

# Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre: New Programming & Initiatives

Academic Affairs Committee  
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# Three New Areas of Programming

- English Language Learning Program
- Numeracy & Scientific Reasoning Support
- Promoting Academic Skills for Success (PASS)

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# **ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING PROGRAM**

# English Language Learning Program

- Targeted skills-based workshops
  - RGASC
  - Visual Studies, Historical Studies, Management
  - Residence
  - Registrar
- One-to-one appointments
  - Grammar
  - Referencing
  - Speaking / Writing Skills

# English Language Learning Program

- Academic Integrity Tutorial
  - Details all aspects of integrity, not just plagiarism
  - Focuses on success rather than penalty
  - Highlights good referencing practices
- Grammar Workshop
  - Series of 10 PPT workshops and related quizzes
  - Available on Blackboard
  - Does not affect ‘Grade Centre’

# The “Academic Integrity” Online Tutorial

## QUESTION 4

10 points

Save Answer

It looks as though your assignment just contains lots of references from sources to other people's ideas. What can you do about this?

- Integrate quotations, paraphrases, and summaries with your own words and use different reporting verbs to introduce your sources.
- Take out some citations if they are a distraction from the points you make and so it looks as though you have written more.
- Leave it as it is and hope that the professor doesn't notice that it is overcrowded.
- Put in more of your own ideas and opinions, without backing them up with any sources.

## QUESTION 5

10 points

Save Answer

Which of the following constitute plagiarism?

- When you use an idea from a source and change a few words and include a citation to the source.
- When you provide one or two sentences in your own words, condensing the main point made by a source.
- When you write something directly from a book or article and then include a citation to the source.
- When you express in your own words the ideas of what an author has said and include a citation to the source.

*Click Save and Submit to save and submit. Click Save All Answers to save all answers.*

Save All Answers

Save and Submit

Each of the three main modules includes a test.

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# **NUMERACY & SCIENTIFIC LITERACY SUPPORT**

# Numeracy Support

Foundational mathematics skills supported through face-to-face appointments and/or drop-in sessions:

- Support aims at diagnosing foundational (pre-university) mathematical issues;
- Interventions focuses on promoting a deeper understanding of foundational mathematical concepts including: algebraic formulation, basic statistical methods, pre-calculus, and advanced functions;
- Instruction includes facilitating the development of the students' quantitative reasoning skills (rather than helping with math homework or assignments).



# Scientific Literacy Support

- Provided through the development and implementation of a new assessment tool—the Graded Response Method (GRM)
- The Graded Response Method:
  - Is an alternative to Multiple Choice testing;
  - Supports the development of students’ critical thinking skills by requiring them to “justify” whether a response is or is not valid;
  - Requires students to rank responses through a series of logical statements distinguished on the basis of the degree of truthfulness (i.e., always true, sometimes true, sometimes false, or always false);
  - Encourages greater student engagement with course material.

# An Example of a GRM Question

Define biogeography and describe what major contributions to the discipline were made by Alfred Wallace during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

- A. A branch of science that deals with the geographical distribution of animals and plants. Wallace was a major contributor to the discipline through his analysis of regions, promoting their use as an organizing principle of zoogeographical analysis.
- B. Biogeography is growing in popularity as people around the globe explore their role in the biosphere. Wallace was the co-founder of the theory of natural selection along with Charles Darwin. However, he never achieved the recognition that Darwin did.
- C. A branch of science that deals with the worldwide distribution of life. Wallace contributed to the discipline through the use of the principle of zoogeographical analysis.
- D. Biogeography explores the physical structure of ecosystems and is fundamental to understanding the nature of evolution. Wallace was a 19<sup>th</sup> century naturalist who studied organismal behaviour.

**Answer: A, C, B, D**

# GRM @ UTM

- ANT101
- BIO153
- BIO356
- CHM110
- CSC290
- CSC108
- GGR111
- GGR202
- GGR305
- MGM200
- MGM301

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## Using the Principles of SoTL to Redesign an Advanced Evolutionary Biology Course

### ABSTRACT

A primary goal of university instruction is the students' demonstration of improved, highly developed critical thinking (CT) skills. However, how do faculty encourage CT and its potential concomitant increase in student workload without negatively impacting student perceptions of the course? In this investigation, an advanced biology course is evaluated after structural changes (implemented in 2010) met with a poor student evaluation of the course and the instructor. This analysis first examines the steps used to transform a course to encourage CT and then explains how it can be assessed. To accomplish these goals, the instructor

# Numeracy & Scientific Literacy Support Models

## Numeracy:

- In-class presentations & workshops
- Co-curricular workshops
- Drop-in Math Support Sessions

## Scientific Literacy:

- Consultations with faculty members to help them develop assessment and teaching strategies (especially rubric construction and GRM tools)

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# **PROMOTING ACADEMIC SKILLS FOR SUCCESS PROGRAM (PASS)**

# PASS @ UTM

- Based on successful models elsewhere (e.g., Bounce Back @ San Diego State University)
- Launched February 2015
- Provides dedicated support to academically “at risk” students
- Program goals:
  - Rebuild students’ motivation
  - Model successful behaviors
  - Raise students’ self-awareness
  - Build students’ resilience

# PASS @ UTM

- Seven-week non-credit course
- Followed by individualized monitoring and support in the subsequent term
- Each week of the course includes:
  - One-hour “class meeting” focusing on foundational academic skills (listening, note-taking, reading, writing, problem-solving, critical thinking, research skills);
  - Follow-up one-hour small group “interactive session”;
  - Reflective writing exercise delivered online.

# PASS @ UTM

## Key features:

- Three levels of interaction
- High ratio of Peer Mentors to students (1:6)
- Interactive game activities at core
- Accountability of students for engagement
- Extensive documentation



# PASS @ UTM

- Offered three times per year (Summer, Fall, and Winter).

Term	Enrolled	Completed	Re-enrolled
Winter 2015	10	3	2
Summer 2015	23	12	3
Fall 2015	35	26	1
Winter 2016	15	13	0
Summer 2016	53	31	3

# PASS @ UTM: Impacts

Session	Participants	Improved CGPA
Winter 2015	3	2/3 (67%)
Summer 2015	12	11/12 (92%)
Fall 2015	26 (19 assessed)	15/19 (79%)
Winter 2016	13 (7 assessed)	7/7 (100%)

PASS Session	Compliance Rate
Summer 2015	67% (6/9)
Fall 2015	100% (7/7)
Winter 2016	50% (2/4)
Summer 2016	100% (5/5)

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**QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?**