ 3**
- Versions of the Adult Learner Inventory 3**
- Item Structure on the Adult Learner Inventory 3**
- The Scales..... 4**
- ALI: 8 Scales..... 4
- Description of Scales..... 4**
- Outreach:..... 4
- Life and Career Planning: 4
- Financing:..... 4
- Assessment of Learning Outcomes: 4
- Teaching-Learning Process:..... 4
- Student Support Systems..... 4
- Technology: 4
- Transitions: 4
- Reliability and Validity 5**
- Reliability 5
- Internal Validity 5
- The Inventory Development..... 5**
- Contact us 5**
- For More Information 6**

Addendum: The Adult Learner Inventory™

The Adult Learner Inventory (ALI) was developed by Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) and CAEL (the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning) and is appropriate for students 25 years of age and older, primarily in undergraduate programs at adult-focused institutions. The ALI is similar in structure and design to the RNL Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), but the items are unique. CAEL's Principles of Effectiveness for Serving Adult Learners served as the basis for the inventory's construction.

The ALI gives the institution an opportunity to examine the priorities of their adult learners as a unique group. The data will help you to identify what matters to your adult students and how satisfied these students are. With this information, colleges and universities can target areas most in need of improvement in order to retain adult students.

The Adult Learner Inventory asks students to respond with a level of importance and a level of satisfaction. A performance gap is calculated by subtracting the satisfaction score from the importance score.

Versions of the Adult Learner Inventory

The Adult Learner Inventory is available in two versions:

- Four-year college and university version
- Community college version

Item Structure on the Adult Learner Inventory

There are 47 standard items rated for importance and satisfaction on the ALI.

The ALI includes 10 items which may be defined by the institution and rated for importance and satisfaction. Since the ALI is only available for online administrations, the text of the campus items is included in all reporting.

There are 20 items for students to indicate how important factors were in their decision to enroll in the program.

Two summary items are included the survey, related to overall satisfaction and if the student would recommend the institution.

There are 18 standard demographic items on the ALI. Some of the standard demographic items allow for multiple responses, directing students to check all that apply.

The ALI includes two optional demographic items with up to six responses (students may only select one response). The text for these items utilized by your institution is included in the reporting.

The survey also includes an optional demographic item to capture the students' major or program with a four-digit numeric code. The responses are included in your results.

The Scales

For the Adult Learner Inventory, the 47 items of expectation are analyzed statistically and conceptually to provide eight composite scales. These scales follow seven of the eight original Principles of Effectiveness for Serving Adult Learners, as defined by CAEL, plus one additional area focusing on transitions. A description of the scales follows.

All: 8 Scales

- Outreach
- Life and Career Planning
- Financing
- Assessment of Learning Outcomes
- Teaching-Learning Process
- Student Support Systems
- Technology
- Transitions

Description of Scales

Outreach: assesses the way the institution conducts its outreach to adult learners by overcoming barriers of time, place, and tradition in order to create lifelong access to educational opportunities.

Life and Career Planning: Assesses how the institution addresses adult learners' life and career goals before or at the onset of enrollment in order to assess and align its capacities to help learners reach their goals.

Financing: Assesses the way the institution promotes choice using an array of payment options for adult learners in order to expand equity and financial flexibility.

Assessment of Learning Outcomes: Looks at the way the institution defines and assesses the knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired by adult learners both from the curriculum and from life/work experiences in order to assign credit and confer degrees with rigor.

Teaching-Learning Process: Assesses how the institution's faculty use multiple methods of instruction (including experiential and problem-based methods) for adult learners in order to connect curricular concepts to useful knowledge and skills.

Student Support Systems: Addresses how the institution assists adult learners using comprehensive academic and student support systems in order to enhance students' capabilities to become self-directed, lifelong learners.

Technology: Assesses the institution's use of information technology to provide relevant and timely information to enhance the learning experience.

Transitions: Assesses how the institution supports guided pathways leading into and from its program and services in order to assure students' learning will apply to successful achievement of their educational and career goals.

Another principle defined by CAEL is **Strategic Partnerships** which looks at how the institution engages in strategic relationships, partnerships, and collaborations with employers and other organizations in order to develop and improve educational opportunities for adult learners. It was determined in the development of the ALI that students would not be able to respond to this area.

The items which contribute to each scale can be viewed within your results. Use the filter in the upper left on the Item Report segment to see the items within each scale.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

An effort was made to measure the statistical reliability of the inventory at the Scale/Principle level over time. The inventory was assessed for test-retest consistency, using a sample of 155 students who completed the inventory twice. The scale scores for these two administrations generated a reliability coefficient (alpha) of 0.8.

Overall, the ALI's reliability appears to be appropriate, especially given its reliance on a relatively small number of items.

Internal Validity

The scales contained in the Adult Learner Inventory were tested for homogeneity by calculating coefficient alpha. Overall, the scales demonstrate internal consistency at levels that are within the boundaries of generally accepted standards. The overall coefficient alpha for importance was 0.79 and 0.83 for satisfaction.

Input from numerous participants suggested that length could serve as a deterrent for student responses to the ALI. Therefore, every effort was made to reduce the overall size of the instrument. The length of the Inventory was subsequently reduced from an initial 54 items down to 40, and then expanded to 47 to include the transitions items. The scales were reduced using factor analysis and inter-item correlations, which identified areas of redundancy within the eight scales.

The Inventory Development

The Adult Learner Inventory was designed by RNL with cooperation from CAEL. Their Principles of Effectiveness for Serving Adult Learners served as the basis for the Inventory's construction.

The original survey was piloted in 2002. The community college version was piloted during the 2005-06 academic year.

Contact us

For general questions about reviewing your results or to order materials for a future administration, please contact:

- Shannon Cook, Senior Director of Retention Solutions, Shannon.Cook@RuffaloNL.com

To schedule an in-depth report discussion phone call at **no charge** or to explore opportunities to have a consultant come to campus to present your results (additional fees apply), please contact:

- Julie Bryant, Associate Vice President of Retention Solutions, Julie.Bryant@RuffaloNL.com

For questions regarding the raw data, please contact

- StudentSuccessTech@RuffaloNL.com

For More Information

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Download this document and the separate addendum documents for the specific survey versions from this location: www.ruffaloNL.com/SPSInterpretiveGuides.

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