

## The KPU Learning Centres: Supporting Learning Excellence

Over the past ten years the Learning Centre has provided services and supports to students and KPU learning communities through an intentional model of service called Learning Excellence. Through this framework the Learning Centres provide extensive services to meet the needs of diverse learners, both in and out of class. This model provides individualized support for students at risk as well as for those who want to strengthen their academic abilities. Through personalized plans developed in consultation with Learning Strategists, students can work one on one with a tutor, or they can be part of a small group in a Peer Assisted Study Session<sup>1</sup> (PASS) to get the attention and encouragement they need to succeed academically. At the same time within the Learning Excellence model student tutors and PASS leaders develop the learning skills and strategies to help other students as they enhance their own leadership abilities and their commitment to excellence.

Beyond this, however, learning supports work best when introduced and used in the context of the content students are exploring. Thus, Learning Centre services are provided in a complementary, integrated or embedded way through collaboration between Instructors, Learning Strategists and Coordinators and Staff. This intentional design encourages the practice of combining effective strategies with the goals and objectives of the instructor in a collaborative way. Ultimately, this collaboration serves to embed skill and knowledge components that enhance and encourage a deep approach to learning and understanding into all courses, so that students are well satisfied that they are developing the essential skills, knowledge and abilities they need to make the most of the opportunities that arise in their lives, now and later.

Table 1: Learning Excellence Model

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
<b>General</b>	<b>Complementary</b>	<b>Integrated</b>	<b>Embedded</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills development</li> <li>• Tutoring programs</li> <li>• Intervention and Retention programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individualized Assistance</li> <li>• Online Learning Support</li> <li>• Course based skills and strategies</li> <li>• Work with faculty to design and adapt learning materials or strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attached to course / assignment</li> <li>• Collaborative: content, scaffolding, timing</li> <li>• Input into assignment</li> <li>• Several in-class visits</li> <li>• Part of a team of support professionals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes all of the integrated skills and knowledge components as part of a course.</li> <li>• Scaffolds strategies and developmental activities across degree programs.</li> </ul>

What has been significant for our growth and development is the relationship we have been able to forge with the Teaching and Learning Commons and Librarians. The bond that has formed in the last few years, in particular, has encouraged all of us to engage in learning more about and supporting teaching excellence and innovation, while at the same time providing learning resources, tutoring, problem solving and lesson support available online to students and faculty.

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### **ENCOURAGEMENT AND MOTIVATION**

*Thank you for all your hard work and encouragement, your actions and supports helped me achieve my goals.*

BA GRADUATING STUDENT

*I appreciate your encouragement and support throughout my studies. This semester I have completed my degree and not only I already got a good job, but also I have been accepted into a Master's Degree program. My future looks very promising! All this would have never happened without your advice. Thank you!*

BBA GRADUATING STUDENT



Image courtesy of Microsoft  
ClipArt Animations. 2010. Retrieved  
06.26.2014

### **LEARNING WITH CONFIDENCE**

*I got 75% in BUSI and 72% in ACCT in a first mid-term. Moreover, I'm putting efforts for getting better grade than B. I'm so thankful that you helped me a lot on recognizing my strengths, weaknesses, time management and the learning strategies with the help of LASSI. Thank you!*

BUSINESS DIPLOMA STUDENT, 2<sup>ND</sup> YEAR



Image courtesy of Microsoft  
ClipArt Animations. 2010. Retrieved  
10.05.2012

Source: Faculty Report 2019

# General Support – Tier 1

This tier represents general time honoured approaches that Learning Centres have adopted since their inception.

This includes a focus on **peer tutoring** as a key component to supporting students in their academic success as well as stand-alone **intervention and skill development programs** such as Academic Skills Workshops, Academic Boost Camps, Early Alert support, Sensational Saturdays, PASS and Review Sessions.

There is some presence in the classroom, but the majority of the programming occurs separately.

**Data gathering** relates more to student use than student needs

## Examples:

**Peer Tutoring** – usually serves around 25 -30% of FTE.

### Examples of student use from 2021

Student (new) signups for online tutoring for 2021: 2455

Total sign ups in system: 7428

Peer Tutors Trained: 30

Total tutoring sessions: 5638

When face to face and online tutoring options have been available close to 3,000 students can be seen to attend around 12,000+ appointments.

### Academic Skills Workshops

# delivered in 2021 = 122

Attendees = 1871

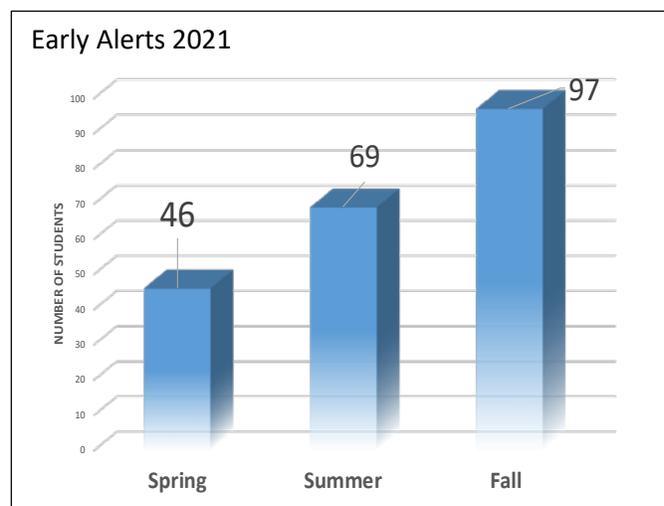
### Review Sessions

# sessions delivered = 73

Attendees = 1115

### Early Alert Responses

e.g. 2021



# Peer Tutor Program

One of the highly successful programs at KPU is the Peer Tutor Development program. This program has been in existence since 2014 and has undergone regular and frequent curriculum revisions to ensure that our tutors are conversant with current research into learning and tutoring, and are able to interact with other students in ethically and socially responsible ways. Within a context of academic integrity, intercultural understanding, indigenization, decolonization and reconciliation, and strong approaches to learning, tutors are required to complete up to three levels of certification that lead to professional levels of tutoring. They are chosen from KPU students who meet academic, interpersonal and GPA criteria set in consultation with academic faculty. As such they form an interdisciplinary community of high achieving students, all of whom have access to faculty mentors, assistance with graduate school and awards applications, and references for potential employers.

To date well over 1,000 tutors have participated in our tutor training teams led by learning strategists and learning centre coordinators and assistants.

*Dear Learning Centre,  
At the end of the semester, one of my students told me that her experience with tutors at the Learning Centre was amazing. As an international student already with a degree, she said she had not experienced such useful and on target assistance ever in her previous education. She said, "they really care".  
Thank you for the work you do.*

POST BACC FACULTY

## TPDW

Out of these experiences KPU has developed Tutor Program Development Workshops (TPDW) for sharing our practices with educators across Canada and beyond. In these sessions participants are introduced to foundational theory and the tutoring skills that contribute to an effective Tutor Training program. Participants are encouraged to similarly share and refine their practices throughout the sessions. KPU materials are shared via a creative commons licence and are quality assured through comparisons with international standards such as CRLA and the NTA, and through accreditation with the Canadian Educational Developers' Caucus. It is intended that sharing this work with other educators will aid in establishing Canadian Tutoring Standards.

# Academic Skills Workshops

Our workshops are selected according to student needs as identified through student appointments and faculty consultations and/or requests, as well as current research in the field of learning and cognition. They include, but are not limited to topics such as:

- ✓ Understanding the impact of mindsets and how to recover from setbacks
- ✓ Strategies for working and studying
- ✓ Reading and notetaking with confidence and purpose
- ✓ Deepening your thinking and metacognition
- ✓ Dealing with procrastination
- ✓ Exam preparation – moving beyond memorization
- ✓ Preparing for open book exams
- ✓ Leveling up your executive functioning
- ✓ The importance of grit
- ✓ Balancing life and learning: self-care and productivity
- ✓ Preparing for open book exams
- ✓ Understanding concepts
- ✓ 10 Tips for online learning
- ✓ Your first 13 weeks
- ✓ Pebble pad basics
- ✓ Excel – intermediate skills for university students
- ✓ Team processes and progress
- ✓ Monitoring your learning through rubrics

And more ...

In Spring 2022, 88 workshops are scheduled, however Strategists also create additional materials and instructional resources for students and faculty through collaborative efforts. <https://www.kpu.ca/learningcentres/workshops>

We have also created online, anytime workshops, as well as producing interactive online self-paced pressbooks.

See <https://www.kpu.ca/learningcentres/servicesguide>

## *Collaborating with faculty to support student development*

*Thanks so much (Strategist)! I met with (student) this week too and he was so impressed with the workshops and when we met he had such great questions to ask about the assignments. I provide the instructions, a video, ask for questions, a rubric and often students wait until the day it is due then miss half the instructions ...*

*As always, I see such a huge impact when I can get students to attend the workshops, this semester I am happy to see so many taking me up on my offer and early on rather than the last day of the semester 😊*

### LEARNING WITH CONFIDENCE

The workshop feedback in blue is one of my top 3rd year domestic students, and the green is a 2nd year international student.

*... the becoming a more independent learner workshop was today ... This workshop exposed me to a detailed breakdown of the overall topic of "Bloom's taxonomy" more specifically 6 if the cognitive taxonomies by Bloom. Additionally, the instructor (Professor Aguilera) gave us questions to help us understand Bloom's taxonomy, the deep and surface approaches to learning, the three phases of learning, basic principals of active learning, various methods to learn effectively, and we went over a study strategy checklist. One interesting aspect of this workshop was the ability to answer a quiz where I learned that I am more of an independent learner, as opposed to a dependent learner. This workshop helped me academically as it helped reinforce the idea that independently studying is the best study method for my future studies in the HR field. However, I learned that when working or studying in a group, one of the methods that I can try is to make sure that we stick to the study material, not waste a lot of time by going off topic and trying to relate our previous experiences to the study material. Finally, the reason as to why other students should attend this workshop is because students get an opportunity to ask questions or receive in-depth insights by a subject-matter expert in the field (Ph.D.) about topics related to Bloom's taxonomy, various learning methods as well as how their applicable in the real-world and to our study habits.*

*I attended the workshop of "Become an independent learner" on Sept 29 from 10:00-11:30pm. I learned that how we can become an active and independent learner. She gave us a handout of study strategy check and told to check us what we do and what not and i found some things that i need to do for better independent learning to earn a better grade. She mentioned that some students just remember, understand, and apply the concept and they forget to analyze, evaluate, and create new ideas which means generating new ideas and apply it in real world situations due to which they are unable to remember it for long term. So we should follow these steps of learning. One more thing i learned are three phases of learning i.e. exposure, processing, and feedback which means expose yourself to understand new concepts, remain open to learn new things and process those concepts to information, try to make new ideas, meaningful information, promote deep learning in yourself. Last is the feedback which is critical because we learn but we don't know we remember it or not. So work with others to put yourself some self-testing questions to test your knowledge. I think others should attend this workshop to become a more independent learner and to increase the power of learning.*

# General Intervention, Transition and Retention Programs

Program	2021 student registrations	Duration
<b>KPU100</b> Students registered	605	Since 2020 1000+
<b>KPU101</b> Students registered	142	(New program)
<b>Academic Boost Camp</b> Students registered	214	Since 2009 1000+
<b>ACE-IT &amp; YTT for Dual Credit High School Trades Programs</b>	150	Since 2012 1,500 +



Surrey Learning Centre, taken with permission.

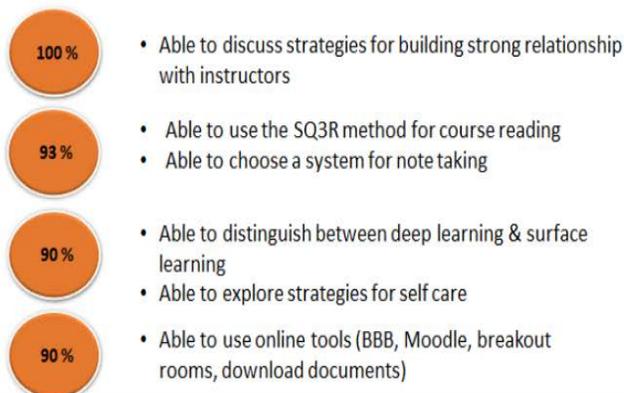
**KPU 100 Introduction to University** is a week-long 10-hour transition program offered via Moodle, prior to the start of each semester, that supports new students in developing effective learning and life strategies. KPU 100 provides an intercultural online learning environment that acknowledges and celebrates students' strengths as learners, develops confidence, and provides skills required to navigate the KPU learning environment. The series starts with a live synchronous session on a Monday, an optional mid-week check point and another live session on Friday at the same time. The rest of the program is self-paced and students receive supportive feedback and guidance throughout the week from program presenters as they complete interactive and reflective activities.



### Key Content for KPU 100:

- Developing personal goals
- Structuring your learning in an online environment
- Managing time effectively
- Using the principles of deep learning to enhance your study
- Reading texts and taking notes
- Using memory strategies
- Communicating effectively online
- Working in online groups and teams
- Improving test-taking skills
- Using powerful questions
- Developing a growth mindset
- Using KPU technology (e.g. Moodle)
- Maintaining well-being through physical activity, sleep and self-compassion
- Cultivating optimism and resilience

### Assessment of Selected Outcomes



### Student Feedback



# KPU 101 - Thriving in Action

This six-week program explores the relationship between positive psychology and effective learning strategies. It has been demonstrated to enhance student well-being, confidence, and competence in managing university studies successfully. It also cultivates motivation, agency, and resilience to improve the lives of students. Topics explored in the course include awe, meaningfulness, character strengths, curiosity and creativity, gratitude, grit (persistence), growth mindset, intentionality, resilience, optimism, self-compassion, willpower, and habits.

**This program consists of:** Online resources and readings, including downloadable content from the KPU 101 Moodle course site; a two-hour live session; and a weekly exercise to complete in Pebble Pad which is reviewed by a facilitator.

A certificate of completion is issued at the end of the program based on completion of module exercises and reflections. There are no grades or credits associated with this program.

## Learning Aids

have been created to complement Learning Strategist appointments with students. They reflect student learning and developmental needs and again are based on research in language and learning, linguistics, neuroscience, positive psychology, cognition and metacognition. A learning aid is something intended to enhance learning and retention by the learner. They may include, but are not limited to: written materials, visualizations, charts, diagrams, processes, strategies, or any other appropriate item. These one page resources are available at all Centres and online. They can be used within courses or as supplemental supports for students.

There are over 100 Learning Aids available for use individually or as a class resource.

<https://www.kpu.ca/learningcentres/learning-aids>

Categories include:

Reading, Managing Time, Study Skills, Thinking and Memory, Questioning, Communications, Courses, Writing Basics, Reflection

# Complementary – Tier 2

This tier sets in motion opportunities to enhance individual support for students as well as paving the way for learning support services to be offered more generally via interaction with instructors.

**Individualized student support** is offered via consultations with **Learning Strategists**, who also work with Learning Centre staff to build programs to meet identified student needs.

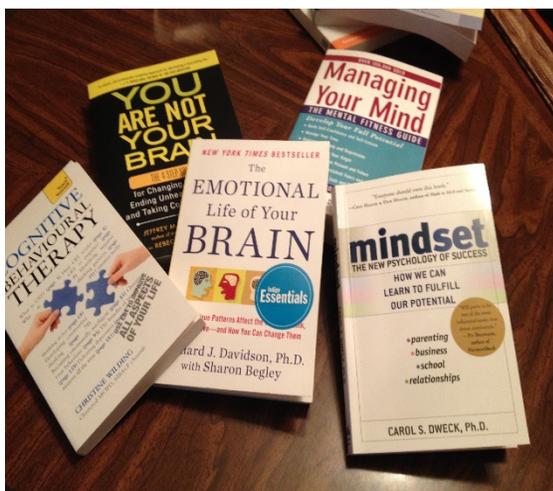
Given the diverse student population, many of whom are underprepared, work 20 – 30 hours a week and have little support at home, **online learning support** is essential as all students can access this.

Tier 2 encourages faculty to seek support for students through **tailored learning seminars** or workshops that address identified student needs within courses. Workshops and **assistance with the development of learning activities or materials** complement the instruction students receive. Faculty work collaboratively with Learning Strategists and Staff.

**Data gathering and statistical analysis** develops.

## Learning Strategist Consultations

Tier 2 Complementary services and programs offer assistance beyond a general or generic focus. Students can book individual consultations with a Learning Strategist. Learning Strategists work to create personalized study strategies for reading, learning from lectures, managing time, preparing for exams, and more. Students are sometimes advised to review the Learning Aids for topics to discuss with a Learning Strategist. They can book a face to face appointment, or connect online.



Strategists keep up to date with research and programs through their professional development agendas, contributions as members or officers of professional associations, attendance and presentations at conferences, further study and contributions to communities of practice.

# Learning Strategist Activities

- ✓ Student and small group appointments.
- ✓ Faculty consultations and classroom delivery of skills sessions.
- ✓ Follow up learning strategy sessions for students.
- ✓ Academic Skills Workshop design and delivery.
- ✓ Supporting writing and tutoring platforms and tutors (TutorOcean, WriteUp and WriteAway).
- ✓ Tutor training, mentoring and supervision.
- ✓ Developing Communities of Practice within and outside KPU.
- ✓ KPU 100, and KPU 101 delivery.
- ✓ Transition programs (First Year Festival, YTT).
- ✓ Resource development for specific courses, delivering seminars specifically for Academic Departments, Post Bacc students groups, and Trades and Tech students.
- ✓ Pebble Pad creation, use and development.
- ✓ Team meetings, Strategist meetings.
- ✓ OER and Ed Tech development.
- ✓ Badging and credentialing.
- ✓ Senate representation, Senate Committees, LRMC, Chair of SSCTL, Chair of the Library Committee.



## Examples of other Complementary Supports include:

**Tutor Navigator** program where a tutor is attached to a first year class to offer general guidance, coaching and tutorial support for the class. As classes went online this program was introduced to aid student development and learning.

Website – 93,265 views for 2021

Asynchronous Online Support includes

# TLC YouTube

2021 Total views: 67,021

Total Number of Videos: 159

Number of Subscribers: 598

See <https://media.kpu.ca/channel/The%2BLearning%2BCentres/88033>

Categories include:

Tutoring Services, Reading Texts and Taking Notes, Writing Skills, Exam Preparation, Time Management, Critical Thinking and Reflection, Technology Skills and Moodle.

## Open Education Resources views:

Academic Writing Basics	33,405+
Introduction to University	27,863+
Prep for Canadian Classroom	3,659+
Learning to Learn Online	104,000+



*These resources are ALL developed by our Learning Centre Faculty and Staff Team.*

# Integrated – Tier 3

Integrated programs have proven to be more effective in developing and consolidating skills than services and courses dispersed through traditional academic departments.

**Learning Strategists** take a key role in **working closely and collaboratively with instructors on courses** as they find ways to integrate skill development through content, scaffolding and timing of the learning activities. Learning Strategists are able to identify key strategies that enhance the learning outcomes associated with various content areas and are available to **consult with faculty regarding student learning issues** as they arise from time to time.

**Continue in-class and complementary workshops** prepare for Supplemental Instruction **Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS)** through identification of courses and interested instructors.

**Data, statistical analysis and reporting available to Kwantlen community** to demonstrate intervention efficacy, accountability for resource use and development of initiatives. Help for Faculties to demonstrate learning and student support provided generally and specifically for program planning and reviews.

## **Examples:**

**Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS)** where a peer leader is trained to work, upon request, with faculty and students in high risk courses running group study sessions to demonstrate learning strategies for the students and checking for understanding throughout the course.

## **Bonus Mark Programs**

BUSI Bonus Mark Program – which started three years ago with one faculty with two courses. It has now expanded to reach over **1120 students** and five faculty for required courses like BUSI 1100, 1110 and 1210. Class and student results are compared to previous classes, or previous students results and have demonstrable positive results in exam strategies and assignment completion.

See: <https://www.kpu.ca/learningcentres/busibonusmark>

Faculty in a range of Arts, Science, and other Business programs negotiate bonus marks for students for identified workshops that complement the learning in their course(s) and are now integrated into the learning outcomes.

## Writing Focused in-class and/or course specific support

Writing Right in Biology

Writing in Science

Biology Lab report collaboration with Lab Assistants

Using Rubrics to evidence learning

Understanding Assignment instructions

Developing Pebble Pad entries and resources for learning and professional purposes.

Reflecting on learning

Reflective and reflexive writing

**Pebble Pad, BBB, Educational Technology support – jointly constructed with T&L Commons**

### **HOW DOES IT WORK?**

*In my Busi1110 class 80% of the students this term indicated that they are still in India. There are pros and cons of course to not having students here and in person, HOWEVER, some of the benefits I have noticed is students in their first term seem more settled and mentally healthy (many times students have arrived days before class started and it is such a big shift along with being away from home and family for the first time). The student learning center workshops have once again been an additional engagement point for the students and I get a sense of their connection to KPU. I offer bonus marks each semester in the hopes of students actively engaging with the learning center (learning that it is not for remediation or punishment) and investing time in their academic skills, but this is the first semester I have had as much adoption overall AND especially in the first 4 weeks.*

*Selfishly, my enjoyment in teaching is increased when I feel like I am working with a team in the learning center to support our students 😊 and the greatest rewards I get (which is why I teach at KPU and love first years) is seeing the improvements over 13 weeks and just knowing their academic confidence has increased. Thanks again! Please feel free to share with your colleagues - I do try to share some of the feedback and I would love to share the rewards and impacts of the students who work with the learning center team, because you may not see the difference you make as clearly as I do.*

**BUSINESS INSTRUCTOR**

## Embedded – Tier 4

Embedding learning skills and knowledge within the disciplines allows for the **richest of learning environments** and the **cultivation of learning excellence**.

Embedding skills involves a **stronger focus on student learning outcomes** and offers the institution a way of **identifying student development and progress** in a more holistic way so that interventions can be sought in a pro-active and timely way.

Working in partnership with faculty, **Learning Centre staff and faculty provide input into foundation courses or programs** to ensure students are provided with a balance of content and process skills that they will need to develop as lifelong learners.

**Example:**

### **BUSI Anchor Skills Learning Resources Development Plan**

**Project Goal:** The creation of a contextual, embedded resource for all anchor skills in the BUSI diploma. Resources may be adapted from existing LC/Library resources; however, it is desirable to generate adaptations that tailor resources to the course Learning Objectives and the business context.

Resources may include:

- Pressbooks (for either specific skills or scaffolding skills into assignments – see BUSI 1215 example)

- Videos/ interactive videos

- H5P learning activities

- Moodle lessons

Instructor notes may be created as relevant.

Resources will be housed in a central online location (identified by the BUSI department)

For more information please feel free to contact:  
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