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Strategic Learning Skills of Walden Students: Highlighting the Resources

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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?

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.


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 typical of me) to 5 (Very typical of me).

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.

Interpretation
First Year Resources linked to LASSI scales:

Sample Links: Motivation Resources

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

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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.

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.