



Teaching First-Year Students

Today's Guest Presenters:

Dr. Andrew McWilliams

Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry and Biology

Academic Coordinator, First-Year and Common Science Office

amcwilli@ryerson.ca

Dr. Christina Halliday

Director, Student Learning Support

challida@ryerson.ca

LTO Staff Presenters:

Dr. Eric Kam

Associate Professor, Economics

Director, LTO

erickam@ryerson.ca

Lauren Wilson

Manager, LTO

Instructor, Professional Communications

lauren.wilson@ryerson.ca

Did you know?

The research on student departure (mostly US)

- Majority of dropouts occur in the first-year (Tinto, 1987; 2006)
- Among the main causes of student departure are: adjustment to PSE culture, expectations, processes, difficulty meeting academic expectations, and social isolation (Tinto, 2012).
- Students with disabilities are under-represented in PSE and are less likely to persist and attain a credential (McCloy, U. & DeClou, L, 2013; Murray et al., 2014).

Did you know?

The important role of the PSE Instructor

- The classroom may be for many students the only place they meet peers and faculty members (Tinto, 2006)
- Frequent contact with a faculty member has a positive influence on student persistence. Contact that occurs outside the boundaries of the formal classroom has an even stronger positive impact on persistence (Tinto, 2012)

Did you know?

Campus interventions: Student Learning Support

- 38,944 student visits in 16.17
- 2,496 AAS registrants in 16.17, 12% average annual growth
- 41% of respondents to 16.17 SLS annual survey (n=1074) were first year students
- 32% of respondents came to SLS through referral from Instructors, TAs, or department staff (largest proportion)
- Without academic support, students report being more challenged to meet academic expectations and succeed in PSE (Tinto, 2012)

What challenges do first-year students face?

An Instructor & Administrators Perspective...

What Challenges do First Year Students Face? FYCSO Perspective

- Finances
- Understanding Academic Expectations
 - Foundational Background
 - Work Load: Work vs. School vs. Life Balance
- Family Expectations
- Commute
- Health
- Understanding University Policies
 - Who can help me? What support systems are available?
 - Who needs to be informed and in what detail?
 - Misconceptions



An Instructor & Administrators Perspective...

What Challenges do First Year Students Face? FYCSO Perspective

- Sense of Belonging/Isolation in the Crowd

- Social Network:

- Building New Relationships

- Staying Connected

- Family Connections

- Second Guessing Program Choice

- Personal Identity Issues

- Career Pathway



An Instructor/Student Partner Perspective...

Response to flipchart discussion...

- The differences in culture, processes, and expectations between K-12 and PSE.
- Boundary setting and navigating between parent and child/student.
- Academic expectations for the process of completing an assignment and the end product.
- No actively emerging educational and linked career goals.



An Instructor/Student Partner Perspective...

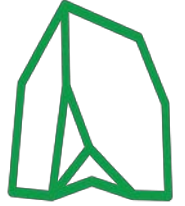
- Connect students with academic and well-being supports
- Be reasonably informed and accurate about what's available for these purposes on campus
- Respond with empathy, communicate clearly and with thoughtfulness, identify boundaries, always maintain academic standards
- Where and if possible, be a mentor



4th
Welcome to
Student
Learning
Support
www.ryerson.ca/sls

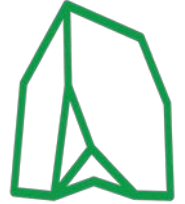


Easy to find online



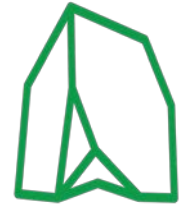
[Student Learning Support website](#)

Our pedagogical approach



- student independence
- academic rigour
- preservation of academic integrity
- accessibility and accommodation
- student centered learning
- academic skill building
- experiential learning

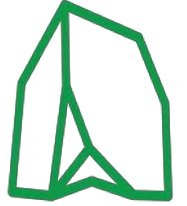
Our methods on the ground



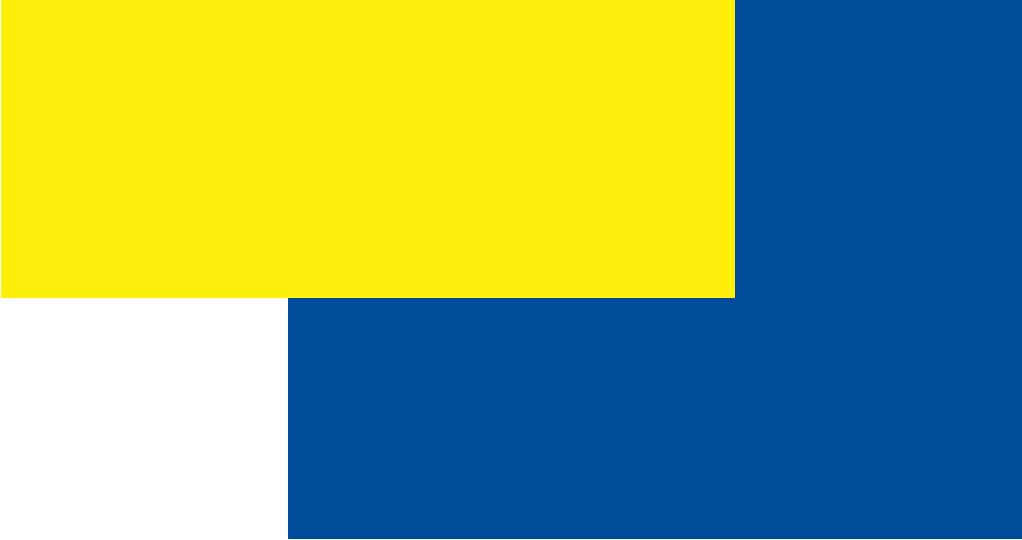
- **1:1** (engages all of our pedagogical approaches)
- **small groups** (engages all of our pedagogical approaches)
- **workshops/larger groups** (some limitations with respect to our pedagogical goals)
- **remote contact** (phone, adobe connect, skype, google hangouts)
- **online resources, assessments** (some limitations with respect to our pedagogical goals)



Other resources



Student Affairs



**Let's
discuss...
What can you
do?**

Vincent Tinto - 5 Conditions for Student Persistence

*See supporting literature in notes

- 1) Expectations
- 2) Support (Academic, Social, Financial)
- 3) Feedback
- 4) Involvement (Academic and Social)
- 5) Learning

Discussion: How can these be incorporated into your classroom?



**THANK
YOU!**

**Ryerson
University**

**Learning &
Teaching
Office**