Linking Intervention Strategies to Transition Issues of At-Risk Student Populations

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Overview of Presentation

- Who Are We?
- What is the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory?
- Why do we use it?
- What is the theoretical foundation for using interventions?
- How do we control our institutional environment?
- How was the LASSI incorporated into three intervention models for at-risk student populations?
- Small group discussion of case studies
- Questions and Comments
The University of Akron
Wayne College

- Is the only regional campus of The University of Akron
- Supports a commuter population of approximately 2,025 students
- Positioned on 160 acres of rural farmland on the north edge of Orrville
- http://www.wayne.uakron.edu
The Smucker Learning Center is committed to:

• Providing opportunities for student development and intellectual competence in a learner-centered environment

• Fostering universal access for all students to engage in achieving their personal and educational goals through the development of critical thinking skills, self-awareness, and emotional and social growth.
Wayne College At-Risk Populations

- Students in developmental coursework
- First-year students placed on academic probation
- First-year students dismissed after one year
- Returning adult students
- Students with disabilities
Transitional Issues of At-Risk Populations

- Anxiety
- Motivation
- Time Management
- Study Skills
- Low Self-efficacy
Nine years of research, development, and testing led to the development of this statistically valid and reliable tool for the diagnosis of study skills.*

The LASSI is a 10 scale, 80-item assessment tool designed to increase self-awareness.

The LASSI focuses on thoughts, behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs that relate to successful learning.

Ten Scales of the LASSI

- Anxiety (ANX)
- Attitude (ATT)
- Concentration (CON)
- Information Processing (INP)
- Motivation (MOT)

- Self-Testing (SFT)
- Selecting Main Ideas (SMI)
- Study Aids (STA)
- Time Management (TMT)
- Test Strategies (TST)
Measurements/Statements on LASSI

**ANXIETY (ANX)**

- Assesses the degree to which students worry about school and their academic performance.
- Worrying about doing poorly interferes with my concentration on tests.
- I am very tense when I study.

**ATTITUDE (ATT)**

- Assesses a student’s attitude towards and interest in college.
- I feel confused and undecided as to what my educational goals should be.
- I only study the subjects I like.
Measurements/Statements on LASSI

CONCENTRATION (CON)

- These items address a student’s ability to pay close attention to academic tasks.
- I concentrate fully when studying.
- I find that during lectures I think of other things and don’t really listen to what is being said.

INFORMATION PROCESSING (INP)

- These items address the student’s use of mental imagery, elaboration, monitoring, and reasoning.
- I translate what I am studying into my own words.
- I try to think through a topic and decide what I am supposed to learn.
Measurements/Statements on LASSI

MOTIVATION (MOT)

- These items assess a student’s diligence, self-discipline, and willingness to work hard.

- When work is difficult I either give up or study only the easy parts.

- I set high standards for myself in school.

SELF-TESTING (SFT)

- These items measure review and preparation skills for classes and tests.

- I stop often while reading and think over what has been said.

- I try to identify potential test questions when reviewing my class material.
SELECTING MAIN IDEAS (SMI)

- These items address a student’s ability to pick out important information for further study.
- I have difficulty identifying the important points in my reading.
- Often when studying I seem to get lost in details and can’t remember the main ideas.

STUDY AIDS (STA)

- This scale addresses the degree to which students create or use support techniques to help them learn and remember.
- I use italics and headings to organize the information in my textbooks.
- I attend group review sessions when available.
**TIME MANAGEMENT (TMT)**

- These items address a student’s use of time management principles for academic tasks.
- I only study when there is the pressure of a test.
- When I decide to study, I set aside a specific length of time and stick with it.

**TEST TAKING STRATEGIES (TST)**

- Items assess a student’s approach to preparing for and taking examinations.
- I have difficulty adapting my studying to different types of courses.
- In taking tests, I find I have misunderstood what is wanted and lose points because of it.
The graph below interprets your responses to the LASSI. The numbers on the top and bottom of the chart show percentile ranks. You can use these percentile ranks to compare your scores to other individuals' scores. For example, if you scored in the 80th percentile in Attitude and Interest (ATT), you scored higher than 80 percent of other individuals answering the same questions.

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**75 - 100**  
If you scored **above the 75th percentile** on any of the ten LASSI scales, you probably do not have to give a high priority to improving your strategies in those areas.

**50 - 75**  
If you scored **between the 75th and the 50th percentiles** on any of the ten scales, you should consider improving your strategies for those scales.

**0 - 50**  
If you scored **below the 50th percentile** on any of the ten scales, you need to improve your skills to avoid serious problems succeeding in college.
• “The environment is of particular importance because it includes those aspects of the students’ experiences that can be directly controlled by the institution.”

• “Student characteristics and the educational policies and practices that affect college experiences may affect student learning outcomes or the talent development of a student.”

• **Knowing that the LASSI is a valuable tool, we can control our institutional environment to produce the greatest benefit to the student through intervention strategies.**

Why Intervention Strategies?

• To improve student learning outcomes by:
  – Increasing student awareness of significant factors that influence learning outcomes
  – Creating individual action plans to strengthen skills
  – Engaging students in their own learning
  – Developing self-regulated learners
  – Strengthening faculty/student relationships

• To enhance student retention and success

• Intervention programs endorse an environment for student success.
Objectives of Intervention Programs

- To ease a student’s transition to college
- To strengthen a student’s confidence and increase self-awareness
- To personalize the college experience for each student
- To assist the student in taking advantage of campus resources
- To foster a student’s personal, professional, and academic growth through campus involvement
Intervention Model #1

Students in Developmental Coursework

- All students placed in developmental courses are required to take the LASSI the first week of class.
  - <50 on COMPASS English
  - <73 on COMPASS Reading
  - <30 on COMPASS algebra domain

- A class composite of LASSI scores is given to each faculty member to illustrate where the class stands as a whole on the ten scales.

- Having this composite at the beginning of the semester allows faculty to incorporate learning strategies into course objectives.

- Faculty modify their instructional strategies to address areas below the 50th percentile.

- At midterm, faculty conference with each student to develop individual plans/strategies for improvement.
# Class Composite for Basic Writing

**The University of Akron Wayne College**  
**Basic Writing - Fall 2008 --- Dr. S. Horn**

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* This number equals the number of students times 100, the highest possible total score for the entire class.
Intervention Model #2
Strengthening Academic Skills Program

- Letter contract sent to first-year students dismissed at end of academic year offering option to participate in three-week program.

- LASSI given to participants before first workshop and a mentor is assigned to student.

- Students required to attend three two-hour workshops and submit a reflection paper for each.

  - Each paper must be reviewed by a writing consultant in the Learning Center before submission.

  - Students meet twice with mentor to review LASSI results and develop an action plan to improve skills.

  - Mentors follow-up with students to encourage implementation of strategies.
Intervention Model #2: What Would We Have Done Differently?

- Include Strengthening Academic Skills (SAS) contracts in students’ dismissal letters.
- Offer SAS program and workshops earlier in the summer to allow more time for reinstatement decisions and registration of classes.
- Formalize action plan into a written document.
- Include in student contract the required follow-up appointments monitoring implementation of strategic plan to improve academic skills.
- Involve Financial Aid staff from beginning to avoid last-minute barriers to enrollment.
- Develop a program evaluation for student to complete.
Intervention Model #3
Academic Mentoring for Probation Students (AMPS)

- AMPS is a condition of first-year student’s probation.
- First LASSI administered at beginning of second semester and mentor is assigned.
- Mentor and student work together to develop a written action plan to address areas below 50th percentile.
- Students meet with mentors once per month to review intervention strategies and monitor progress.
- Second LASSI given to students two weeks before end of semester.
- Mentors and students discuss differences in first and second LASSI and make adjustments.
Examples of Intervention Strategies

**ANXIETY SCALE**

- Control Negative Thinking (I’m going to fail.)
- Exercise Regularly.
- Engage in deep-breathing for 3-5 minutes.
- Substitute a pleasant memory for stressful thoughts.
- Practice effective test-taking strategies.

**ATTITUDE SCALE**

- Form a peer study group.
- Talk with faculty.
- Use the syllabus as a plan for learning.
- Set long-term and short-term goals.
- Attribute success or failure to controllable factors (not luck).
**Examples of Intervention Strategies**

**CONCENTRATION SCALE**
- Design an exclusive study area with minimal distractions.
- Establish goals and time limits for each assignment.
- Take short breaks when studying (50:10).
- Control noise levels.
- Use writing to keep mentally and physically active.

**INFORMATION PROCESSING**
- Preview material and turn text headings into questions.
- Associate new information with previously learned.
- Make learning relevant and meaningful.
- Review, review, review.
Examples of Intervention Strategies

MOTIVATION SCALE

• Attribute failures to insufficient effort, lack of information, or reliance on ineffective strategies rather than to lack of ability.

• Engage in active learning activities (participate).

• Develop realistic and measurable goals.

SELF-TESTING SCALE

• Develop questions that target levels of thinking: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

• Use SQ3R to integrate reading and study techniques (survey, question, read, recite, review).

• Use the Cornell Note Taking Method to self-test.
SELECTING MAIN IDEAS

• Identify the topic: What is the one thing this paragraph or section is about?

• Identify details: What are the major supporting details?

• Find the main idea: What is the message the author is trying to convey about the topic?

STUDY AIDS SCALE

• Use textbook patterns to identify what is important (italics, boldface print, charts, and chapter summaries).

• Attend study groups.

• Meet with tutors.

• Prepare study guides.
Examples of Intervention Strategies

**TIME MANAGEMENT**

- Establish goals and priorities
- Analyze social, school, and work commitments and try to strike a balance.
- Use a planner or PDA to develop a semester, weekly, and daily plan.
- Fight the tendency to procrastinate...just do it!

**TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES**

- Arrive early to prepare mentally for an exam.
- Be sure test anxiety is not an excuse for being unprepared.
- Boost your confidence by answering easier questions first.
- Allot time for each section of the test.
- Read the questions carefully.
Small Group Discussion

• Divide into four groups.

• Each group will review actual LASSI inventories and identify areas for improvement.

• Each group will develop intervention strategies to assist students in addressing areas to strengthen.

• Each sub-group will share recommendations with larger group.
For Further Information

• To take a sample administration of the WEB LASSI, go to
  http://www.hhpublishing.com/_assessments/LASSI/index.html

• To view Becoming a Strategic Learner instructional modules, go to
  http://www.hhpublishing.com/_onlinecourses/study_strategies/BSL/index.html

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