



LAWRENCE ACADEMY

Academic Support Office

Learning Strategy Coaching Description

Philosophy

The purpose of learning strategy coaching is to support those students who experience difficulty with their academic performance due to learning disabilities or learning differences. Students who have gaps in basic academic skills and/or those who significantly struggle with self-management skills – such as active study skills, time management, organization, and task completion/planning – may also benefit from the support of a learning coach. Additionally, for those students who have been absent because of a long-term illness, a family can request 4-8 meetings with a learning coach to help the student complete missed work.

Lawrence Academy's professional learning coaches work 1:1 with students on study skills that address the student's learning needs (e.g., note-taking skills, test-taking skills, organizational skills, time-management skills, and memory skills). If the student has a learning disability, the coach will work on general skills and will focus on teaching specific strategies known to be effective for students with that specific learning disability.

This program is not intended to take the place of students working with their classroom teachers. The coach/student relationship should support the teachers and academic curriculum by providing skills that will be useful to the student. Many students will also need regular meetings with their classroom teachers to supplement their work with a coach.

In 1:1 learning coaching, the focus is on the aforementioned skills, which are often demonstrated or modeled through a student's assigned work. Although completing homework is not a goal for any coaching session, the coach uses homework assignments to demonstrate different strategies and skills. Often, students will begin an outline for a paper, practice self-editing techniques, learn a memory strategy to study new science vocabulary, or use an active reading strategy to read a chapter in an assigned novel.

The goal of learning strategy coaching is for students to develop a set of learning strategies that work well with their learning style and/or learning strengths, as well as to develop self-advocacy skills and initiative. While, initially, a student may lean heavily on a coach, over time, it is our intent that the student will develop more independence.

Process

The decision to enroll a student in the learning coaching program will be worked out between the director of academic support and the student's parents, advisor and/or teachers. Parents may initiate this process prior to enrollment or during the school year; the director or advisor may contact parents with concerns raised by teachers as well. Students who have had coaching (or tutoring) in the past; who have been diagnosed with ADHD or a specific learning disability in the areas of reading, writing, or math; and/or who have associated deficits in executive functioning

(the ability to organize, synthesize, integrate, initiate, monitor, and plan) may benefit from meeting with a learning coach one or two times per week.

Once the decision has been made to begin coaching and there is availability, the online registration form needs to be completed by a parent, and then a coach will be assigned. Generally, students meet coaches (on average) once or twice a week as a part of the student's schedule; if a student needs to access a 1:1 learning coach more than two times per week, Lawrence Academy may not be the best fit to support the needs of the student. Parents will be billed by term or year. Some financial aid is available for students in this program.

Coaching sessions will always be scheduled outside of class time. Students may not miss any Lawrence Academy classes or other obligations to attend a coaching session. If a student misses a session due to illness, the coach will make every effort to reschedule the missed meeting. Unexcused absences will be reported to the Dean of Student's Office and will be treated as a class cut. There are no refunds for missed appointments. (Refer to the Coaching Policies and Fees document and the Student-Coach Agreement for detailed guidelines.)

Communication

Communication among all people working with a student is important for the progress of the student. Parents may communicate with coaches through email or phone calls. The learning coach provides the family with an email address and a phone number that can be used to stay in touch; however, the advisor remains the main point contact for families. It is helpful if all people working with a student (i.e., advisor, parent, teacher, coach, and often the student him- or herself) are included on any email communications.

Since the focus of the coaching is on skills and not on specific content, the learning coach will be working to reiterate and reinforce the content taught in class. The student is responsible for bringing materials to the sessions. The learning coach contacts the student's teachers via email at the beginning of the trimester and familiarizes him- or herself with the student's curriculum, but does not track assignments for the student. A coach will often encourage a student to discuss questions directly with a teacher and to see the teacher for extra help (seeing a teacher for extra help is a general expectation of every student at LA). If a student and/or parent has a specific issue regarding the requirements of an assignment or a grade received, these questions should be discussed directly with the teacher (and/or advisor).

The advisor shares information from comment cards with the learning coach each time they are written, so the coach can remain up to date on the student's progress. In addition, the learning coach writes email reports to the student's teachers and advisor, summarizing the sessions and asking clarifying questions when needed. In order to be working toward the same goals and communicating the same messages to the student, we try to cultivate the collaborative relationships between teacher, advisor, learning coach, and student as much as possible.

Duration of Academic Coaching

The goal of this type of coaching is to empower students with the appropriate skills and strategies to become independent and successful learners, utilizing their strengths to help them with their areas of challenge. It is also a goal for each student to reach a point where the support of a learning coach is no longer needed.

Learning coaching at LA is transitional and temporary. The director of academic support, along with the student's teachers, advisor, and learning coach, will determine when coaching should end. The learning coach provides a recommendation about whether the student should continue or stop coaching, and the director uses information from the learning coach, teacher comments, advisor, and parent feedback to determine if a student is recommended to continue or to 'graduate' from learning coaching. Students also complete an online feedback survey to assist Lawrence Academy in maintaining a highly professional service.

Cynthia Blood, director of academic support
PO Box 992 ♦ Groton, MA 01450
Phone: (978) 448-1583 ♦ Fax: (978) 448-9208 ♦ cblood@lacademy.edu

Provided here for information only; students will fill this out with their coach during their first session.

Student-Coach Agreement

The following guidelines serve to help both the coach and student effectively utilize their sessions.

- Coaching sessions are a commitment, just like a class or afternoon sport/activity. Extra help sessions with teachers need to be scheduled around scheduled coaching sessions.
- The time and day of the coaching session has been approved by the director of academic support and should not be changed without prior approval from the director.
- The room(s) being used for coaching is often shared by others or is a classroom used by other faculty; leave it better than you found it (i.e., throw away your snack trash, log off the computer, turn off the lights, etc.).
- In case of early withdrawal, no refund will be made once a schedule has been set and sessions have started.
- Student and coach should arrive on time, with materials, and be prepared to work the entire 50-minute block.
- If possible, missed sessions will be made up, provided a 24-hour notice has been given and there is a valid reason for missing the session.
- The student **MUST** contact their coach via phone, text messaging, voice mail, or e-mail when he/she will miss a session. The school does not contact coaches regarding individual schedule changes, sporting events, or student illness*. (This is also the same for a coach who needs to miss a session.)
- *Regarding illness of coach or student: Illness often occurs overnight or in the early morning. A 24-hour notice is ideal, but often not possible when a student or coach is ill. When the coach is ill, he/she must contact the student as soon as possible to cancel and offer a make-up session. When a student stays home ill or is in the nurse's office (or has been sent back to their dorm room sick), the **STUDENT** must contact his/her coach as soon as possible; the coach will verify the student missed school due to illness. The student will not lose the session, and the coach will make every effort to reschedule the session.
- The coach will do his/her best to be flexible with any official Lawrence Academy schedule changes that the student may encounter.
- There is no refund for missed or cancelled sessions that the coach is unable to reschedule. However, for students continuing into the next term, unused sessions will be carried over for the student and coach to use when needed.
- No approval is needed to schedule a make-up session. The session should be scheduled at a time that works for both the coach and the student. (The 8 p.m.-10 p.m. study hall should be avoided as much as possible; however, in rare instances, this time frame may be used for make-up sessions.)
- When a student cancels the same day (or less than 24 hours beforehand) for any reason other than illness or does not show up for a session, the student will lose that session. There is no refund, and no make-up session needs to be scheduled.
- The student and coach will complete a Full Value Contract and Goals to outline expectations.

Student: _____ Coach: _____

Signatures: _____

Date Reviewed and Signed: _____