The Adult Learner Inventory (ALI) was developed by Noel-Levitz 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 Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), but the items are unique. CAEL’s Principles of Effectiveness for Serving Adult Learners serve as the basis for the Inventory’s construction.

The Adult Learning Inventory results can be combined with CAEL’s Institutional Self-Assessment Survey (ISAS) to provide a broader view of the adult learning experience on campuses. Both tools are components of CAEL’s Adult Learning Focused Institution (ALFI) Initiative. For more information on the ISAS or ALFI, please contact CAEL (www.cael.org).

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 ALI
The Adult Learner Inventory is available in two versions:
• Four-year college and university version
• Community college version

Item Structure on the ALI
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.
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:
• How would you rate your overall satisfaction with this program?
  1 - Not satisfied at all
  2 - Not very satisfied
  3 - Somewhat dissatisfied
  4 - Neutral
  5 - Somewhat satisfied
  6 - Satisfied
  7 - Very satisfied
• Would you recommend this program to other adult learners?
  1 - Definitely not
  2 - Probably not
  3 - Maybe not
  4 - I don’t know
  5 - Maybe yes
  6 - Probably yes
  7 - Definitely yes

There are 18 standard demographic items on the ALI. Some of the standard demographic items do 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). Consult your survey administrator for details on the items utilized by your institution.
The survey also includes an optional demographic item to capture the students’ major or program with a four-digit numeric code. Again, consult your survey administrator for details on the corresponding major or programs.

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.

ALI: 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.

The other principle is **Strategic Partnerships.** This principle can be assessed through CAEL’s ISAS. **Strategic Partnerships** 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.

The items which contribute to each scale can be reviewed within your campus report. The HTML electronic report includes the items within the scales on the scale report; when you select the scale name, it will expand to show the items. In the paper report, there is a section which provides the scales alphabetically and the list of items within the scale.

Reliability and Validity

**Reliability**

An effort was also 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.

Further demonstration of validity will be done on an ongoing basis as the number of observations, as well as availability of criterion data, increases.

**Internal Validity**

The final 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 Noel-Levitz with cooperation from CAEL (the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning). CAEL’s *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. As of 2013, the Adult Learner Inventory has been administered by more than 220 institutions and completed by more than 108,000 students.

Interpreting Your Results

For guidance on interpreting your results, please refer to the General Interpretive Guide or contact Noel-Levitz for additional assistance.

A word about Noel-Levitz

A trusted partner to higher education, Noel-Levitz helps systems and campuses reach and exceed their goals for enrollment, marketing, and student success.

To help with goal attainment, our 40 full-time consultants and 60 part-time associates bring direct experience from their previous and current positions on campuses as consultants, enrollment managers, marketing leaders, retention directors, institutional researchers, financial aid directors, faculty, student affairs leaders, advising directors, and more.

Noel-Levitz has developed an array of proven tools including software programs, diagnostics tools and instruments, Web-based training programs, customized consultations, workshops, and national conferences. With the Satisfaction-Priorities Surveys, the firm brings together its many years of research and campus-based experience to enable you to get to the heart of your campus agenda.

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Contact us

Refer to the General Interpretive Guide or contact us for guidance on further interpretation of your results. For general questions about reviewing your results or to order materials for a future administration, please contact:

- Julie Bryant, Associate Vice President of Retention Solutions, julie-bryant@noellevitz.com
- Shannon Cook, Director of Retention Solutions, shannon-cook@noellevitz.com

You may also like to take advantage of 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).

Visit the Satisfaction-Priorities Surveys Client Resource Site

This link is appropriate for all surveys in this survey family: www.noellevitz.com/SSIClient

Enter your e-mail address and log-in information.

(Note: If you cannot remember your log-in information, please request your log-in be sent to you immediately, using the indicated link). If you are unable to access the client community, please contact Noel-Levitz.

Resources include

- National group demographic details and lists of participating institutions;
- Links to the current National Satisfaction and Priorities Report;
- Details on upcoming client events;
- Recent presentations on satisfaction assessment topics;
- And more...