

Steps to College

A Seneca College & TDSB Project



History of STEPS

Based on STEPS to University, part of the University of Toronto's Transitional Year Program

- Started in 1992 and expanded to Parkdale Collegiate in 1996
- Currently, 8 TDSB schools offer STEPS to University

Parkdale Collegiate Institute

- Inner-city School
- Diverse Population
- Reverse pyramid: more than 80% of our graduates continue on to University
- But weren't retaining Students all the way through, from grade 9 – 12

Parkdale's STEPS to College Proposal

- Original proposal submitted November 2004
Part of our 'Learning to 18' Model, intended to:
- Catch early leavers at risk of not completing their OSSD
- Increase credit accumulation
- Develop learning skills necessary for post secondary success
- Nurture self confidence, positive attitude towards education and post secondary pathway
- Provide opportunities that overcome socio-economic barriers

2006: First Year Pilot Project, in Partnership with Seneca College

- Thirteen students enrolled, all received two OSSD credits
- Eight students received two credits, 5 received one credit from Seneca College
- Currently, 3 students are in college, 4 have been accepted, and 6 are still in high school

Requirements for Success:

- Strong commitment from the entire school community
- Administrators/Counselors
- Teaching Staff/Parents
- Patience - time and flexibility
- Dedicated Computer Lab - Technicians

College Requirements

- Highly motivated and innovative faculty
 - Excellent IT support
 - College wide endorsement
 - Suitable College Credit(s) to offer
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Student Profile:

- Chronically late or absent
- Low credit accumulation/may not complete ODDS
- Hover around level 1 in assessments
- Require learning skills support
- Require ongoing nurturing for academic success
- Need ongoing monitoring to maintain appropriate behaviour
- Have low self-esteem and limited ambition and motivation

Goals: What we Hope to Achieve:

- Independence and Maturity
- Help students develop confidence
- Transition these students from needing constant supervision and help to independence, self reliance and responsibility
- Prepare them for Grade 12 and post secondary education


How Does it Work?

- September to June
- Grades 11 and 12 students who are at risk are recommended
- They are enrolled in an English Literacy (Semester 1) and a Sociology class (Semester 2)
- Students are concurrently enrolled in ICA001 at Seneca College
- 'Dual-Credit', Team Teaching model

Becoming College Students

- Registration at Seneca is through Continuing Education (single subject)
- Students receive Seneca Student Numbers
- Seneca e-mail accounts
- Seneca 'One-Card', photo ID and access to on campus services

Student Reality in the STEPS to College Program:

- These are not 'college' students, and they need nurturing and emotional support
 - These students require an enormous investment of time from the teacher
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Program Delivery

- The ICA course is delivered to Parkdale via broadband technology (online)
- Video conferencing from Seneca instructor weekly
- Seneca instructor visits Parkdale every second week for face-to-face with students

On Site College Visits

- Students visit Seneca College once or twice a month
- Trips reinforce the experience for students, and are a motivational tool
- Make the college experience real for students
- Gives students a sense of pride and accomplishment
- Boost students self-esteem, and offer a vision to a positive future

After six months with this group, we see:

- ✓ improved attendance
- ✓ improved marks
- ✓ improved behaviour
- ✓ confidence in improving
- ✓ developing some ambition
- ✓ growing understanding of education as a path to success

Where Are We Now?

- We are in our second year, and have 15 students enrolled in the program
- Students who participated last year were retained as *Mentors* for this year's group
- Mentor training was provided by Seneca's SMILE program

Don Mills CI

- Began in the program January 2007
- 17 Students
- Same Seneca Teacher, New HS Teacher
- Desire to move through college curriculum first, to allow students to finish by **April** (college semester end) then focus on HS subject through May/June

Challenges

- Logistics between college and high school scheduling are problematic
- Work load is intense for these students
- Time – there is never enough time for these students
- Acquiring approval/funding in early spring is required in order to plan for a fall start

Next Steps

- We continue to focus on STUDENT SUCCESS and access to pathways
- We continue to work together on resolving scheduling/timetabling and logistical issues
- We continue to improve and expand the model, because we know it works

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