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Strategic Learning Skills of Walden Students: Highlighting the Resources

Vicki L. Underwood, PhD; Kimberly V. Burton, MLIS; Anne Rojas, MLIS; Melanie A. Brown, PhD

Problem

Although Walden University provides abundant resources to assist the high proportion of nontraditional students enrolled, to best use available resources,

- Students need to be aware of their learning skills needs and require focused guidance targeted toward building the skills they lack.

A comprehensive assessment of students' strategic learning skills is needed to create/revise learning resources and provide guidance needed by students.

Purpose

Goals of this study include:

- **Assessing and providing individual feedback** on the strategic learning skills of incoming Walden students;
- **Accumulating a body of data** that may be applied by Walden staff in developing and refining resource materials for all Walden learners.

Significance

Starting incoming Walden students on the path toward becoming more skilled and successful learners by

- Assessing learning skills, particularly the *strategic* learning skills students need to be successful,
- Providing Walden resources tailored to identified learning skills needs,
- Applying findings to creation and refinement of Walden resources to assist future students.

An assessment of Walden students' strategic learning skills will benefit

- Students - provision of resources tailored to the needs of the assessed students will point these learners toward the path for improvement.
- The University - Walden staff will be able to develop evidence-based student resources to assist all learners.

Social Change Implications

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

- - - Nelson Mandela

Theory or Framework

Weinstein's model of strategic learning (Weinstein, Acee, & Jung, 2011) includes three components:

- **Skill** - traditional study skills, assessing the learning situation, awareness of self as a learner, selecting the best strategy to apply/adapt to the situation.
- **Will** - motivation to learn, beliefs and attitudes toward learning.
- **Self-regulation** - managing the learning task, the individual's approach to the learning task.

Relevant Scholarship

Success in school often equates with success in life (Ma, Pender, & Welch, 2016; Trostel, 2015).

Numerous institutional and student demographic factors affect students' success from first year through professional and doctoral degrees (Demetriou & Schmitz-Sciborski, 2011; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017; Seidman, 2012).

Learning, the basis of student success, depends on the individual student's thoughts and actions about and during the learning experience (see review by McCombs, 2017).

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the **strategic learning skills strengths and needs** of students across all Walden programs and degree levels?

RQ2: To what extent **will students use Walden resources** tailored to their own identified learning skills needs?

Participants

Participants are student volunteers enrolled in introductory/orientation courses at Walden University during the fall and winter/spring terms of 2018-2019, in all programs, at all academic levels.

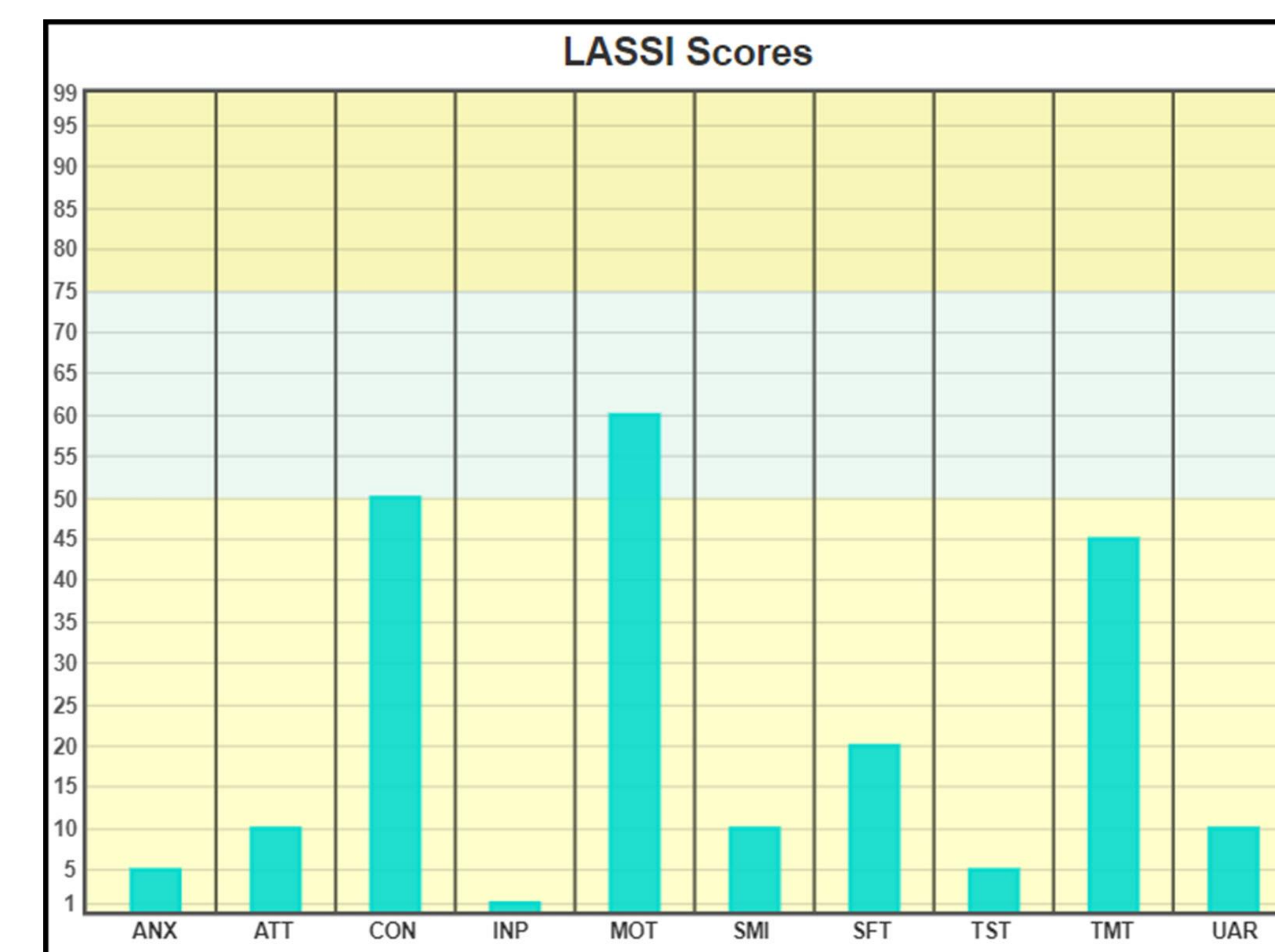
Procedures

Data Collection: All first-term students are invited to voluntarily complete an online learning assessment and immediately receive feedback and links to resources on the Walden website that are tailored to their identified needs.

Instrumentation: The **Learning and Study Skills Inventory**, Third Edition (LASSI; Weinstein, Palmer, & Acee, 2016).

- **Subscales:** Anxiety, Attitude, Concentration, Information Processing, Motivation, Selecting Main Ideas, Self-Testing, Test Strategies, Time Management, and Using Academic Resources
- **5-point response scale** from 1 (*Not at all typical of me*) to 5 (*Very typical of me*).

Sample LASSI Student Report:



Analysis

Inferential statistics (*t* test, ANOVA) will be used to analyze strategic learning skills differences across degree levels, programs, selected demographic variables.

Descriptive summaries will provide input for evidence-based revision and creation of learning resources by Walden staff.

Findings

Findings will be shared with various Walden academic and student services areas to facilitate development of evidence-based resources such as Walden Library's Information Literacy instruction and the Academic Skills Center's Success Strategies.

Interpretation

First Year Resources linked to LASSI scales:

Subscale	Introduction
Anxiety (ANX)	
Attitude (ATT)	Welcome to Your First Year Resources!
Concentration (CON)	You've responded to the LASSI questions and received your LASSI profile with your score for each scale. Now, are you curious about how to build on your strengths and make improvements in those weaker skills? Click on each LASSI scale listed on the left side of this screen, and you will find information and links to Walden University resources to help you strengthen your skills in each area. Use these resources to help enhance and improve your study strategies, preparing you for success in your Walden program.
Information Processing (INP)	
Motivation (MOT)	
Selecting Main Ideas (SMI)	
Self-Testing (SFT)	
Test Strategies (TST)	Before you get started, remember to bookmark this site so you can find it easily. As you move forward on your academic journey, you will want to return to this site many times to make use of all the modules, videos, tutorials, Quick Answers, and other tips and support provided to you in this Guide. Now, on with the learning!
Time Management (TMT)	
Using Academic Resources (UAR)	

Sample Links: Motivation Resources

Academic Skills Center resources

[Learning & Growing from Instructor Feedback:](#) Have you ever felt deflated by an instructor's feedback on your work? Maybe you put great effort into an assignment, but you didn't receive the high grade you expected. It might feel tempting to get angry or give up – instead, you can grow from that feedback. This brief blog post provides advice for acting on instructor feedback to help you strengthen your skills for the next assignment.

Library resources

Quick Answers

- [Quick Answer: How can I organize my ideas?](#)
- [Quick Answer: What does it take to be a successful library researcher?](#)
- [Quick Answer: How can I get an overview or introduction to the Walden Library?](#)

Writing Center resources

[Goal Setting in writing a paper:](#) Writing goals are a vital part of the writing process. Writing goals establish purpose and connection between small writing tasks and help to develop transferrable skills that enhance performance in the workplace. Writing goals also provide a sense of motivation and accomplishment over time, as you reflect on progress and celebrate small victories.

Limitations

Possible limitations include:

- LASSI is a self-report instrument.
- Survey respondents are volunteers.
- Invitations are sent by email and may not be seen.

Acknowledgements

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