
LASSI IN ACTION

LASSI-in-Action provides research and case studies from professionals using LASSI, LASSI Instructional Modules, and LASSI Prescriptions.

Contents

Letter from the Publisher

by Robert Hackworth

Embedded Academic Success Coaching and LASSI

by Emily Kilburg

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Letter from the Publisher:

Happy New Year! We have one new article to add to our Fall and Winter 2022 LASSI-in-Action Newsletters.

We hope this new material extends the reach of LASSI and offers more assistance for students and educators, as LASSI has paved the way for success for nearly forty years.

Click on the title in the Contents bar to begin reading the article.

We value your feedback and input. We hope many of you will consider writing articles for future editions.

Embedded Academic Success Coaching and LASSI

by Emily Kilburg, Academic Success Coach, Tulsa Community College

In 2021, Tulsa Community College (TCC) was awarded the federally funded Title III Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP) Grant which supports TCC in serving at-risk students and students from lower socioeconomical backgrounds. The goal of the SIP Grant is to develop programs that lead to higher course completion, retention, and eventually, graduation rates. One component of the grant is expanding Academic Success Coaching within the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion by introducing embedded academic success coaches into a subset of *College Success* courses – a course required by all students who are enrolled in developmental studies and for students who are enrolled in TCC’s widely popular Tulsa Achieves Program that serves as a gap-funded program that ensures students who live in Tulsa County pay no tuition.

The Grant funded the addition of three academic success coaches whose focus is to coach students in *College Success*, a first-year orientation and study skills course. Essentially, the course is “College 101” and prepares students for the rigor of collegiate academics. *College Success* is a required course for a number of students enrolled at TCC and as well as many dual enrollment high schoolers. The SIP Grant embedded academic success coaches work closely with a cohort of students in *College Success* and create individual coaching relationships with the goal of improving course completion, retention, and persistence.



The SIP Grant embedded academic success coaching program kicked off in Fall 2022 with one full-time coach and two part-time coaches who had a cohort of 19 *College Success* sections, 11 instructors, and 342 students. The students were asked to complete three components as part of the SIP Grant; 1) complete two assessments, 2) attend coaching sessions with their embedded coach, and 3) attend peer mentored study sessions. One of the two assessments administered to the students was the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) and the other was a holistic, life assessment created by the Office of DEI at TCC for academic success coaching. All students in the cohort were asked to complete the LASSI through in-person classroom visits, one-on-one coaching sessions, and via email and text communications. In the first semester of the program, 55% of cohort students completed the LASSI.

Academic success coaches use the LASSI as a “snapshot-in-time” assessment to guide the coaching process. The LASSI informs what types of educational support would most benefit the student at that time. The LASSI, combined with the TCC internal assessment, provide a well-rounded, holistic understanding of a student’s current strengths and areas of growth, as it relates to their academic journey. The LASSI has been instrumental in providing coaches with the necessary academic data points to start the coaching process.

The LASSI, in combination with embedding academic success coaching, has the ability to directly impact student performance in the classroom. The embedded academic success coaches are familiar with the *College Success* syllabus and requirements. Coaches can combine knowledge of a student’s LASSI results and the course requirements to work with the student to make actionable changes in a class by providing a snapshot of measurable, targeted skills for improvement of an academic journey. This may differ from other coaching strategies as the action steps may not be specific to a course, project, or assignment.

Academic success coaches have found that the LASSI is an especially effective starting point for coaching sessions with students who may be nervous to discuss personal life challenges or other barriers. The LASSI allows coaches to enter into the coaching relationship on common ground with students and have actionable items to address, all while building rapport with the student and beginning the process of addressing other barriers to success at TCC.

The results of the LASSI are best used in combination with a coaching session so the academic success coach can guide the student through the results, discuss their reaction to the results, and make an action plan to improve in areas. However, coaches have found that students do a moderate amount of reflection regarding the results prior to the coaching session taking place which suggests that the act of the doing the assessment, even without guided discussion, can help students reflect on areas that they are challenged in and lean on areas they have shown strength in.

The LASSI results from Fall 2022 demonstrate, on average, TCC students found the most challenges with anxiety and were strongest in the area of self-testing. While the LASSI is a strong asset for one-on-one coaching, the cohort results can also inform how to manage group coaching and classroom visits. Based on the cohort data, coaches may need to spend more time during classroom visits addressing school and test anxiety in order to improve the percentile score. Conversely, as TCC students scored higher in self-testing, this could be a good area to continue to support and build confidence in so students can continue to use it as a good academic strategy.

The LASSI has been an integral part of the coaching process at TCC since 2016 and continues to lay a strong foundation for coaching work as we continue the implementation of embedded academic success coaching. Looking forward, coaches aim to improve the LASSI completion rate of cohort students by working with instructors to have students complete the LASSI within the first few weeks of the course. In addition to encouraging students to actively participate in coaching, taking the LASSI early in the semester will give students the opportunity to reflect on their academic needs immediately to make changes to improve for the current semester. The LASSI is a great tool that gives students and coaches data-informed comparison to current and past TCC students, along with students across the nation.

[Return to Contents](#)