

# APTUS: Academic Coaching to Enhance Persistence through Self-Assessment and Reflection

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## Introduction

Academic motivation and teaching strategies were both studied by using the APTUS assessment to assess extrinsic and intrinsic motives for studying in the higher education environment while also measuring direct and discovery-oriented instruction techniques (Donche, De Maeyer, Coertjens, Van Daal, & Van Petegem, 2013). Both academic motivation and teaching strategies measure behaviors and the student's ability to take control of the learning process (Donche et al., 2013).

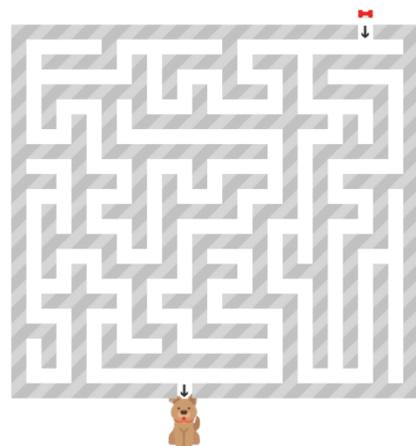
Persistence is understood as official enrollment in the next consecutive semester by a matriculated student, as indicated by course enrollment and a financial commitment.

**RQ1.** How does information from APTUS assist students to persist?

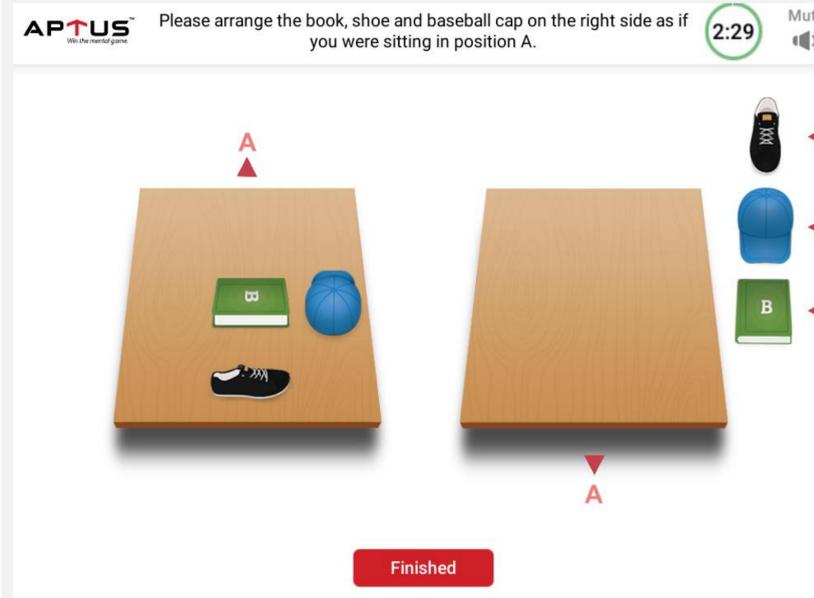
**RQ2.** How does the application of information from APTUS impact participant academic behaviors?

**RQ3.** According to Academic Advisors and Faculty, what development strategies recommended by APTUS are most effective?

APTUS™ Move the bone through the maze using your finger or stylus. 2:25 Mute



## Method and Procedures



A section of ENGL 101 coupled with students in a section of MENT 101 each completed the APTUS assessment. The ENGL 101 and MENT 101 instructors were provided the results of their class along with strategies that may be integrated into their instruction to address areas of strength and weakness. Academic advisors were provided the individual APTUS report for both groups of students to further contribute to the coaching conversations held in the student's first semester.

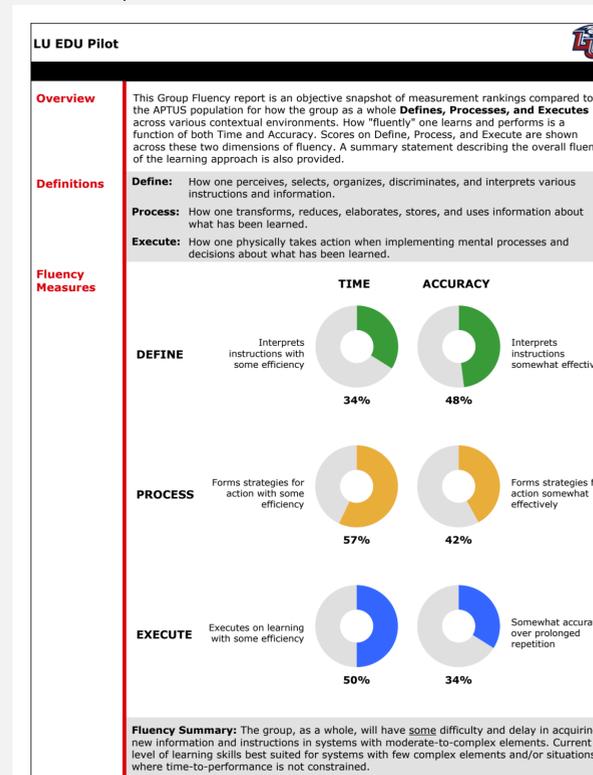
Student achievement was evaluated throughout the course and two students were interviewed from the MENT 101 and ENGL 101 course in January 2019. In addition, persistence and overall GPA data were compared between the section that used APTUS versus those that did not. Data was recorded, coded and themes generated to address the academic persistence and behavioral tendencies of at-risk students.

## Findings

Two participants that took part in the study met with the researchers individually. The following themes emerged from the discussion:

1. Each participant acknowledged "Grit" and "Focus" as two of the most significant behavioral tendencies when reviewing the seven options (Confidence, Focus, Self-Control, Detail, Competitiveness, Simplicity, and Grit)
2. Each participant selected "Grit" as the overall behavioral tendency with the most impact on academic success and persistence.

No significant academic performance information was recognized in general from those that completed the assessment compared with those that did not.



## Implications

The significance of this study is that to date, retention programs that focus on a growth mindset have not been created based on first identifying the attributes of a growth mindset. In addition, the impact of this study has the ability to equip students with the confidence to take ownership of their approach to studying, classroom engagement, and successful persistence toward graduation.

Limitations for this study included:

1. Assessment completion mechanism as it needed to be completed in a proctored environment on an iPad.
2. Sample size. Because students could "opt out" of completing the assessment, only a few of the ENGL 101 students actually participated. All of the students that did complete the APTUS assessment found it to be enjoyable and different from anything else they completed.

