

LASSI IN ACTION

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

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Letter from the Publisher:

Welcome to LASSI in Action! Your colleagues are finding and reporting interesting approaches for meeting the needs of their students. In this Winter edition of LASSI in Action you will find five informative articles that may be helpful in your own attempts to make effective changes in the lives of students. That is, and always has been, the aim of LASSI authors and editors. Working together is the best path for bringing improvements. Let's make that happen!

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

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

LASSI Usage for Conditionally Admitted Freshmen

by Debra James, Ed.S. Director, Academic Support and Success, Jacksonville State University

The LASSI has been used at Jacksonville State University (JSU) for many years. Since 2019, it has been utilized through the success coaching program at the JSU Student Success Center. The success coaching program was created for conditionally admitted (CA) freshmen to receive additional academic support and interventions and to assist with freshmen retention rates. Success coaching is not mandatory for CA students; however, it is strongly recommended to students by academic advisors, instructors, and support staff. Two success coaches were hired specifically for CA students, and the LASSI is used as a pre/post assessment during coaching meetings. It not only improves academic weaknesses, but it helps with measuring the success of the program. Students are considered to be “at-risk” if they score 50% or less in five or more LASSI scales. This does not mean that students are coded “at-risk” at the university; the term is used specifically for the success coaching program. During the 2021-2022 academic year, CA students who attended success coaching at least three times earned an average 2.9 GPA while CA students who did not attend success coaching meetings earned an average 1.9 GPA.

The LASSI is administered during the initial success coaching meeting each fall semester, and depending on student scores, the interventions are provided at each meeting thereafter. The post assessment is given at the end of the spring semester after several coaching meetings have occurred. Once students attend their first meeting, they tend to show up for most future meetings, so program attendance has not been an issue. In fact, it has increased each semester since 2019. Success coaches work on building relationships with their students from the first meeting so that students will continue to participate in the program.



As for trends in LASSI scores over the last three years, time management, information processing, and anxiety have been consistently the top three areas of concern. Students do not typically understand how those skills can affect their success in college. Several success coaching meetings may take place before students realize that the skills needed in college are the same skills needed to be successful in life. Some of the interventions include goal setting activities, which increase motivation, time management activities, and testing and learning strategies. One of the most significant issues for students, especially freshmen, is time management, so much

time is spent on creating manageable daily and weekly schedules. Other interventions include group workshops on topics such as adjusting to college, motivation, and learning styles. Other workshops include partnering with support staff on campus to promote their services (financial aid assistance, accommodations, tutoring support, etc.).

The LASSI allows the success coaches to tailor appointments to meet individual student needs, and student responses have been positive. It is one of the reasons the program has been successful. Moving forward, in addition to the LASSI, other assessments will be administered during coaching meetings to ensure that students are receiving the most relevant and helpful resources.

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Learning Strategists' Use of LASSI at St. George's University

by Donna Walker & Breneil Malcolm, Department of Educational Services,
St. George University

St. George's University (SGU) is located on the island of Grenada and comprises four schools: Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Graduate Studies, and Arts and Sciences. With a highly diverse range of students, faculty, and staff from over 140 countries across the globe, SGU is the largest source of physicians to the United States workforce (Mauser, 2021). In the context of this discussion, we put forward our use of the LASSI, during the orientation phase within the School of Medicine, to guide students' inquiry into their learner characteristics.

Background

The rigor of medical school is well established, with the volume and pace exceeding that of most other graduate programs (Malau-Aduli et al., 2020). To get accepted into this highly competitive



medical program, most students have maintained a high degree of motivation, self-confidence, and resilience. Now at this point in their academic careers, even the smallest differences and improvements to approach can have a significant impact on performance (Riddell et al., 2017). To successfully transition to medical school, students need to leverage their existing strengths as learners and actively work towards discovering and addressing areas needing improvement. SGU's learning strategists utilize the LASSI as a

foundational component within a multi-faceted learning strategy curriculum designed to build students' confidence about their strengths and spark curiosity about their knowledge gaps as a learner.

Problem Statement

Within our context, a significant issue is the time sensitive nature of this learning discovery. For example, without early intervention, students tend to identify these gaps after the results of their first exam are released. At this point, students' scores and performance are negatively impacted, which poses a potential problem for subsequent performance. Furthermore, it can be significantly challenging to prioritize addressing gaps while also balancing class attendance, labs,

reviews, and preparing for further exams. On the other hand, some students may make learning discoveries earlier, such as at the end of the first week of school. Yet, this can still be disadvantageous as it is often paired with students doubting their sense of belongingness, pursuing inefficient content approaches, and having reduced motivational aptitude within their program (Pedler et al., 2022). Ultimately, our experience aligns with the extensive literature on the importance of the timely assessment and awareness of strengths and weaknesses.

Methods and Results

Our solution is to create an intervention point during the orientation week of the program to help students to understand their current status as a learner. By taking a strengths-based approach, we help students to build confidence and encourage them to leverage these insights as they transition into the medical curriculum. Firstly, students complete the LASSI as a pre-orientation activity. Then, they attend a series of connected live sessions (and have access to our online resources) based on four components of the LASSI: time management (TMT), selecting the main idea (SMI), information processing (INP), and self-testing (SFT). We select these components of the LASSI to cover with students based on over a decade of hosting sessions and refining based on student feedback. These have also been observed as the most challenging components for students within the first few weeks of the term. A key aspect of these sessions is the interactive small group formats, which encourage engagement, active participation, and reflection. The presence of a learning strategist at each of these breakout sessions allow students to participate in flexible interactions specific to their individual needs. After these initial sessions, students are also given the opportunity to attend sessions dedicated to each of the LASSI components based on their individual performance on the inventory as well as their interests. According to our student satisfaction reports, more than 90% of students have found this to be a productive use of their time and highly appreciated the opportunity.

Conclusions and Implications

Overall, the LASSI has proven to be an invaluable tool in the early assessment and intervention of students' learning needs. Utilizing this tool gives SGU's learning strategists the opportunity to engage in strategically facilitating students' learning process in a timely and efficient manner. Through group sessions at the start of the term, students are given an advantageous head start to begin tailoring their learning strategies and approaches using a data-informed, strengths-based approach through the LASSI.

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Adaptation of LASSI to Brazil: A Brief Story and Preliminary Results

by Evely Boruchovitch, Ph.D, School of Education, State University of Campinas, Brazil

I am a Ph.D. in Education from University of Southern California (1989-1993). When I was a student at USC, I became acquainted with Dr. Claire Ellen Weinstein's work. I loved it! I was lucky enough to meet her personally at two Annual Meetings of the American Education Research Association. Dr. Claire was so nice! Once she gave me a printed version of LASSI-HS. I



still have it. One day in 2015, I guess, I received an e-mail from her who copied Dr. Taylor W. Acee inviting me to a phone call. I was delighted with the possibility to talk to her and to Dr. Acee. She invited me to collaborate with her and Dr. Acee. As I always was impressed by LASSI as a powerful diagnostic, prescriptive assessment and intervention tool, I suggested to them that I could translate and adapt it to Portuguese and do validation studies, among others. She told me at that time about the LASSI 3rd

Edition and I told them that I would submit a proposal and apply for a research grant from the Brazilian National Research Council (CNPq) to conduct research with LASSI in Brazil.

Though it was highly competitive, I got the research grant in 2016 and started working on the project. Unfortunately, Dr. Weinstein passed away in July 2016. My research team and I worked very hard to translate the 10 LASSI Scales and the LASSI website to Portuguese. We were fortunate to have very warm and kind support from the LASSI H&H Publishing team. Priscilla Trimmier and Mike Ealy were very sweet and helped me a lot. Dr. Acee revised the back translation of the Portuguese version of the LASSI and advised research study and data collection procedures in Brazil. We did it! Everything has gone well so far. We have just finished data collection. We gather data from approximately 2300 Brazilian university students from different Brazilian Universities. The Pandemic of COVID-19 has delayed our schedule but we have caught up.

It is important to mention that while we were collecting data for the major validation study, we did some descriptive and correlational studies with smaller samples and some intervention studies with university students who want to become teachers. We also estimated the reliability of the 10 LASSI scales and LASSI total scores. Overall, preliminary results showed that the

reliabilities were acceptable to high for most of the scales, with the exception of Academic Resources Scale. This might have happened due to cultural differences, and the different resources made available to students in college across our two countries. Investigation of whether the same results will emerge in a larger sample is about to be conducted.

We also found that Brazilian university students, especially those who are enrolled at Teacher Education Programs, would benefit from Strategic Learning Interventions, since they scored around average in most of the scales. Moreover, our intervention studies also evinced that LASSI was a powerful diagnostic tool to pinpoint students' areas for improvement. As we found that demographic and academic life variables were associated with differences in LASSI scores, we can use this information to better design and implement future interventions studies. Currently we have published four journal papers and have a book chapter to be published soon in a book edited by Springer (for more details, see the reference section).

Furthermore, it is worth commenting that students who took part in this research and responded to the Brazilian version of the LASSI 3rd Edition mentioned having a very nice experience and liked very much to receive the LASSI feedback on their strengths and weaknesses. Though participants were aware that the inventory needs to be validated for its use in Brazil, they said that the results they got indeed were very helpful to them.

I not only feel very proud of this research, but also I am very happy to work with both the H&H Publishing team and with Dr. Taylor Acee, who is a very committed researcher-practitioner. We are about to reach our major goal – start the validation studies. I do hope to have a valid and reliable Brazilian version of the LASSI 3rd Edition soon! It will definitely make a difference in Brazilian University Education.

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Proactive Advising and Success Coaching: TRIO Student Support Services

by Shawn Guy, Director TRIO SSS, Alamance Community College

Alamance Community College TRIO Student Support Services uses the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) to help students identify gaps in their study habits. The information gained from the assessment allows members of the TRIO staff to serve students with high-impact student engagement activities better. Academic advising, coaching strategies, and workshops are tailored to meet any deficiencies identified by the survey.

The LASSI assessment is administered to each applicant during the TRIO onboarding process. Students are encouraged to be highly reflective as they complete the assessment and discuss the results with members of the TRIO staff. TRIO participants reflect on their results and have meaningful conversations based on the data. The LASSI assessment tool has effectively established rapport with new TRIO students entering the program.

The TRIO Academic Adviser uses the LASSI results to decide scheduling, course loads, academic support services, and majors. Data regarding each student's ability to process information, select main ideas, and self-testing is used during initial advising sessions to create class schedules and academic plans. Also, during the first advising meeting, TRIO students receive information regarding academic support services like the Tutoring Center, Math Lab, and Writing Center. Finally, the LASSI results are combined with an online career assessment tool to determine if a student is in the appropriate major. The LASSI results are invaluable for advising students and steering them down the proper career path.



The TRIO Success Coach uses the LASSI data to engage students while completing their student success guides. This document identifies nonacademic barriers that may impact student success. TRIO students receive coaching strategies centered on motivation, attitude, anxiety, and concentration, as they make the connection to external factors influencing their success. TRIO students who are deficient in these areas are also encouraged to attend workshops that provide more information on how they can improve in each area. The LASSI provides baseline

information, allowing TRIO Student Support Services at Alamance Community College to be proactive with its advising and success coaching approach.

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The Interplay Between Personality Traits and Learning Strategy: A Unique Approach to Mentorship for Medical Students

by Raed Albar MBBS, MMed, Ayman Mohammed MBBS, MBS
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Medical schools convey a great amount of academic material within a limited period of time. Students' success in handling such a workload is greatly influenced by their personality traits as well as by the learning strategies they employ. With this in mind, we conducted a cross sectional study that explored the relationship between medical students' personality traits and their learning strategies, using two assessments: NEO-FFI-3 for personality traits and LASSI for learning strategies.

We are members of the student development and mentorship committee at the College of Medicine in Alfaisal University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. We aim at helping faculty mentors to encourage their students to engage in reflective learning and become life-long learners. In this sense, understanding how students learn is vital, and the empirical literature advocates that students' characteristics, such as personality traits, have the potential to influence their learning outcomes. Moreover, personality traits have been thought of as the basis for understanding individual differences in learning. Hence, we wanted to empower faculty members at the College of Medicine to mentor students according to strengths and weakness that might arise from their personality traits. Furthermore, we wanted to help faculty personalize their mentorship practice and identify their mentees whom they might be at academic risk.

We had 309 students across all academic levels in the College who completed both assessments. NEO-FFI-3 is the most widely used assessment where it measures five fundamental personality traits (Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism). Pearson correlation coefficient and linear regression analyses were performed. Based on Cohen's criteria, the potentially meaningful linear correlation was set at ≥ 0.3 . The results were intriguing. The following tables illustrate the strength of the correlations and the degree of prediction for each trait and strategy.

Pearson Correlation Coefficient among Personality Domains and LASSI Scores										
	ANX	ATT	CON	INP	MOT	SMI	SFT	TST	TMT	UAR
Openness	0.072	0.015	-0.033	0.285***	-0.050	0.112	0.104	0.070	-0.105	0.009
Conscientiousness	0.17828**	0.340***	0.557***	0.240***	0.676***	0.324** *	0.317***	0.414***	0.641***	0.108
Extraversion	0.143*	0.19251**	0.104	0.230***	0.035	0.136	0.085	0.074	0.076	0.266***
Agreeableness	0.057	0.292***	0.051	0.009	0.001	0.062	0.011	0.071	-0.061	0.028
Neuroticism	-0.564***	-0.255***	-0.317***	-0.012	-0.239** *	-0.334* **	-0.014	-0.394***	-0.220** *	-0.185*

*p-value <0.05, **p-value <0.01, ***p-value <0.0001

Summary of Beta Estimates from significant predictors associated with LASSI Scores.										
	ANX	ATT	CON	INP	MOT	SMI	SFT	TST	TMT	UAR
Increase of 1 scale in Openness (e.g. Moving one step up in the scale from low to average or from average to high increases the likelihood of using the learning strategy).	3.13			8.40		3.75	3.66			0.009
Increase of 1 scale in Conscientiousness		7.59	13.19	5.78	18.49	6.34	8.34	8.45	16.68	0.108
Increase of 1 scale in Extraversion		4.34		5.13						5.77
Increase of 1 scale in Agreeableness		7.53								0.028
Increase of 1 scale in Neuroticism	-16.74	-3.58	-4.99			-7.55		-9.00		-0.185*
Adjusted R ²	0.37	0.29	0.31	0.15	0.42	0.18	0.095	0.32	0.38	0.066

Note: Beta estimates were selected based on p-value <0.05.

Conscientiousness was found to have a positive significant correlation with seven learning strategies and was the most important predictor of learning strategies that our medical students

are likely to employ. This is especially true for Motivation, Time Management and Concentration. It is most likely because students who score high on the Conscientiousness scale have a proclivity to being industrious, organized, dutiful and achievement strivers.

Neuroticism was found to be correlated with four learning strategies, but the correlation here is negative with all of them. The highest was with Anxiety scores. It is worth noting that, in LASSI, higher Anxiety scores mean that students experience lower anxiety in reality, which correspond to lower scores in Neuroticism.

Extraversion was positively correlated with Using Academic Resources and Information Processing. We speculated that this could be due to the tendency of extroverts to socialize, which may help in developing their Information Processing through communication and extended exchange of experiences with faculty members and other students. Such sociability could also make it easier for them to seek help from others, which contributes to better Use of Academic Resources as well as making such students seek for efficiency in their learning process. Moreover, Extraversion was also positively correlated with Attitude scores, meaning extroverts exhibit a more productive attitude towards learning, which again could be related to the social experience of college as a whole.

Openness was positively correlated with Information Processing. This is consistent with the literature, since students who score high on Openness tend to utilize more higher-order cognitive skills such as elaborative processing, critical thinking and constructive learning approaches, leading to deep learning. We had expected the correlation to be higher, considering that openness represents itself as a creativity dimension. However, we speculated that these results might be due to the overcrowding and highly structured medical curriculum, limiting the true expression of trait openness in this context.

Agreeableness had a significant positive correlation with Attitude scores. This may be explained by the compassionate nature of agreeable students which makes them perceive studying medicine positively. Since medicine, and any health professions, require empathetic and collaborative attitude, it makes sense that agreeableness and Attitude are correlated in the context of studying in the College of Medicine.

All in all, all the above-mentioned personality traits have an influence on at least one learning strategy in LASSI, and we want to emphasize on the importance of these two traits: Conscientiousness and Neuroticism. Through the predictive quantification that this study provides, mentors have a practical, objective and accurate means to predict potential shortcomings among their mentees that result from their trait tendencies. Thus, timely intervention can be planned and tracked effectively. This research aspires to inspire a more holistic mentorship approach where educators consider personality traits and learning strategies together. Therefore, we recommend incorporation of personality traits and learning strategies

assessments in the formal training of mentors, academic coaches, educators and curriculum developers. After all, what students really need is to be listened to, understood and compassionate guidance from their mentors.

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