

# Creating Sustainable Assessment: A Pretest-Posttest Model Secures Permanent Funding Source and Improves Students' Academic Standing in the University

Dr. Karen Gabrielle Johnson and Dr. Beverly Wallace  
Shippensburg University

Pilot project was a success:

- The LASSI is now used as the diagnostic tool for determining the action plan for students on academic probation.
- The protocol has been adopted for all agencies involved in working with AIM students.
- An additional training has been added this year to provide more training in anxiety reduction.
- Next year's training will build on this year's results and add a training on how to help students change their attitude.

Results indicated a significant difference between the two groups in all areas EXCEPT anxiety and attitude.

**CONCLUSION:** Students who participated in AIM perceived that they improved in all areas related to the LASSI except for anxiety and attitude.

LASSI Matched Pairs Pre/Post Test Results				
Those who completed AIM = Pre and post LASSI, AIM Intake + 2 follow up sessions				
Those who did not complete AIM = Pre and post LASSI, and less than those listed above				
Pair	Pre	Post	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	PreANXper	PostANXper	-1.851	.069
Pair 2	PreATTper	PostATTper	-1.984	.051
Pair 3	PreCONper	PostCONper	-6.305	.000
Pair 4	PreINPper	PostINPper	-5.391	.000
Pair 5	PreMOTper	PostMOTper	-5.917	.000
Pair 6	PreSFTper	PostSFTper	-4.930	.000
Pair 7	PreSMIper	PostSMIper	-5.336	.000
Pair 8	PreSTApr	PostSTApr	-5.989	.000
Pair 9	PreTMTper	PostTMTper	-8.204	.000
Pair 10	PreTSTper	PostTSTper	-4.103	.000

At the end of the semester, the week before finals, students returned to the Learning Center to take the LASSI. Post-test scores were compared with Pre-test scores using a matched pairs *t* test.

Students participated in the Academic Improvement Plan, which consisted of:

- The *Intake* at the first visit where students discussed their semester goals based on LASSI results and developed an action plan designed to achieve those goals
- Follow-up sessions* where Learning Specialists incorporated specific learning strategies to target interventions at weakness(es) identified by the LASSI

Students who completed at least two follow-up sessions were described as those who had participated in AIM during data analysis.

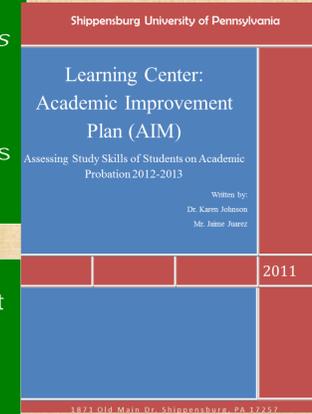
Follow Up Closing the Loop

Determined the *Learning and Study Strategies Inventory* (LASSI) was the best instrument for our purposes:

- demonstrated validity and reliability
- contained a broad combination of elements known to be related to college success

Found a grant source to fund a pilot study

- wrote a grant proposal
- received funding for project



Proposal

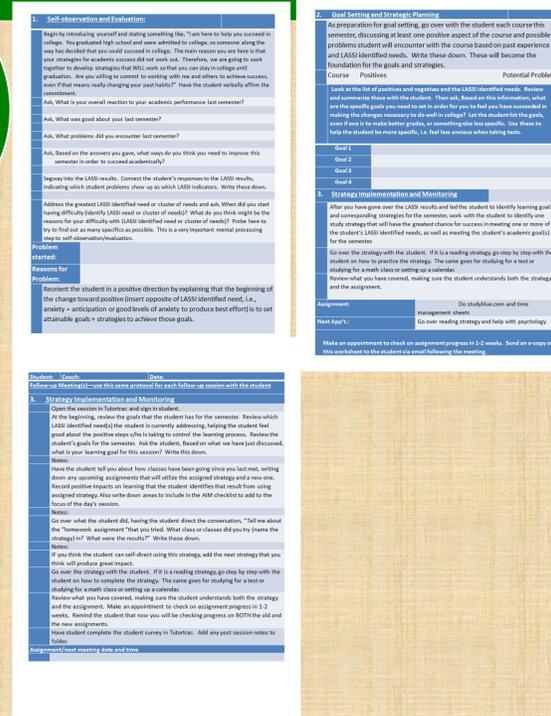
Problem

Even though we had an instrument to provide an indication of student self-perceived skill levels across multiple elements, we needed an intervention that offered the most probability of success for helping students enact positive changes:

- chose framework developed by Dembo & Seli, 2004
- Developed a protocol based on this framework

- The Learning Center provides programming to students on academic probation.
- The AIM program seeks to determine students' needs and identify factors that contributed to students' poor academic achievement
- Once needs and root causes have been identified, learning coaches help students develop a plan of action to improve students' success
- Identification of students' strengths and weaknesses is crucial and requires reliable and valid measurement instruments
- Prior to 2012, The Learning Center had no funds to support this crucial piece of our program and had to rely on a free, online version of the Student Behavior Inventory (SBI)
- However, the SBI lacks external validity and reliability, has become outdated, and does not provide sufficient information to clearly identify root causes of many students' academic weaknesses.

Protocol



Treatment

LASSI Pre-test

Students came into the Learning Center to take the online LASSI Pre-test:

- no appointment necessary within the hours of operation
- had to be taken within the first three weeks of the semester to allow enough time for the treatment to occur
- were given an appointment for the Intake portion of the protocol within a week following the inventory.