

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## **Using the Past Schooling and Background Inventory**

The following is taken from "The 'First Three Weeks' Retention Process" by Dr. B. Allan Quigley, 1993. It is based on the outcomes of a series of four research projects over an eight year period. Findings from these investigations indicated:

- The first three weeks are critical for the potential drop out population.
- It is possible to identify many of those learners who are at-risk during the orientation and intake period.
- The at-risk learners who leave in the first three weeks appear to be affected or discouraged by what they are experiencing in the program - much of this appears to arise from their past schooling experiences.
- Creating high support situations with increased academic challenge in the first three weeks can make a difference in retaining this group.

### **Steps for Implementation**

Use of the Past Schooling Inventory should come after observation of the student during a tour of facilities and a one-on-one interview. Special attention should be paid to attitudes and body language. Those students who seem uncertain, uncommitted, skeptical, hostile, extremely nervous or fearful, or who do not make eye contact, fidget, are distractible or are not engaging should be considered "at-risk" for dropping out and are good candidates for the application of the Past Schooling Inventory.

Before assignment to class, the intake person should spend approximately 45 minutes completing and discussing the Past Schooling Inventory with each at-risk student. The intake person should read each statement aloud using his/her own copy while the student completes the Inventory by circling in pencil a number on the continuum for each statement. During this process, the student should be put at ease and encouraged to think back to his/her school experiences and to answer each question carefully. They should also be encouraged to honestly project how they think they will do in the present school situation.

The intake person should build a profile by listening carefully to the discussion of each statement. He/she should schedule a one-on-one interview with the at-risk student at least once per week. In these interviews, have the student review his/her Past Schooling Inventory marking choices with a different color of pencil. Use the Inventory as a baseline with the at-risk student for at least six weeks. All information about the at-risk student should be shared with the appropriate teacher(s) at each step in the process.

Research has also found that at-risk students are more likely to remain in class if they become part of a small group (4 to 6) of regular attenders. This can be done by placing the student into a very small class or into a small group within a larger class. The choice to use small group is based on the expectation that peers in a smaller, supportive atmosphere make the major difference. It may also be helpful to assign a mentor or buddy to the at-risk student.



