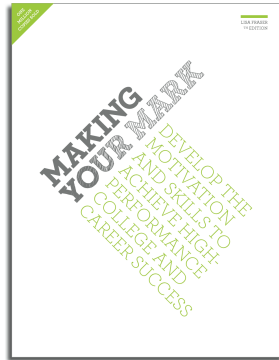


THE RIGHT START TO COLLEGE CHECKLIST

Student Motivation
and Retention:
Affordable
Simple
Great Results



The 7 Essential Elements of The Right Start to College Student Motivation and Retention Checklist*

Does your college have...

1. A strengths-based retention vision (p.2)
faculty involvement, first impressions, student satisfaction

2. College-wide commitment (p.3)

3. Faculty training and support (p.4)

4. Student success resources/support (p.5)

5. Detailed plan for 1st day of college (p.6)

6. Motivated students/1st day feedback (p.7)

7. Great results (p.8)
increased student motivation, satisfaction, and retention

www.makingyourmark.com

*The Right Start to College works optimally when all 7 checklist elements are present, but is effective when any combination of retention elements are in place.

1. A strengths-based retention vision

faculty involvement, first impressions, student satisfaction

A Strengths-Based Retention Program

Everyone on campus needs to buy into a retention program that supports *every* student, and front-end loads all students with the success skills and motivation to persist. The Right Start to College is based on developing student strengths—versus the old-school system of identifying student weaknesses and providing these at-risk students with support after they’ve run into difficulty.

Student-Centered Orientation

As opposed to traditional Student Services-based orientation approaches, The Right Start to College is student-focused and addresses student-identified questions, needs and concerns. By providing students with the information they want about their education and their future, we’ll help them create an educational and career vision that they can buy into and commit to. Students identify their main areas of concern upon entering college:

- Understanding how their education relates to a career
- Believing that their education is valuable and worthwhile
- Developing long-term self-sufficiency: lifelong skills that will ensure them a high-performance career
- Lowering their anxiety about graduating and getting a job
- Wanting to connect to a career that pays well
- Getting to know faculty and classmates
- Developing a support system

A student-centered retention program ensures that students have the answers to these questions by helping them

- Create an educational and career vision
- Build relationships through interactive exercises and activities
- Develop high-performance academic/career success skills

A Great First Impression

The first few minutes and hours of Day 1 are crucial to reaching our students, fueling their motivation and energy, and helping them develop the confidence that they’re in the right place. We have to set the right stage to make students feel welcome (have program faculty circulating to greet new students; have upbeat music and/or a program video or slides playing; have treats placed on students’ desks...), and have a professional information package prepared for each student that contains the critical information they’re looking for on Day 1 (please see page 5 for information package details). Part of a great first impression is a relevant, engaging Day 1 agenda (please see page 6 for agenda details).

Program-Based Retention

The best way to encourage relationship and team building is to create a strong program culture that fosters a sense of belonging. Students with a support system are much more likely to persist (please see page 6 for a detailed program-based Day 1 agenda).

Faculty-Driven Approach

The Right Start to College is based on building student strengths and competencies, and is also about changing student behavior toward high-performance work habits. This kind of change cannot take place at the institutional level—it must take place in the classroom at the program/faculty level. When students perceive their education as career professional development, the classroom becomes an enriched learning environment that results in faculty teaching more motivated students.

Compulsory Course

The Right Start to College is compulsory because it is not aimed at assisting at-risk students—it is designed to maximize the motivation base and learning experience of every student that we teach, and to help each one of them take their performance skills to the next level.

The *Real* Core Curriculum

The fundamental core curriculum are (1) relationship building (2) developing an educational and career vision and (3) high-performance academic and career success skills. Together they create a motivational platform upon which students can believe in the academic curriculum and see each subject’s relevance to the bigger career picture, as well as their ability to manage it all. The syllabus, textbooks, and grading system should be delayed until this motivational foundation has been established.

2. College-wide commitment

the stages of implementing a new retention program

A college-wide commitment is critical because each and every first-year student has the right to maximize their college experience. The Right Start to College is based on developing students' strengths and academic/workplace skills; every student deserves this professional development, support, and career preparation. We need to ensure that each relevant college department (management, student services, program faculty and staff) has the resources and training to best serve each of our students. As well, a new paradigm shift requires new terminology. Accordingly, we advocate changing the image and naming of "orientation" to The Right Start to College; orientation is often considered optional and carries with it stereotypes of college services and social activities.

Where to Start

A college-wide commitment to retention involves making a commitment to each of the 7 checklist items outlined throughout this document. Education and training of staff is the first step in making this commitment.

Awareness Training - Stage 1

This involves making sure everyone involved shares a clear retention vision, and is aware of the program objectives and their importance (please see page 2 for details, and please visit our website to download published articles on the design and implementation of The Right Start to College).

Faculty Training - Stage 2

Because it is the faculty who will be delivering The Right Start to College, they'll need support in learning the new student motivation and behavioral change tools and interactive exercises. All training materials are available free of charge from our website. The training involves teaching faculty how to

- Communicate to all students a clear agenda and vision of The Right Start to College prior to start-up
- Outline the importance of The Right Start to College by making it compulsory
- Involve all faculty in creating a positive program culture
- Make a great first impression and helping our students ensure they've made the right program choice
- Deliver a student-based orientation program that connects with what motivates students: educational and career vision/information, relationship building, academic and career success skills
- Paint a clear picture of students' education and career journey, which builds career confidence
- Give students a clear overview of the academic program, culture and expectations
- Create a 'skill competency' context for the academic curriculum that makes each subject relevant
- Outline the skills necessary to be successful at college and in the workplace
- Provide supportive student success resources, including *Making Your Mark*
- Strengthen students' college success and self-management skills
- Build relationships with faculty and students in their program groups

Review, Renew, Recharge Training - Stage 3

After colleges experience successful results from The Right Start to College, they move to the next level of training which involves (1) Review: reviewing what worked and what improvements are needed for subsequent years, (2) Renew and Recharge: expanding the program to providing students with support after Day 1 through to alumni. Also available is The Right Start to College's Program/Faculty Lead Hand management system, which involves helping faculty implement further elements of The Right Start to College year round.

While a college-wide student retention approach to The Right Start to College is optimal, you can be effective and make a difference no matter the size and scope of your program. The various levels of commitment are outlined below, from using The Right Start to College with the entire first year student body, right down to using it within a one-subject course:

- college commitment - management and faculty adopt The Right Start to College for all programs
- program commitment - all program faculty take part in The Right Start to College
- first-year experience commitment - any combination of the VP Academic, VP Student Services, Academic Council, Student Success Committee or Management Team commit to providing The Right Start to College to every student
- pilot program - to gain support for the program, a pilot program can be implemented and results documented
- one-subject commitment - often through a first year experience seminar, one faculty member involved

Whether you are approaching student retention from a faculty position or from a management perspective, the objectives and components of your retention program are common and can be implemented at some level.

3. Faculty training and support online, telephone, on-site, conferences

A successful program depends on well-trained faculty and staff who understand the importance of each component of the retention program. Because The Right Start to College is all about changing student behavior, faculty require training—which can be done independently using our free resources—to ensure they are well prepared to use the motivational tools and exercises that help students take their work habits and their commitment to persist to a higher level.

Behavioral change happens by changing student perceptions—from perceiving the material as ‘study skills’ to seeing it as professional development for a high-performance career—and by encouraging students to adopt high-performance work habits and skills. To that end, the interactive motivational exercises and content found in *Making Your Mark* are designed to help students

- reflect on past work habits
- develop new perceptions about the importance of their college education
- understand how their education is directly related to a career path
- determine what skills they’ll need to succeed
- discover their areas of strength
- build important peer relationships, and
- learn effective work habits and techniques

Online Training

Our free training resources can be found on our website, www.makingyourmark.com:

- *Making Your Mark* instructor’s manual - explains how to conduct the interactive exercises, and includes an outline of a Day 1 agenda (as well as a 5 day, 30-hour format) and explanation of the day’s activities
- Resources - student retention resources are available for download
- Published articles - download various articles that detail The Right Start to College retention program
- Newsletters - some of our recent newsletters, which include ideas on how to implement The Right Start to College

Telephone Training

Also free of charge, we support your college’s retention program with telephone training of the faculty and program coordinators who will be delivering the program.

On-site Training

Many colleges elect to do on-site training. Our facilitator, Don Fraser, takes staff through a typical The Right Start to College Day 1, and helps staff customize the appropriate student support resources. He also shares teaching techniques such as The 6 Keys to Brain Power, as well as the results of his 20 years of retention research: key factors in student motivation, first impressions research, essential questions of students on Day 1, the critical factors in high-performance change and college success, and maintaining student motivation after Day 1.

Recent feedback from Vanier College after completing the first module of The Right Start to College training:

“The seminar went way beyond my expectations and I think the turn-out was fabulous,” said George Archer (Dean of Technology). “I wanted to focus teachers’ attention on the importance of their performance and interaction with students in retaining students. I also wanted teachers in the Technology programs to get to know one another and feel they are part of a Program and not just their Department.”

Centering his talk on the best practices in student motivation from day one to graduation, Fraser put his audience through exercises that were simple, fun, informative and easy to use in the classroom; exercises that would help teachers connect with their students immediately and grab and hold their attention from the very start of classes. Understanding students’ needs and expectations, respecting them, acting professionally and leading the way for students to see themselves as professionals were part of the approach he urged. “It’s up to you,” he said, indicating that facilities, equipment and great students don’t make a great program, teachers do.

Conferences

The Right Start to College has been presented at international, national and regional conferences on education. Look for Don Fraser at the following conferences:

- Career College Association Annual Convention and Exposition
- ACCC - Association of Canadian Community Colleges Annual Conference
- Noel Levitz National Conference on Student Recruitment, Marketing, and Retention
- Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience

4. Student success resources/support

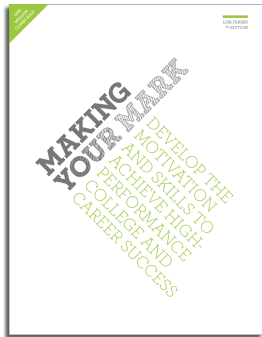
Making Your Mark+

Retention and student motivation depend on us delivering the right information as soon as we make contact with our students on Day 1. This information must respond to what students want to know regarding their college decision and career direction, and should be customized to their program or area of study. It must also help them develop relationships with their faculty and peers. We've listed the various resources and materials that support The Right Start to College:

The Right Information: Day 1 Resource Materials/Student Seminar Kit

- Agenda—a detailed outline of The Right Start to College Day 1 student seminar
- *Making Your Mark*, 8th Edition—contains the retention/student motivation interactive exercises and the high-performance academic/career skills
- Program handbook—gives students a detailed overview of their program, career and faculty
 - welcome letter from Dean/program faculty
 - faculty bios/pictures
 - career vision: job market information and sectors/employers/job titles
 - career competency skill profile
 - program of studies
 - program policies, key dates and information
 - placement/internship/field work information
 - alumni success stories
 - industry resources/accreditation
- Name tent/tag—helps students get to know each other
- College day timer/handbook, including student services and college information—includes college policies, support services, and general information
- Student Association/Orientation Information
- Music, treats and lunch
- Student Association and Student Services items

Making Your Mark



Making Your Mark is the foundation of The Right Start to College retention program, which focuses on the development of high-performance educational and career success skills, on helping students find a strong comfort level with their program selection, and in motivating students to commit to a career path and then persist through to graduation. *Making Your Mark* has been used by over one million students to get through college.

The interactive exercises in *Making Your Mark* and our instructor's manual target

- developing and strengthening student motivation
- high-performance habits and change
- relationship building
- academic skill building

The exercises encourage students to reflect upon what motivates them and help them preserve that motivation throughout their college years. Students also examine their past work habits and determine how they can improve their self-management skills, and understand how they can transfer college success skills to a career setting. They also see how they can effect high-performance change, so that their current work habits and systems can be taken to a new level.

Making Your Mark Contents

career directions • college success interactive exercises • student motivation • high-performance change • notetaking tips
time management • study hints and shortcuts • college survival skills • exam preparation • papers and reports

"The skills outlined in Making Your Mark will help you graduate from college. But more important, these skills will see you through your entire career. It's kind of like a 2-for-1 deal. The college success skills you develop are the same employment skills you'll need for your career: good work habits, efficient time management, and an organized system for getting your work done at a high standard. If you approach your college years as professional development for your career, you'll be well prepared for the work-place, and you'll come as close as it gets to guaranteeing yourself a good job upon graduation."

5. Detailed plan for 1st day of college agendas for one-hour to one-week seminars

While it may sound obvious, having a detailed roadmap for Day 1 will ensure that you cover the essentials of your retention program, and will also give your students a visual foundation for the day so they'll know where they're headed and what's important.

Each of our seminar agendas, which range from one hour—if that's all you have time for—to a full week, can be downloaded from our web page: www.makingyourmark.com. There you'll find a detailed plan and implementation guide for the first day of college that matches the time frame your college or program can allocate to the Day 1 start-up. We invite you to download our instructor's manual which will show you how to deliver each of the student motivation and academic/career success exercises found in *Making Your Mark*.

The Right Start to College Seminars

Ideally, you'll be able to dedicate a full day or week to The Right Start to College. We have one, three, and five-day seminar agendas that give students a complete background to career and college success, as well as a comprehensive exposure to the student motivation and retention exercises found in *Making Your Mark*.

Each of the three The Right Start to College seminar agendas contains the following content/elements:

1. Welcome: distribute the student seminar kits (please see page 5 for details)
2. Relationship building: icebreakers that build relationships and encourage student commitment and motivation
3. Motivational and career exercises: introduce high-performance change and the concept of Me Inc
4. Faculty panel: introduce each of the faculty to students, and have them talk about their own career path - this will allow students to get to know their faculty and to be exposed to a variety of potential career paths
5. Educational and career vision
 - a. Job market information
 - b. Required skill profile/job market competencies
 - c. Program of studies
 - d. Cooperative education: internship and field work opportunities
6. Career and college success skills/self-management skills: conduct the interactive exercises that help develop academic/career high-performance success skills
7. *Making Your Mark* (see section below)
8. Program handbook: give a detailed picture of the program, career and faculty
9. College day timer: cover the various college and student support services, key dates and academic policies
10. Day 1 Feedback Survey: get immediate retention results and gather information that will allow you to address individual and group needs and concerns

Our week-long program gives students a more comprehensive look at their chosen career and required skills, and a greater insight into their behavior patterns and work styles. Some of the material covered in the week-long format includes

- time to take students through every exercise in *Making Your Mark* with a thorough debriefing, plus detailed analysis of individual and class results
- job market preparation - research, interview and presentation skills

Making Your Mark Seminars

For those on a more limited time frame, we have *Making Your Mark* seminar agendas in one-hour and two-hour formats, which are narrower in focus and are targeted toward helping students develop a career mindset and related high-performance academic/workplace skills. Students are exposed to essential career and academic success skills.

Student motivation topics and exercises in *Making Your Mark* include

- relationship building while building notetaking skills and examining college goals and concerns
- relationship building through building a support system and network
- career motivation by learning the 8 cornerstones of high-performance careers and benefits of high-performance skills
- career motivation by understanding the principles of Me Inc
- career motivation by comparing the salary of a high-performance career with a minimum wage job
- career motivation by changing perception of learning from high school grades to career professional development
- career motivation by knowing the workplace skills that employers are looking for
- career motivation by undergoing the 7 stages of high-performance change and developing personal strengths
- success skill development by changing the perception of study skills to self-management skills
- success skill development by understanding the benefits of a systemized approach to schoolwork
- success skill development by working through the content and associated exercises in *Making Your Mark*

6. Motivated students/1st day feedback

day 1 results

The resoundingly positive feedback we've received from faculty and students is evidence of the tangible results and effectiveness of the Right Start to College:

Motivated Students

"This was an effective week because it taught my classmates and me what life has to offer. Creating an interactive class also helps people learn more effectively. It draws us in, making us wanting to learn more. Don Fraser was one heck of a speaker. Attending class the very first day, I was worried that it would be boring and unexciting, but was I wrong. The way he speaks and his teaching techniques were phenomenal. I was always tuned in and was never bored with his material. Also I've learned so much more about myself and the world around me. In other words, he was an inspiration that makes me become a better person."

-Student, Loyalist College

"If I thought I was going to have a typical school day, this sure surprised me. I felt like I was in a conference room in a hotel in Toronto listening to a celebrity. Don Fraser "had me from hello". I don't think in my entire life I have met such a powerful speaker with such energy of a tiger. The class was literally absorbing his energy."

Student, Loyalist College

Increased Student Confidence

"The one week course was perfect. Everything was pieced together and flowed smoothly. From guest speakers, to the interviews, to group presentations. This week was well-planned and organized to create one successful and memorable experience. I was fortunate enough to attend the January semester to experience this course. After spending one week in a classroom of thirty, I've bonded like no other. Who would've thought, in five days, everyone became friends, classmates and family. There was nothing like it, and without this one week session, we would never have bonded or found out anything about each other and ourselves. Loyalist should continue this program because it's fast and very effective. It feels great knowing the professors know your name, and all about you. That's something other colleges and universities don't offer which makes Loyalist unique. My gratitude to this one-week course is endless."

- Student, Loyalist College

Stronger Student Commitment to Persist

"This week was all about me, my career and my potential skills. After one week, I found there are more opportunities for me in the job market as well as life. Knowing more about me will open many doors and help me narrow down future possibilities. Success was one of the main themes that was covered this week, how we can improve our attributes to be successful, and the strategies to become a high-performance person. Adaptability was one of the key strengths that was covered this week. You have to adapt to the constant change in life and adapt to any environment in order to be successful. One of the key concepts that I felt changed me in order to work harder was the focus on personal strengths and the importance of developing strengths in order to accomplish goals and tackle life problems."

-Student, Loyalist College

Motivated Faculty, More Teachable Students

"Hello Don Fraser! I just wanted to thank you for the amazing workshop that you gave in August. It has shaken up my teaching practice in a really good way! I've managed to establish a fun learning environment that stands on the concepts I'm teaching while acknowledging and supporting their career choices. It's really been great. It seems like my new-found understanding of their perspective and ultimate goal (thanks for pointing that out, Don! Awesome and transformative information) was the missing link in the learning environment of my classroom! My students want to stick around and linger after class to see if anything else interesting is mentioned. These students are grasping more and wanting more than previous groups. Awesome, awesome, awesome! Thank you!"

- Faculty member, Vanier College

Better Classroom Environment

"I wanted to pass along a couple of comments with respect to the January intake, now that I have had a chance to get to know them a bit. While the January intake groups always seem to be of a "bit higher caliber" I have to say that this group is really impressive. They are a "team" and have a great level of confidence that they are ready to take on any challenge that we are prepared to give them. The energy in the room is far more like a second semester group. They know each other, and from the first few minutes in the class, were participating at a level that was truly impressive and enjoyable. You are to be congratulated on the work that you did to prep them for the next 15 weeks. I am positive that we will see great things from this particular group. Thanks for making my classroom better."

- Faculty member, Loyalist College

7. Great results

increased student motivation, satisfaction, and retention

Improved Retention

“Walking the retention walk isn’t always easy. My use of *Making Your Mark*, however, has proved effective. My institution has had a 30% attrition rate between the freshman and sophomore years. None of the freshmen who [used] *Making Your Mark* [within my college prep course] opted out—each one is back this year, and five of them are active in student leadership roles on campus. The success speaks for itself.”

-Professor, Northern Arizona University

Increased Comfort Level with College and Program Selection

Before attending The Right Start to College at SAIT (Southern Alberta Institute of Technology),

- 40% of students indicated that they felt “very” or “extremely” comfortable about attending. After attending The Right Start to College, this figure increased to 88%.
- After taking part in The Right Start to College, 84.7% of SAIT students were confident that the program they had chosen was the right program for them.

Increased Student Confidence in Program Completion and Program Selection

NISOD’s Innovation Abstracts profiled Confederation College’s results after implementing The Right Start to College:

- Ninety-four percent of students surveyed said college staff were friendly and welcoming, an increase of 11% over the previous year in the the College’s first-year student workshops.
- Ninety percent said they felt that they had made the right choice, up 8% over the previous year.
- Ninety-two percent believed they would complete their program successfully, up 19% over previous years.

Increased Student Satisfaction

Among other comments, Confederation College students shared these thoughts about their first-day sessions:

- “I definitely feel more at ease with my choice.”
- “I liked listening to graduates and learning about what’s been happening to them.”
- “We got to know our teachers on a more personal level.”
- “I got to know people!”
- “I am excited about my program!”
- “I look forward to this semester—it sounds like a fun, yet challenging (in a good way), program.”
- “I like the atmosphere of friendliness.”

Feedback from Noel Levitz Annual Conference (1997-2007)

Ratings: 93.1% Excellent 6.9% Good 0% Fair 0% Poor

Comments:

- “Unbelievably high energy—Don Fraser gives educators the tools and motivation to share with their students. He’s awesome!”
- “Amazing—would love to have this as a longer session. Will take this back to my college and insist that Don visit our campus!”
- “Excellent session—great information, high energy, fun. Wonderful handouts. This should be a keynote!”
- “Dynamic, great thoughts and ideas to take home with me. Makes me excited to make powerful changes.”
- “The very best presentation of the conference. I am so excited to take these ideas and implement them at my institution.”
- “Awesome—positive, visionary, what I am after for my students and school.”
- “Excellent! I so enjoyed this presentation. Look forward to working with him in the future. Awesome!”
- “Thanks for the hope for change!”
- “Very motivational speaker—full of energy!”
- “Especially helpful to hear this can work in a real environment—with faculty, institutional restrictions—and how to link college with the rest of students’ lives.”
- “Great presentation and resource materials.”
- “Dynamic. I wish it was in a longer session.”
- “Fun—very interactive.”
- “Very interactive and motivating. I need to take this program back to motivate students.”

For further information, please contact Don Fraser

416-484-8118 or 1-877-492-6845

donfraser@makingyourmark.com

www.makingyourmark.com

1881 Yonge Street, P.O. Box 48086, Toronto, ON M4S 3C6